

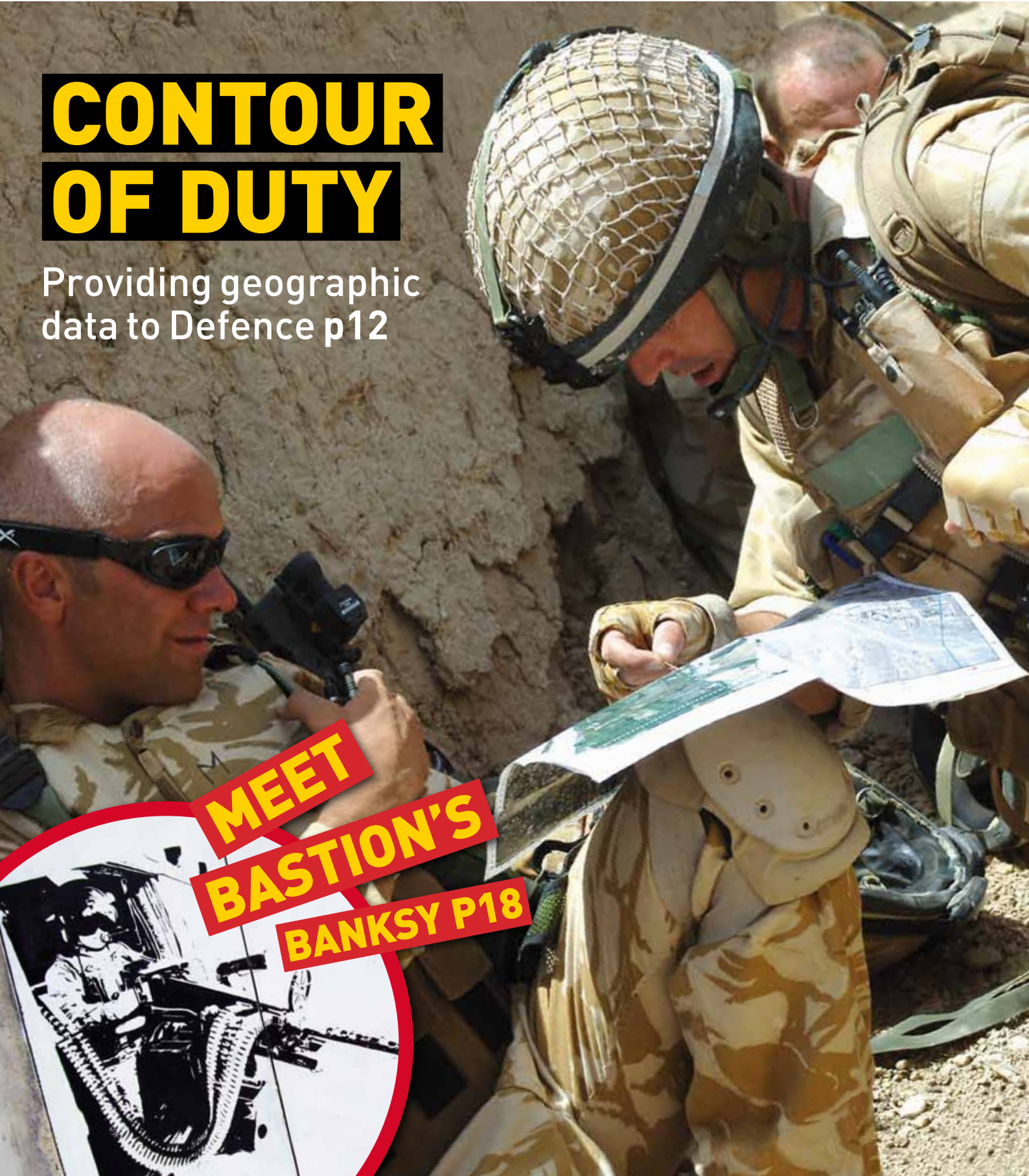


Defence**F**ocus

Royal Navy | Army | Royal Air Force | Ministry of Defence | ISSUE #266 DECEMBER 12/JAN 13


CONTOUR OF DUTY

Providing geographic data to Defence p12



**MEET
BASTION'S
BANKSY P18**





We ensure global reach
from **up there**

to ensure smooth passage
down here

TRAVELCORPORATE - Adria Paris - © Astrium 2012, © Getty Images

By incorporating the strengths of Vizada into Astrium Services, we are the world's number one commercial MilSatCom service provider. Our powerful government satellite communication services that connect, inform and protect can now give you more. More solutions. More global reach. More reliability. More innovation. Now more than ever, you can count on us to support your critical missions. www.astriumservices.com

VIZADA AND PARADIGM
UNITING FORCES FOR A STRONGER ASTRIUM SERVICES

 **ASTRIUM**

AN EADS COMPANY

NAVIGATOR



**MILLIES:
ARMED FORCES
HONoured P26**



Regulars

P5 IN MEMORIAM

Tributes to the fallen

P16 VERBATIM

General Ranald Munro reveals how he made it from private soldier to general

P28 MY MEDALS

Squadron Leader Jason Davenhill looks back on his illustrious RAF career

P31 WIN A WATCH

One Suunto Ambit watch worth £400 is up for grabs for one lucky reader

Features

P12 INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Ian Carr reports from the Defence Geographic Centre in Feltham

P18 BATTLEFIELD BANKSIES

Taking a look at some of the military murals on the front line

P21 COVENANT GRANT SCHEME

Scores of projects boosting ties between the military and local communities

P26 MILLIES WINNERS

Lowdown on the military recipients at The Sun newspaper awards ceremony

P29 YOU'RE SO SAD!

Don't fret, you could be suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder



P18



P21

EDITOR'S NOTE

DefenceFocus

For everyone in defence
Published by the Ministry of Defence

Level 1 Zone C
MOD, Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB
General enquiries: 020 7218 1320

EDITOR: Fiona Simpson
Tel: 020 7218 3949
email: fiona.simpson102@mod.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Tristan Kelly
Tel: 020 7218 4252
email: tristan.kelly569@mod.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Ian Carr
Tel: 020 7218 2825
email: ian_carr@dmc.mod.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Leigh Hamilton
Tel: 020 7218 5988
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 7218 1320
email: shell.daruwala932@mod.uk

MOD does not endorse any product or service advertised in *Defence Focus*, nor does it verify any preferential treatment offered by any advertiser to MOD employees. Queries on advertisements should be addressed to our advertising agency.

Opinions expressed in *Defence Focus* do not necessarily represent those of the MOD. Articles on all aspects of MOD and Defence will be considered for publication but we reserve the right to edit contributions. MOD staff contributing to *Defence Focus* should ensure their writing is suitable for open publication.

Advertising
Advertising sales are handled by Anton Linton at Ten Alps Media. Tel: 020 7657 1810
email: anton.linton@tenalps.com

Distribution
The magazine is distributed through major military bases, depots and MOD offices.



Produced by Williams Lea Ltd on 100% recycled paper.
MOD Helpline 01603 696329.

TRISTAN KELLY

The oldest known drawing of a human face, discovered in a cave in Angoulême, France, is estimated to be some 27,000 years old.

The who, what and why behind its creation are questions we don't know the answers to, but it seems we have a primeval need to make our mark on the world and say 'we were here'.

Perhaps it's the time of year or maybe it is because my short tenure as acting editor of this fantastic magazine (for all in Defence) has come to an end, or perhaps it's just a bout of good old-fashioned mid-life crisis, but it is something I have been reflecting on recently.

It's clearly shown in the Armed Forces and in Afghanistan and the tradition of military murals to mark a unit's deployment, a feature investigated by Ian Carr in this issue.

However, I suppose the real question should be not just what mark

we have left but whether that mark has left things for the better.

I'm not sure I can be so confident, but our report on the effort of local groups to support the Armed Forces and their families through the Community Covenant Grant Scheme clearly shows that many people out there are making their mark for the better.

It's something that the Armed Forces expend a lot of their effort on and, reflecting back over 2012, I think that the organisation as a whole can be proud of its achievements, not least in the Olympics, Diamond Jubilee and Afghanistan.

But enough of this navel-gazing and looking back, it's time for us all to brace ourselves for 2013, the challenges it may bring, and how we can all make those good marks on the world.

All that is left to say is good luck to our new editor Fiona and a happy New Year to you all.

Ministry of Defence online

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 and subscribe to the daily alerts.

Facebook/Twitter

Join over 200,000 followers at the HM Armed Forces Facebook page and receive Defence HQ tweets @DefenceHQ on Twitter.

