

# Defence**Focus**

Royal Navy | Army | Royal Air Force | Ministry of Defence | ISSUE #250 APRIL/11

## LEAVING LIBYA

The Armed Forces' biggest civilian evacuation in five years





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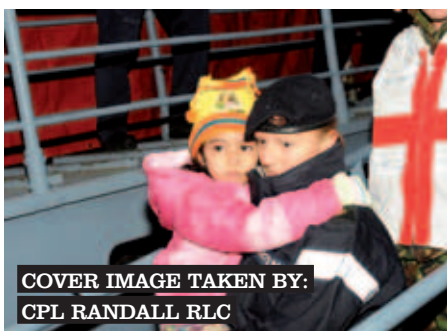
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

## DefenceFocus

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## DANNY CHAPMAN

Just when I thought the new team delivering Defence Focus and MOD's Online News was getting to grips with things, along comes Libya, Transforming Defence announcements, paper shortages at the printers and staff leave and sickness galore, including a knee operation and one member of the team suffering very yucky-looking burns from spilt MOD soup! And like, I imagine, many others across Defence, we are struggling with less people to deliver the work.

Still, when I came to work on Monday moaning about our difficulties one of my staff said things could be worse, we could be in Japan. Which of course is absolutely right. The events unfolding there are unimaginable for many of us. A friend of mine lives in Tokyo and has emailed me saying he has moved south of the city, is holed up in a hotel with his passport in his pocket and ready to jump on a plane if the nuclear situation deteriorates. I hope when you read this that things have calmed down

there and what is already a horrendous situation for a whole country has not got worse.

So far, Japan is a country in the grip of a disaster that UK defence has not provided assistance for. In the last month we have however conducted a large evacuation of people from Libya. I write this the day after the UN voted to enforce a no fly zone over that country and the Chief of the Defence Staff has been instructed to, with our allies, urgently put in place appropriate military measures to enforce it. Kim Sengupta has given us the final page of this issue today from Libya as the UN vote is celebrated.

So by the time you read this I am sure the extent of UK military involvement will be clearer with the debate on the whys and hows and cans in full flow. Let's also hope that regimes in other countries in the region, such as Bahrain, facing mounting protests, deal with them like Egypt and Tunisia. In the meantime we'll try and avoid more soup spillages, and keep you all informed. Let's hope we have the paper to do it with next month!

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# IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS – 13 FEBRUARY TO 16 MARCH 2011



## Lance Corporal Kyle Marshall

Lance Corporal Kyle Marshall, from 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan on Monday 14 February 2011 by an improvised explosive

device. He was deployed on an operation to reassure and improve security for the population in an area in the south of the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province. Aged 23, from Newcastle, LCpl Marshall was an outstanding soldier and non-commissioned

officer. Popular and cheerful, he was a natural leader who enthused all of those he worked with. He was a keen footballer, and had played to county level in his youth. He leaves behind his father Garry, his mother Olywn and his fiancée Hayley.



## Private Robert Wood

Private Robert Wood, from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, was killed in a fire at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, on Monday 14 February 2011. Aged 28, from Hampshire, Pte Wood's

fortitude and cheerful 'Wilco' approach epitomised the very essence of what it takes to be an army stevedore. A proud and professional port operator, he would always be there to lend a hand, teamwork being an essential element to loading or discharging shipping.

A recent and proud father, he constantly thought of his new family and gained strength from the thought of returning to them. A hugely popular figure, he leaves behind his parents and Rebecca, the mother of his beloved son Noah.



## Private Dean Hutchinson

Private Dean Hutchinson, from 9 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, was also killed in the fire at Camp Bastion on Monday 14 February 2011. Aged 23, from Wiltshire, Pte Hutchinson joined the RLC

as a driver on 2 September 2004. His infectious humour and hard work immediately earned the respect and friendship of his peers. A lively and energetic soldier, Pte Hutchinson could always be found getting stuck in with whatever his troop was up

to, both in work and socially. A dedicated tradesman, his energy acted as a spur to others, especially the more junior members of his troop. His family said: "Dean was an amazing son, brother and boyfriend. We were so proud of him."



## Lance Corporal Liam Tasker

Lance Corporal Liam Tasker, from the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 1 March 2011. He was taking part in a patrol with his dog,

Theo, when they were engaged by small arms fire. LCpl Tasker was struck and died from the injuries he sustained. On return to Camp Bastion, Theo suffered a seizure and died. LCpl Tasker, aged, 26, from Fife, was an outgoing, jovial and friendly character. He was

extremely popular with his colleagues. He always strived to be the best and he will be sorely missed by all in the Squadron. He leaves behind his mother Jane Duffy, his father Ian Tasker, his brother Ian, his two sisters Laura and Nicola, and girlfriend Leah.



## Lance Corporal Stephen McKee

Lance Corporal Stephen McKee, from 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment, was killed by an improvised explosive device on 9 March 2011 during an operation to

disrupt insurgent activity in the Nad 'Ali district of Helmand. Aged 27, from County Down, LCpl McKee was a family man who showed enormous strength, particularly during the very difficult time when his two-day-old daughter passed away. He had strong

family connections with the regiment, with three brothers, a cousin and his father-in-law all serving. He leaves behind his wife Carley, his parents Heather and Bobby, his brothers Michael, Gareth and Robert, and his sisters Kelly and Rebecca.

## PARAS LEAP INTO NEW VIRTUAL WORLD

Sergeant Graeme Rose, an instructor in the RAF Airborne Delivery Wing, demonstrates the new virtual reality parachute trainer at RAF Brize Norton where state-of-the-art training equipment is helping Armed Forces personnel to master the art of parachute jumping.

The Parachute Training School at Royal Air Force Brize Norton recently opened the virtual reality parachute trainer which uses the latest digital imagery to create a realistic virtual world to train in.

Parachute students are suspended by harnesses and wear virtual reality goggles to practise jumps in a range of realistic environments. Instructors are able to simulate rain, fog and snow, and can choose any time of day or night. Wind speed and direction can also be adjusted to make the descent more challenging.

They can also simulate emergency situations so that the parachutists can practise drills realistically in the safety of the simulation.

Their performance can be recorded on video and instructors can provide feedback to improve their skills. The instructor can view what each trainee can see through their goggles on high resolution screens, as well as an overall picture of the individual or group descent. **DF**





Picture: Andrew Linnett



**Sew far sew good: RAF Sergeant Nikki Parker, deployed with the MSST, pictured with a female member of the Gereshk Community Council**

Picture: Courtesy Foreign and Commonwealth Office



# ENGAGING WOMEN

**UK FEMALE ENGAGEMENT TEAMS ARE ADVISING AFGHAN WOMEN HOW WORKING TOGETHER CAN CREATE FUTURE PROSPERITY. REPORT IAN CARR**

**A**fghanistan has for decades had a brutal reputation among westerners for the way in which women are treated in their society. Yet, since the fall of the Taliban, life for many women has improved.

In 2001 an Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs was established, and just before Christmas its current minister, Dr Husn Banu Ghazanfar, visited London to discuss women's issues with British ministers.

Dr Ghazanfar spoke with pride about the 37 per cent increase in the number of girls attending school since 2001. Today, one in four Afghan teachers are women, and since 2001 there has also been a 25 per cent increase in the rate of women entering Afghanistan's parliament. News reports about women joining the Afghan National Security Forces, being trained by ISAF and playing an important role in counter-insurgency, are becoming more commonplace.

Under the Taliban women were not allowed to attend schools, nor were they allowed to leave their homes unaccompanied, let alone take up paid employment. Yet after more than 30 years of war there are many widows in the villages and towns throughout the country who, if not allowed to contribute to their local economies, can only live as dependants on their often desperately poor extended families.

Happily this is, albeit slowly, beginning to change with the help of programmes such as the Female Engagement Teams (FETs) set up formally during Operation Herrick 13 to help women into work.

Based in Lashkar Gah, Captain Rachel Marjoribanks is the local FET coordinator. There is one FET for each operational area. Working closely with the Foreign Office stabilisation advisers (Stabads) and the military stabilisation support teams, it is her job to develop the programme. "I go out to speak to families in the operational area, to explain the idea of helping women to set up cooperatives so they can earn a living," she explains.

Captain Marjoribanks acknowledges that it is very early days and that she has to approach the subject cautiously. "A lot of it is about developing relationships," she said.

The idea is to set up cells of cooperatives and workshops where women can use traditional skills such as embroidery to produce goods for sale and develop a market for what they produce.



There is also scope for the women to learn new skills under vocational training schemes. Some of these skills, like motorcycle maintenance, are perhaps far from the traditional Afghan woman's role but are proving to be popular. "I'm keeping it simple at the moment. I am concentrating on telling them how they can develop what they are already doing in their households, turn it into a cottage industry and by working together they can make some money," explained Captain Marjoribanks.

She adds that in what is seen by the West as a prescriptively male-dominated society, the

programme is going down remarkably well with the men folk. "I spoke to an elder in a village near Lashkar Gah recently and he said that he saw it as his community's responsibility to help women. He was very keen on the overall idea. According to Captain Marjoribanks this is a typical reaction. The elders are keen to get the women in their community contributing and become full members of society. "We're not out of the woods yet," she says, "but it's a long term project and it's looking positive so far."

The FETs are not working in isolation as several Afghan NGOs are also promoting the idea, and the concept is spreading by word of mouth through the many women's shuras that are now taking place.

As well as funding from Stabad budgets, since 2004 the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) has been providing micro-loans, in a way that is compliant with Islamic law, to men and women in Afghanistan who have no bank accounts but who, through WOCCU, have the opportunity to join a financial institution owned and controlled by its members.

Having established interest in the scheme, the FET organises a place for women to meet to discuss things. The FET has to have force protection and wherever possible this is comprised of female troops. But only women from the FET go inside the meeting place with helmets off. "To start with the conversation is all about our families, whether we have children. We drink a lot of tea. It takes time, but little by little we feed in information.

"I'd like to have a flagship project, but it is early days so I see our role as getting the ball rolling for future Herricks, and things are looking promising." said Captain Marjoribanks. 



Relief: oil workers celebrate as they are rescued from the Libyan desert by an RAF Hercules C-130

Picture: Cpl Paul Randall LBIPP RLC

# OUT OF AFRICA

**THE RESCUE OF BRITISH NATIONALS FROM LIBYA WAS THE BIGGEST CIVILIAN EVACUATION OPERATION THAT JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS HAS MOUNTED SINCE LEBANON IN 2006.**

**TRISTAN KELLY TELLS THE STORY OF HOW IT CAME TOGETHER.**

In February, as the eyes of the world were on the emerging revolution taking place in Libya against the Gaddafi regime, the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force were sent to evacuate British and other foreign nationals from the country which had begun to descend into chaos.

