

OLYMPIC YEAR: HOW THE FORCES WILL SUPPORT THE GAMES

Defence**Focus**

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CHAT WITH THE CHIEFS

The biggest challenges for 2012

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NAVIGATOR



Regulars

P5 IN MEMORIAM

Tributes to the fallen

P19 MY MEDALS

Sergeant Steve Hughes looks back

P28 HEALTH

Living with asthma



P16 DEFENCE INQUEST UNIT

Helping out the coroners

P20 PODIUM

A new approach to procurement

P22 SHOW TIME

Injured troops take to the stage

P31 READERS OFFER

Learn to dive in London



Features

P6 FORCES ON FLICKR

Images from the Defence Image Database

P8 THREE OF A KIND

Service Chiefs on the challenges for 2012

P12 DARING-DO

HMS *Daring* embarks on maiden voyage



EDITOR'S NOTE

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DANNY CHAPMAN

So where were we? It seems like quite a while since I was writing an editorial for the December/Jan edition of this magazine. And for those of you who have been pining for the next edition I can only apologise that it has taken us a while to get this issue to you.

What's new? Let's go straight to the interviews we have conducted with the three Service Chiefs and see what they say about the biggest challenges for each of their Services in 2012.

We asked them what new kit they were looking forward to seeing this year. And 2012, despite the budget problems we are regularly reminded of, sees each Service getting quite a few goodies, including the culmination of the Type 45 programme. So we've annotated a photo of HMS *Daring*, highlighting the ship's key capabilities.

Of course, the main challenge for Defence this year is still operations, with the combat mission in Afghanistan set to continue until the end of 2014. Over coming

issues we intend to keep you updated with progress there (don't forget to look at the MOD website and intranet where we publish daily stories on UK activity in Afghanistan).

2012 sees a new operation forming a key priority for UK Defence on home ground – Op Olympics – and we've set out what defence capabilities will be involved.

We also expect a few Service personnel to be competing in the Games (I guess us civvies just don't have the fighting spirit required – especially here at *Defence Focus* where the most taxing exercise is a brisk walk to the canteen). We plan to bring you some interviews in future editions with our Olympic hopefuls.

And finally, I'd just like to mention our new Flickr favourites page where we feature the most popular defence images published on the social media image website, along with some comments from users of the site. If you are wondering what the comment "congrats on being explored!" means, as was I, then I think it is a sign that you are simply behind the times and you had better log on to Flickr right now!

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IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS – 6 DECEMBER 2011 TO 10 FEBRUARY 2012



Sapper Elijah Bond

Sapper Elijah Bond from 35 Engineer Regiment died in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham on Thursday

8 December 2011 from wounds sustained during an improvised explosive device blast when he was helping to conduct an engineer reconnaissance task in

Nahr-e Saraj.

Aged 24, from St Austell, he leaves behind his mother Lizz, father Mark, sisters Kimberley and Bethany, and brothers Isaac and Jose.



Captain Tom Jennings

Captain Tom Jennings, Royal Marines, was killed in Afghanistan on Thursday 22 December 2011 when the

vehicle he was travelling in was caught in an explosion while on an operation south of Kabul.

It was the same vehicle that Squadron Leader Anthony Downing had been travelling in.

Captain Jennings was a true leader, selfless in his professional approach and dedicated and humble.

He leaves behind a wife and two young sons.



Squadron Leader Anthony Downing

Squadron Leader Anthony Downing, RAF, died at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Birmingham on Friday 23 December 2011 from wounds sustained in the same incident in Afghanistan that resulted in Captain Jennings' death.

Squadron Leader Downing

had a modest demeanour that belied a hugely professional and determined individual.

Aged 34, from Kent, he leaves behind his parents, a brother and a girlfriend.



Private John King

Private John King, from 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan on Friday

30 December 2011 by an improvised explosive device while clearing a village of insurgents during a foot patrol with Afghan National Security Forces in the Nahr-e

Saraj district of Helmand.

Aged 19, from Darlington, he leaves behind his mother Karen, father Barry, brothers Ian and Stephen, and girlfriend Kelly.



Rifleman Sachin Limbu

Rifleman Sachin Limbu, from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, died in the

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham on Monday 2 January 2012 from wounds sustained in an improvised explosive device blast during an operation to enable locals'

freedom of movement and deter insurgent activity in Helmand in June 2010.

Aged 23, from Rajghat, Morang, in Nepal, he leaves behind his mother and father.



Signaller Ian Gerard Sartorius-Jones

Signaller Ian Gerard Sartorius-Jones, from 20th Armoured Brigade

Headquarters and Signal Squadron (200), was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 24 January 2012 at Forward Operating Base Khar Nikah in the Nahr-e Saraj district of

Helmand province.

Aged 21, from Runcorn, Cheshire, he leaves behind his wife Kellyanne, young son Dylan, parents Robert and Amanda, and brother Alan.



Lance Corporal Gajbahadur Gurung

Lance Corporal Gajbahadur Gurung from the Royal Gurkha Rifles, serving with

1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, died on Friday 27 January 2012 from a gunshot wound while on a foot patrol in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province.

Aged 26, from Majthana, Nepal, he leaves behind his wife Manisha, father Gum Bahadur, mother Lekh Maya, his brother Buddha, and sister Junu.

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PICTURES FROM THE DEFENCE IMAGERY WEBSITE ARE SHOWCASED ON FLICKR WHERE USERS CAN LEAVE COMMENTS. HERE ARE SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR IMAGES

HIDE AND SEEK

A search dog trained to sniff out explosives is pictured with his handler patrolling through fields in Helmand province.

Military working dogs are on the ground daily in Afghanistan providing security at operating bases and helping with the detection of improvised explosive devices, allowing troops the freedom of movement to conduct counter-insurgency operations.

COMMENTS

- **thurrockdave**
Superb shot by Sgt Frere - the silhouette of the soldier really puts the dog in context.
- **Lady Nessa**
Precious! Keep safe.
- **RicHep**
Wonderful wonderful shot. Love it.

1513 VIEWS

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson



TARGET PRACTICE

As HMS *St Albans* made its passage en route to Kuwait, the ship took part in a Passex (passage exercise) with Kuwaiti forces.

Pictured here is a Kuwaiti F-18 Hornet fighter aircraft staging an attack on the Type 23 frigate HMS *St Albans* as a member of the ship's protection force trains a mini-gun on the fast-moving target.

HMS *St Albans* was deployed to the Middle East for six months in the

second half of 2011, carrying out counter-terrorism, anti-narcotics and anti-piracy operations.

COMMENTS

■ **Blueiscoool**
Very nice work - congrats on being explored!

1403 VIEWS

DOWN WASH

An RAF Chinook departs after transporting members of the Afghan Uniform Police to a joint operation in Helmand, Afghanistan, with soldiers from A Company, 1st Battalion The Rifles.

The UK and Afghan troops came under heavy fire during the operation which took place in August 2011. It resulted in the Afghan police seizing explosive materials from a compound.

COMMENTS

■ **tony.house61**
Great POV on this, nice work...

1253 VIEWS

Picture: Sergeant Alison Baskerville RLC



Picture: Sgt Martin Downs RAF

SHARPSHOOTER

A British soldier with his sniper rifle on board a Merlin helicopter en route to Camp Shawqat, Nad 'Ali.

The L115A3 rifle is a large calibre weapon has state-of-the-art telescopic day-and-night all-weather sights.

1552 VIEWS



Picture: Cpl Kryssy Lees

SABRE-RATTLING

A Royal Air Force officer cadet salutes with a ceremonial sword. This image was a runner up in the RAF Photographic Competition 2011.

1639 VIEWS

THE BIG THREE

WITH THE YEAR WELL UNDERWAY WE ASKED THE HEADS OF THE THREE SERVICES WHAT THE BIG ISSUES ARE FOR 2012



FIRST SEA LORD
ADMIRAL SIR MARK STANHOPE



CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF
GENERAL SIR PETER WALL



CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR
STEPHEN DALTON

DF: 2012 will see continuing operations in Afghanistan and unrest in the Middle East. What is the biggest challenge for your Service this year?