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

EXCLUSIVE MILITARY DISCOUNTS

Call 01522 814010

German Free Phone 0800 1800119

www.forcescarsdirect.com



FORCES
CarsDirect

IF YOU SERVE YOU SAVE

IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS – 24 OCTOBER TO 10 DECEMBER 2012



Captain Walter Barrie

Captain Walter Reid Barrie, from 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, was killed in Afghanistan on Sunday 11 November 2012. Captain Barrie was taking part in a football match between

British soldiers and members of the Afghan National Army at Forward Operating Base Shawqat in the Nad 'Ali district of Helmand province when he was shot at close range by a member of the Afghan Army. He was fatally injured in the attack. Aged 41 and from

Glasgow, Captain Barrie was renowned as an approachable and compassionate officer; he cared deeply for the well-being of those around him and had unparalleled rapport with all ranks.

He leaves behind wife Sonia and son Callum, aged 15.



Lieutenant Edward Drummond-Baxter

Lieutenant Edward Drummond-Baxter, from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 30 October 2012. Lieutenant

Drummond-Baxter was killed alongside Lance Corporal Kunwar. They were shot by a man wearing an Afghan police uniform with whom they had been attending a meeting at Checkpoint Prrang in the southern area of the Nahr-e Saraj district

of Helmand province. Lieutenant Drummond-Baxter was an excellent platoon commander who was respected by his soldiers and fellow officers.

He leaves behind his mother Helen, father David and sister Emily.



Lance Corporal Siddhanta Kunwar

Lance Corporal Siddhanta Kunwar, from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 30 October 2012. He and Lieutenant Drummond-

Baxter were shot and killed by a man wearing an Afghan police uniform following a meeting with the Afghan Police. Lance Corporal Kunwar was an outstanding soldier and a true Gurkha. He displayed calmness of mind, cheerfulness in adversity and

loyalty throughout his many operational tours.

He leaves behind his father Shyam Kumar Kunwar, stepmother Chhali Devi Kunwar, his four sisters, Shova, Shyandya, Smitta and Sardha Kunwar, and his elder brother Bhupendra Kunwar.



Corporal David O'Connor

Corporal David O'Connor, from 40 Commando Royal Marines, was killed in Afghanistan on Wednesday 24 October 2012 while on patrol in the Nahr-e Saraj district of

Helmand province. Corporal O'Connor was participating in a patrol with C Company, 40 Commando, to conduct low level training with the Afghan Local Police. While en route to conduct that training, the patrol came under small arms fire near the village of

Char Kutsa. As a result of the engagement Corporal O'Connor was fatally injured alongside his colleague and patrol medic, Corporal Channing Day.

He leaves behind his mother Rosemary, brother Phil and father Roy.



Corporal Channing Day

Corporal Channing Day, from 3 Medical Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan on Wednesday 24 October 2012 while on patrol in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province. Corporal Day was on a patrol with C

Company, 40 Commando, to conduct low level training with the Afghan Local Police. While en route the patrol came under small arms fire near the village of Char Kutsa. As a result of the engagement Corporal Day was fatally injured alongside her colleague Corporal

David O'Connor. A veteran of previous Iraq and Afghanistan deployments, she was looked up to, especially by more junior soldiers.

Corporal Day is survived by her parents Leslie and Rosemary, her sisters, Lauren and Laken, and brother Aaron.

**SAPPERS FROM 21 ENGINEER
REGIMENT ROYAL ENGINEERS
WORKING INTO THE EARLY
EVENING TO STRIP OUT ONE OF THE
ACCOMMODATION BUILDINGS AT
PATROL BASE NAHIDULLAH**





Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC

DECKS JOB

IAN CARR TALKS TO BFBS'S DUSTY MILLER IN HIS STUDIO AT CAMP BASTION DURING HIS LATEST TOUR IN AFGHANISTAN



We all miss certain things when we are away from home. A good glass of beer, catching up on a Corrie plot line, or getting out of bed to your favourite radio show.

Well thanks to people like Allan 'Dusty' Miller, British Forces Broadcasting Service's (BFBS's) General Manager, troops in theatre can keep at

least a few home comforts.

Dusty runs the broadcasting operation in Afghanistan providing a range of radio and TV programmes that mixes chat, news, music, drama and sport.

Dusty is an old hand at the broadcast game. An army brat, he grew up in Germany and went into the trade straight from school in 1974. "I don't know anything else

really, other than the British Forces," he says. "They're the best audience, the most appreciative – and the most critical. They think of us as part of them, so they feel fully justified in poking us in the chest if they think we've cocked something up. We are not short on feedback, which is gratifying."

Dusty might not know anything else, but he does know his audience. And after 30 years of broadcasting to troops deployed to Bosnia, Kosovo, Gulf War One, Iraq and Afghanistan, they know him. They know that he and the rest of the team are with them in more than just spirit. The broadcasters, and the technicians who keep the show on the road, are swallowing the same dust and sweating under the same sun, and diving for cover when the sirens sound.

"On one of my tours in Iraq, we were based at Basra Airfield and were getting shelled nine times a day for weeks on end. You got very tired, and very used to the alarm going off and having to get up and put your body armour on, hitting the deck and waiting for the all clear to sound."

By comparison Dusty reckons that in Afghanistan the BFBS crew have it easy, at least in Bastion where the accommodation is OK and the warning sirens rarely sound.

Perhaps his outlook reflects the affection that he has for his audience, and the knowledge that one thing you don't do in theatre is moan. Because how ever hard you have it, someone else has it harder.

"Sean (*Sean Macaulay the station manager*) and our technology boys go out from Bastion, and they know the further out you go, the more austere it gets."

Macaulay agrees that it's an eye-opener visiting the more remote patrol bases. "We have four or five technicians in theatre at any one time, plus myself and a studio tech. We are responsible for the compound infrastructure, all the satellite dishes, the IT and that sort of stuff. So sometimes we have to go out to install or fix things. You hear the gunfire and the explosions going off and it brings it home to you why we are here. You can lose touch of that at Bastion, but we are here for the guys on the ground."

Thanks to BFBS's deals with the big commercial broadcast companies,



Picture: Corporal Steve Bain ABIPP

**I'm a celebrity, get me in there:
Cheryl Cole visits British troops
in Afghanistan**

personnel can spend their downtime in front of a movie, enjoying their favourite soap or watching Top Gear or sport. The soap enthusiasts may get their fix a day later than back home, but when they phone the family, they can still share opinions on whether Corrie's Tyrone should stay with Kirsty or flee with the baby to Glasgow. For 15 minutes, family and normal life doesn't seem so far away.

These prime time programmes are accessible via digital terrestrial signal in the main operating bases. In the forward operating bases and some patrol bases, programmes are beamed into communal sets via a satellite signal. Some troops hook up their laptops to receive the signal so they can watch from their bunks.

TV fans from remote bases can pop into the studios when they pass through Bastion and download programmes from the station's database onto a dongle or a laptop so they don't miss their fix of footie.

But it is the engagement with the troops and their families that sets BFBS apart. "We have 42 hours of live output spread over two shows a day, five days a week, and on Saturday we've got a breakfast show and Sunday a lunchtime show," said Dusty. Which means that, in theory, the station's two presenters get one day off a week.

The station has two news reporters who do three-month rotations, like the rest of the team. Their output is mainly for the TV, although the audio is used for the radio news as well. They go out and about outside the wire picking up news items and conducting interviews.

"I've designed the breakfast show around Operation Herrick. Our target audience is 100 per cent the forces here, so there's lots of local information, all the sort of stuff they will need, climate, hydration issues, ops safety."

The show can be picked up in the UK, Germany and Cyprus where, because of the time difference, listeners tend to be shift workers and truck drivers.

The afternoon show, although



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Hillhouse

Galaxy of stars: David Beckham during a visit to Helmand province, Afghanistan



Picture: Corporal Barry Lloyd RLC

still having an operational bias, is designed for a worldwide networked audience. "We will have lots of link ups with families back in the UK. For example, when we had the 22 Field Hospital here, their wives club back in Aldershot would time their coffee mornings to coincide with the station's programmes so they could listen to us and interact with our presenter. It was a bit like getting a post card from home," said Dusty.

'Access all Areas' is a four-hour show broadcast on Sundays. It is presented live from Bastion and is a mix of stuff from the

families and lots of items from Afghanistan, including all the interviews and packages that have been covered during the week.

"It's a magazine programme with really nice music and lots of lovely 'miss ya' items. The wives go out and record things for us from the various units, so the guys know that while they are listening their families are too," said Dusty. "Any listener who isn't involved in the 'love ya, miss ya' stuff may get fed up with it – but they know that it'll be their turn next to get the 'Johnny wants to say hi to his Daddy', and enjoy their three

minutes of warm fluffy feeling."