News footage abounded with images of grateful civilians and hardworking sailors and airmen. However, it took many more dedicated individuals behind the scenes to make sure such a large scale operation could be pulled off at such short notice.

As the situation in Libya deteriorated over the weekend of 19-20 February it became clear that the Foreign Office (FCO) would need more than the chartered aircraft that had already been sent if all

British citizens were to be evacuated from the country, including many based at oil camps in the inhospitable desert areas to the south. Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) based in Northwood, north west London, was thus tasked on scoping the options and work began on figuring out exactly what could be done.

Sitting at the centre of the requirement was Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ), a standing headquarters within PJHQ designed for such emergencies and held at short readiness, headed by Brigadier James Bashall.

On Tuesday 22 February the FCO made the formal request for assistance in organising a Non-Combatants Evacuation Operation (NEO). The Armed Forces were

now primed for action and as Brigadier Bashall and his team were putting in train their response, teams within the Royal Navy and RAF were similarly preparing their equipment and personnel for readiness if called on by JFHQ.

The Maritime Operations Centre based at PJHQ had received their first call on Monday 21 February. "We came in for a normal working day on the Monday when the call came in," explains Lieutenant Commander Tim Hounsom, Commander Task Force 320, Maritime Special Operations. "Things got busy," he recalls, with typical Service understatement. "Captain Abrahams, Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Operations, received the call from the MOD and it was at that point that we

started scoping options for tasking a ship.”

Perhaps disappointingly to many of us the smoke-filled war rooms of the 1940s, with their huge table maps and model ships are long gone. Today the Royal Navy relies on cutting-edge technology to track its assets around the globe and make decisions on ship movements. Tasked with organising those movements that Monday morning was Lieutenant Commander Caroline Wyness, Surface Fleet Programmer at the Maritime Operations Centre.

She had to not only find a suitable vessel capable of a maritime evacuation of this scale, but also to consider the knock-on impact of retasking such a ship would have on the rest of the Fleet.

With the UK no longer posting a frigate in the Mediterranean on a permanent basis, a potentially difficult task was made easier through fortunate timing. “It happened to time quite nicely with one of our frigates, HMS Cumberland, coming back through the Suez Canal,” said Lt Cdr Wyness. Returning from her final deployment before decommissioning, Cumberland was due to make several port visits for regional engagement but it was decided to send her instead to Crete and the NATO jetty at Souda Bay. Here she would be reconfigured and prepared for any possible mission to Libya.

Now convinced of the requirement for a Royal Navy ship to travel to Benghazi in eastern Libya Brigadier Bashall sent a small unit and a protection team of Royal Marines to rendezvous with HMS Cumberland in Crete before her departure for Libya. Also joining the ship at that point was an FCO team to process the passengers as well as hundreds of Board of Trade life jackets suitable for civilian use, collected by the Navy from around the UK the previous day.

These were then flown by an RAF Hercules C-130 to the port ready for the influx of civilians when Cumberland eventually docked in Benghazi. “We found the suitable life jackets in Portsmouth and Devonport which are usually used for family days onboard ships,” explained SO1 Logistics First Officer Ed Read. “So we can’t do family days at the moment as all the life jackets are in the Mediterranean!”

Meanwhile, Lt Cdr Wyness was still moving pieces around the chess board in Maritime Command and the Type 42 destroyer HMS York was redirected from her route towards the South Atlantic and reconfigured in Gibraltar, before HMS Westminster was sent from exercises in British coastal waters to eventually replace York as she was on her way to relieve HMS Gloucester.

Also on their way to the Mediterranean



Royal Marines help to offload evacuees' baggage from HMS York

were Brigadier Bashall and his team, who had been offered space within the British High Commission in Malta to set up their headquarters. “We set up on Wednesday night and as soon as we arrived we had orders to fly in the Hercules,” Brigadier Bashall explained. The Hercules that had transported the Royal Marines and life jackets had been left in the Mediterranean for just such a tasking. After initially flying to Tripoli to deliver a team to aid the British Ambassador there earlier in the week, on Saturday 27 February the RAF returned to action as it became clear that many people were stranded in the desert, far from Benghazi and the sanctuary of HMS’ Cumberland and York.

The first operation, supported by Sentry E3-D aircraft from RAF Waddington, and VC10 air-to-air refuelling tanker aircraft, took place on that Saturday and recovered around 170 people from desert locations south of Benghazi. About 70 of these were British. The second operation into the eastern Libyan desert on Sunday rescued nearly 200 stranded civilians of which about 20 were from the UK.

On the second operation, one of the C-130s suffered minor small arms fire, and although there were no injuries to passengers or crew, the incident shows how sending transport planes into a volatile country is not without risk.

Of course, it was not only British nationals that had been in need of help and it was not only British military assets that were in use. With liaison officers from many




Picture: Neil Blair LBIPP RLC

Going home: oil workers make their way to an RAF Hercules C-130 in the Libyan desert

other countries coordinating efforts with JFHQ in Malta, the picture began to brighten and as weary passengers disembarked HMS Cumberland in Malta after a tempestuous but welcome voyage, the end seemed in sight.

After two days of desert extractions, and a further voyage to Benghazi by both HMS Cumberland and HMS York, the FCO were confident that all those that wished to leave had been brought out from the country.

In total around 600 British and other foreign nationals were eventually evacuated from the country by air and sea before it descended further into civil war. For many of those involved in the operation it had just been another day at the office, but those who were evacuated have spoken of their eternal appreciation.

One oil worker, Brian Walker, tried for a week to leave and after having his vehicle stolen, been shot at, robbed, getting lost in a desert and travelling 1,000km on a bus said the RAF eventually got him out. “It was great,” he said. 

Personal account: MOD civilian Euan Fraser is responsible for financial management at Lashkar Gah

*Send in the*  
**CIVVIES**

## SUPPORTING OPERATIONS IS ALL IN A LONG DAY'S WORK FOR CIVVIES WHO LIKE THEIR DESKS NEARER TO THE ACTION. REPORT BY IAN CARR.

Let's face it, one way or another; we are all doing our bit to support operations. Your uniform may be pinstripe instead of multi-terrain pattern and you may be handling ration packs in a warehouse rather than tucking into one in a scrape in Helmand, but make no mistake, whether you are a scientist developing a better bit of body armour, or working in accounts scratching your head over a column of numbers; if you are in MOD, your work is supporting our Armed Forces.

Some civvies though choose to move their desks closer to the action by volunteering through the Support to Operations (S20) scheme to take their skills if not straight to the front line, then pretty darned near it.

There may be a military maxim, 'Never volunteer for anything', but our Armed Forces are rightly relieved that plenty of civilians ignore this advice, for they bring a wealth of talent and capability to the operational effort.

For non-military personnel though, being in theatre can be an odd experience and one that calls for resilience, a flexible attitude and sound judgement. Those that choose to go may know their stuff inside out, but the environment can be a complete shock to the system, and the context of the work they know so well soon teaches them the real meaning of 'outside the comfort zone'.

If you are not cut from the right sort of cloth, volunteering for this may seem a mad thing to do. But it is common for S20 civvies to be enthusiastic re-offenders who love the camaraderie and added responsibility that comes with deployment.

Rob Mullen, a C2 claims officer based at Lashkar Gah, loves these deployments but is clear about the demands. "We have to have people who can do the work. They may be good at what they do back home, but if this doesn't suit them it's a big problem. You don't come here to develop your functional competences. There's no breaks and no downtime to speak of, so you've got to be sure that it's for you."

Rob's boss, Euan Fraser, has also deployed before. As Deputy Civilian Secretary he has all the financial delegations and responsibilities that you would expect of a C1. He has to work within the rules of JSPs but he has the added challenge of applying them in a developing country that has been war torn

for more than 30 years.

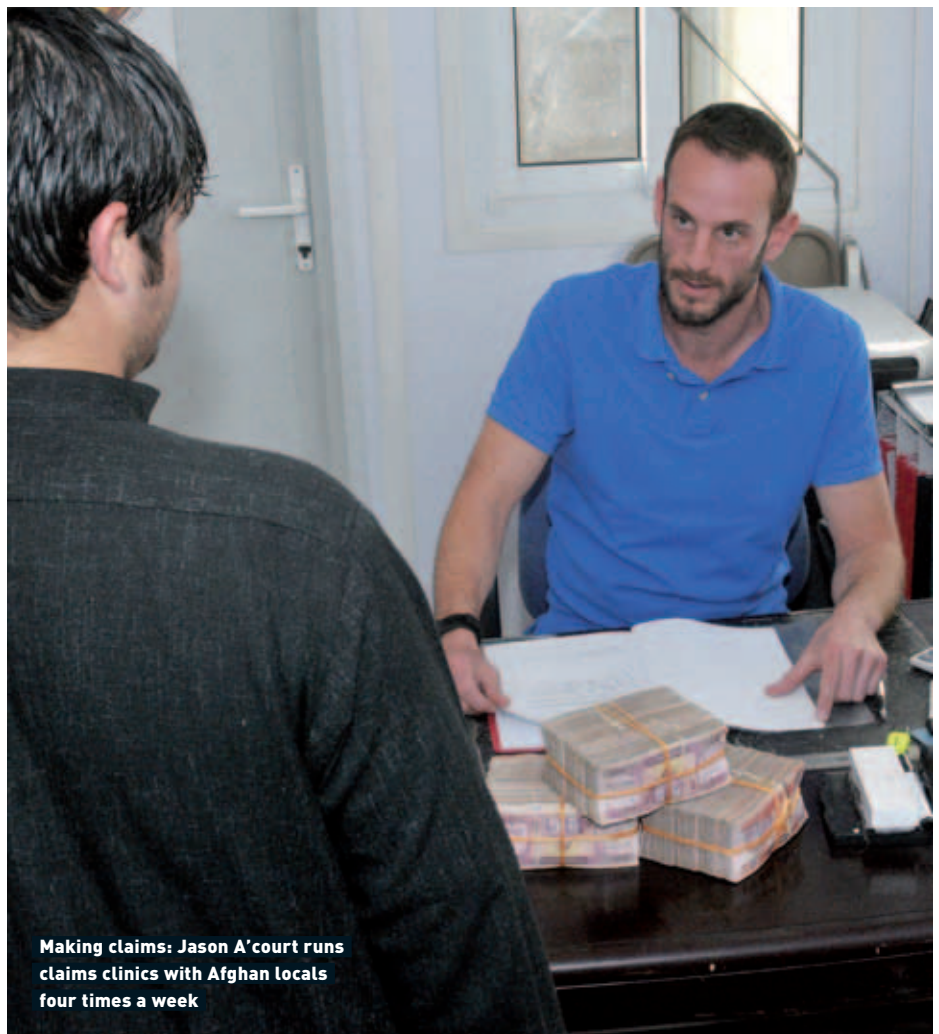
Part of his job is to account for money spent settling claims from locals for damage caused by ISAF action. He also has to account for money spent under the cash for work scheme. "We employ labour on small projects that are good for the community, like building wells," he said, "and which takes men of fighting age off the streets." Funding such projects puts judgement to the test. Not only must he be careful not to create a culture of dependency but he must safeguard against putting money in the wrong pockets.