1SL: The biggest challenge in our uncertain world will be generating sufficient force elements to meet any emerging events beyond our existing commitments and support to the Olympics. With the resourcefulness of my people, I'm sure we'll achieve it, but it will be far from easy because the Royal Navy has been, and still is, running hot – much like the other Services. Those units not deployed are preparing for forthcoming taskings such as counter-terrorism and counter-piracy deployments across the Middle East region. And units are reconfiguring from previous commitments, such as 3 Commando Brigade, which following its recent very successful tour in Helmand, is now focused on standing up as the Lead Commando Group from April as part of the Response Force Task Group.

CGS: Sustaining the operation in Afghanistan remains Defence's Main Effort and will continue to be the Army's biggest challenge. 2012 is a vital year in the development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and will see a significant increase in the number of Afghan-led operations and the transition to the ANSF of the lead for security in large areas of the country.

CAS: The RAF remains focused on delivering success in Afghanistan. Significant progress has enabled the Afghan people to take increasing control of their

own lives but the operational environment remains challenging. RAF Chinook and Merlin helicopter crews continue to provide lifelines to troops on the ground, while their skill and commitment remain vital to many discrete operations mounted against insurgents and their supply lines. And the Combat ISTAR aircraft – Sentinel, Tornado and Reaper – fly daily above Afghanistan providing invaluable information on which success on the ground depends, across the whole country. Last year, the RAF delivered operational success over Libya, in humanitarian support operations around the world, and by providing routine air defence for the Falkland Islands. Some of these tasks will continue and new ones will emerge; our challenge is to meet these commitments as well as the essential support to the Olympics while managing the Service reorganisation to meet the needs of Defence in 2020 and beyond.

DF: What are you are hoping to do for your Service this year?

1SL: I want to end as much of the uncertainty, associated with huge change across all areas and at all levels, as swiftly as possible. Taking the right decisions, in terms of organisational structures and processes, quickly is vital if our people are to play their part fully in delivering the maritime element of Future Force 2020.

CGS: I would like to secure the best terms and conditions of service for all our personnel and protect their pay and allowance packages where

possible. I also want to ensure greater opportunity for our soldiers and stability for our families.

CAS: I will continue to strive to set out the requirements on the Service clearly and candidly and provide people at the heart of it with the opportunity to use their commitment, skills and initiative to deliver the best outcome they can within the resources available. I will also ensure that the impact of the operational commitment on RAF people is recognised and appreciated throughout the country.

DF: How is the British economic crisis affecting your Service and what are your plans to mitigate it?

1SL: Clearly the UK's economic situation is a concern and Defence must do its bit to address this priority issue. The Strategic Defence and Security Review made some bold decisions and we continue to refine plans to match ambition with resources. It is too early to say how further refinement of these plans will affect the Royal Navy, but I'm heartened by a strong forward equipment programme that will deliver the new capabilities we'll need in the future. I firmly believe that the devolved authority, responsibility and accountability given to the single Services will go a long way to giving me the ability to more effectively manage the Royal Navy's outputs.

CGS: I think the Secretary of State put it very accurately in his speech in Washington (in December) when he said '...today the debt crisis should be considered the greatest strategic threat to the future security of our nations'. The reductions in the UK Defence Budget have already had a significant impact on the Army; we are reducing Regular Army manpower by 20,000 and have seen the Army equipment budget under further pressure. In Army 2020, we have a generational opportunity to redesign the Army to be relevant, agile and effective, drawing on the lessons of recent campaigns.

CAS: It inevitably has a significant impact but, without a strong economy, no country can provide all the services that it wants or needs. The commitment and bravery shown by our airmen and women and the cost of modern technology needed to fight now and in the coming decades require investment proportionate to operational tasks.

DF: In terms of kit, what do you most look forward to seeing trialled and introduced in 2012?

1SL: 2012 will see the culmination of the Type 45 shipbuilding programme, the introduction of Lynx Wildcat and ASW (anti-submarine warfare) Merlin, along with training Royal Naval personnel on the Support Helicopter variant of Merlin, and the conclusion of *Astute's* first of class trials programme. By any measure, that makes 2012 an exciting prospect.

CGS: This year will see the Watchkeeper Tactical Unmanned Air System programme enter service,

and we will also take on additional Foxhound vehicles and Falcon communications equipment. All three of these are destined for Afghanistan almost as soon as they are off the production line. The Warrior upgrade programme will also get fully underway this year which is very welcome, and we will further the development of our future Scout vehicle which is critical to the Army's future inventory.

CAS: The first Voyager Strategic Air Transport and Air-to-Air Refuelling (AAR) aircraft's arrival in spring will provide state-of-the-art global military transport as well as AAR to support the deployment of other RAF and allies' aircraft. We'll also see the maturing of the Chinook Mk4 and Puma 2 which will both provide essential tactical airlift on operations. The Typhoon force will continue to grow to give the UK military capability of which it can be proud.

DF: What is morale looking like among your personnel this year?

1SL: Morale is understandably fragile: job security, pay, pensions, allowances and harmony levels among others are being challenged. But my sense is that, with a much smaller than previously envisaged final full tranche of redundancy underway, sailors and marines can quickly begin to focus on their future careers in the Royal Navy in which they can feel that they are making a positive difference to maintaining our country's prosperity and security.

CGS: In the circumstances pretty good. The Army has been pounding hard on enduring operations for a decade and the next decade looks no less challenging. My sense of morale is that it is reasonably resilient, especially considering the pressure that redundancy is imposing on our people. I take some comfort from the fact that we always surprise ourselves in adversity.

CAS: Morale is a very perishable but essential factor in any Service; so it is vital that commanders pay constant attention to meet the needs of and inspire motivation in their people. Success on recent operations, particularly in Libya, has meant that morale among the deployed RAF remains high. However, I am conscious that back home, other factors play more heavily on even the most committed of minds. Consequently, I and my Air Force Board colleagues will continue to do all we can to secure what is needed to demonstrate that we value our people's loyalty and service.

DF: How much are you looking forward to the Olympics?

1SL: Very much, especially sailing! And the Royal Navy looks forward, with immense pride, to ensuring the security of the Games

CGS: Ever hopeful, I'm still training hard...

CAS: They will be a great opportunity for our sportsmen and women to show what they can achieve. **DF**

TROOPS ROYAL JUBILEE PARADE

ARMED FORCES TO MOUNT SPECTACULAR TRIBUTE TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN FOR THE DIAMOND JUBILEE



Diamonds are forever: HM The Queen presents medals to members of 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh

Picture: Chris Barker

In honour of the Queen's 60-year-reign, the Armed Forces will mount a special parade and muster at Windsor on Saturday, 19 May.


Nearly 2,500 troops from the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force will parade through Windsor Castle and town in the presence of Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh. They will then muster in the Castle grounds for a unique event before an audience of more than 3,000 Armed Forces personnel, their families, and veterans.

An impressive, tri-Service flypast of current and historic aircraft will conclude the celebrations.

Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir David Richards, said: "Her Majesty The Queen's support and encouragement over the years has created a very special bond between our monarch and her forces. That link is felt by all those who have the privilege to wear Her Majesty's uniform both in the UK and on many varied operations overseas.

"The parade and muster will truly be a day to remember. It is an opportunity to highlight the unique relationship the Queen has with the men and women of the Armed Forces and the role she fills in our lives."

The custom of the Armed Forces paying tribute to the monarch during a jubilee year is an established tradition. Similar celebrations were held for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the Silver Jubilee of King George V, and the Silver and Golden Jubilees of the present Queen.

The parade and muster will be the first time all three Services have visited the Queen for a dedicated event, and will be broadcast by BBC Television. Further details, including information on those marching in the parade and the aircraft taking part in the flypast, will be released in due course. 

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



JOIE DE VIVRE!

A French sniper celebrates the top 'hit score' on Exercise Boars Head which saw soldiers from 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland train with French soldiers from the 8th Marine Infantry Parachute Regiment at Northumberland's Otterburn Training Area

A DARING DEPLOYMENT

THE LARGEST AND MOST POWERFUL DESTROYER EVER BUILT FOR THE ROYAL NAVY HAS EMBARKED ON HER MAIDEN DEPLOYMENT

HMS *Daring*, the first of six Type 45 destroyers to enter service, is currently sailing on her maiden operational deployment. Taking up taskings east of Suez to safeguard sea lanes and work with UK allies in the region, the state-of-the-art ship opens a new chapter in Navy capabilities.