Although the broadcasts are live, the packages are pre-recorded and security cleared before transmission. "It's too dangerous to go live to air. With the best will in the world the guys want to talk about what they're doing; 'me and my six blokes were on patrol last night till 03.00 and... oh and can you tell my wife I'll be flying out tomorrow at 16.00'."

But, other than that, Dusty insists, you don't have to worry about what the guys are going to say: "They never swear on the radio, they know how to behave themselves.

"Although you have to be a bit careful with the requests we get. What can be hilarious over a cup of coffee with your mates in your crew room sometimes isn't quite so funny when the whole of Afghanistan is listening."

In fact, for some, the on-air experience can come as a bit of an eye-opener. "You get the ones who are jack-the-lad who think our job is easy, then they are faced with the mic and they've got nothing to say."

But, if nothing else, what 30 years of broadcasting has taught Dusty is how to tune into military humour. Keen to come up with a way of producing some radio material that would engage the troops, Dusty came up with what could be called a BAD idea, that's Bastion Amateur Dramatics.

He goes out to record guys reading dialogue from a favourite film then plays the clip on the show. Listeners have to guess the film to win a prize.

"We had a Bond theme and a Canadian guy said he could do a really good impression of Sean Connery, so I recorded him and he sounded absolutely nothing like him – but it was hilarious; now all the units are trying to outdo each other hamming it up, which is great because they become the stars of the show."

Dusty and the team also get to meet, and interview, the real-life stars keen to do their bit to support the troops. People like David Beckham, Cheryl Cole and Ross Kemp produce a big boost to morale, and in Dusty's opinion deserve a lot of praise for what they do. "When Cheryl Cole was here she was doing something almost every second, I don't think she slept."

All in all it's a service that means a lot to the troops. They fly into Bastion then out to wherever in Helmand they will be spending their tour, listening, often under canvas, to Dusty and the rest of the team.

"When they come back at the end of their tour they often come and pop their heads round the door to say 'I'm on my way out now, I've been listening to you for the last three months, and I just wanted to say thanks'. At times like that I think this is the best job in the world." DP

Home entertainment: catching up on Downton Abbey



Picture: Alison Baskerville/LNP



**TOGETHER
WE FLY HIGHER.**

This year, we're honoured once again to support the British Military Tournament; a celebration of the skills, commitment and dedication of the British Armed Forces.

Our support reflects our commitment and dedication to the UK, with whom we've shared close partnership for over 70 years.

Discover more at boeing.co.uk

 **BOEING**



Picture: Sergeant Brian Gamble

Fine on paper: even in a world of digital information, there will always be a need for traditional paper maps

OFF THE MAP

THE DEFENCE GEOGRAPHIC CENTRE, KEEPING THE ARMED FORCES ON THE RIGHT TRACK: REPORT BY IAN CARR

When Australian scientists went to have a look at Sandy Island in the South Pacific recently, they discovered that, despite having featured on maps and on Google Earth for years, it doesn't actually exist. The experts working at the Defence Geographic Centre (DGC) may well have smiled wryly on hearing this. There is no room in their world for such errors.

DGC provides geographic information to Defence, predominantly to the Army and the RAF, but also to other government departments. They work in a world of international collaboration, sharing and co-producing geographical information where a reputation for accuracy matters.

DGC's geographers, or geospatial

analysts as they prefer to be called, know that, if you rely on a map which hasn't been created from entirely dependable source data, the result can get you into trouble.

But even the best maps are the result of compromise and estimate. "Unless you are on the ground looking at something, geographical information is always an approximation," said Ian Spencer, Head of Geo Research. "We know how accurate our sources are, and the technical parameters of our sensors, so we know how accurate our products are. We have to work within a defined margin of error for each military product. If it's outside that margin it's considered unfit for purpose."

It's true that DGC augments some of their products with open source material,

such as Google Earth pictures, to provide pop-up images of features, but they do it knowing where the risks lie.

But DGC produces more than just maps, whether on paper or on a screen. After all, a map is just one way of presenting geographical information, and it might not be the best solution for you.

Instead, you might need a database of geographic data to put in a weapons system, or a 3D simulation created from stereoscopic photographs to prepare yourself for the environment through which you may have to fly and control a missile.

DGC specialises in making sense of a huge mass of data and presenting it to the customer in a way that is going to help them make sense of the world, spot relationships, and make informed plans.

"We get two types of request" said Operations Officer Major Jim Danks. "These are ad hoc for a single event or operation, such as disaster relief or support to the Arab Spring operations. And longer

term planned work which can include Afghanistan tasks.”

A request may start as a one-off and then develop into a long-term requirement. When Camp Bastion was established more than a decade ago it started as an ad hoc request. Now, as a home for thousands of troops, it is a standard request requiring the provision of many different types of data.

HELPING THE CUSTOMER

With a military front end, DGC can help the customer to define exactly what they require, then the experts can provide them with the best product to satisfy that need.

When a request comes in, the team may only have hours to reply. Knowing where to look, and what for, is where the experts earn their pay. They decide what products already exist that might suffice, or if they have something that can be easily adapted. There's a lot to consider.

“We have the largest collection of current maps in the West, more than 650,000 hard copy items and more than 300 terabytes of digital information,” said Lionel Fewson, Head of Collection.

Which means that DGC has coverage, in one form or another, of 90 per cent of the globe, including information about tribal distributions, population densities and boundary agreements. And the collection is growing all the time.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Working for Lionel are five Collection Officers; they could be described as the geographic equivalent of Indiana Jones.

They scour the globe in search of useful, credible data, visiting countries of interest gathering information and making new contacts.

Making maps from scratch is time consuming and very expensive, so international collaboration and data sharing is very cost effective. “We have memorandums of understanding with 50 countries and links with many trusted commercial suppliers,” said Lionel.

On the digital side, DGC is part of a 29-nation programme to capture digital data from various places of interest around the world. In return for their contribution, DGC has access to the entire output.

A good example of the benefit of co-operation is the award-winning work producing image based mapping of compounds in Helmand province to improve battlefield and situational awareness.

Working with the US Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, the project has to date captured and referenced more than 200,000 compounds and produced more than 1,100 large scale maps covering more than 11,000 square kilometres.

NAMING OF PARTS

On the research side, as well as providing specialist advice and keeping a weather eye on potential future products, there is also a lot of name-calling going on.

What you call something on a map matters a lot. Names are culturally and politically loaded (Malvinas or Falklands) so choosing the wrong one can get you into trouble. Attached to DGC, working in conjunction with the Foreign Office, is the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names.

DGC takes an impartial, fact-based approach to deciding what to call features on their products. Establishing a common name has tactical advantage as well. In a coalition environment it is important to have a consistent approach when referring to places which may well have many different local names. “So we are changing the way we provide the name service,” said Ian. “We realise our guys need to have ready access to the best available data for names and all the known variants.”


Another DGC specialism is in the positioning of boundaries and borders.

Determining where the line should be drawn is a tricky business. “If the background research tells us that a boundary is marked by a river, we need to know which bank does it run along, or does it run down the middle? We can also advise on how to draw new boundaries. If you just draw a line or follow a river you immediately

hit problems – cutting across natural areas of resource, or migration routes. Get it wrong and you can end up isolating large numbers of people,” said Ian.

When it comes to future products, there is a revolution taking place, and DGC is leading the way. The move is towards making more use of human geography in an ordered way. “We want to develop standards with our overseas partners to define database structures so that we can start capturing information like ethnicity demographics, economics, religion and water control. If you go on the internet you will see lots of people doing things in different disciplines, but at the moment it isn't connected. We want to pull all this information together in a systematic way so that decision makers and analysts have a better understanding of what's going on.

“If we have the basic geographic foundation we can overlay that with all kinds of human activities. Once data is organised then you can share it and exploit it, and when it has a spatial element you can model these factors and see what effect their interaction has.”

Ian believes that marrying physical and social sciences will open up a new world of understanding, as long as you take into account the assumptions and approximations that have been made. Asking how does factor A affect element B is OK as long as you keep an eye out for any more fictitious islands on the horizon. 



Above: master of the rolls, DGC has a full range of modern print and production equipment, below left: using stereographic imagery to produce simulations, below right: identifying sources for new products



DOVES OF WAR

IAN CARR TALKS TO SENIOR CHAPLAIN PADRE PAUL SWINN AND VISITS HIS LITTLE BASE OF CALM IN LASHKAR GAH

As you hurry to the dining facility along the shiny cement path that serves as one of Main Operating Base Lashkar Gah's pedestrian super highways, you might notice an ordinary looking tent standing on the edge of the base's central flower garden.

From the outside it's nothing special. It could be a store for the transit accommodation. Yet step through the doorway and a haven of tranquillity awaits.