"We always ask for three tenders and do basic checks to make sure we're not handing money to the Taliban. But with some jobs it can be a struggle to find three companies who can do the work. And some quotes are silly. We were asking for a small wall to be built in Nad 'Ali and were quoted three-quarters-of-a-million Afghanis - nearly \$17,000." A wall costing that much

you should be able to see from space.

Euan's claims officers, Rob Mullen and Jason A'court (both C2s), run claims clinics with Afghan locals four times a week. "We investigate claims, matching them against patrol reports and various databases we have and Military Stabilisation Support Team local knowledge. Often it comes down to a probability issue," said Rob.

They reckon that, having had a careful look, they turn down 30 per cent of claims. When you consider that this involves face-to-face discussions, through an interpreter, where passions, and voices, can easily reach screaming point, being a claims officer takes bottle. But it's not about being a hard nut. "Most people can't read or write," said Jason. "They can't accurately describe where they live, they can't show you on a map as that means nothing to them and they don't have the same concept of time as us. You will get a guy saying 'you killed my camel'. You ask



**Making claims: Jason A'court runs claims clinics with Afghan locals four times a week**

where and they say 'Babaji', that's like saying the West Riding of Yorkshire. Then you ask them when it happened and they say last year."

The guys have developed a sixth sense for when they are being spun a line. "It is surprising how many camels being claimed for were either prize-winning stock, or pregnant, or both," said Jason. "We did have a good one where a cow somehow had managed to get itself shot right between the eyes while still in a compound. If you are a new claims officer they will definitely try you out. You have to be firm. After a while they will laugh and shake your hand. We have a list of repeat offenders."

But every claim is taken seriously. Many of the people coming to the clinics are desperately poor so getting it right matters. Making decisions about whether compensation payments should be paid for the deaths of livestock and even of family members would take most people out of their comfort zone. But the work is rewarding. "This is not a job you could get anywhere else. In a team in Main Building

you'd have support all the way up to one star on hand. Here we have Euan to bounce things off. But in the end you have to live with your decisions," said Jason. Rob agrees: "If you work in an IPT you may never see any direct effect of your work, here you do. It's varied and incredibly interesting."

The rest of the Civ Sec team are based in Camp Bastion, in the Joint Forces Support HQ (A). Polly Chandler is a C1 dealing with commercial activity. She is studying a document with General Petraeus' name at the bottom. The opening paragraph puts Polly's new job into context. It says that the scale of ISAF's contracting effort is huge, and describes that as a good thing – or possibly a very bad thing if mistakes are made. "Contracting can spur economic development, and further the Afghan Government's aims," writes the General. "If however we spend large quantities of international contracting funds quickly and with insufficient oversight, it is likely that some of those funds will unintentionally fuel corruption, finance insurgent

organisations, strengthen criminal patronage networks, and undermine our efforts in Afghanistan.

In view of these points, contracting has to be commanders' business." So, no pressure then. Keeping this in mind Polly will be doing her best to fulfil the policy of 'Afghans First: Buy Local and Build Local'.

Large contracts, such as building developments, catering and laundry services, are placed by PJHQ but lower value contracts are dealt with locally. Polly and her team will manage them, place purchase orders and review tenders. "This financial year we have had 350 requirements coming through here. They can come from anywhere, from any of the guys on the ground – to buy 'white fleet vehicles', cranes or washing machines for the FOBs. Sometimes we do struggle to place contracts locally." And this has to be done carefully, building up a database of trusted suppliers.

To advertise contracts, and to educate suppliers about what is expected of them, Polly organises regular conferences to which local companies are invited. "They are like trade fairs – ish," she says.

Sitting opposite her is Tony Brodrick, affectionately known as Shaggy ("I look like the hippy on Scooby Doo."). Tony is a Band E1 who is carving out a new job created by S20 to look after civvies when they arrive blinking at Bastion.

"I look after every civvy who comes into theatre, I collect them from the landing area, sort their onward flights if they are going on to Lash or KAF, I sort their R+R and end of tour flights for them and their accommodation. I've had to set it all up from scratch. It's been a bit of a baptism of fire."

According to Shaggy, it used to be everyone for themselves. "The most affected were the MOD Police. They'd arrive with no idea where to go next. If you are deployed to Bastion normally a member of the team you were joining would come and collect you, but most of the police are based at Lashkar Gah or Gereshk, so they didn't have anyone to look after them while they were transiting through Bastion."

So, if you are a civilian keen to do your bit to support operations by taking your talent to theatre, not only will you get training and advice before you go, there will be a smiling face waiting to greet you when you arrive.

All you need to do now is work out if you fancy all those 14-hour days. Well, do you? **DF**

*There are 18 roles in theatre. Find out more about Support to Operations through the People Services Home page on DII*

## “ This is not a job you could do anywhere else ”



**Snap to it: Claims Officer Rob Mullen takes a picture of a local claimant for the records**

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# SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO NOW?

THE ARMED FORCES REDUNDANCY PROGRAMME IS UNDERWAY. LORRAINE MCBRIDE EXPLAINS THE PLANS TO MAKE REDUCTIONS IN SERVICE PERSONNEL

THE ARMED FORCES Redundancy Programme was announced in October as part of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). The RAF unveiled their redundancy programme on 1 March and the Army and Royal Navy will publish the details of their schemes on 4 April.

The redundancy programme will target specific ranks, trades and branches, and although the programme is compulsory, volunteers are also being sought who will have roughly six weeks to apply for the scheme.

Once the application window closes, selection boards will sit within each Service to determine which personnel will be selected for redundancy. Military sources stress that while some volunteers may be rejected and some non-applicants selected, this is essential to retain a balanced and sustainable Armed Forces with the right blend of skills.

All those on combat operations (who are receiving the Operational Allowance) or those within six months of deploying on operations at the date redundancy notices are issued will be spared from redundancy. Non-applicants who are outside six months of deployment will not be required to fulfil any future operational deployment.

Under the SDSR, the Government

announced the need to reduce the size of the Armed Forces by 17,000 personnel (split between 5,000 Royal Navy, 7,000 Army and 5,000 RAF).

Although some reductions will be achieved through cuts in recruitment and natural wastage, there remains a need to make up to 11,000 personnel redundant, including some who don't want to leave. All the reductions will be phased in up to four separate tranches to spread the reductions and maintain operational capability.

An Armed Forces redundancy compensation calculator is available via the

**“We must ensure individuals who remain – and this will be the vast majority – are aware of their importance to us....”**

intranet, which gives everyone a forecast of the compensation to which they would be entitled in this Armed Forces Redundancy Programme. The level of payments will vary for individuals.

To find out more, Service personnel should input their details to the calculator for a forecast of their redundancy and pension benefits based on length and terms of service.

With a look to the future, Commodore Jonathan Woodcock, head of Pay and Manning, said: “We must ensure individuals who remain – and this will be the vast majority – are aware of their importance to us; they have the skills we need and are fundamental to ongoing defence commitments.”

In the first tranches, RAF and Army personnel will be informed if they are to be made redundant on 1 September 2011 and Royal Navy personnel on 30 September. Applicants will then serve six months' notice before leaving, while non-applicants will serve 12 months' notice – they can ask to leave earlier if they want to do so.

All non-applicants for redundancy will have the opportunity to apply for a transfer to an area of any Service that has shortages. These shortage categories will be published ahead of the September notification dates, along with the application process and selection criteria. All redundancies will be completed by 31 March 2015.

Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir David Richards has acknowledged the uncertainty that personnel may feel. He said: “While for some the prospect of redundancy may be seen as an opportunity, for the majority it will be unsettling.” He pledged full support for those planning the step into civvy street.

Recognising what will be a life-changing decision for many, Commodore Woodcock added: “Personnel being made redundant either as volunteers or non-volunteers will receive help to assist them in their transition back into civilian life. This includes improving awareness of issues associated with housing and finance as well as understanding the civilian jobs market and transferability of skills developed while in the Services. In sum, MOD will ensure that our personnel are fully prepared and supported for their transition. They deserve nothing less.”  
*For more, look up DIN 2010DIN01-187: Regular Armed Forces Redundancy Programme. There is also DIN 2011DIN01-056: Redundancy Compensation Terms for Members of the Armed Forces. Both DINs can be found on the Defence Intranet.*





**Leaving: The RAF has now  
launched their redundancy scheme**



## REDUNDANCIES BY NUMBERS

**177,600**

Number of full-time trained personnel currently serving in the Armed Forces.

**17,000**

Personnel reductions across the whole Armed Forces, including 11,000 redundancies.

**0**

The Redundancy Programme is for Regular Service personnel only so won't affect the Reserve Forces.

**6**

Number of months notice that redundancy applicants will serve before leaving. (Non applicants will serve 12 months' notice).

**£1.2bn**

Savings made over four years by reducing the size of the Armed Forces by 17,000 and approx £800m annually thereafter.

# BUT CIVILIANS MUST HURRY...

## THE CLOCK IS TICKING FOR CIVILIANS WANTING TO APPLY FOR MOD'S VOLUNTARY EARLY RELEASE SCHEME

Time is fast running out for MOD civilians who wish to apply for the Department's voluntary early release scheme.

Director General Human Resources and Corporate Services Susan Scholefield wrote to all staff on 28 February to launch the MOD-wide scheme, which is open to all civilian staff. With the changes to Defence under the SDSR, MOD is required to achieve significant savings and reduce civilian numbers by around 25,000 over the next four years, including 5,000 from Trading Funds.