Hailed by her Commanding Officer Captain Guy Robinson as 'staggeringly capable' the ship's key assets are her Sampson multi-function radar system and Sea Viper air defence missiles - it is said the ship can track and destroy a target the size of a cricket ball travelling at three times the speed of sound.

She sails on her maiden deployment with her 200-plus ship's company, bolstered by a specialist Royal Marines boarding team from the Fleet Protection Group. All those aboard are eager to show off what has been hailed as one of the most advanced warships in the world.

CAPABILITIES

- 1** Lynx HMA8/Merlin HM1 helicopter with Stingray torpedoes and Sea Skua missiles
- 2** Navigation radars
- 3** Long range radar with identification friend or foe interrogator
- 4** Communications mast
- 5** DLH offboard decoy system
- 6** 30mm automatic small calibre guns
- 7** Sampson multi-function radar
- 8** Electro-optical gunfire control system
- 9** DLF passive naval decoy system
- 10** Sea Viper Sylver surface-to-air vertical launch silos
- 11** 4.5 inch Mk8 Mod 1 Naval Gun
- 12** MFS-7000 bow sonar (under keel - not shown)
- 13** Phalanx close-in weapon system



SEA VIPER MISSILE

The Sea Viper can engage multiple targets simultaneously, meaning it is capable of defending the new Type 45 fleet and ships in their company

against multiple attacks from the most sophisticated aircraft or missiles approaching from any direction and at supersonic speeds.

Sea Viper uses state-of-the-art Sampson radar, allowing it to react to high-speed, very low-level, anti-ship missiles and track targets to a range of up to 400 kilometres. The Aster missiles are capable of speeds in excess of Mach four and are highly agile.



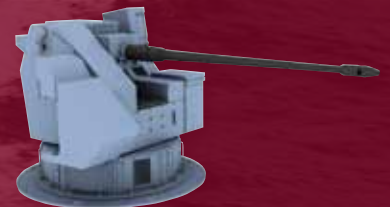


HELICOPTER

The Type 45 is designed to operate a Merlin HM1 or Lynx HMA 8 helicopter armed with Stingray anti-submarine torpedoes and Sea Skua anti-ship missiles. Her flight deck is large enough to land a twin-rotor Chinook to deliver or embark troops or stores.

SEA BOAT BAY

Deploying rigid-hulled inflatable fast boats allows the Type 45 to conduct a variety of patrol and boarding operations.



SMALL CALIBRE GUNS

MSI Defence Systems automatic 30mm naval guns, located port and starboard, feature the battle-proven Oerlikon KCB cannon that fires a variety of ammunition.

These guns receive commands from and issue tellbacks to the electro-optical gunfire control system and are employed to destroy close-in threats such as fast attack craft, speedboats and inflatables, or to engage helicopters or unmanned aerial vehicles at close range.



MEDIUM CALIBRE MAIN GUN

A BAE Systems 4.5 inch Mk8 Mod 1 naval gun mounting provides the Type 45 with an effective, battle-proven naval fire support/shore bombardment capability and a secondary role in support of anti-surface warfare operations. It receives commands from and issues tellbacks to an electro-optical gunfire control system.

Skies the limit: two RAF Hawk
T2 aircraft pictured during a flight
over North Wales

Picture: Cpl Paul Oldfield RAF



TAKING PILOTS FASTER AND FURTHER

IN A MOVE PREDICTED TO REVOLUTIONISE RAF FLYING
TRAINING, 4 (RESERVE) SQUADRON AT RAF VALLEY IS
ABOUT TO LAUNCH ITS NEW SYLLABUS

Through a combination of synthetic training and 28 Hawk T2 aircraft, the training syllabus which awaits the students who will begin the new course at RAF Valley in April is now considered to be world-leading.

"I've been to Australia and the USA and seen how they train fast jet pilots and in my view we've leapfrogged them," said Squadron Leader Rob Caine, Officer Commanding Staff Training and Standards.

"This is principally because of the Operational Capability 2 software in the jet which turns a very capable digital Hawk into a front line aircraft emulator, both air-to-air and air-to-ground."

Students come to the North Wales station straight from flying the Tucano at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

"On arrival each student is given a laptop and wherever they go on station they can plug it in and get whatever they need - briefings, debriefs, the flying programme, student study devices etc," explained Flight Lieutenant Stefan Brown, an instructor on 4 (Reserve) Squadron.

At Valley, during six weeks of ground school, students will progress using a variety of training aids, including a full-motion simulator, and practise everything they can expect to encounter in the air, before getting airborne. Thereafter, four or five flights are undertaken with an instructor before the first solo.

"The aim of the syllabus is to produce a multi-role single jet pilot and we can take pilots faster and further than ever before," explained Squadron Leader Caine.

"We are now able to train using the tactics and procedures of the front line here, including introductions into the classified planning aspects. As a result the standard [of graduating students] should be higher in terms of capability and readiness."

The advancement in capabilities of the new Hawk T2 enables students at RAF Valley to now receive training on air-air, close air support and other combat roles.

Externally, apart from an extended nose, the T2 looks little different from its T1 predecessor, but in the cockpit things are markedly different.

Three, full-colour, multi-function displays similar to those used by the Typhoon can be used to display navigation, weapon and systems information, and the aircraft's head-up display has been updated to use symbols

and data used in current combat aircraft.

Other changes include 'hands-on-throttle-and-stick' controls which are fully representative of front line combat aircraft types, and twin-mission computers hosting simulations of a wide range of sensor and weapon systems.

While the aircraft does not carry munitions-using software, an instructor is able to replicate most of the munitions in the RAF inventory and also pose threats.

"For example, for electronic warfare training I can input surface-to-air missile sites into the software," said Squadron Leader Caine. "The student pilot must react using the correct tactics and procedures to survive."

"We are also going further than anyone else in the world in training for Joint Strike Fighter. We've calculated that we'll save £200m over 25 years and produce a better product at the end."

Some 30 per cent of the civilian

ground crew who maintain the Hawk T2 fleet for Babcock Defence Services in a new purpose-built hangar are ex-regulars.

"The ex-military guys have the broad brush of engineering experience which is great value, particularly in developing the local workforce," said Jim Boyd, T2 Operations Manager.

These include Dave Shepherd, the T2 Department Manager who left the RAF as a rigger in 1994 having served at Cottesmore, Farnborough and in Germany.

"I've not been to a better place. We're working in a phenomenal aircraft," he said.

His views were echoed by another former RAF regular, Brian Chambers: "These are definitely the best facilities I've worked in. I never got to work on Typhoon and the T2 is the nearest I can get to it. Compared to the T1, the new aircraft is 100 per cent better. We like the jet." **DF**

“...we'll save £200m over 25 years”



Simulating the senses: students progress using a variety of training aids, including a full-motion simulator, and practise everything they can expect to encounter in the air before getting airborne

Picture: Cpl Paul Oldfield RAF



HELPING TO FIND THE ANSWERS

THE DEFENCE INQUEST UNIT'S SUPPORT TO CORONERS IS HELPING FAMILIES FIND THE FACTS WRITES IAN CARR

When the worst has happened, the death of a loved one, you need all the support you can get to help you cope, not just with the emotions but with the practicalities of death.

Sadly, until just a couple of years ago, while many of the welfare and

compassionate mechanisms were in place to support Service families who had lost a relative on operations, or on training, the quality of the inquest process was undoubtedly in need of improvement.

"Back in 2007/08, I think it would be fair to say that the MOD was struggling with how we handled inquests because there was

no focus," said Mike Venables, head of the award-winning Defence Inquest Unit.

"The families were dissatisfied by the service they were getting and by the way that inquests were working. Many didn't understand why we were having them or what they were for," said Venables.

As a response, the Army, for the



Picture: Sergeant Dan Harmer

Easing the way: some coroners were finding coping with a backlog of inquests difficult before the DIU

which were completely alien to them. Many didn't understand what they were dealing with, nor what a theatre of war was like.