For this is the Chapel of St Martin, and once inside, although only a canvas width separates you from the noise of troops, armoured vehicles and the thump

of Chinooks, you feel as if you have been transported to a tiny English village church.

There is a carpet on the floor with wooden benches facing the lectern, and set into the walls there are even "stained glass windows" fashioned out of Perspex.

"It is beautiful isn't it?" says Padre Paul Swinn, Task Force Helmand's senior chaplain during Herrick 16. That might seem an odd thing to say about a Nato tent, but he's right. "It has a lovely atmosphere, it is definitely a place for quiet and reflection."

Prayers and services aside it's not where the padre spends all his working day, but he does pop in from time to time.

"When I do, very often there will be someone here having a quiet moment of reflection, perhaps because they are in distress about something happening at home. They may want a quiet word of encouragement, or just to be by themselves for a while."

In a life cramped by your colleagues, solitude is a rare commodity. "In a very busy camp like this the pressures can build; this church provides an escape, a quiet refuge out of the way," says Padre Swinn.

On the tent wall, besides the padre's pride and joy, an electronic organ on which he enjoys playing hymn requests, there is a

**Calm in the garden:
Padre Paul Swinn reads
his Bible in the garden
at Lashkar Gah**

Pictures: Corporal Dek Traylor (RAF)



noticeboard. It is covered with yellow post-it notes. They are prayers and dedications.

Some are for family members; many are for mates killed on operations; most are written by troops in their teens or early twenties. For the padre this has an extra resonance. "I turned 50 during this tour, the average age of the chaplains here. The average age of the soldiers is comparable to my own children, so it's almost literally like we are fathers to the troops."

One of the prices of a military career, especially with heavy operational workloads, can be the pressure, which if not managed can be a problem at the end of a deployment.

When tours end, the padres give briefings to the soldiers on how to prepare for the moment when they walk in through their front doors. It is a brief that Swinn has refined over the years.

"I have done three tours in Iraq, and I used to offer sage advice about how troops couldn't expect things to be exactly the same when they got home. But, guess what, I used to make the same mistakes as everyone else. I thought I was a returning hero when in fact they couldn't care less about that and just wanted me to sort out the washing machine!"

IS RELIGION STILL RELEVANT?

With fewer people going to church nowadays is there still a need for spiritual guidance? Do young soldiers regard the chaplains as anything other than curiosities?

"I don't see that at all," says Swinn.

"From the moment they start basic training they will be aware of the padre and know them as a friendly face when everything is confusing and bewildering. In the 21st century we are presented with the idea that in Western society we have outgrown religion, I don't think we have at all.

"We protect ourselves with barriers of materialism. We have peacefulness in our society so we think we have no need of God.

"On an operational tour you suddenly discover the protective walls you have built for yourself are stripped away. Real life is far more uncertain, and those things that we used to see as important can now seem very artificial." It is the padre's role to help people find a set of values upon which they can depend. And what better framework could you want, argues Swinn, than the six core values of the Army. "Courage, loyalty, discipline, integrity, selfless commitment and respect for others. Those are grand themes that I think about on a daily basis. It may sound theoretical, but it's not. Here you see it has a hugely practical application."

As well as providing this moral and spiritual guidance, the chaplains, as in any parish, play a part in supporting their flock through times of trouble.

While welfare is a chain of command



responsibility, the chaplains play their part. Padre Swinn is swift to praise the support given by sergeants, sergeant majors and officers commanding, but he points out that there are occasions when an individual might want to step outside that formal support network. That is when anyone, regardless of rank, can talk to the chaplains in the strictest confidence.

As senior chaplain, Padre Swinn gives the same pastoral care to his team of chaplains who are dispersed across the operational area. "One of the challenges of being a chaplain on operations is, you will see infantry sitting together at the meal table, signallers will sit with signallers, but in most locations there is only one chaplain, and even though you are friend to everyone, it is a case of who cares for the carer?"


But it is all too easy to fall into the trap of assuming a padre's role is just about helping people to cope with life's hardships. There is much that is uplifting.

"An operational tour is an exciting thing, and there is a bit of the boy scout in all of us," exclaims a smiling Padre Swinn. "But as well as the sense of adventure, we can all take away a great sense of achievement that we are in some measure helping a community to take responsibility for itself again. I think that is a very rich privilege."

Padre Swinn also enjoys being part of positive events such as celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

"Things like that can help prevent all the days seeming the same. I also think that one of the benefits of having the weekly church service on a Sunday is that it gives structure and focus, and a sense of normality to our lives."

As the padre says this, the double thump of a Chinook is a reminder that outside the tempo hasn't changed.

It is time for us to be elsewhere, albeit in a calmer frame of mind; the minister has once more worked his magic. 



TRANSFORMING THE TERRITORIAL ARMY

DEPUTY CHIEF LAND FORCES (RESERVES) MAJOR GENERAL RANALD MUNRO ON EXPANDING THE TA AND ITS APPEAL

Picture: Corporal Steve Blake RLC (Phot)



DF: What is the appeal of joining the reserves in 2012?

RM: The same as always; people who want to live a life less ordinary, where they're challenged, work alongside good people, strive to the values and standards of the British Army, take responsibility and know they matter because they're part of a team that delivers. Then look at the ethos, friendship, camaraderie, humour and sharing adversity. They learn new skills and how to perform under pressure. All those things existed before and exist now, the added attraction for reservists today is an increased opportunity to work alongside the regulars on operations. The army benefits from reservists skills because they bring civilian expertise.

Reservists benefit because they develop a sense of self-worth. It's really important that they feel valued by the army and the country in what they do.

DF: How many TA soldiers will you recruit?

RM: The orders that we've been given by the MOD is that we're to grow from 19,000 phase 2 soldiers to about 30,000 phase 2 trained soldiers ready to go on operations.

DF: Is that realistic?

RM: Nobody would deny that our challenge is a big one. The question is about bringing the necessary resources to bear and that's starting to happen. The green paper has just come out which is about recalibrating the bargain between defence, society and state. That will require a huge cultural change in society from employers particularly, with the reservists. Then, it will be easier to recruit because employers and society will understand where reserves sit and how important it is that they contribute to defence capability.

The challenge in pure number terms is big and recruiting will get easier as time goes on. But we can do it if we want to and right now we want to. This is the critical path to delivering Future Reserves 2020. If we don't get it right, the reserves can't deliver FR20, which is a bigger proportion of the integrated army, then Army 2020 fails and defence doesn't have the capability it requires. The green paper is about consultation. [Go to <http://bit.ly/SEjwfP> to have your say in the Future Reserves 2020 consultation].

DF: Surely, the UK's bosses aren't happy about losing staff for six months? What's in it for them?

RM: Big employers can share the training burden and carry corporate social responsibility. There are real

opportunities for big employers who have the staff to withstand absences. I always imagine a five-man garage in Truro and think, what do they need? Employers will be getting someone motivated, fit, with less absenteeism, that takes orders, shows leadership, personal responsibility in a team and understands the values of discipline and moral courage. We must explain to the country that we need to – because of austerity – do defence differently. The alternative is to pay more taxes for a bigger army.

DF: Do you plan to compensate bosses who may have to hire new staff?

RM: That happens now. When a soldier goes on operations, an employer gets money to fill the slot. While there's a huge cultural change required; reservists potentially deploy for one year in every five and most people in the TA have a career that spans five to 10 years which equates to two operational tours in 10 years. It's not a huge ask.

DF: Is the prospect of foreign combat deterring applicants?

RM: Perhaps counter-intuitively, it creates an attraction. Young men and women want to serve their country but also challenge themselves in a difficult environment so recruitment has gone up as people join with the aim of going on operations.

DF: Are reservists up for life-and-death situations?

RM: Are they up for it? Unbelievably! As of now, 25,000 soldiers and officers have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and are indistinguishable from the regulars. Many of them have been decorated for bravery. We select from a common standard for officers and soldiers. What the army decides to do with them is down to how much we train them and give them responsibility. In future conflict where stabilisation, nation building and reconstruction become more important,

the reservists play a hugely important role. These postmen, plumbers and bankers can bring all their experiences to a military environment, to help reconstruction. They're absolutely up for it.

DF: We hear that many youngsters are obese. Is the TA going to be fit enough?

RM: The people coming into the reservists are clearly a reflection on society so it's affecting fitness levels.

We have to do a better job to explain to recruits how they can fulfil their potential in the army where they'll make good mates, do exciting things and be given a hell of a lot of responsibility at a young age.

When you see the people who went on operations to Iraq, some of them were unfit but when they're shaped by the army, they are lions. They're doing a fantastic job on behalf of the country.