All applications need to be submitted to the PPPA by 31 March, after which each of the TLBs will arrange their own selection panels. Applicants will then receive an offer/rejection letter from the PPPA by July 2011. Offer letters will be accompanied



by a formal compensation quotation and information about pension options. Successful applicants will depart no later than 31 March 2012.

Staff selected for early release will be encouraged to make full use of the MOD Outplacement Service (MODOPS). The scheme is designed to help people make the step from working in the public sector to applying for jobs in the private sector.

A day after the scheme launched, the PPPA's website reported a five-fold increase in traffic, drawing 1.4m hits.


Speaking to *Defence Focus*, Susan Scholefield revealed that line managers had reported brisk business in applications for voluntary redundancy, with some 3,500 accessing the PPPA's system by the end of week two.



By Kim Sengupta, Defence and Diplomatic Correspondent, The Independent

# GAME CHANGER?

**ON THE DAY THE UN VOTES FOR A NO-FLY ZONE OVER LIBYA KIM SENGUPTA REPORTS FROM THE REBEL CONTROLLED TOWN OF BENGHAZI**



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AS THE early intoxicating days of freedom after four decades of dictatorship began to be replaced by the grim reality of Gaddafi's troops taking back town after town, there has been a growing bitterness in Benghazi at the perceived callous indifference of the West.

These reverses have been mainly due to the incompetence of the rebel fighters. And the political and military leadership of the provisional government in Benghazi has misled all with often wildly exaggerated accounts of "successes". But it was the failure to impose a no-fly zone and supply the rebels with heavy weapons which became the perceived causes of their predicament.

Throughout Thursday there had been a flickering hope that the United Nations would take action to stop Col Gaddafi's brutal offensive. But the announcement in New York, when it came, was still electrifying. Several hundred Kalashnikovs and anti-aircraft artillery rounds opened up in celebratory fire. Mosques around the city started playing chants of "AllahHu Akbar" through loudspeakers, echoed by the rebel fighters driving around the streets waving the banner of the protest movement. In the middle of all this, almost lost amid the chaos, there was an air strike by regime planes. Later, several large explosions were blamed on enemy infiltrators, but were likely caused by the rebels themselves hitting an ammunition store.

All this took place near large posters saying "No Foreign Intervention - Libyans Can Do It Alone". Some of the rebel leadership wanted to put members of the British diplomatic mission, captured a few weeks after arriving, on trial. But my colleagues and I, who had watched the young men of the protest movement, brimming with enthusiasm but untrained, getting slaughtered, could not help but feel relieved that, at last, something was being done to level the playing field.

The wording of the UN resolution in protecting civilians appears to give flexibility of action. Simply ensuring that Col Gaddafi's warplanes do not fly is unlikely to have much effect on the outcome of this conflict. In truth very few have been killed or injured by air strikes. What would be a game changer would be if the regime's heavy guns and armour are disabled. The Shabaab (rebel fighters) have simply been unable to cope with their firepower. Knocking out the logistical system would also slow down Gaddafi's troops, whose supply lines are already stretched.

But Western powers should think twice about supplying large amounts of arms and ammunition without keeping control. The rebels have fired more ordnance for the edification of the media's cameras, and in celebrating non-existent victories, than they have done in anger.

The UN resolution remains, for the time being, an academic exercise. Today (Friday 18 March) at the front line it was business as usual, with regime planes dropping bombs and their artillery in action. The bodies of a family lay by the roadside, at Zuwaytina, 90 minutes drive from Benghazi, their car riddled with bullets by Gaddafi forces. **DF**

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# DAMAGE CONTROL

KEEPING ON TOP OF TRAUMA TREATMENT IN BASTION WITH HELP FROM BIRMINGHAM AND YORK. REPORT BY IAN CARR

**O**n the wall of Colonel Robin Jackson's office is a map of Task Force Helmand (South West) with the Role 3 hospital at Camp Bastion in the middle surrounded by concentric circles, like a target.

These are range rings. Each circle shows at a glance the distance the medical emergency response team (MERT) can cover in a set time to reach a casualty. The first boundary is 10 minutes – five minutes out, and five back again. And every minute matters. When a call comes in saying that casualties need to be evacuated, a range is taken from the map and the nearest appropriate aircraft is deployed.

Bastion is served by British MERTS in which casualties are collected in Chinooks with Apaches providing escort protection, or Pedros where US Black Hawk helicopters are deployed. "They each have pros and cons," said Colonel Jackson, 207 Field Hospital's commanding officer. "MERTS are probably quicker in a straight line, but probably take longer to get off the

ground and they have to wait for the Apaches to fire up. On the other hand a MERT has more medical equipment on board, a Pedro just carries medics."

Camp Bastion's hospital is the busiest trauma hospital in the world. "We deal with 60 per cent of all ISAF, local, Afghan security forces and other casualties in Regional Command (South West), which is a 400 square kilometre area within a 25-minute flight time. Although we can work out to an overall two-hour flight limit," said Colonel Jackson. On the flight back to Bastion the casualty receives treatment, such as blood transfusions. "We are always striving to improve, but the MERT is about as good as it gets," he added.

"When patients arrive they are assessed in a highly coordinated way, you could describe it as a medical pit stop. The staff are military as well as being medically trained so skills and drills are second nature."

There are 10 field hospital teams which rotate on a five-year cycle to staff Bastion's main hospital. Most of these are UK and American, but there are plenty



**Clinical excellence: Camp Bastion's Role 3 hospital is the busiest trauma hospital in the world**

of other nationalities such as Danish, Estonians and Georgians represented.

Treatment needs to be of the highest order so it's not surprising that a wide range of clinical specialisms can be found here. There is even a paediatrician from Great Ormond Street Hospital on the team. It also explains why there is such a high proportion of Reservists from the NHS (50 out of around 220) to be found on the wards. "But no-one knows or cares whether you are TA, Regular, British or American," said Colonel Jackson.

This need for specialisms can produce oddities. "At the moment we have the previous commanding officer, Colonel Bhatnaga, who has rejoined us as a consultant physician, the current CO – me, and the future CO, Lieutenant Colonel Kerry Trow, who will take over from me in the Spring, all here all at once!"

Although this is the busiest trauma hospital in the world, 40 per cent of the patients are being treated for non-battle injuries, such as chest infections or sports injuries. "Our role is to provide damage control surgery. We either make people well enough to return to unit, or we stabilise them sufficiently so they can refer on to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham."

There is a close connection between Bastion and Birmingham. Every week a feedback tele-conference is held to discuss medical issues and share expertise. Lessons learned are fed back into the NHS system.

Bastion hospital also has close links with Strensall Army base near York where an accurate replica of


the Role 3 hospital has been built. Before deploying, multinational teams of Regulars and Reservists complete an arduous period of training and testing there over three increasingly complex and demanding exercises.

But it's more than just training. Every team that deploys to Bastion must first pass the Strensall test and be signed off as competent. "We send back small teams from here to update scenarios and we have a bi-monthly VT conference with Strensall to keep them swept up with the situation here," explained the Colonel.

All staff have had the Strensall experience and describe it as exacting but superb as it means they have already built a team spirit and been exposed to the high-pressure environment before they arrive at Bastion.

Majors Simon Davis and Heather Tysall have played a huge role in developing Strensall's excellence. Major Davis spent two years there and describes it as "the jewel in the crown when it comes to pre-deployment training. It does as much as you can to prepare someone for the shock factor of battle."

US Navy nurse Mukendi Kudithini agrees. It's her first time in Afghanistan. "Strensall was good training. We don't have anything like that in the US. Before that all I'd dealt with was trauma caused by baseball or car accidents. But this here, this is real trauma."

As well as clinical improvements, the overall trend of better kit and medical training for troops is making a real difference in terms of patients' survivability. 



# TRANSFORMING DEFENCE

## DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND RESOURCES DOMINIC WILSON SPEAKS TO LEIGH HAMILTON ABOUT PROGRESS WITH DEFENCE REFORM



Reforming Man: Dominic Wilson

Picture: Andy Malthouse

**DF:** There are a few people involved in the plans to reform Defence. What does your role involve?

**DW:** I'm overseeing work of the MOD's Defence Reform Unit (DRU), which is supporting Lord Levene and his external steering group, who are examining the way the Department operates, its organisation, its structure and the processes that support it. But, the task is so broad that it is not just Lord Levene and his team that are doing the work. They have an important role to play – but we need people across the Department to engage in the substance.

**DF:** What are your biggest challenges?

**DW:** The challenges are ensuring coherence in the process; capturing the good ideas that are already out there and the many initiatives that are already in hand and making sure that they are forming part of a coherent whole. And we need to do it all at pace – the financial pressures mean that we can't wait forever to get the work done; and as far as possible we need to maintain a process that is top down in its approach, led by Lord Levene's team. We are conscious of the uncertainty that all this brings. People know what the

questions are and we need to provide the answers they are looking for as quickly as we can.

**DF:** What is the difference between the Strategic Defence and Security Review and the Defence Reform Review?

**DW:** Put simply, the SDSR was primarily focused on the front line force structure, although not exclusively, because there were efficiencies announced in other areas.

Defence Reform is much more focused on what supports the front line. It's not about looking at how we create multi-role brigades for example, it's much more about how we have the business processes in place to support the effective generation of military capability.

But together the changes we need to make constitute a massive change programme and we should see the implementation of the two elements together. In the New Year we launched the concept of Transforming Defence which takes into account both parts: how we implement the SDSR and how we drive implementation of Defence Reform activity.

**DF:** You've previously stated that, with regard to the DRU, by March there would be an operating model agreed; and by July, a detailed blueprint will be available. Are you on schedule?

**DW:** There are some parts of the Department that are already providing answers. For example, we've had the announcement on the Defence Infrastructure Organisation which, while that initiative didn't start with Lord Levene, he and his group did examine the proposals and made recommendations to the Secretary of State.

But the work is taking time. On the one hand we want to proceed at pace, but on the other hand there are some big issues at stake in the work and I think it's to the credit of Lord Levene and his team that they are taking the time to get it right. I've heard people say 'what do Lord Levene and an external group know?' and 'is there a danger that they are going to try to impose changes to the Ministry of Defence that just don't suit our business?' They are conscious of the need to get it right and are prepared to put the time in to make sure they do.

Are we on target? Well, we were aiming for a high-level operating model for around March and we're a little behind on that but not much. We're certainly on track for completing the work by July. But even then, the process doesn't stop in July. Although Lord Levene is hoping to make his recommendations then, in terms of the changes

that we'll have to make and the detailed design, that will go well beyond July and implementation will obviously take a number of years.