"Some of the more inexperienced were dealing with operational incidents as if they had occurred on the local high street," said Colonel Clive Newell, who leads the DIU's team of military case officers. "Military families have a very good idea of what their sons, daughters, wives etc are doing; so to sit through an inquest with bizarre questions being asked of a witness by a coroner who wasn't situationally aware left a bad taste in their mouth."

So from the start it was clear that the DIU had to engage with coroners and offer to make their jobs easier by furnishing them with all the reports and information they needed for the case and help them gain as complete an understanding of the context of the incident as they could.

To make things easier still the case officers now help to identify and locate military witnesses.

At first this was not so straightforward. "Credibility was our biggest challenge. Coroners felt initially 'DIU – here we go, they're out to pull the wool over our eyes'," said Colonel Newell. "That was never the intention. They have realised over the years that we are completely transparent and we are as helpful as we can be, because

used on ops. We set up demos for them, mine clearance drills, let them experience the weight of the packs that troops carry, so if something like that should come up in a future case they could say 'right I've seen this before, I know something about this'," said Colonel Newell. The coroners found the experience so useful that it has now become an annual event.

DIU case officers also help coroners find their way through the weighty reports that once used to simply land on their desks with a thump. Case officers read through the Royal Military Police reports, Special Investigation Branch reports and witness statements before handing them on to the coroner. "We read through everything first and redact them for security – which is something that they do worry about so we explain that. Then there can be thirty or more witness statements for them to look through.

"We point them to what we see as the salient information and suggest who we see as the key witnesses who should be called to the inquest," said Colonel Newell. "We provide them with a Rolls-Royce service."

"And they don't always understand military hierarchy," said Lieutenant Colonel Freddie Kemp, Parachute Regiment. "We can explain the roles of the company, platoon and section commanders and say,

“ We want our families to have the best service ”

majority of the fatalities were soldiers, set up project Ajax to improve the situation. In 2008 it became tri-Service, and so the Defence Inquest Unit (DIU) was formed. "Our role," says Venables, "is to support bereaved families by making sure that the coroner is in the best place to do what is necessary. That means making sure they have everything they need and that the process is satisfactory and done in a timely fashion. An inquest, by its very nature, is never going to be a good experience, but it is the last formal stage, it's done publicly, and it's an opportunity for the families to ask any questions they want to ask."

The purpose of an inquest is for an independent coroner to establish the facts of what happened – who has died, when, where, and how did it happen. It is not about apportioning blame.

But one of the biggest problems that coroners faced was being able to establish exactly what had happened in situations

we want our families to have the very best level of service. If a soldier has been killed because of negligence, or lack of equipment, we would not be doing our job if we tried to sweep things under the carpet."

Strong relationships based on trust have been built up since those early days, and coroners who want any additional information, or an explanation of something they don't quite understand, don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call the case officers for help.

That additional information can involve arranging for a coroner to be shown how an SA80 rifle is cleaned, a flight in a particular type of helicopter, or a translation of military jargon.

To help coroners gain more of an understanding of the context of a theatre of operations, two years ago the DIU organised a familiarisation event for them at Warminster.

"We showed them the vehicles and kit

'with respect, this is the chap you need to speak to, he will be the one who had understanding of the threat, he will know about the planning of the operation, the availability of kit, how long the guys were on the ground – he is the bloke who will know'."

Being independent, the coroners can of course choose to disregard all this advice. But that rarely happens. David Ridley, coroner for Wiltshire and Swindon, said: "The DIU's focus on achieving the smooth running of the inquest process is exemplary. I know that the unit's involvement has been very well received by families and Service personnel witnesses alike, who often have to relive traumatic events in the alien environment of a court."

Providing support to the witnesses is a critical part of the unit's work. "It can be a hugely difficult experience for some witnesses," said Mike Venables. "They have to relive the death of a friend, and quite possibly they were injured in the same

incident. They may have spent six months in hospital because they were hit by shrapnel from the same explosion that killed their mate."

The DIU has produced a DVD explaining the role and purpose of inquests, and what will be expected of the witnesses. Case officers brief them: "But what we don't do is coach them. All we say is, 'you've got nothing to fear from this, all you have to do is tell the truth as you see it'. It can be a cleansing experience," said Venables.

Even though inquests are supposed to be anything but adversarial, a coroner's court can be daunting. To help establish a proper military context, and help witnesses feel more at ease, they are advised to attend wearing their Service dress rather than civilian clothing as they used to. Case officers also appear in uniform.

Before the unit came into being, MOD tended to be legally represented at inquests. "But we took the view that some families see that as intimidating," said Venables. "It looked as though the big bad ministry had turned up, so now, even if the families choose to have a barrister, we tend not to, we just send a case officer."

This not only helped to ease the tension at inquests, but has reduced legal representation costs by more than £1.3m. But the decision was not about saving costs insists Venables. If the case has complicated legal issues, or if there are particular security implications, the DIU will have legal representation.

"If it is a multiple incident, and if there are several families there who are legally represented, we might have a rep – if only as a bit of a buffer for the witnesses. It can be pretty intimidating for Private Snooks if he's facing two or three barristers."

Which all underlines the unit's open approach to inquests. Ask any member of the team and they will tell you categorically they are not there to get MOD off the hook.

"I have no difficulty whatsoever," said Mike Venables, "if an incident has happened and the Department has done something wrong, it is entirely right that the coroner should criticise us. And we will make sure they have the information necessary to do so on an informed and intelligent basis."

Once a coroner has concluded an inquest and reached a verdict, if he feels there is something that needs raising which might help prevent future deaths, he will write a report, known as a Rule 43, to the Secretary of State. Again the DIU can help.

"Rule 43 reports are really important," said Lieutenant Colonel Freddie Kemp.

"What we can do is let the coroner know of any improvements that have been made since the time of the death. We can refer him to any similar cases and say, these were the lessons learned, this is what happens now, this is the new kit – it can save his time and it can reflect to families that the death of their relative was not totally in vain."

Last year the DIU won the Operational Excellence Award at the annual Civil Service Awards. "It was a huge tribute to the guys," said Mike Venables. "The job they do really makes a difference. What they do matters and it was great to see them get recognition for that."

Talking to the team, you are left in no doubt that they find their work rewarding, even if, at times, it is distressing. "I like to think we've done a good job, but I can't call it satisfying – because it's such a sad job," said Colonel Clive Newell.

Lieutenant Colonel Kemp nods his

agreement: "You get the feeling that you have done your duty. Everyone has got as much out of it as they can. We've cut down the time that inquests were taking; we have helped the coroners to provide our families with a better service. That is satisfying." **DF**

DIU FACTS



■ Reducing the level of legal representation has saved more than £1.3m

■ 522 inquests have been completed since 2001. Last year the DIU worked on 95 inquests, 79 of which were operational

■ Overall, the DIU has responded to 32 coroners' reports; four in 2011 and eight in 2010. All were responded to within 56 days

■ The DIU team comprises seven civilians and five military staff

■ In 2011 the average time taken for an operational inquest was 12 months



Repatriation: a cortege leaves RAF Lyneham



NORTHERN IRELAND

Back in 1995, I was serving with the Air Reaction Force and if we wanted to chase someone in a vehicle, we'd fly out in low level helicopters, land in a field, jump out and run out into the road to stop the car. It was what you expect Special Forces to do and for a teenaged soldier it was brilliant.

My first foot patrol was on the night the ceasefire broke down after the IRA blew up Canary Wharf. Our Sergeant ran in shouting, "Get up – the ceasefire has broke down! We need to go on patrol."

We thought he was joking and fell asleep but when he came back screaming, we knew it was real. Throwing our kit on, we headed into a nasty area with a "Sniper at Work" sign out on the road.

It was 2am and there was a lot of movement from known suspects so we saturated the ground with troops, stopped cars and searched people, which we'd spent months training for. Suddenly, it was real, my first taste of a tour and I loved it.

KOSOVO

By 2008 I'd become a photographer and I deployed for six weeks with 2 RIFLES to cover any trouble in Kosovo.