DF: How many reservists have we got in Afghanistan at the moment?

RM: Every year, we supply around 2,300 reservists contributing in one shape or form to operations. That's a large return on your investment. I know from meeting

guys and girls preparing for Afghanistan, they're as keen as mustard and fantastic people, well trained, relishing working alongside the regulars.

When they return, they'll have great experiences having done something positive for rebuilding a nation and hopefully give back to society.

DF: What's the biggest challenge in the TA?

RM: Undoubtedly time, being able to balance work, the requirement to build military competences to go on operations and family. It's always been that way and that challenge will be exacerbated because greater emphasis will be placed on the reservists.

The senior leadership have to shape society so that people can serve without worrying about losing their job. I'd like to see a situation where people are proud to say, "I'm a reservist!" when they go for a job interview. At the moment, people tend to keep it a bit quiet.

DF: Do the regulars give the TA the respect they deserve?

RM: There has always been healthy

banter and rivalry and certainly in my experience, those regulars who serve with the TA were quickly seduced by their enthusiasm, optimism and quality. In the last few years, because of working so closely together on operations, there has been a very strong respect for TA soldiers among the regular Army.

DF: The Secretary of State has called for the TA to be renamed, reservists. What's your take?

RM: If you talk to the boys and girls on the ground there's an appetite for name change whether it's Army Reserves or Army Volunteer Reserves.

The image has definitely changed and the TA like the fact that they're a professional valued resource working alongside the regulars.

My view is that if you're going to make a change, make a big fanfare to reflect the new contents.

DF: What is your advice to anybody considering joining the reservists?

RM: My very strong advice is talk to someone in the TA, go to your career office and give it a go. You won't regret it. **DF**



Save 50% on AA Membership at enrolment and 10% at renewal*

Why the AA is the perfect choice for the Armed Forces

- You'll have the option to put your AA Membership on hold, for example when you're on duty overseas
- AA Membership covers the whole of the UK including Northern Ireland

To join, call **0800 048 0075**
Quoting reference 'F0690'

*Discounts are off AA standard recurring annual prices for breakdown cover. Offer only available to Armed Forces personnel by calling the number given, quoting the stated reference and paying annually by direct debit under a recurring transaction arrangement. Enrolment offer available to new Members for their first 12 months of Membership only. Renewal offer available to Armed Forces personnel who are existing AA Members, or who join under the enrolment offer, and will be available at each renewal date until they cease to be Armed Forces personnel or the withdrawal of this scheme. Offer not available in conjunction with any other offer/discount or on any other AA product/service. Automobile Association Insurance Services Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA). Registered office: Farnham House, Basing View, Basingstoke RG21 4EA, England & Wales. Registered number 2414212.

Breakdown Cover

AA Your 4th Emergency Service



Picture: Corporal Dek Traylor



Picture: Imperial War Museum



Picture: Imperial War Museum



Picture: Imperial War Museum

BATTLEFIELD BANKSIES

IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT TROOPS HAVE A TALENT FOR IT'S BRIGHTENING UP THEIR SURROUNDINGS. IAN CARR LOOKS AT MILITARY MURALS

Tradition, regimental pride and identity are elements in the very marrow of military men and women. Marking a spot where you and your mates have done your bit means a lot in a profession where you can end up anywhere in the world, with the opportunity

for moments of glory and hours of boredom. The proud subtext of the military banners and battle honours is always "We were here, and we were the best".

All over the airfields of Afghanistan, Iraq and Bosnia, the troops have stamped their marks on concrete blast walls with

awe-inspiring military murals. Some are traditional regimental or unit badges, but the ones that really blow you away as you step out of the helicopters are those that could grace the covers of superhero comics or games' sleeves.

They are amazing. And they are important. Louise Skidmore, the project manager for the Imperial War Museum's War Story exhibition told *Defence Focus*: "The murals are a fascinating personal, visual representation and documentation of war. We hope to be able to properly document these murals so that they can be seen and studied by future generations."



Pimp my wall: Staff Sergeant Kev Barrett by his masterpiece



Picture: Imperial War Museum

This astonishing artwork tends to be created by squadron air crews, but *Defence Focus* tracked down Army Air Corps Lynx helicopter pilot Staff Sergeant Kevin Barrett who has painted murals for his squadron, 9AAC-669 Flight, in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

"I'm quite an artistic person, and in the military if you are like that you are always getting pinged to do people's leaving presents and stuff, so on tour, when the idea of a mural comes up, you get identified straight away."

Staff Sergeant Barrett's last masterpiece was at Camp Bastion, and it was, he admits, a good way to get a break from the daily chores. However the task soon took over all his spare time. "The one in Bastion took about two weeks, working two or three hours a night in my own time. It can get to be a bit of an annoyance because everyone feels they own it so they make comments, like if I was eating a meal or in the gym they'd say 'how come you're not

painting the mural?"

Staff Sergeant Barrett admits that getting so involved in the projects is a buzz, especially knowing that they mean so much to everyone in the squadron. But he also owns up to an occasional touch of the prima donnas: "If someone is passing comment, or if someone who doesn't have any artistic flair says 'didn't you think of doing this or that' it can get very personal." But when it's finished, the true value can be measured by the number of guys clamouring for their pictures to be taken standing next to it.

So where does the inspiration come from for the subject of the murals?

"You try and reflect the theme of what you are out there to do and capture that purpose through your artwork. For example, as helicopter pilots our role is to provide protection to other call signs. So I took that idea and gave it a twist."

"In the middle I painted the badge and on the other side a black and white painting of a gunner."

"I come up with a million ideas, and you ask the guys what they'd like to see. Then I pass it by my Officer Commanding."

"You've got to be tasteful, you can't have images of bombs dropping on people, but you also want to push the envelope a bit and for them to be exciting and fun."

There is also the tradition of squadron rivalry that fuels the creative juices. "On the other side of the wall to us was the Apache detachment, so, when I was doing mine, I'd wander round and have a look. You are always trying to outdo each other."

A bigger problem than passing the good taste test is actually getting hold of the materials to do the work. In theatre everything is earmarked for its

proper purpose, so the soldier's natural scavenging skills must come to the fore – all in the interest of art.

"Our squadron mascot is Loony Tunes' Wile E Coyote. We needed to go through the proper paths to use it, and there's lots we can't do with him, like we can't have him holding a gun. The lads wanted me to do a Coyote pub sign for the crew room, but I couldn't get hold of any brown paint. The best I could get was tan so I added coffee to it to get the right colour. I was trying to make orange, but it was coming out peach – I can be a bit of a diva when it comes to getting what I want."

Occasionally Staff Sergeant Barrett allows the lads to help with the painting itself, but only in filling in blocks of colour or giving the cement wall a whitewash undercoat. "I was putting in a lot of hours on the Bastion one and it was freezing cold because it was winter, and I was doing it wearing a onesie fleece, so yeah a bit of help was welcome. You just don't want people doing the wrong thing."

Yet once finished it's worth all the effort. "When we taxi our helicopters in, the taxi line points straight at our mural and it looks great, especially at night when you have your aircraft lamp out and it shines on it, and people say 'yeah, our squadron did that'. That's what matters to the squadron, it's putting your stamp on a place. Squadron identities are huge, it's about belonging. And being part of a squadron makes you tremendously proud."

Now museum curators are keen to see these murals take their places in exhibitions explaining the military experience.

Jenny Spencer-Smith, the National Army Museum's Collections Content Manager told *Defence Focus*: "Murals are part of the scar tissue of wars. Lingering on after peace is brokered, they mark a moment in history when combatants found time out of conflict to commemorate their presence on their environment."

"At the museum we record murals across a range of conflicts from nineteenth century Abyssinia to modern day Afghanistan. Diverse in style, subjects and meanings, they can serve to demonstrate rival factions' control of terrain."

"They may form part of a psychological assault – these may continue to reverberate with both civilians and soldiers alike. They can celebrate units through insignia and mottoes, tribal tokens of loyalty; or they may be an exuberant artistic expression of the experience of war."

"Murals provide a valuable glimpse into how warring sides articulate the emotions, events and provocations of their conflicts and that is why it is crucial that they are recorded." **DF**





Flying the flags: military wives in art workshops across Salisbury Plain created these striking batik flags

Picture: Laura Haskell

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

PROJECTS THAT BUILD BRIDGES BETWEEN THE FORCES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES HAVE TRANSFORMED LIVES THANKS TO MOD'S £30M COMMUNITY COVENANT GRANT FUND. LORRAINE MCBRIDE MEETS THREE SUCCESSFUL BENEFICIARIES

WOMEN'S ART PROJECT ON SALISBURY PLAIN

"Anything but plain, Darling!" is a community project that reaches out to isolated women across Salisbury Plain.