**DF: Is the external team, being led by Lord Levene, incurring any additional costs?**

**DW:** No cost at all. The individuals on the Defence Reform Steering Group are doing the work entirely gratis, free of charge. And it's also worth remembering how much time they are giving to this. While they have one formal steering group meeting a month, they meet in smaller groups and are spending a lot of time reading papers or having discussions with individuals, so they're spending an increasing amount of time, free, engaged in this endeavour.

**DF: The aim of the DRU is to create a department that is 'fit for purpose and affordable' - will this be achieved by predominantly cutting posts?**

**DW:** There are two aspects to that. The first is, when the Defence Secretary first conceived of defence reform and reforming the way the Department operates, it wasn't specifically about saving posts. It was about making the Department operate better, so we could better deliver value for money and deliver more effective support to the front line. That was what it was originally about. But simpler processes do involve fewer people. And we're all aware that the SDSR's outcome set out a significant reduction in the number of posts. So in some respects, defence reform is about enabling that reduction to happen.


**DF: You have often been quoted as saying that Defence Reform started with a blank sheet of paper - what is on that sheet of paper now?**

**DW:** We're beginning to fill in bits of the paper. We have announced the Defence Infrastructure Organisation which is the first part of that.

Increasingly, the group will be tabling proposals to the Secretary of State on the high-level governance, the make-up of the successor to the Defence Board, for example. We'll have the activities that we expect to be performed in the head office and the activities that we would expect to be performed by the TLBs and how we draw the line between the two. So we expect Lord Levene to make recommendations to the Secretary of State over the next few weeks.

**DF: What clarity are you able to provide to staff on progress and also what the future will look like?**

**DW:** I can understand the frustration over the length of time it is taking. But I would rather it was done properly than just done quickly.

The uncertainty that people are feeling is a real problem. We will start to get greater clarity over the next few weeks as a lot of the high-level work is completed. But I am confident that the MOD of the future, while it's going to be smaller, is still going to offer a fantastic range of jobs for people still supporting the Armed Forces on operations and still have a variety of different career routes and different specialisms. It's still going to be a stimulating place to work. I'm sure that whatever Lord Levene comes up with in terms of the detail of the process, that isn't going to change. 

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# HARD-HEADED NATIONAL INTEREST

**THE WAY THE UK DOES OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INTEREST ALL IN DEFENCE, FORMER CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF AIR CHIEF MARSHAL, THE LORD STIRRUP WRITES.**



Picture: Harland Quarrington

**Lord Stirrup: Former chief of the defence staff**

**D**uring my tenure as Chief of the Defence Staff the relationship between MOD and the Department for International Development (DFID) underwent something of a transformation – and it needed to.

At the outset, neither side really understood the other's aspirations and limitations, and as a result our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan were sometimes less effective than they should have been.

But gradually, thanks to the hard work of many from both departments – especially those deployed to operational theatres, we overcame the friction and started to work not just to a common purpose but through common ways and means.

We in Defence had recognised that the issues we were confronting required a political solution, and that our work needed to facilitate this if it was to be strategically useful. DFID recognised that the military line of operation was a crucial element in providing sufficient stability for their work on governance to flourish.

The much admired civil-military mission in Helmand became the manifestation of our new understanding. All involved should feel proud of this very welcome progress.

But it would be nice if we could avoid the need to relearn these lessons in future conflicts. So, I believe that it's crucial for MOD and DFID to sustain and nurture their current good relationship, and to

develop their future thinking and plans in partnership.

For this reason alone, Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell's announcement this month of a new approach to the way the UK does overseas development should interest all in Defence.

Among the changes he announced is the concentration of DFID effort on countries where UK aid will achieve the best results in fighting poverty. How does this chime with Defence priorities?

Well, there will be a new, stronger focus on countries on the brink of, or emerging from, violent conflict. Nearly two-thirds of the UK's development programmes – and 30 per cent of Britain's overall aid budget – will be in areas of conflict and in fragile countries.

As Andrew Mitchell explains, the evidence shows that conflict keeps people in poverty and misery. Two-thirds of the countries furthest from reaching the internationally agreed poverty targets – the Millennium Development Goals – are in the midst of, or are emerging from, violent conflict.

Many of these are failed or failing states that pose a serious security risk to us all; when governments cannot control their territory and meet the expectations of their people, terrorists, pirates and drug smugglers – to name just a few malefactors – can gain a foothold.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review recognised that such security challenges require an integrated response. We do of course need military strength to tackle some of them, but we also need effective diplomacy and targeted aid efforts that deal with the root causes of conflict. Well-targeted aid can get governments working and give people hope through education and jobs. This can contribute to preventing conflicts before they start and help to reduce the risks that threaten us.

So while putting greater focus on countries that are fragile and in conflict is the right thing to do morally, it is also the right thing to do from the perspective of

hard-headed national interest. It will help to make Britain safer and reduce the need for combat operations, with all the sacrifice that they entail.

We were not able to pre-empt such need in Afghanistan, but DFID's focus on building up the Afghan Government and encouraging economic growth – for example by training 45,000 uneducated young people in vocational skills such as plumbing, electrics, metalwork and IT – is essential if we are to get our people out of the front line as soon as possible.

By giving Afghans an alternative to insurgency, by helping some of the world's poorest people to help themselves, DFID is advancing the day when our combat forces can come home.

The pity is that it's taken us – and the rest of the international community – so long to come to this realisation. How much better if we'd done this in 2002; if we'd acted to pre-empt insurgency rather than allowing it to grow and then being forced into the much more difficult and costly task of confronting it.

We must try not to repeat this mistake. The lessons have been hard-learned, and we must keep them in mind. That's why we should be interested in the UK Aid Review, and all welcome the integrated approach that DFID is thereby helping to promote. **DF**



**A soldier from The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (5 SCOTS), teaches Afghan policemen about how to spot possible improvised explosive devices.**

Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere RLC





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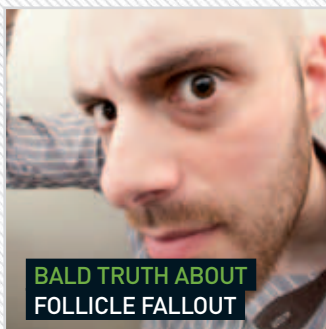
# LIFESTYLE

BOOKS **HEALTH** COMPETITIONS **PUZZLES** PEOPLE



**BATTLEFIELD LOVE LETTERS**

**NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM'S EXHIBITION**



**BALD TRUTH ABOUT  
FOLLICLE FALLOUT**



**STARRING ROLE  
RAF HALTON FILM HIT**



**GRIPPING READ  
BOOK REVIEWS**



**BRIDGEWOOD BLISS  
WIN A VIP STAY FOR TWO**

# DEJA VIEWS

**LOOKS FAMILIAR? DID YOU KNOW THAT THE RAF'S HALTON HOUSE HAS A STAR ROLE IN THE KING'S SPEECH? REPORT BY LORRAINE MCBRIDE**



**Good things come in threes: Geoffrey Rush, Colin Firth and Helena Bonham Carter**

**L**ights, camera, action! It is not every day that the MOD can claim a hand in making Britain's most successful film for a generation. But key scenes from royal drama, *The King's Speech* which has scooped four Oscars, were shot at RAF Halton, Buckinghamshire.

The historic RAF estate is no stranger to movie stardom having previously featured in *The Queen*, *Judge John Deed*, *Evita*, *An Ideal Husband* and *Miss Marple*.

*The King's Speech* has been a global hit, with Colin Firth's portrayal of King George VI's life-long battle to overcome a stammer that resonated with critics and the public alike.

Filming at RAF Halton took just two days between December 2009 and the New Year. And for the filmmakers, Halton House was a dream with its period features including original fireplaces, panelling, mirrors, mouldings and windows.

Location manager, Jamie Lengyel, told *Defence Focus*: "We took full advantage of the different rooms that RAF Halton has to offer."

The film sees the future King George VI (Colin Firth) rehearse his broadcast to the nation in his Buckingham Palace study. But what millions of fans will see, is not really a palace or a hand-built studio set, but Halton House's exquisite "Gold Room", renowned for its ornate corniced ceiling. The room dates back to when Halton House was owned by the Rothschild family.

The crew returned in January 2010 to film two scenes in which the King's elder brother, Edward VIII (played by Guy Pearce) makes his abdication speech in Halton's panelled "Function Room", concealed behind a blue gingham backdrop to transport it back to 1936.

The climax of the film is when King George conquers his life-long stutter and coaxed by speech therapist, Lionel Logue, (Geoffrey Rush), his wartime address is a triumph. The action cuts to Edward and Wallis listening to the radio at their French chateau, which is actually Halton House's south drawing room,

decked out with white carpet to transform it into their Parisian mansion. The crew filmed against a green screen, adding exterior shots of French countryside by computer wizardry later.

The crew also filmed in nearby Wendover Woods, which doubled up as the roads approaching Balmoral.

Jeannie Beha is RAF Halton's commercial business manager and hires out Halton House to film companies. She is used to rubbing shoulders with A-list actors and says: "All the actors were genuine people and always said, 'Good morning'. As for Colin Firth, he was gorgeous, he can come back any time!"

Halton House comes with an impressive pedigree. Shortly after Alfred de Rothschild inherited the Halton Estate in 1879, he embarked on building Halton House, a grand country mansion in "French renaissance" style. Completed in 1883, it was purchased by the Air Ministry in 1919, when Halton House became the Officers' Mess and remains so today.

While the film has scooped four Oscars, there is no doubt that RAF Halton can be proud of its once-in-a-lifetime role for Best Supporting Location.

*The King's Speech* is out in cinemas now. **DF**

**Star role: RAF's Halton House was used to film key scenes in *The King's Speech***



**Before: Halton's Function Room...**



**... is turned into the King's Palace study**



**Meanwhile the South Drawing Room ...**



**... becomes the King's Paris villa**

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to prevent any rattling when stored in a rucksack. For the chance to win one, just email your name, telephone number and address to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk) before 28 April 2011, putting the words 'Swiss Mess Tin' in the subject line.