Picture: Steve Hughes

MY MEDALS

Sergeant Steve Hughes joined the Army aged just 17 in 1995. Now a photographer, he looks back on his career. Interview: Lorraine McBride

We drove around the mountains filming and photographing soldiers, sending back the images to London on our portable satellite transmitting equipment. There was no evidence of any atrocities, which seemed strange. Armed riflemen drove around in armoured vehicles whereas we'd go down to the cafés in Pristina to meet the Sky News teams for a coffee.

Wherever we went, there

was a massive presence of NATO forces. We got a good reception everywhere. Kids came running out to say hello so we'd bring sweets but had to watch that they didn't slip under the wheels.

Photographically, it was a challenge with so little going on, but it gave me one of my famous images: a man with his arm raised in front of a "Stop" sign.

IRAQ

In 2009, I deployed as a cameraman to cover the closing down of Basra, which was special.

Our last foot patrol was with the RAF Regiment and we stood out in the oil fields by night, photographing silhouette shots against burning oil wells.

When I'm taking historically important photos, it's exciting, and it'll be like that when we finally pull out of Afghanistan. Everyone will want to cover it as it's so special.

AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, there were no typical days. We could be filming chefs in Bastion preparing 10,000 Christmas dinners, or be on an operation in the early hours with 2 PARA trying to cross a river in pitch black in silence before kicking in compound doors looking for the Taliban.

My outstanding memory is of Operation Panther's Claw, which was so kinetic. I was lying on my belt buckle and a guy was shot close to me. I heard the bullet flying over the top. I really wanted footage so I raised my arm; half expecting my hand and video camera to drop beside me as they got shot off. The air was thick with rounds bouncing off walls and soldiers screaming for medics but I still wanted to film everything.

ACCUMULATED CAMPAIGN SERVICE

You get this rare medal for 1,080 continuous days on tour, which equates to six separate six-month tours (*qualifying criteria changed in 2011*).

Luckily, I've also done many cool things like spending six years in the the Parachute Display Team, travelling the world jumping out of planes.

Once, I parachuted onto Larkhill Officers' Mess at the 'James Bond' summer ball in a tux and picked a lady from the crowd to hand her a box of Milk Tray – she blushed bright red!

LONG SERVICE

This is for 15 years' undetected crime, as they say. As a recruit, I'd have said, 'Oh that's miles away,' but time has flown.

My favourite job is photographing the Queen. It's surreal to be just metres away from such a famous woman. I find myself staring and wondering what she is thinking.



High five: Sergeant Hughes exiting a Twin Otter aircraft over Perris Valley drop zone in Riverside, California

Picture: Craig O'Brien



BUY WISE

THE UK GOVERNMENT'S NEW PLAN FOR DEFENCE AND INDUSTRY - A FRESH APPROACH TO PROCUREMENT? ASKS RUSI'S SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW JOHN LOUTH

On 1 February 2012, the UK Government published its long-awaited White Paper on Technology, Equipment and Support. It set out a vision intending to reform Britain's

fraught acquisition and procurement process, but the challenge will be at the implementation stage.

In a short review published on the Royal United Services Institute's (RUSI's) website, John Louth, Senior Research Fellow and Deputy Head, Defence, Industries and Society Programme, hints at supposed highlights from the Government's report, suggesting the areas that will be subject to rigorous analysis and debate as stakeholders strive to implement the White Paper.

BUYING THROUGH OPEN COMPETITION AND OFF-THE-SHELF

Industry is used to selling its equipment and competencies to government through open competition, so this is a well-understood and expected component of the White Paper. Also, the Government's preference for purchasing equipment off-the-shelf, where possible, had been widely trailed prior to the White Paper's release.

The suggestion in the document that government will intervene to protect notions of sovereign capability and technological advantage drawn from the UK's defence industrial base is welcomed, and potentially offers a counterweight to its preferred off-the-shelf policy. The test, of course, is how this policy stance is 'operationalised' in practice, especially if the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) is to be reformed to embrace some kind of strategic partner from the private sector.

EXPORTS

The Paper, unsurprisingly, champions defence and security exports, with this being one of the major 'takeaways' from Government's consultation with industry prior to the White Paper's release.

Again, it will be important to see how this policy preference is exercised by the Government, especially as the UK exported in excess of £12bn worth of defence and security goods and services in 2010, with all the economic benefits to the UK that this implies.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Government's commitment to maintaining the science and technology element of the annual defence budget at 1.2 per cent suggests a recognition of the importance of science and technology to innovation and future defence capabilities. How this fixed element plays into a balanced defence portfolio is yet to be seen.

SUPPORT TO SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

The Paper goes to great lengths to stress the importance of the UK's Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and their part in the country's defence and security effort.

Indeed, with more defence industry SMEs in this country than France, Germany, Spain and Italy combined, their economic significance is also critical to the Government's plans to reduce the budget deficit.

Policies to reduce bureaucracy combined with specific measures to engage more SMEs through the procurement process have been well received by industrialists, and the Government deserves some credit for focusing on this issue.

The test, easily measurable, is whether more SMEs are contracted by MOD over, say, the next few years to 2015. How this policy ambition sits with DE&S reform also forms part of the calculation.

CONCLUSION

The White Paper, in conclusion, provides a useful summary of Government's thinking towards defence and security industries and how capabilities can be nurtured, acquired and sustained. There is also a clear indication that Government has responded well to an extensive and lengthy consultation with industry for which all parties are to be congratulated.

What comes next though – a detailed, coherent implementation plan embracing policy reform, significant procedural changes and profound structural transformation to the procurement function? It is hard to see a blueprint for that anywhere, least of all within the White Paper.

RUSI will initiate detailed analysis of the White Paper through RUSI's Acquisition Focus Group in the forthcoming issue of RUSI Defence Systems, together with commentary from the staff of RUSI's Defence, Industries and Society research programme.

This article first appeared on www.rusi.org 

VITAL NUMBERS

THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE READY TO HELP YOU

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SSAFA Forces Help: Supports serving personnel, veterans and

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

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

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

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

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

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

Naval Personal & Family Service and Royal Marines Welfare

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



Second to Nunn: director Sir Trevor Nunn (centre) directs the actors in rehearsals

TROOPS

TAKE TO THE WEST END STAGE

A REMARKABLE GROUP OF WOUNDED, SICK AND INJURED SERVICE PERSONNEL HAVE JUST STARRED ON THE WEST END STAGE. REPORT BY LORRAINE MCBRIDE

A group of servicemen and women who have all suffered brutal or life-changing injuries while serving their country are back on the road to recovery and have been helped along the way by a project called the Bravo 22 Company.

The play, *The Two Worlds of Charlie F*, is based on a Service person's view of injury and recovery. It explores the consequences of both physical and psychological wounds, and the impact that the struggle to recover has on others.

Writer Owen Sheers interviewed each member of the newly-formed Bravo 22 Company, made up of wounded, sick and injured troops, and wrote his script by weaving in their personal experiences. The result is a darkly comic, authentic and richly uplifting tale of survival.

And what's more, most of the real life people the play is based on act the theatricalised characters themselves, while the others are involved in behind the scenes production.

One serviceman involved in the groundbreaking initiative is Marine Cassidy Little, aged 30, who serves with 42 Commando Royal Marines. He lost his lower right leg when he was caught in an improvised explosive device blast while on patrol in the Nad 'Ali district of Helmand province, Afghanistan, last summer.

In the aftermath of the bomb blast, Marine Little, despite his name a larger than life Canadian, told a young medic treating him, with gallows humour: "There goes my dancing years!"

About a month into his recuperation at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court, the Marine learned about the Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust and their first project to work with wounded military personnel.

Marine Little said: "I got involved because I thought it would be a distraction. If I focus on the fact that my whole life has changed, it's difficult. I've had setbacks here and there but they don't seem as drastic now I've got involved in this."

The Marine was instantly drawn to the Bravo 22 Company project because he has always had a lust for the stage. Talented and gregarious, he landed the star role of Charlie Fowler after pouring out his story to Owen Sheers.

The project aims to use acting to boost confidence and help the servicemen and women back on the road to recovery. About



a dozen Service personnel act in the play while others have designed the set, made costumes, and man the sound and lighting equipment and help backstage.

Marine Little said: "When I got the final script before Christmas, I was like 'Holy Smokes!'" But the self-assured Marine never once doubted his ability to pull it off. "I'm more than happy to jump in the deep end of just about any situation," he said with obvious pride.

The play, produced under the artistic auspices of renowned theatre director Trevor Nunn, debuted on 22 January at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in central London with two back-to-back performances.

Marine Little's huge extended family flew over to support him and he firmly believes that the project has been invaluable for his recovery. "You need distractions," he said. "Some people get distracted by their Xbox, unfortunately some people will get distracted by their medication or alcohol - we all look for distraction because nobody

wants to sit down and stare at their stump."

Heart-warmingly, he thinks that the lure of the spotlight provided the best medicine of all.

Ask if there is any similarity between the world of acting and the military and Marine Little nods. "Huge. The director is the CO [Commanding Officer], the producer is the RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major], the stage manager is the OC [Officer Commanding], and the writer is the padre and provides guidance."

The project was put together by the Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust in partnership with the Royal British Legion, the Army Recovery Capability and the Royal Navy Recovery Pathway. Actor Ray Winstone also supported the project as the Company's Ambassador. All proceeds go to the Royal British Legion.

The play was sparked by a brainwave of producer Alice Sparke who saw it as a way of drawing individuals out of their recovery bubble, boosting self-esteem and pulling people out of their comfort zone.

"It's been a huge challenge," said Alice, who worked hard to persuade Commanding Officers from the Personnel Recovery Units that acting 'wasn't an airy-fairy therapy'. But all the signs are that the project has been a triumph.

Captain Anna Poole serves with 15 (North East) Brigade based at Catterick Garrison. She served on operations in Iraq in 2003/04 but was injured in Latvia in 2005 competing in a luge competition for the Army and Great Britain.

Captain Poole's injury eventually led to the amputation of her left leg last





Lure of the stage: every member of the Bravo 22 Company has been inspired

June. "Sitting at home is a very difficult thing to do," she said frankly. "You just stare at four walls and it's very difficult to get motivated so going out and meeting people while coming to terms with injury is a real confidence boost."

Captain Poole's Personnel Recovery Unit suggested that she get involved

Unlike in active service, military personnel recovering from injuries are all on first name terms: "When you go to rehab, everyone uses first names," she said. "Because of what we're doing, we need to be in a relaxed environment because we just don't need the pressure and expectation linked with our rank,"

“We stood on stage and it was like, wow, we are different people”

with Bravo 22 Company. In person, speaking at rehearsals, she sounds like a professional actress, a legacy of boarding school elocution lessons to iron out her broad Yorkshire accent. And in the play she plays Army Captain Becky Robinson who loses a leg in a mine strike. "We've all kept our regiments, our backgrounds, and in my role, I'm the 'organiser' who chivvies people to go kayaking down the Amazon," she said.

Since she got involved Captain Poole hasn't looked back. "I had no intention of acting, but I'm really enjoying it and now I really wish I had a bigger part."

continued Captain Poole. "When you're in your own world of depression and pain, you're a patient, and your responsibility is to recover in the best way that you can."

Back in November, Captain Poole and her fellow actors stood on stage at the Theatre Royal Haymarket, overawed at the challenge ahead: "But we stood on stage this morning and it was like, wow, we are different people," said Captain Poole on the day of the performances. "We are more confident and talking about things that we've never even shared with our families."


"People have come out of themselves and it's been really cathartic. It is great to feel enthusiastic about something again - it has been far too long."

The troops involved in Bravo 22 hope that the play will eventually tour and there has been no shortage of press interest in their resolve to overcome pain and disability. It is also apparent that lifelong friendships have formed.

Clearly the troops inspired the director, writer, producer and a handful of professional actors who generously gave unstinting encouragement, and also performed in the play. But it is far from a one-way street and it's obvious that the professional actors and troops bring out the best in each other.

"They might say, just turn this way on stage, little things that you wouldn't even think," said Captain Poole. "I think they brought them in because they didn't know if we could act and we didn't know if we could pull it off," she laughed.

"But they're a great bunch, they've really helped us along the way and are good friends. If it went on tour, we'd jump at it. Through acting, people have found a different person within themselves."

For more information, visit www.bravo22company.com 

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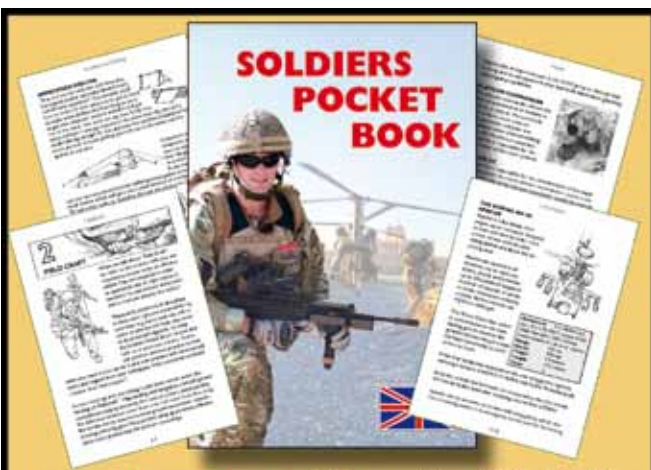
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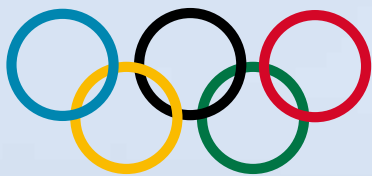
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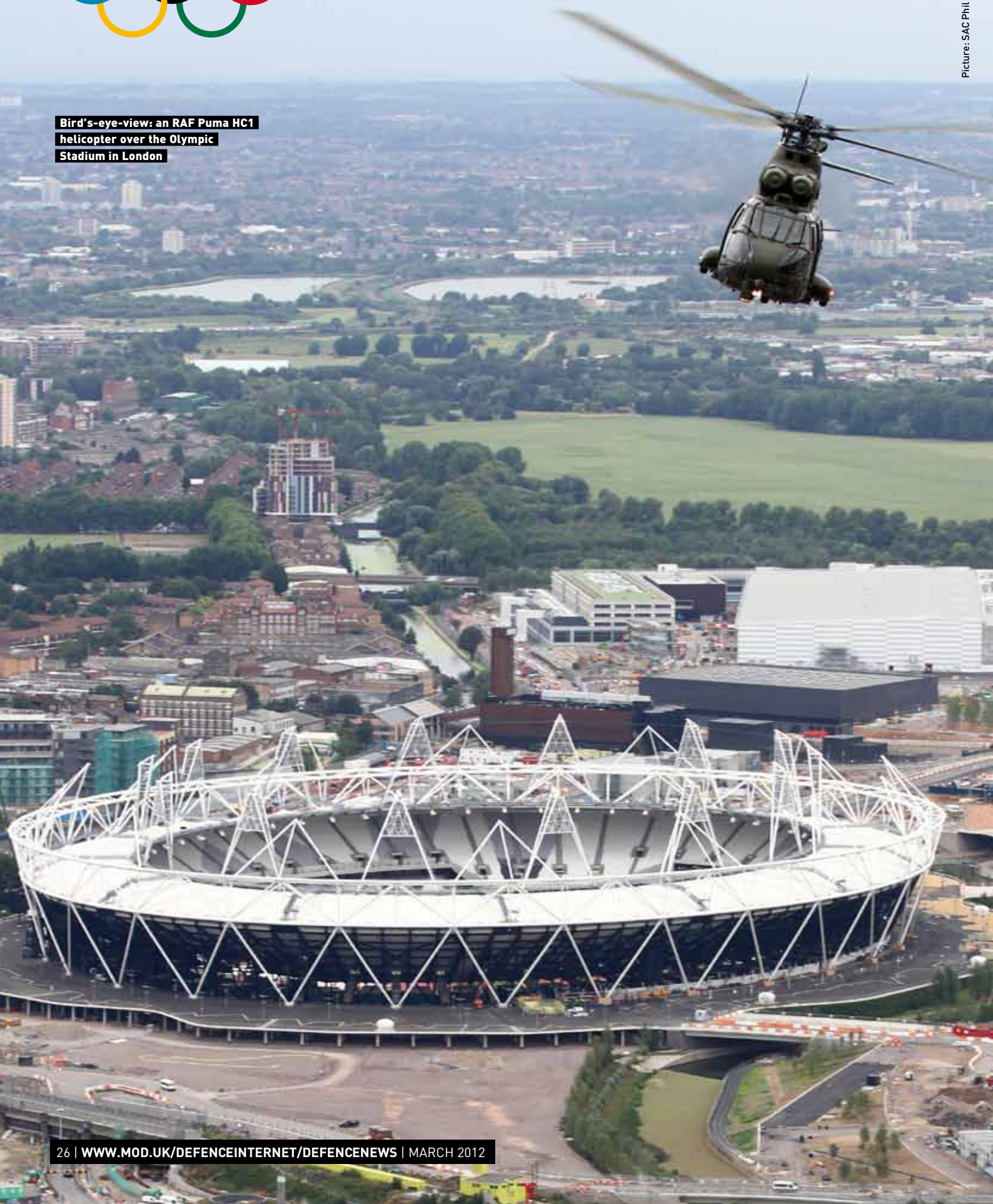
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**Bird's-eye-view: an RAF Puma HC1
helicopter over the Olympic
Stadium in London**



Picture: SAC Phil Major

It is not just the athletes that are in intensive training for this summer's Olympic Games in London. Britain's Armed Forces have also been putting in the hours as they prepare for one of the UK's biggest security challenges in 2012.

While the safety and security operation for the Games remains for the police to lead on, the Armed Forces will make a significant contribution by providing a range of support to the civilian authorities.

Several training exercises have already taken place including one on the River Thames which involved nearly 100 Royal Marines and naval air assets joining up with police to hone their skills on the water. In the skies, Typhoons and other aircraft from the RAF joined up with Royal Navy helicopters for a training exercise in Yorkshire. Meanwhile, the RAF have had Typhoon pilots operating in London airspace refining their procedures with the National Air Traffic Services.

Many more exercises are planned for the coming weeks and months to make sure both the London Olympic and Paralympic Games are the safest ever. **DF**



Water sports: Royal Marines on a security exercise on the River Thames with the police in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games

Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

OP OLYMPICS

WITH THE 2012 LONDON OLYMPIC GAMES FAST APPROACHING THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN TRAINING HARD



Photo finish: Royal Air Force personnel direct fast jets in a training exercise over Yorkshire in preparation for the 2012 Olympics

DEFENCE ASSETS INVOLVED

The Defence contribution to Olympics' security will include specialist capabilities which only the military can provide, as well as some more general support. In total, the MOD expects to provide up to 13,500 personnel, comprising:

- 5,000 personnel in support of the police and other civil authorities, with specialist capabilities including explosive ordnance disposal teams, military working dogs and Royal Navy support to maritime policing, as well as a 1,000-strong unarmed contingency force for deployment in the event of an Olympics-related civil emergency
- 1,000 personnel to provide logistics support
- 3,500 personnel, rising to a peak of 7,500, to provide venue security

Several personnel will also be participating in ceremonial events.

A number of military assets will also be deployed, including:

- *HMS Ocean* - the largest ship in the Royal Navy's fleet will be berthed in the Thames at Greenwich and will provide logistics support, accommodation and a helicopter landing site
- *HMS Bulwark* - based in Weymouth Bay will provide maritime command and control, accommodation, helicopter and small boat basing, and logistics supply
- Typhoon jets, stationed temporarily at RAF Northolt in London, and helicopters, likely to be Puma and Lynx, operating from *HMS Ocean* to support airspace security

In addition, the military will make available Defence real estate including Woolwich Barracks and Horse Guards.

Picture: SAC Ben Stevenson

**FEELING WHEEZY, COUGHING
OR BREATHLESS? MAYBE YOU'RE
AMONG THE ONE IN 13 ADULTS
WHO SUFFER FROM ASTHMA**



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

Hello from Portsmouth. The number of people with asthma is increasing. Worldwide, 100 million people share this condition, which was known to the doctors of ancient China and Greece. Many people think that asthma mainly affects children but actually one in 13 adults suffer with it. A lot of people are surprised to find that they develop asthma in later life.

A large background image of a woman with long brown hair, seen from the side, wearing a dark blue athletic top with pink trim. She is holding a blue inhaler to her mouth and appears to be using it. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green foliage.

**EVERY
BREATH
YOU TAKE**

WE SAVED OUR BABY SON'S LIFE

WHEN CHARLIE BLACKETT AND HUSBAND JUSTIN MET ON A ST JOHN AMBULANCE COURSE, THEY LEARNED VITAL SKILLS THAT IN TIME WOULD SAVE THEIR SON'S LIFE



Charlie Blackett is no stranger to bandages, slings and defibrillators. "My dad, granddad and brother were all in the St John Ambulance, and I wanted to follow," she explains. "I joined the Chipping Sodbury and Yate division when I was six, the Badgers first, then the Cadets when I was 10. I've attended big events, camped in the Malaysian rainforest, and been to Buckingham Palace and met Princess Anne."

Her life-saving skills were put to the test when son Finley was just six weeks old. "We were at home, with our two-year-old, Harriet, and Finley was in Justin's arms," she recalls. "Suddenly we noticed that Finley had gone blue and limp. We tried waking him, but soon realised it was much more serious. He wasn't breathing."

Justin started cardio resuscitation while Charlie called for an ambulance. "It didn't take long for us to get Finley back. By the time the ambulance arrived, he was fully conscious and looking around as if to say, 'What happened?' It was such a relief but it felt like a lifetime." Staff at the hospital checked Finley over and said the problem was caused by reflux and it was probably a one-off.

"So I couldn't believe it when it happened again," says Charlie. "I was at home with both children and had to resuscitate him while talking to the ambulance service on speakerphone. Then it happened a third time, while Justin was alone with him."

Finley's reflux is under control now, thanks to medication, but these memories will stay with his parents forever. "Now he's a fit, healthy two-year-old," says his mum. "If we hadn't been able to breathe for him when he wasn't breathing, who knows what brain damage could have happened?"

As a first aid trainer, Charlie Blackett is passing on her knowledge to the next generation. "When Finley stopped breathing I was so thankful to have a skill that can save a life. I'm forever grateful that I know first aid."

For more on lifesaving skills, visit www.sja.org.uk

This article first appeared in issue 17 of [benhealth](http://benhealth.org), the member magazine of leading mutual organisation Benenden Healthcare Society. The Society provides affordable healthcare to public sector and third sector workers. Visit benenden.org.uk.

People with asthma have over-sensitive airways in their lungs. When triggered, these airways tighten and narrow. At the same time, the lining of the airways becomes inflamed and swollen, producing mucus. All of this obstructs the passage of air in and out of the lungs.

Asthma varies in its severity – some people manage successfully to live completely normal lives and just occasionally have to use medication. Others need to visit hospital or clinics regularly for treatment. Although unusual, it's important to remember that people do still die from asthma – in fact over 1,000 people every year in the UK have a fatal episode.

But how do you know if you might be suffering from asthma? The symptoms are wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath. These may become particularly noticeable if you have a chest infection. Even if you just tend to wheeze or cough at night you may have asthma. In a severe episode, the person becomes so short of breath that they are unable to speak. This is a medical emergency and an ambulance should be called urgently.

So, what can trigger an asthma attack? What we do know is that you're more likely to develop asthma if you have a family history of asthma, eczema or allergies. There are many causes, including:

- House dust
- Particles in the air from pets
- Smoky environments
- Sudden changes in air temperature
- A chest infection

Fortunately, we have very useful medicines to treat asthma. Most of these are delivered to the lungs using an inhaler. Broadly speaking, there are two main types of inhalers.

"Preventers" reduce the chance of having an attack while "relievers" stop an attack if it happens. It's common for someone to use a preventer inhaler regularly and keep a reliever inhaler handy for use as required.

As long as your asthma is well controlled, you should be fine to take part in most forms of exercise. Olympic marathon runner Paula Radcliffe is just one example of a phenomenally successful athlete who suffers from asthma. If in doubt, speak to your GP. It's still important to keep fit.

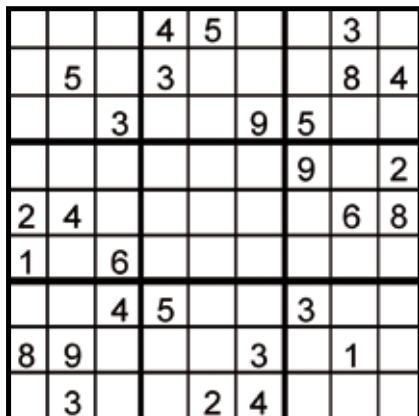
Unfortunately, smoking definitely makes asthma worse and much harder to control. Even passive smoking can trigger an asthma attack so be sensitive to those around you.

If you think you may have asthma, you should visit your GP for a chat and undertake some simple breathing tests. If you are already an asthmatic patient, do make sure you have regular check-ups when asked by your practice nurse or GP.

Stay healthy and I'll see you next month.

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

SUDOKU



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

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

Solution to the December 2011/January 2012 puzzle



■ Send in your Sudoku solution by 31 March 2012 and you could win a Victorinox Swiss Army Soldiers Knife. Our address is on page 4. For more info, visit www.victorinox.com

CHESS



Compiled by:
Carl Portman

Did you go to the London Chess Classic in December? It was an opportunity to see the best chess players on the planet perform and it did not disappoint. With three points for a win the contest was fierce and draws were not allowed unless the arbiter gave permission; the result was that there were fewer draws than in other tournaments.

It was won by the amiable (and very tall!) Russian, Vladimir Kramnik, who played solidly throughout. Added to the main event were tournaments for other grandmasters, ladies, juniors, weekend players and so on, plus visits from the likes of Garry Kasparov, Viktor Korchnoi and Boris Becker, who loves his chess.

The online coverage was fantastic with tens of thousands visiting each day and, to be honest, I know of no other tournament in the world that is so well organised, which is down to Malcolm Pein and his support staff. It is to be hoped that there will be another classic this year so if you did not go in 2011, get to Olympia and enjoy yourself.

Study the following position from the game Kramnik-Howell from the tournament. David just played a pawn to b1 to get his second queen. What did Vlad as white play to end the game?



Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please. The prize is a DVD donated by those wonderful people at Chessbase.

The answer to the Dec/Jan problem was that the queen does not go anywhere! Black plays 1...Rxa3 winning a piece. Winner to be announced. The November winner was Flt Lt Craig Rawlins from Helicopter Engines IPT.

Carl Portman
with Chess Classic
2011 winner
Vladimir Kramnik

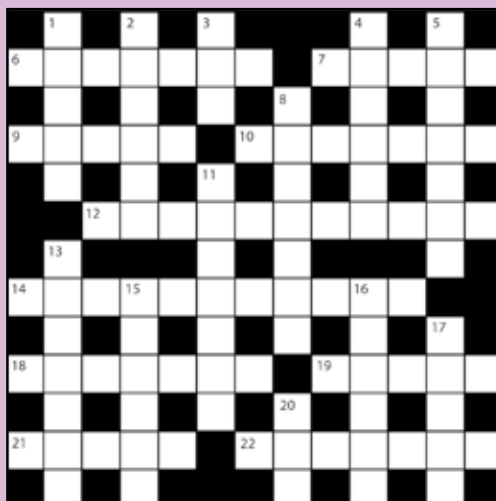
TOPICAL
CROSSWORD

ACROSS

6. This country qualified for the Euro 2012 football championships by beating Turkey in a play-off (7)
7. Korma, bhuna or vindaloo (5)
9. Bar of gold (5)
10. An equilateral parallelogram (7)
12. Comedian who pulled out as host of the 2012 Academy Awards ceremony (5,6)
14. See 3 Down
18. See 1 Down
19. Freshwater stream smaller than a river (5)
21. The _____, another term for depression sickness (5)
22. This group's hit singles include 'My Girl', 'Baggy Trousers' and 'Michael Caine' (7)

DOWN

1. And 18 Across. Footballer who scored England's winner in their 1-0 win over Spain



in November (5,7)

2. Wilson, British Prime Minister from 1964 to 1970, and from 1974 to 1976 (6)
3. And 14 Across. This DJ's gold-coloured coffin was on public display before his funeral in November (3,5,6)
4. Abnormal sound from the heart (6)
5. Long period of abnormally low rainfall (7)
8. This group's record 'Flowers In The Rain'

was the first track played on BBC Radio 1 when it began broadcasting in 1967 (3,4)

11. Long, narrow opening in a rock (7)
13. Stronghold within a city (7)
15. Lightweight motorbikes (6)
16. Voice-box (6)
17. See 20 Down
20. And 17 Down. Steven Spielberg's new First World War movie (3,5)

SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- Across
6. Croatia 7. Curry
9. Ingot 10. Rhombus
12. Eddie Murphy
14. Jimmy Savile 18. Lampard
19. Brook 21. Bends 22. Madness
Down
1. Frank 2. Harold
3. Sir 4. Murnur
5. Drought 8. The Move
11. Fissure 13. Citadel
15. Mopeds 16. Larynx
17. Horse 20. War



WIN LAKE DISTRICT STAY

The Castle Inn Hotel near Bassenthwaite in the Lake District is offering one lucky reader the opportunity to win a fantastic two-night break for two.

Nestled in the picturesque countryside, in the shadow of Skiddaw, this friendly family-run hotel is the ideal setting for a weekend break. With walking, cycling and water sports available locally and a number of great bird watching trails, hotel facilities include an indoor heated pool, gym, sauna, jacuzzi, steam room, tennis court, putting green, bar and restaurant.

The prize includes breakfast and a three-course dinner on both nights, in

Ritsons Restaurant, worth £50 per couple, or an allowance to dine in the Lakers Bar, with a complimentary bottle of house wine each evening.

The prize is subject to availability and must be taken before 13 July 2012. Excludes bank holiday weekends and school holidays.

The Castle Inn Hotel also offers all *Defence Focus* readers a special rate of £52.25 per person, per night, to enjoy a two-night bed and breakfast break in a standard room. Offer includes dinner on the first night in Ritsons Restaurant or Lakers Bar. The deal is available Sunday to Friday nights inclusive. Room upgrades or a stay on a

Saturday night are available on request, subject to an extra charge. Offer is available throughout 2012, excluding school holidays, public holidays and bank holidays. For more, visit www.castleinnncumbria.co.uk

TO WIN

Just email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by 31 March 2012. Include the phrase "Castle Inn" in the subject line.

WIN A TRY DIVE AND LIDS TICKETS



IF YOU'RE looking to do more on your summer holiday than sit on the beach, what better way than to have a go at scuba diving. With so many resorts and hotels now having their own diving schools, it's never been easier to learn. The London

School of Diving, based in Chiswick, West London, is one of the UK's leading diver training facilities, offering quality scuba instruction from entry level courses through to instructor level training. Diving sessions are conducted by professional instructors in the comfort of their on-site heated pool, where novices are guided through the process of taking their first breaths underwater. For more information visit www.londonschoolofdiving.co.uk and www.diveshows.co.uk. The School is just one of 250 companies exhibiting at the London International Dive Show at ExCeL, London, on 31 March and 1 April, and are offering a fantastic Try Dive prize for two with pairs of tickets for the International Dive Show.

TO WIN

Just email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by 21 March 2012. Include the phrase "dive" in the subject line.



Welfare Communications Everywhere



WelComeE (Welfare Communication Everywhere) - providing communication services to link entitled UK military personnel on operational duty with their families and friends back home.

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Entitled deployed personnel can retrieve the voicemail messages for free in-theatre.

- * Free when calling from a UK, German or Cypriot landline
- ** Calls to 0800 numbers are free from a UK landline. Mobile and international call costs may vary. You may wish to check with your mobile/service provider.

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Entitled deployed personnel can top-up the private side of their Paradigm account card whilst serving on operational duty overseas.

WelComeE

Welfare Communications Everywhere

WelComeE Customer Contact Centre

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