This summer, artist Alex Grant led workshops (funded by a £2,000 MOD grant) enabling military wives, partners and local women to create striking batik flags drawing on their life experiences of Salisbury and military life.

The flags went on display at Lacock Abbey in September to high acclaim. The project drew in women of all ages through art workshops.

"The response has been very good, our village workshops were packed and people desperately want to do more," said Alex from Circular Arts, Wiltshire.

As well as the military wives and partners, Alex also taught community volunteers (many from military families) who supported the workshops.

Alex said: "It's all about giving women independence and a chance, regardless

of age and ability, to try something new. This is not simple art. It was seen on public display by thousands of people, enabling visitors to touch and walk among the art. We help give many army women a real sense of freedom and achievement."

"People don't believe what can come out of these workshops. In small groups, wonderful things happen. It is about creating new artistic talent that benefits the community. Getting funding is a nightmare but the MOD has really helped."

Visit www.circulararts.co.uk



Scaling new heights: a youngster enjoying activities



Follow my leader: outdoor exercise at a play day in Oxfordshire

MILITARY PLAY DAYS

A series of play days bringing together Armed Forces communities and local youngsters has been a runaway success. Oxfordshire Play Association laid on play days at each of Oxfordshire's six military bases: Bicester Garrison, RAF Benson, RAF Brize Norton, Vauxhall Barracks, Dalton Barracks and Shrivenham Defence Academy.

Manager Martin Gillett from Oxfordshire Play Association explained how too many military families were isolated in the communities in which they live.

"Our tagline is 'Bringing Armed Forces families and communities together'. We held fantastic days offering free entry and activities," said Martin.

"We invited kids from military families and communities to play together and help promote youth groups and clubs."

Sports clubs, Scouts and Guides, and church groups turned up, eager to recruit new members and raise awareness among Service families about what's on their doorstep.

The first play day held in Bicester in April 2012 attracted fantastic media coverage. "Ninety-nine per cent of military bases threw their weight behind it so it was a real team effort," said Martin.

Local charity Oxfordshire Play Bus offered a double decker for kids to play lots of different activities on board, and a youth bus was used to teach teenagers DJ skills as well as sports.

The play events were funded with a £22,000 grant and laid on activities for youngsters from 0 to 19. "We wouldn't have been able to run free Armed Forces play days without it," said Martin. "It made a huge difference."

Visit www.oxonplay.org.uk

COVENANT GRANT

The Community Covenant Grant Scheme considers applications for funding between £100 and £250,000 to be spent on projects that promote greater understanding of the Armed Forces in the civilian community and build stronger ties. Since its launch in August 2011, hundreds of projects, from one-off activities run on a shoestring to the more ambitious, have inspired people across Britain.



Ready steady cook: it's toasty outside



Going live: the cast record their lines

RADIO KHAKI

Fiona Macbeth set up a drama workshop with students and created a radio play based on veterans' experience of Service life. The play was broadcast on local radio and is now touring schools.

"We focused on their journey into Civvy Street rather than what they went through in Afghanistan," said Fiona, a senior lecturer from Exeter University.

"The students interviewed 15 veterans of all ages, and themes included struggling to settle back into family life, unemployment and the sense of dislocation that people feel when they leave the Armed Forces."

The project was funded by a MOD grant for £6,180. Fiona said: "Our project wouldn't have happened without it. It enabled us to go further afield to meet people in Cornwall and Dorset.

"We hired really good recording equipment, and the expertise of a



Cast: taking a break from recording the play

playwright, Mark Beeson from Med Theatre, helped students pull it all together. The one-off show won high praise.

"Our feedback was very positive and reactions varied depending on what walk of life they came from," said Fiona. Pupils typically express surprise

when they learn of the challenges facing veterans, whereas others say "well I've moved around a lot and it isn't too different from what I've experienced".

The veterans were moved by how much the play had captured their own lives. "I really feel like I've been heard," was one elderly chap's touching verdict.

YEAR IN PICTURES

Picture: Corporal Paul Morrison, Army Phot



Soldiers from the Kings Royal Hussars celebrate the Queens Diamond Jubilee in Afghanistan

Picture: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare



Ice Patrol Vessel HMS Protector in Antarctica taken by Royal Navy photographer Arron Hoare who won the prestigious Peregrine Trophy Photographic Competition 2012

Picture: Corporal Dek Traylor (RAF)



Lance Corporal Lees of the King's Royal Hussars, Quick Reaction Force lays out his kit ready for patrol in Lashkar Gah

Picture: Corporal Graham Taylor (RAF)



The Red Arrows perform a flypast over The Mall as part of the closing ceremony for the London Olympics

Picture: Mark Owens/HQ Scotland



Soldiers from 19th Regiment Royal Artillery (The Highland Gunners) Homecoming Parade in Dundee

Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC



Soldiers from 3/215 Brigade of the Afghan National Army and 15COTS on board an RAF Chinook helicopter during Op Tuufan

Picture: Corporal Dek Traylor (RAF)



A soldier from 16 Signal Regiment working alongside the Afghan Uniformed Police to deliver essential aid

Picture: Corporal Dek Traylor (RAF)



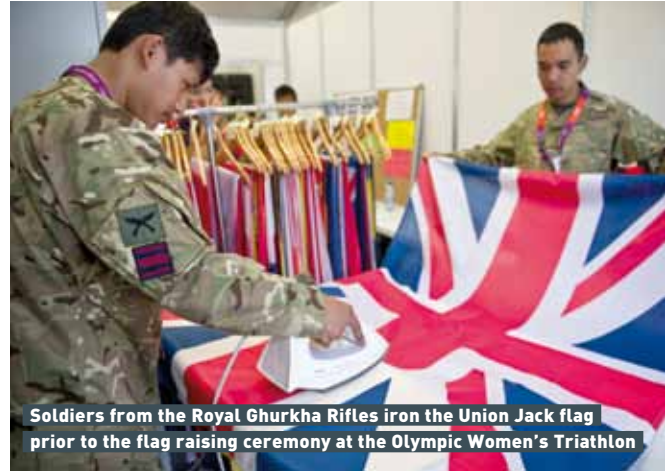
Local contractors working on a building close to Patrol Base Pimon to house 100 soldiers from the Afghan National Army

Picture: Sergeant Adrian Harlen



Her Majesty The Queen visits soldiers from the Household Cavalry Regiment and the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment

Picture: Sergeant Alison Baskerville RLC



Soldiers from the Royal Gurkha Rifles iron the Union Jack flag prior to the flag raising ceremony at the Olympic Women's Triathlon

Picture: Sergeant Jez Doak



Hundreds of wreaths around the Cenotaph during Remembrance Sunday

Picture: Harland Quarrington



The Household Cavalry support Claire Lomas as she finishes the London Marathon



NIGHT OF MILITARY

HEROES

THE WORK OF THE ARMED FORCES WAS HONoured AT THE FIFTH SUN MILITARY AWARDS (THE MILLIES) REPORTS LORRAINE MCBRIDE

Billed as a 'Night of Heroes', royalty, top politicians, and stars of showbusiness and sport turned out at the annual Military Awards. But the real stars, in the glittering ceremony held at London's Imperial War Museum, were the military heroes whose bravery, professionalism and courage were being celebrated.

Guest of honour His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales presented the Most Outstanding Soldier Award to Corporal Sean Jones MC who led a bayonet charge against the Taliban after his platoon was ambushed in Nahr-e Saraj.

As the father of Britain's most famous Servicemen, the Prince said he shared the worry of all Service families when their

loved ones are on operations. Paying tribute to the military, he said: "When you think of what they're doing, it's remarkable."

And there were certainly enough remarkable stories to go round. Captain Simon Maxwell Royal Marines got a standing ovation after receiving the Overcoming Adversity Award from comic Ricky Gervais. The young officer completed a gruelling Iron Man race less than a year after losing a leg in a Taliban bombing.

"I know every winner says they're surprised but it's true. It's mega to be appreciated and even better for my comedy hero to present this. It's just unbelievable."