## Callsign Hades

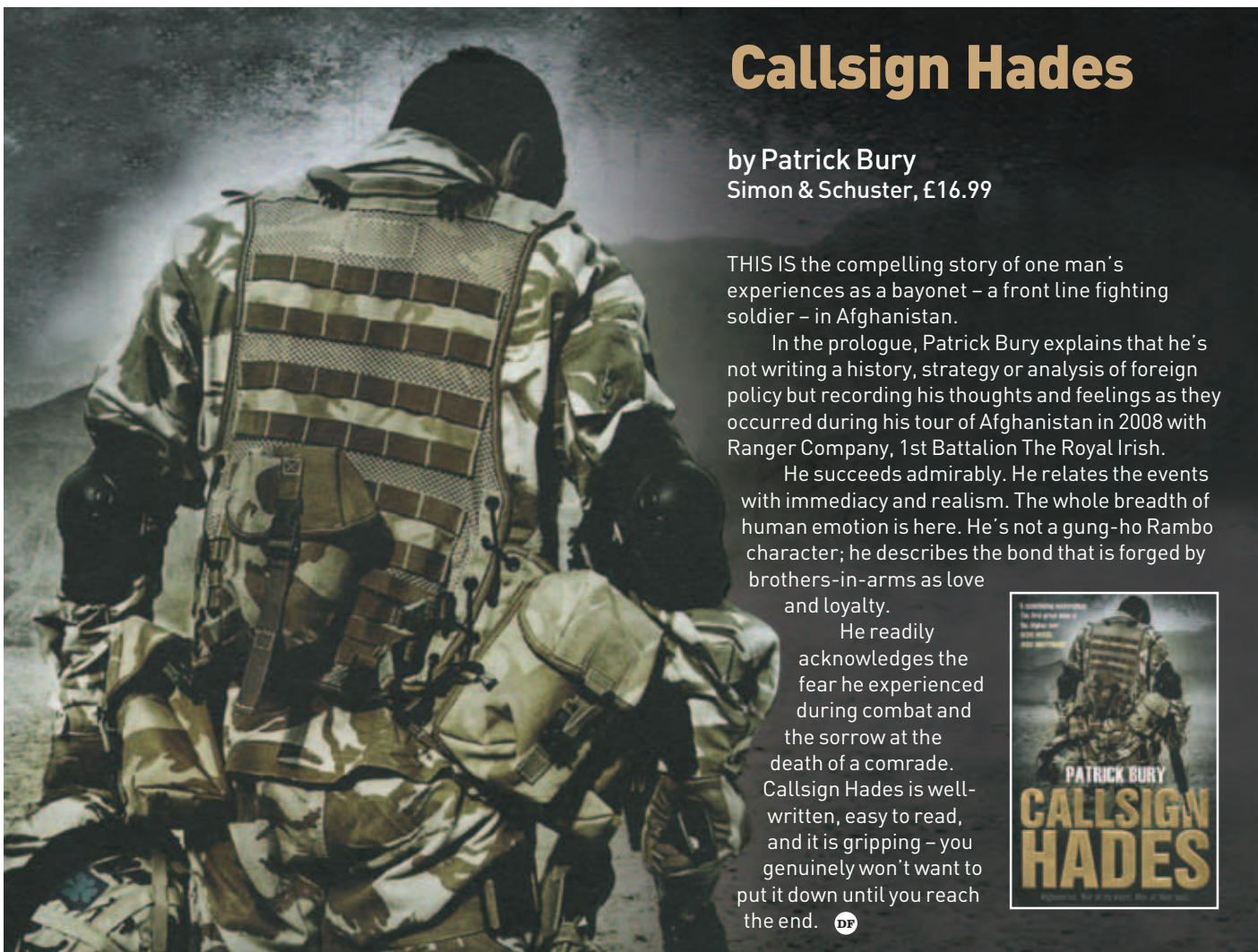
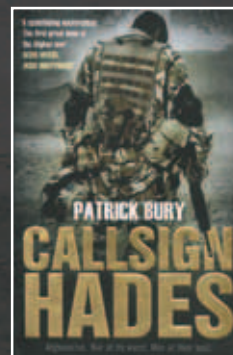
by Patrick Bury  
Simon & Schuster, £16.99

THIS IS the compelling story of one man's experiences as a bayonet – a front line fighting soldier – in Afghanistan.

In the prologue, Patrick Bury explains that he's not writing a history, strategy or analysis of foreign policy but recording his thoughts and feelings as they occurred during his tour of Afghanistan in 2008 with Ranger Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Irish.

He succeeds admirably. He relates the events with immediacy and realism. The whole breadth of human emotion is here. He's not a gung-ho Rambo character; he describes the bond that is forged by brothers-in-arms as love and loyalty.

He readily acknowledges the fear he experienced during combat and the sorrow at the death of a comrade. *Callsign Hades* is well-written, easy to read, and it is gripping – you genuinely won't want to put it down until you reach the end. **DF**



## The Secret Capture U-110 and the Enigma story

By Stephen Roskill  
Seaforth Publishing, £16.99

THE SECRET Capture is a real-life boy's own escapade, telling the absorbing story about the capture of U-boat 110 in May 1941 by the Royal Navy.

First published in 1959, Stephen Roskill's aim was to put the record straight following an earlier claim by an American to have made the only capture of a U-boat in 1944.

It is well-written, in a sometimes breathless style when describing the action, though some of the

explanatory asides are laborious and slow down the sequence of events.

This edition has a new introduction by Professor Barry Gough, which is well worth reading as it explains how and why the book was written and the limitations faced by the author – many papers relating to the action were still classified.

It is a genuinely fascinating book that feels more like an adventure story than a factual record of historic events. **DF**



## Military Ghosts

By Alan C Wood  
Amberley Publishing, £14.99

MILITARY GHOSTS is a fascinating collection of stories and legends by a former member of the RAF and retired policeman.

Personal experiences prompted Alan Wood to research the occult. Sixty years on, this gazetteer of ghosts, by military Service, encompasses the spirits of Roman legionnaires and more modern military phantoms – most notably pilots and aircrew from the Second World War.

The majority of the entries

are located in the UK, but not exclusively.

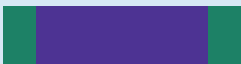
The style of writing brings to mind a gathering round a comfortable fireside on a miserable winter's night to be entertained by a good storyteller.

You can dip in and out quite comfortably at your leisure, and even the most case-hardened among you will feel a shiver when reading about the USAAF B-17 Flying Fortress that returned from a sortie in Germany to land safely, though all on board were dead. **DF**

DEFENCE FOCUS TALKS TO MEN AND WOMEN ABOUT THEIR MEDALS AND THE MEMORIES THEY EVOKE



Field of fire: Weapons awaiting destruction in Macedonia in 2001



**NORTHERN IRELAND**

I've done five tours of Northern Ireland, starting with a four-month emergency tour in 1991/2.

We were stationed at the Maze prison. The medal reminds me of being a young private soldier in the Parachute Regiment, learning my trade on the streets of Northern Ireland at a troubling time in the early 1990s. It was quite a steep learning curve for an 18-year-old.

I then had a two and a half year roulement tour in 1992 working pretty much all over the Province. On that tour I was blown up in West Belfast by a Mark 16 rocket, and for the action received the GOC's Commendation for Bravery.

The other tours were six-month tours all over the Province, and that pretty much took up all of the 1990s.

Of all my medals, this ones means a lot as it's

where I learnt my trade and picked up all the skills I have.



**SIERRA LEONE**

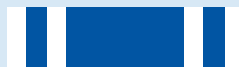
The next tour was to Sierra Leone in 2000, and the non-combatant evacuation operation where I was a mortar fire controller.

Most people were down the pub when we got the call at 11 o'clock at night. We rushed back to camp, and, 72 hours later, were sat in Senegal waiting to mount ops in Sierra Leone. We sat there for a day before the CO flagged down a C-130 Hercules that flew us into Lungi Airport in Sierra Leone.

The heat was a shock, and that four weeks was the first real war-fighting scenario that the Parachute Regiment had been in since the Falklands campaign.

We were sat in the Aberdeen Peninsular, really in the heart of the action, and I remember the first morning, waking up and just

realising that we had gone from Northern Ireland to the jungle. As a young Lance Corporal at the time it was very different from what we were used to.



**MACEDONIA**

It was then onto the Macedonia operation as a Corporal. We were barracked in an old peanut factory with some 650 blokes.

The highlight of the day, if we weren't on patrol, was sitting with our SUSAT sights from our weapons looking at the one TV in the corner.

On that tour however we watched the Twin Towers in New York go down live on the news. That was quite poignant as there were rumours that we'd get involved with Afghanistan. As it happened, within 12 months we were on the Afghanistan tour.



**AFGHANISTAN - OP VERITAS**

I went to Afghanistan

on Op Veritas in 2002. We were based in a building we called "the telecom tower", close to the old presidential palace in Kabul.

It was totally different to what is happening out in Afghanistan at the moment. We had a picture taken from the presidential palace of people listening to music, wearing bobbed hairdos and short skirts. I have a picture of the same street later with burkas and guns. It was quite a change from the non-combatant operation of Sierra Leone, the peacekeeping of Northern Ireland, and the weapons disposal of Macedonia, and then not knowing really what our role was.

**AFGHANISTAN - OP HERRICK 8**

Our last Afghanistan tour was in 2008. It was quite a traumatic tour.

I was called in half-way through to replace my best friend, WO2 Mark Williams, who had been killed. I was the platoon commander up in Catterick, and I had been called forward to fill his role in FOB Gibraltar, which was the worst place in Helmand at that point.

Four or five soldiers from that FOB alone had been killed so it was quite a demanding task to fill the position, and it being my best friend, was quite a challenging role.

We were fighting every day - you were earning your Queen's shilling on that tour for sure. I cherish this medal and remember my friends who died on that tour.



**MY MEDALS**

Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant Christopher 'Buzz' Burrows joined the Paras in 1991. In his 20 years Service he has seen action in many theatres. Interview by Tristan Kelly.

**1 FARNBOROUGH AIR SHOW**

Below, I am with MOD ministers; Nick Harvey, Gerald Howarth, Liam Fox and Peter Luff at the Farnborough Air Show. I like getting out of the office as often as I can to see the various areas of defence in action. The British defence industry is very successful and important to our economy. I want to do what I can to help it succeed in future.



**2 COMMONWEALTH CEREMONY**

Here, I am at a wreath-laying ceremony to mark Commonwealth Day at Memorial Gates, Constitution Hill, to remember all those who fought for the British Empire in the First and Second World Wars. The ceremony was attended by representatives and members of the Armed Forces from countries including Nepal, India, Pakistan, Jamaica and other dignitaries.



# NINE MOMENTS

**LORRAINE MCBRIDE ASKED MOD MINISTER LORD ASTOR TO RECALL HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS TIME IN THE DEPARTMENT**

**3 BRINGING F1 TO THE LORDS**

For 14 years, I was President of Britain's Motorsport Industry Association. I worked with Lord Drayson during his time in MOD to bring motorsport and defence closer together. This photo was taken during a Lords reception I hosted, featuring British military vehicles and vehicles from the motorsport industry. Motorsport provides a lot of technology for defence. Readers may be surprised to learn that the Jackal is built with many parts from motorsport. It was a wonderful job and I was lucky enough to go to many Grand Prix which proved popular with my children!



**4 OMAN**

I have been fortunate enough to visit Oman on a number of occasions – it is a beautiful country and a key ally. This is at a meeting with my Omani counterpart, discussing the long-standing, deep and vital relationship that exists between our two countries. Defence diplomacy is a key part of every Minister and Service Chiefs' role – we are all ambassadors for the UK Armed Forces.





5

**AFGHANISTAN**

In February, I spent a few days in Afghanistan. I met with Afghan and NATO leaders in Kabul and was fortunate enough to meet up with members of my old regiment, the Household Cavalry, in Camp Bastion. I also managed to visit the hospital at Bastion and see the incredible work being carried out by regular and reserve medics. The progress is a tribute to the remarkable work of the UK Armed Forces.

6

**AWARDS CEREMONY**

Last October I presented some awards at the inaugural MOD's Sanctuary and Energy awards ceremony. As a farmer, I've always taken close interest in the management of the defence estate and these awards recognise people's efforts to conserve energy, cut carbon emissions and go the extra mile.

7

**FOOD AND KIT DEMONSTRATION**

Above I am meeting members of the Forces in Parliament as they show MPs and Peers the latest kit used on the front line in Afghanistan. Years ago, I served in Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong during the riots, then a tour in London on mounted ceremonial duties. In 1969, we were the first reinforcements to Northern Ireland when the troubles began.

8

**FAMILY**

Here I am with my wife and three of my daughters – I have six children – at home in Kent. My job is fascinating and I've tried to do my best for the Armed Forces. Fitting everything in can sometimes be a struggle, particularly with the recent Alternative Vote Bill. On several occasions, I've been in the Lords all night and had to put my camp bed down in my office – but you do what you've got to do.

9

**PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE**

Defence is hugely important and I can't move down the corridor in the Lords without being ambushed by interested Peers asking questions. I do my best to keep Peers of all parties abreast about defence and hold regular briefing sessions. We are not living in a perfect world and have had to make some tough, difficult decisions, none of which we have taken lightly, but we have a huge budget deficit we need to get on top of.



By Surgeon Commander  
Nick Imm in Faslane

HELLO from HM Naval Base Clyde where I've just started in post as Principal Medical Officer.

Gents, are you going a bit thin on top? Worried you might follow in a family tradition of baldness? This month, let's discuss the reasons for male baldness, and whether it's worth trying to do anything about it.

Around half of all men are affected by male-pattern baldness by the age of 50. This tends to start with the hair receding above the temples or thinning on the crown of the head. In some men this can happen at a much earlier age and can be a cause of anxiety and distress. We don't know exactly what causes male-pattern baldness although it seems to be linked to reduced blood flow in the scalp and a hormone called dihydrotestosterone.

So, what are the options? Well, a brief trawl of the internet or visit to a health food shop will reveal a variety of treatments for male-pattern baldness. Most of these are unlikely to make a difference to your hair although they may lighten your wallet considerably.

Two medications which have been shown to have a marked improvement are Minoxidil lotion and Finasteride tablets. These two aren't available on the NHS but are available to buy in pharmacies. Both cost around £1 per day of treatment and treatment has to be continued indefinitely.

Minoxidil is an old drug for blood pressure which had a weird side effect. Curiously, when people took it as a tablet, some of them noticed that they became more hairy! Research was undertaken to see if the same thing happened if you sprayed it onto balding heads. In fact, most men either had no further hair loss or some regrowth, so the drug was repackaged as a hair loss treatment. We think it may work by increasing blood flow in the scalp. The effects take several months to be noticeable and the lotion has to be used twice a day.

Another drug, Finasteride, is a daily tablet which blocks the effects of the hormone dihydrotestosterone in the scalp. Again, most men notice that hair loss is slowed and some report regrowth of hair. If you stop the tablets, the new growth is lost again.

Before starting any new medicines I'd always recommend you have a chat with your GP about your worries and check the diagnosis. Sometimes, hair loss can be due to other causes, such as a fungal infection, thyroid problems or stress. Your GP will want to check your scalp and maybe take a blood test. You should discuss any potential side effects of treatments and make sure they're documented on your records.

Of course, other options include expensive hair transplants and wigs but the results are variable and these may not really be practical in your line of work. Most people say that a short haircut can make thinning hair less noticeable and perhaps this is all you need – it's certainly a lot cheaper than the alternatives.

Stay healthy and I'll see you next month.

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



**HAIR LOSS IS RARELY  
WELCOME BUT THERE  
ARE OPTIONS THAT  
MAY HELP YOU**

d  
truth

## WEIGHT BRITAIN

**Obesity is Britain's fastest growing killer and in most cases is totally avoidable reports Benhealth's Angela Spencer.**

The story of Patrick Deuel, the American 'Half Ton Man' featured in a Channel 4 documentary last August, is disturbing. That a man can live to reach a staggering 76st 8lbs, without his vital organs collapsing, defies belief. The realisation that the number of people reaching similarly shocking proportions is on the increase is even more grim.

The truth is that the extreme cases, where people literally eat themselves to death, are just the tip of an obesity epidemic. In short, obesity is one of the biggest threats to health in the industrialised world.

The latest Health Survey for England shows that 66 per cent of men and 57 per cent of women are overweight or obese, with almost a quarter of all adults obese. Around three in 10 children (aged two to 15) are classed either overweight or obese.

The Government has since published a national strategy, backed by £372m funding, to help people maintain a healthy weight. But why do people get fat in the first place and what are the risks?

Professor David Haslam GP, a physician in obesity medicine and chair of the National Obesity Forum, explains: "In a nutshell, people become overweight when they put more energy into their bodies, in the form of calories, than they burn up with daily activity and exercise. The body stores the extra energy as fat. Over a prolonged period, people can become overweight, and if the imbalance continues, obese."

The health implications are clear. "Obesity vastly increases the risk of Type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart and liver disease," says Professor Haslam. "Obese people are



also far more likely to develop other problems including strokes, osteoarthritis, high blood pressure, infertility and depression.

"Obesity can even shorten life expectancy. We are now seeing Type 2 diabetes in children, which was unheard of in the 1950s and 60s. The point is that, in most cases, it is totally avoidable."

The market may be brimming with almost as many fad slimming solutions as it is groaning with fast-food outlets, but Professor Haslam says a balanced diet and regular exercise remain the cornerstones of maintaining healthy weight.

"Parents really need to encourage their children to be more active and eat more freshly prepared food, with fruit and vegetables. They also need to let hunger be their kid's guide instead. Punishing kids by stopping them playing football or rewarding good behaviour with sweets isn't the way to go either."



This article comes to you from Benhealth magazine.  
[benendenhealthcare.org.uk](http://benendenhealthcare.org.uk)

# Love letters

## from the front line

**A NEW EXHIBITION DOCUMENTS REMARKABLE LOVE LETTERS SENT BY SOLDIERS AT WAR, REPORTS LORRAINE MCBRIDE**

**L**OVE LETTERS spanning more than 200 years of wartime romance are now on display at the Wives and Sweethearts exhibition at the National Army Museum, exploring what it's like to be in love while at war or with someone who is away at war. Visitors can explore soldiers' relationships from the joy of courtships, weddings and births, to separations, tragic deaths and even battlefield marriage proposals.

One of these romances is told through the letters that Valerie and her sweetheart Major Anthony Ryshworth-Hill, separated by war in 1944, sent to each other. She wrote to him, gluing a dozen tiny photos of herself in ATS uniform, but stressed that while she looked "so terribly English" with her serious expressions and unflattering cap, she does laugh a lot.

Clearly it was enough to ensnare smitten Anthony. He wrote: "Valerie, shall we get engaged in a distant way so that we are sort of linked together until we next meet? How would that suit you?"

Valerie flirts back her acceptance: "Anthony... yes, Anthony, shall we?"

"It was a brave decision to make," observes curator Dr Frances Parton. "He was serving in North Africa, she was with the ATS. They were apart, but despite all the problems they decided to make that commitment and get engaged."

"They seem a very open couple, and even though it's from 1944, their letters instantly transport you right into their feelings, circumstances and problems. This is from a whole series of correspondence and really makes you want to dig the rest of the letters out to find out what happened."

All letters come from the museum's archive and are largely donated by members of the public who often unearth them in the attic. The letters include poignant photos, embroidered postcards

from the First World War, trinkets and a dazzling diamond-encrusted sweetheart brooch from the Second World War. By contrast, there are no 'Dear John' letters,

**“ I have not had the heart to write and tell you sad news... ”**

probably because few of us would keep reminders of when we were dumped. Instead, their commentary with themes of love, loss and yearning is affectionate and deeply moving.

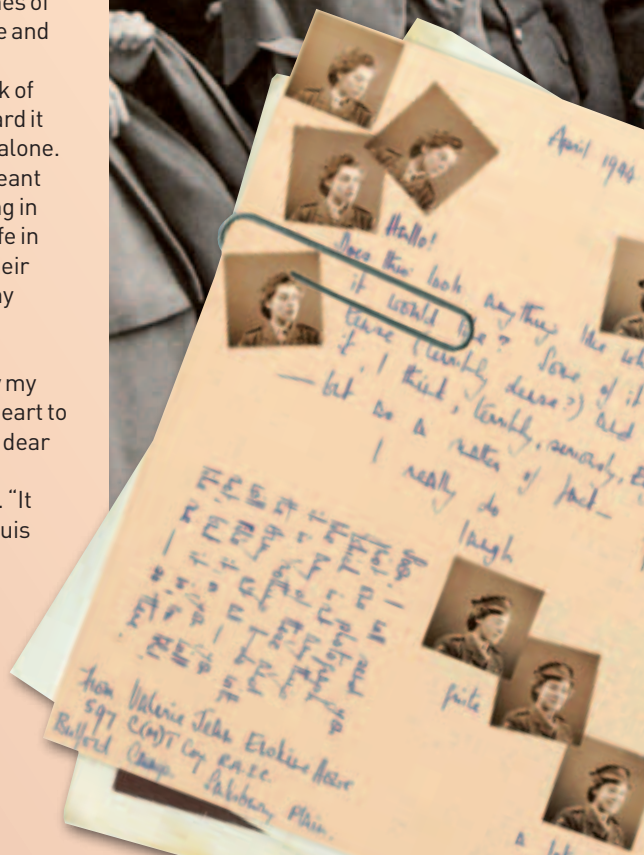
The letters reflect the heartbreak of couples parted by Service and how hard it can be to cope in dire circumstances alone.