Before the ceremony, the officer



Shock and awe: Corporal Sean Jones receives his award from the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall



Royal approval: the Duchess with Flight Sergeant Nick Herring, Master Aircrew Paul Couchman, Squadron Leader Catriona Thompson, Corporal Dan Stubbing, Squadron Leader Gareth Taylor and Group Captain Steve Lushington



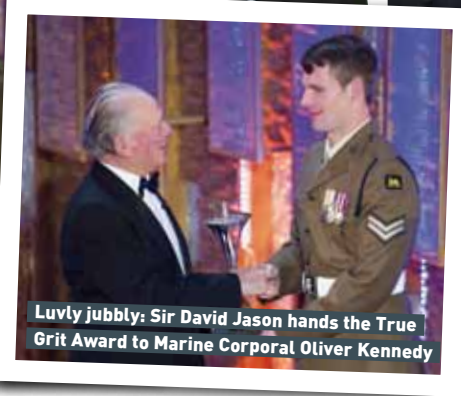
All smiles: Captain Simon Maxwell with Ricky Gervais and grandfather David Maxwell



Queen Vic: Victoria Pendleton with nominee Katherine Pink (Best Reservist) from HMS King Alfred



Great Dame: Lance Corporal Hayley Ridgeway with Dame Helen Mirren



Lovly jubbly: Sir David Jason hands the True Grit Award to Marine Corporal Oliver Kennedy



Top Reservist: Private Simon Sunderland and Jeremy Clarkson

approached The Office star and told him he was a big fan. Gervais said: "Simon didn't know anything about the award but I knew him [having seen his video] so I had to pretend that I didn't know who he was."

In total, 11 categories marked the achievements of military personnel. Best Reservist Award went to Private Simon Sunderland. In his day job, factory worker Private Sunderland makes diesel engines but he risked his life in Afghanistan detecting bombs.

"What a great story," said Top Gear presenter Jeremy Clarkson, who gave Private Sunderland his gong. "Simon does a decent day's work up in the north east,

toddles off to Afghanistan three times fighting for his country and comes back. His backbone is exactly what makes this country so fantastic."

One of the most moving moments was when Dame Helen Mirren presented the Lifesaver Award to Lance Corporal Hayley Ridgeway who received serious injuries but refused treatment so she could give others life saving first aid after her patrol was caught in a Taliban roadside bomb blast.

Dame Helen said: "I'm old enough to remember when women weren't allowed to serve because they were thought to be too emotional and couldn't hold it together under pressure. It means so much to me

to see Hayley do it for the girls as much as anything and her unit and country."

Olympian Victoria Pendleton presented the Judges' Special Recognition Awards for the military contribution of soldiers, sailors and airmen during Op Olympics.

Victoria said: "Everyone I've met has been incredible; individuals who've achieved so much.

"I feel in awe because all I did was ride round in circles on a wooden track with a bike with no brakes and one gear and this is real life.

"I can't not be moved and it makes me feel very proud to be British." **DP**



BOSNIA

I was there with 27 Squadron and there wasn't a high threat at that time.

The main valley towards Sarajevo had a lot of high-tension electricity wires across it. Wires are always a bad thing for helicopters and more crash by hitting them than just about anything else. The valley sides were so steep, the wires were quite a way up them and the cloud was so low we couldn't fly over the top.

The crew started talking about the wires in front and I had seen a set, but there were plenty all around.

At the last minute my captain told me to pull up because straight ahead there was yet another set that I hadn't seen. We got over it but it felt very close.



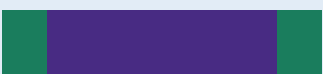
KOSOVO

I was still a co-pilot and we launched from Odiham on the Monday as a pair of aircraft.

We had a brief stop over in Rome after we discovered we needed a replacement part on the Chinook, before flying on to Skopje Airport in Macedonia.

We spent the next few days, while everything ramped up, sleeping in the aircraft and working 18-hour days. We went in with six Pumas, eight Chinooks and a Lynx.

We finally crossed the border into Kosovo about three days after we arrived, and our role was to drop pathfinders in, first along the Kacanik Valley, and then going back and putting troops in position.



NORTHERN IRELAND

At the end of 1999 and into 2000 we were there on standby for the marching season, in case things kicked off.

At the time, those in



MY MEDALS

After a year in the Royal Marines, Squadron Leader Jason Davenhill swapped his Service to the Royal Air Force in 1993 which led him to a career as a Chinook pilot and a collection of colourful experiences. Interview: Leigh Hamilton

power were trying to lower the military profile so as not to inflame the situation.

At every opportunity they were trying to send troops by road rather than in helicopters.

We happened to be there while the foot and mouth outbreak was going on and I was sent back to mainland Britain in the Chinook to pick up two tonnes of Wellington boots and bring them back into the centre of Belfast.



SIERRA LEONE

Having been with the Marines for a year, I was involved in Exercise Brightstar in 1999 on HMS *Ocean*.

We were tasked to do another exercise with HMS *Ocean* in 2000 when Sierra Leone kicked off.

We were supposed to meet *Ocean* in Marseille but at the last minute we were told to change our route for Senegal.

We loaded two aircraft and once we got to Senegal we were immediately told to go to Freetown in Sierra Leone.

One day we'd been told that the enemy were approaching so we spent that evening as the sun went down sitting on a veranda with rifles out thinking we were in a John Wayne film. Luckily they didn't come.

Our role there was taking troops to their landing sites, resupplying them and then bringing them back.



IRAQ

In 2003 I had to go to Iraq and flew to HMS *Ark Royal* and we sailed through the Suez Canal.

We were working really hard and trained at extreme low level over the sea and worked our skills up hugely.

It was really interesting working with the Navy. We had five aircraft on board alongside four of their Sea Kings.

We were preparing to go and do the inserts of the Royal Marines in the Al Faw Peninsula. It was nice to be back at sea what with my experience with the Marines, but the day before it kicked off I had to rush back to the UK for a family emergency.

So I was at home when everything started and had to watch it all on TV. Because I wasn't there between the right dates, I didn't get the clasp for my Iraq medal.



AFGHANISTAN

I went out in April 2006 as a captain and Bastion was only just being built at the time. We were resupplying troops in forward operating bases as well as training and working ourselves up. Most of the time we were delivering people and equipment to different sites.

The scary bit is the night before when you're thinking 'right, I've got to go and do this job here'.

We did get shot at a few times, but unless your aircraft gets hit, you don't really notice.

As a pilot, what is really scary there is landing. If it's at all dusty, particularly through night-vision goggles, the sand blows up and you can lose all sight of what is going on.

There's a very brief moment when you all your references vanish, and then, hopefully, you feel the back wheels go on and then you put the front wheels down and everything clears and you think 'phew, I'm alive'.

IN A DARK PLACE

LACK ENERGY, OOMPH AND DRIVE? YOU MAY BE SUFFERING FROM SAD WRITES NICK IMM



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

Hello from Whale Island in Portsmouth where, after work, I'm busy rehearsing for Scrooge – our panto!

Does the summer seem a distant memory? Got the winter blues? It's reckoned that one in 20 of us suffer with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This is when reduced exposure to sunlight leads to symptoms of depression, lack of energy, poor concentration and disturbed sleep. It only affects people who live where there is a big change in daylight hours with the seasons.

So, if you're currently working somewhere nearer the equator you're unlikely to be affected. The treatment is simply to increase your exposure to sunlight.

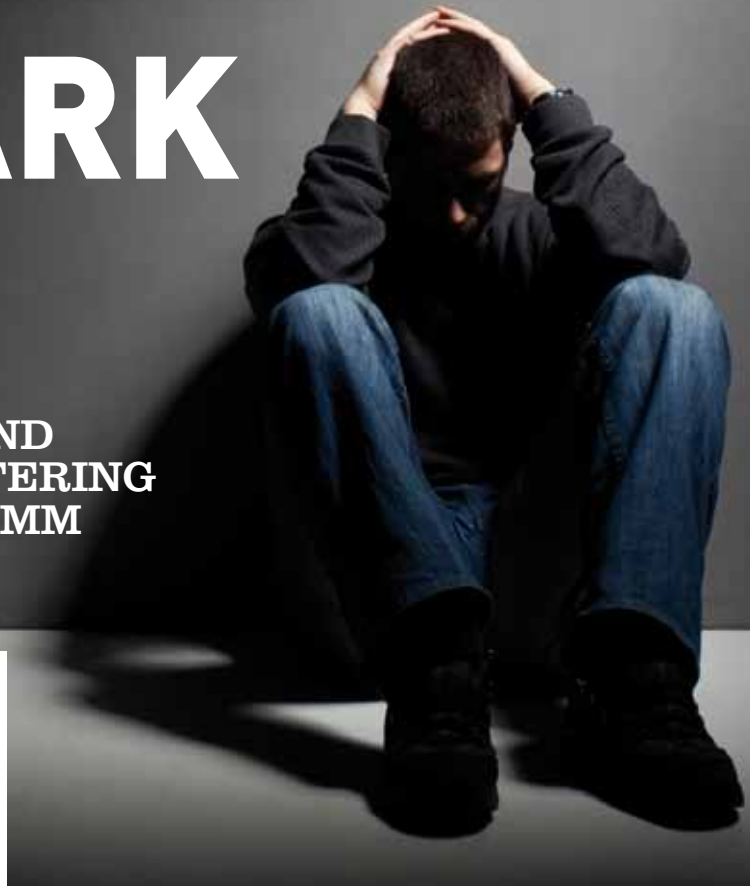
Some people get benefit from special lamps that emit the same type of light as from the sun. If you're feeling low and can't explain it, have a chat with your GP.