One example is the story of Sergeant Louis Jones who in 1901, while serving in Gibraltar, opened a letter from his wife in England, telling him of the death of their beloved two-year-old son Teddy, a tiny victim of cholera.

She wrote: "I expect you think something dreadful has happened by my not writing to you. I have not had the heart to write and tell you sad news about our dear little son."

"It is very moving," says Frances. "It must have been an awful letter for Louis to receive in Gibraltar. She is really struggling to cope and has to borrow money from neighbours to buy black cloth to make a funeral outfit.

"She also has to borrow to pay her doctor and tells her husband that



he will know how much their son had grown because they had measured him for a coffin, which was 37 inches.

"Even though some letters are 200 years old, they are full of emotion," adds Frances. "Other writers can be very reserved but that is down to personality."

From the wives of Wellington's men to men and women with loved ones serving in Afghanistan, the exhibition brings alive the personal realities of war.

From the Falklands War in 1982 there is a letter from Army press officer Lieutenant Colonel David Dunne to his daughter Jessica. In a postcard sent from the QE2, he marks his cabin, describes wildlife and chivvies his daughter to "help your mother around the house."



**Love letters: Curator Dr Frances Parton from the National Army Museum**

There is a selection of photos from Iraq in 2003 showing a soldier calling home on a satellite phone to reflect new ways of communication. Then there is an oral history from current soldiers' wives and sweethearts. Created by Army wife Nancy Tanner, she talks about how the Army has affected their relationship and how she copes when her husband is away.

"It really brings the whole exhibition together," says Frances. "We want to show that it is not only historic letters from the past but that it is relevant to Army wives and husbands today."

In an era where emails are increasingly the norm, you wonder how an exhibition like this will be staged in future. Nevertheless, Frances is convinced that most people will continue to treasure a handwritten letter.

"Although you can send emails, a letter is very considered and physical. You see somebody's handwriting, and imagine them sealing the envelope and posting it. So a letter really does do something that an email or telephone call can't do."

Frances' favourite artefact is a double gold ring sent by Sergeant Robert Porter at Waterloo, to let his wife know that he survived. The rings – which dovetail perfectly – are inscribed with his name on one and her name on the other.

"Mrs Porter wore both rings to symbolise their unity which is very romantic. Even though there was a difficult period while they were separated, something wonderful came out of it."

The exhibition has proved highly popular, with many people lingering while they read the letters. Sometimes, faded spidery handwriting can be hard to read and in the 19th century authors wrote vertically before turning the paper horizontally and writing across the vertical lines to conserve precious paper (known as crossed lines).

"But the great thing is that the letters are so immediate," says Frances. "People get really involved and that is lovely to see."

The letters compete with EastEnders in terms of romance and drama, all tempered by the knowledge that their most recent letter could also be their final letter.

They also point to the need to have common experiences. For example, in a 1918 letter to his wife, Private William Harper hints of being terrified at the prospect of going over the top, but says more about his cold.

Over the 230 years that the exhibition spans, the timelessness of love shines through and you sense that what really unites the love letters and the situations within them is the desire for each of us to share in our experiences.

*The exhibition is on at the National Army Museum, Chelsea, until 31 July.*



**Sealed with a kiss: the exhibition features more than 200 years of love letters sent from war zones**

**(Below left) Battline proposal: Valerie writes to her sweetheart Major Anthony Ryshworth-Hill**

# SUDOKU

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

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

Solution to the March 2011 puzzle



Send in your Sudoku solution and you could win a Maglite torch. Our address is on page 4. For more info, visit [www.maglite.com](http://www.maglite.com), and for nearest stockist details call Burton McCall on 0116 234 4644.

# CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

COMPUTERS have taken a lot of work out of chess study. It is so easy to sit back and watch a chess DVD these days and let the commentator take you through the labyrinth of positions. I can recall the days when we did all this with a book and had to commit serious time to study to get any better.

Indeed there is still plenty of room for books in my heart, especially if they are written the way Bruce Pandolfini has with his Chess Movies 1 tome.

Here, instead of having to physically use a board and pieces to play through the moves, every single move is diagrammed and explained so you can read this anywhere without a board. As the Meerkat would say...simples!

It's a book about quick tricks and traps and is a useful tool for a cunning surprise. Enjoy this on the bus, the train or even in the bath, heaven forbid. It is available from [www.newinchess.com](http://www.newinchess.com) along with their brilliant monthly magazine, New in Chess, which is now in a new larger format.

Here's a position from the game Portman-Pickering (Banbury 2011). It's me as white to move. I played 1.Rook (e) to c1 to keep the pressure on the c-file. What did I miss?



Send your answers to me at carl.portman282@mod.uk The first correct answer out of the hat wins a copy of 101 Brilliant Chess Miniatures, by John Nunn. Kindly donated by Chess Direct at [www.chessdirect.co.uk](http://www.chessdirect.co.uk)

The answer to the March problem was 1.g8=knight!! 1...b5 2.Ne7 Kxb4 3.Nc6 checkmate. The Jan/Feb winner was Richard Harrop from DE&S. The March winner to be announced.

The Combined Services Chess Championships will be held from 26-30 May at HMS Nelson. Players of all strengths are welcome and you can be a serving or retired member of the forces or a MOD civil servant. Details available on the Defence Intranet in DIN 2011 DIN10-006 or from [www.serviceschess.co.uk](http://www.serviceschess.co.uk)

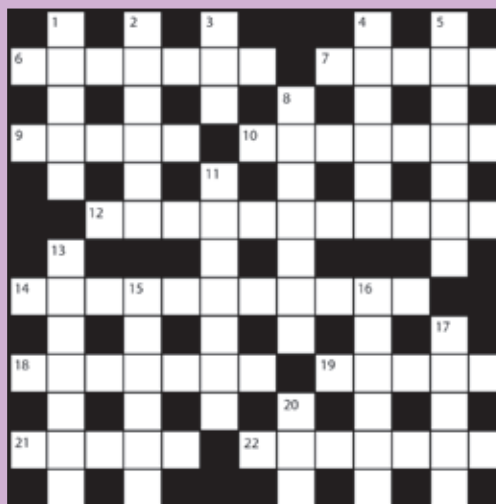
# TOPICAL CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

- 6. See 9 Across
- 7. Rolling In The Deep was a big hit single for this singer recently (5)
- 9. And 6 Across. He was deposed as Egypt's leader in 2011 (5,7)
- 10. Sicily's capital city (7)
- 12. Contestant on the 2011 series of Dancing On Ice (5,6)
- 14. See 20 Down
- 18. Debbie Harry's rock group (7)
- 19. Host country of the 2011 World Cup in cricket (5)
- 21. See 13 Down
- 22. Hard cheese which varies in flavour from mild to extra sharp (7)

## DOWN

- 1. Henry VIII's royal house (5)
- 2. North America Indian people who now live chiefly in Oklahoma (6)



- 3. Prince William is a search and rescue pilot with this part of the British Armed Forces (3)
- 4. Television commercial (6)
- 5. Financial allowance paid after a divorce (7)
- 8. Raised hairs on the back of a dog's neck (7)
- 11. Hydrocyanic acid is also called \_\_\_\_\_ acid (7)

## SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- 1. Tudor 2. Pawnee
- 3. RAF 4. Advert
- 5. Allmony 8. Hackles
- 11. Prussic 13. William
- 15. Genius 16. Canada
- 17. Milan 20. The
- 21. Hague 22. Cheddar
- 18. Blondie 19. India
- 12. Kerry Katona 14. King's Speech
- 9. Hosni 10. Palermo
- 6. Mubarak 7. Adele

- 13. And 21 Across. Britain's Foreign Secretary (7,5)
- 15. Uniquely gifted individual (6)
- 16. Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen's home country (6)
- 17. Ex-Manchester City footballer Robinho now plays his football in this city (5)
- 20. And 14 Across. Colin Firth's multi-award-winning movie (3,5,6)

# WIN TWO TICKETS FOR THE GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP FINAL AT TWICKENHAM



HERE'S a chance to snatch two tickets for the Cabbage Patch (sporting fans' affectionate nickname for the home of rugby) to soak up the atmosphere at this fantastic fixture at the end of May.

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**TO WIN,** just email your name, address and telephone number to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk) by 28 April 2011. Include the phrase **Gullivers Twickenham Final** in the subject line.

## WIN A VIP STAY FOR TWO AT BRIDGEWOOD MANOR, KENT



SPRING is in the air so what better way to celebrate than with a VIP break in a stylish hotel? *Defence Focus* has teamed up with the charming Bridgewood Manor in Chatham, Kent, part of the award-winning QHotels group, to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a two-night break for two.

The prize includes luxurious accommodation in an en suite superior room with complimentary tea and coffee making facilities, and fluffy bathrobes too.

A full English breakfast can be enjoyed each morning and on one of the evenings you can enjoy a delicious three-course meal at the elegant Squires restaurant.

If you overindulge you can work out in the fully equipped gym, take a dip in the indoor pool or treat yourself to a pampering massage or facial at the onsite spa\*. To top

off your perfect stay, afternoon tea for two will be served in the lounge.

Designed around a wonderful indoor courtyard, the 4-star, 100-bedroom Bridgewood Manor is the perfect place for a relaxing getaway. Its welcoming lounge, stylish bar, excellent restaurant, onsite leisure facilities and attentive, friendly service will make you feel like a VIP.

To win this amazing prize simply answer the following question and send it with your name, full address and phone number to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk), placing Bridgewood Manor in the subject line, by 28 April 2011. **Q: What is the name of the restaurant at Bridgewood Manor?**

For more information about offers at Bridgewood Manor please go to [www.qhotels.co.uk](http://www.qhotels.co.uk) or call 01634 201333.



**Terms and conditions:** The prize is a two-night break for two people at Bridgewood Manor, Kent, on a bed and breakfast basis in a superior room to include dinner on one evening, afternoon tea for two and complimentary use of the leisure facilities. \*Spa treatments are not included. Prize must be taken by 30 November 2011. Subject to availability. No cash alternative. Non-transferable. Deadline for entries 28 April 2011.



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