In the summer, it's fun to be outside, cycling to work or jogging in the park. It's less pleasurable in the dark and cold, so it isn't surprising that most of us do less exercise in the winter. It's well known that exercise releases those feel-good endorphins so don't give up. Instead, adapt your routine. Don't fancy jogging? Why not take up squash or salsa?

Keeping to a sensible diet over Christmas can be incredibly difficult, what with all the work parties, family meals and drinks out with friends. We end up consuming far more calories than we need and drinking alcohol more often than usual. Of course, it's important to socialise but do try to keep some days alcohol-free and avoid constantly nibbling between meals. Be strong, resist at least some temptations and you'll be happier in the New Year when you don't have to diet.

Christmas deals in my local supermarket started in mid-October! There's huge pressure to overspend so stick to a budget and you'll avoid a lot of stress in 2013.

Although it's a myth that suicides increase at



Christmas, some people will spend a lonely few days. If you're dreading the holiday season because you're on duty or alone, speak to someone. You'd be surprised how many others feel the same. Plan to meet up with a friend or treat yourself. This is the time of year to look after your oppo or neighbour – just inviting them round for coffee can make a big difference to how they feel.

So make the most of the festive season – stay healthy, get some sunlight, keep exercising, eat, drink and spend in moderation, and enjoy spending time with friends or family.

Have a great Christmas and I'll see you in 2013.

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

FORCESLOANS

- ✓ CASH loans available now
- ✓ Fast payout direct into your account
- ✓ We aim for 100% customer satisfaction
- ✓ Immediate decisions
- ✓ Written quotations always given
- ✓ Consumer Credit license 521069
- ✓ Designed exclusively for Military personnel
- ✓ Call FREE now on:

UK/ IRL: 0800 619 2274 | From abroad: +44 208 922 5258

www.forcesloans.co.uk Access code: MIL

SUDOKU

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

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

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

Solution to the November 2012 puzzle

CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

As I write this (in November) I am preparing to play a 24-hour, marathon chess session for a charitable cause. I will be playing at least six scheduled

opponents and hopefully members of the public too. Now I am not getting any younger, nearing the big 50 as I am, but my appetite and energy for the game remain undiminished by the ravages of time. I am as keen to set up the pieces as I was as a 12-year-old just learning the game. It continues to give me great joy and also dumps me on my backside at times. It introduces me to new people even if they are pugilists attempting to beat me over the board.

Chess really is a sea in which an elephant may bathe and a gnat may drink. I have played for decades yet have still only explored the tip of a mammoth iceberg.

Chess continues to teach me much about life, how to plan for victory and how to be magnanimous when that occurs. Also it shows me how to deal with loss, and how to carry on when all seems lost.

More than anything it continues to give great pleasure to millions, including



readers of this column for which I am grateful. I offer Yuletide greetings to you all.

The following position (Panfilov-Novochenin USSR 1975) demonstrates the attraction of chess. Though material down it is white to move and win the game. Take your time in front of a roaring Yule fire to mull over the solution.

Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please. A recent copy of CHESS Magazine awaits the winner.

The answer to November's problem is: 1...Rxe4+! 2. Kxe4 Bf5+ wins the rook. The winner will be announced next issue. Winner of October's problem was Alan Pickles from MOD Donnington.

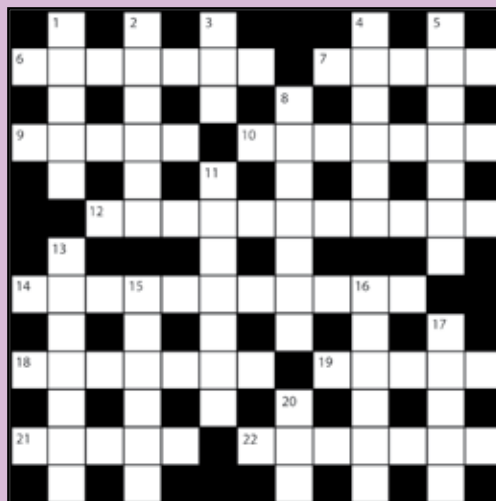
TOPICAL CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 6. See 1 Down
- 7. Pieces of furniture for school pupils (5)
- 9. Name of the superstorm which hit the USA and Canada in October (5)
- 10. Moment when a spacecraft leaves the launch pad (4-3)
- 12. Climbing plant with flowers that smell sweet (11)
- 14. One of the actors who played James Bond before Daniel Craig (4,7)
- 18. Winner of 2012 US PGA Championship and the world's number one golfer (7)
- 19. Actress who won an Emmy in 2012 for her portrayal of Violet, Dowager Countess of Grantham in Downton Abbey (5)
- 21. Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were members of this royal dynasty (5)
- 22. See 1 Down

DOWN

- 1. And 6 and 22 Across. John Whaite was the winner of the 2012 series of this



- television programme (5,7,4,3)
- 2. Artist's workplace (6)
- 3. Snake which killed Cleopatra (3)
- 4. Scottish team which was in Barcelona's group in this season's Champions League (6)
- 5. 2012 James Bond movie in which Javier Bardem plays the villain, Raoul Silva (7)
- 8. Disagreement shown by footballers towards the referee's decision (7)

- 11. Container which releases an air spray (7)
- 13. Spicy sauce made from tomatoes and vinegar (7)
- 15. Admiral killed at the Battle of Trafalgar (6)
- 16. Barack Obama's 2012 US presidential opponent (6)
- 17. Dead body (5)
- 20. Ruby, the American comedian (3)

SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- 1. Great 2. Studio 3. Asp
- 4. Celtic 5. Skyfall 8. Dissent
- 11. Aerosol 13. Ketchup
- 15. Nelson 16. Romney
- 17. Stiff 20. Wax
- 6. British 7. Desks
- 9. Sandy 10. Lift-off
- 12. Honeysuckle
- 14. Sean Connery
- 18. McIlroy 19. Smith
- 21. Tudor 22. Bake Off

BEST FOOT FORWARD



One lucky reader will win a pair of Salomon Quest 4D GTX boots worth £155.

Using the best Salomon construction techniques combined with trail running inspired design, Salomon has developed the next generation trekking boot with superlative comfort and fit.

The 4D chassis consists of four layers which give a double dose of dynamic cushioning, along with stability and traction. Waterproof nubuck leather on the upper plus a Gore-Tex performance comfort membrane fend off water, while rubber heel and toe caps protect the foot. Salomon's Contagrip outsole makes them grip on varied terrain. This is a superb lightweight boot for trekking.

Visit www.salomon.com

OFFER

Salomon Quest 4D GTX boots worth £155 are up for grabs this month for one lucky winner

TO WIN

Email your name, address, phone number and shoe size to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by 17 January. Include the phrase Salomon boot in the subject line.

IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST ACTION!

One *Defence Focus* reader will win the newest Suunto Ambit watch worth £400. The watch is billed as the GPS for explorers. Whether you're a trail runner, mountain climber, mountain biker, hiker or skier, it has everything an outdoor enthusiast could desire; heart rate function, barometer for weather checks, navigation aid, and a GPS for location and an accurate trace.

You can download routes online or input your own waypoints from your computer. Then out on the trails you'll be able to see your route in real time, including your start point, position and, more importantly, the route ahead. Providing location displays in local grid references lets you pinpoint

where you are on your map.

The watch comes in black and silver finishes and is water resistant up to 100m. With a battery life of 15 hours in full exercise mode, you can go out for a long day's activity before having to recharge – the watch if not yourself!

For more information visit www.suunto.com

TO WIN

Email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by 17 January. Include Suunto watch in the subject line.



PRIZE

Win a Suunto Ambit GPS watch worth £400. Perfect for the outdoor sports enthusiast

Raising to Distinction



Queen Victoria School

**Admissions Deadline
Tues 15 Jan 2013**

Queen Victoria School in Dunblane is a co-educational boarding school for children of Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, have served in Scotland or are part of a Scottish regiment.

The QVS experience encourages and develops well-rounded, confident individuals in an environment of stability and continuity.

The main entry point is into Primary 7 and all places are fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence.

Families are welcome to find out more by contacting Admissions on **+44 (0) 131 310 2927** to arrange a visit.

Queen Victoria School
Dunblane Perthshire
FK15 0JY

www.qvs.org.uk



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE