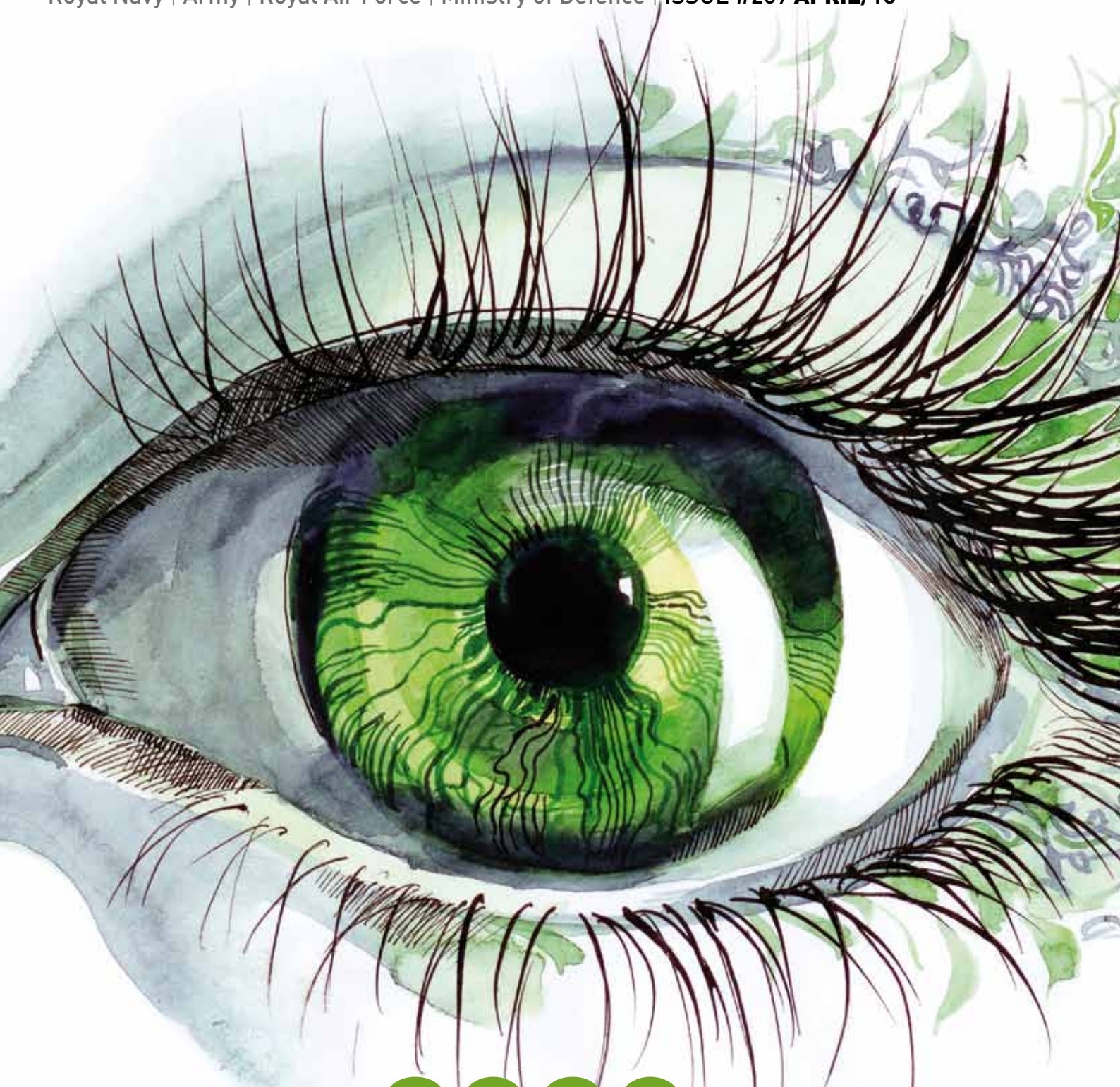


HERRICK HEROES, BOMB DISPOSAL, OP TOSCA, AND MORE

Defence**Focus**

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ARMY 2020 VISION

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Picture: Sergeant Andy Reddy RLC

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THEIR STORIES P20**



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EDITOR'S NOTE

DefenceFocus

For everyone in defence
Published by the Ministry of Defence

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Advertising
Advertising sales are handled by Richard Stillman at Ten Alps Media. Tel: 020 7657 1837
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Distribution
The magazine is distributed through major military bases, depots and MOD offices.



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

FIONA SIMPSON



Apparently moving house is one of the most stressful things you can do. Well imagine moving house on the scale that the Army is undertaking with 12,000 troops currently based in Germany coming

back to the UK.

The majority of them are saying *auf wiedersehen* to their German bases in the next three years.

On page 12 Lorraine McBride looks at the who, what, why, where and when of the £1.8bn rebasing plan, all part of Army 2020. There is also a handy map to help you see who will be going where.

I know only too well the zillions of little things you have to do in order to move house as I'm moving myself this month.

However, my small step for (wo)man is nothing compared to the giant leap for mankind which the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) is undertaking to move so many people and bits of kit from Germany to rehome them back in Blighty.

You can hear from DIO Chief Executive Andrew Manley, whose organisation will be orchestrating the plan, which he describes as "like building a mini Olympics".

There's more orchestration going on this month with the launch of the new operating model, which will see big changes in the way the whole organisation conducts its business.

It's something we have been talking about for a long time, but now it has finally come into being, *Defence Focus* explains (in as simple a way as possible) what it is and why you should care about it.

So hopefully with better ways of working, and all the planning going on, the big move won't be so stressful.

As for me, I wonder if DIO are too busy to help me with all my packing?

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IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS – 31 JANUARY TO 5 APRIL 2013



Lance Corporal Webb

Lance Corporal Jamie Webb of 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (1 MERCIAN) died in an ISAF hospital in

Afghanistan on 26 March from wounds sustained during an enemy attack on his patrol base in the Nad 'Ali district of Helmand province the previous day.

Lance Corporal Webb was born on 6 October 1988. He joined the British Army aged 18 in 2006. His first posting with B Company took him to Ballykinler, Northern Ireland, on Operation Banner.

He deployed with 1 MERCIAN on two tours of Afghanistan. On his first tour in 2010 he served as a rifle section second-in-command in the Nahr-e Saraj area operating with a Danish battle group.

As a result of his performance on operations in Afghanistan, Lance Corporal Webb was recommended for promotion and successfully completed a junior non-commissioned officer cadre in October 2011.

Lance Corporal Webb deployed

on his second tour of Afghanistan in October 2012. Working as a Company intelligence collator and section second-in-command he displayed a sharp, analytical mind and a deep understanding of the operational environment and the campaign.

Lance Corporal Webb leaves behind his much loved parents Dave and Sue, and close family.

Paying tribute, Lieutenant Colonel Phil Kimber, Commanding Officer of 1 MERCIAN, said: "A real character, a totally professional soldier, and a great friend to many, Lance Corporal Webb was exactly the type of man you wanted around."

"Always with a smile on his face, always willing to engage in some witty and mischievous banter, he really did lift the morale of all around him."

HELMAND HERO HONOURED

The 'supremely courageous and inspiring' actions of Lance Corporal Ashworth have been recognised with the premier award for gallantry.

The 23-year-old from the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards was killed storming an insurgent position in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province in June 2012. His conduct in putting himself in the line of fire to protect his colleagues has been rewarded with the Victoria Cross.

Lance Corporal Ashworth and his platoon were tasked to deal with an insurgent sharpshooter team. They came under fire as soon as they landed, prompting him to lead his fire team in a 300-metre charge to the heart of the enemy position. Two insurgents were killed in this initial attack, but a follow-up assault by Afghan police stalled when a patrolman was shot and killed as the enemy fled.

Lance Corporal Ashworth again led from the front, advancing on an insurgent compound using grenades to drive the final remaining enemy to an outbuilding. The insurgents were now being supported by fire from several positions. The immediate

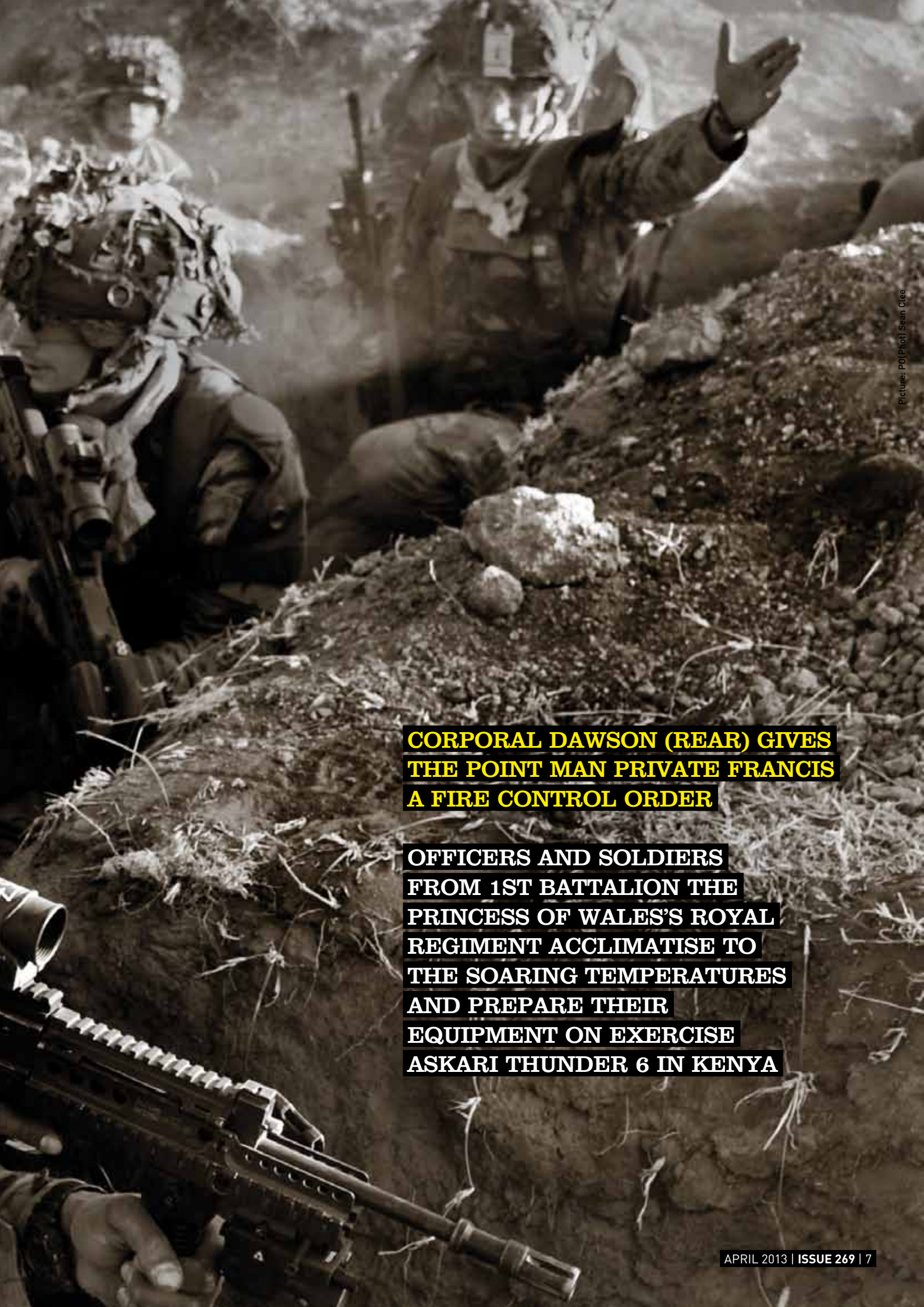
priority was now to neutralise the final sharpshooter and extract as soon as possible. Using his final grenade, Lance Corporal Ashworth crawled behind a knee-high wall that ran parallel to the front of the outbuilding. With just enough cover to conceal his prostrate 6'8" form, he edged forward while bullets flew over his head. When he was within 5 metres of the insurgent position the Lance Corporal was desperate to make his last grenade count.

Under fire he crawled out from behind the wall to get a better angle for his throw. As he was preparing to throw the grenade he was hit.

His citation says: "Despite the ferocity of the insurgent's resistance, Ashworth refused to be beaten. His total disregard for his own safety in ensuring that the last grenade was posted accurately was the gallant last action of a soldier who had willingly placed himself in the line of fire on numerous occasions earlier in the attack. This supremely courageous and inspiring action deserves the highest recognition."







Picture: POI Photo/ Sean Clea

**CORPORAL DAWSON (REAR) GIVES
THE POINT MAN PRIVATE FRANCIS
A FIRE CONTROL ORDER**

**OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS
FROM 1ST BATTALION THE
PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL
REGIMENT ACCLIMATISE TO
THE SOARING TEMPERATURES
AND PREPARE THEIR
EQUIPMENT ON EXERCISE
ASKARI THUNDER 6 IN KENYA**

BOMBS AWAY

THANKS TO A NEW REGIMENT AND A NEW JOINED UP TRAINING FACILITY, THINGS WILL ONLY EVER GO BANG WHEN THE TROOPS WANT THEM TO WRITES IAN CARR

A Garfield soft toy stares down from one of the front bedroom windows. The grass in the front garden is well kept, but there's not much to see in terms of flowers. Mind you, the owners of this attractive four-bedroom detached property with integral garage have had more pressing concerns than sorting out the flowerbeds.

For this is no quiet housing estate but a small part of the state-of-the-art £100m training facility at St Georges Barracks, Bicester. It is just one of the specially designed facilities where the newly commissioned Defence Explosives Ordnance Disposal, Munitions and Search Training Regiment (DEMS Trg Regt) is already putting its students through their rigorous training and getting them to practice their techniques and tactics.

What might represent domestic normality for the rest of us is seen as a potential bomb-making factory by these men and women determined to thwart the enemy whether they are overseas or on UK home soil.

Which explains why the car parked in the drive is not the new Saab that you might associate with such a house, but an old Vauxhall with a flat front offside tyre. But

that doesn't matter, for this car is not here for the school-run. Instead it is a possible hiding place for electrical switches, detonators, explosive or anything else that might form part of the bomb maker's kit, stashed away behind door panels or dashboard facias.

Walking methodically up and down the front lawn, a soldier pushes, not a lawnmower, but a geophysical sensor to detect what secrets might be hidden below the turf. Meanwhile his colleagues, clad in white overalls, are taking samples from doorframes and carpets to test for signs of explosive or booby traps. To the untrained eye, it all looks like a cross between Time Team and Crime Scene Investigation.

When General Sir Peter Wall, Chief of the General Staff, visited the school on 15 March to attend its official opening and to conduct the new Regiment's standing up ceremony, he praised the thought and imagination that had gone into the creation of the school's many facilities.

"This marks another significant way point in developing further our unique capabilities which are vital in supporting our troops and which are probably done better here than anywhere else in the world, and that's not a false claim," he said. "This

facility will bring together under one roof the training and capabilities that have been evolving over many years in numerous theatres around the world."

Expertise and assets from across the Services have been brought together to create what its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Henson has described as "an absolutely first class training facility".

"I run more than 73 different types of courses here which translates into around 4,000 students on 200 courses every year," he said.

The school occupies two sites, one at St George's Barracks in Bicester, the other at Kineton, 30 miles away. Each has been designed to provide different types of specialist training environment. There are four broad strands of expertise which are taught here covering searching for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to establish safe routes for patrols and to check compounds for devices; disposing or neutralising IEDs; disposing of conventional munitions, such as Second World War bombs, and all aspects of the handling and safe storage of ammunition.

At the school students encounter, and are taught to deal with, all the hazards and threats that they could expect to confront in the line of duty. That might mean searching cars and houses for bomb making equipment or learning to cope with hazardous environments by squeezing into a maze of specially designed subterranean tunnels simulating sewage and other service access pipes to deal with devices. Or inching their way along 80 feet of pitch black "Tora Bora type" cave system to encounter whatever horrors their instructors have dreamt up for them.

In the 7 metre deep pool, divers will test their mettle dismantling mines, or get used to operating in an oil contaminated environment in the mock up of HMS *Antelope*, the frigate that, during the Falklands War, was penetrated by two bombs that did not explode.

While the school's official opening has just taken place, it welcomed its first students through the gates in September last year. General Wall expressed his



Pictures: Richard Watt



Know how: 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment search around Char Coucha Village.

Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere RLC

admiration for the professionalism and dedication of the 253 staff that had made opening the new school on time possible, given that they had also had to support operations in Afghanistan while setting it all up.

"I put it to you," he said, "that while this is a training regiment within the army's regimental training organisation, it is also operational in its own right, which makes it even more remarkable that it has maintained its outputs while also dealing with the tremendous change that has got us to where we are today."

But although the hard earned congratulations were well deserved, no one was in any doubt that when it comes to the threat that our Armed Forces face, this

was just one more important step along the path to thwarting a cunning and determined enemy. Certainly the trend in training requirements supports this view, with some areas of the syllabus, such as countering the IED threat increasing by more than 100 per cent over the last three years.

"Those loadings for us, are unlikely to decrease significantly despite the drawdown in Op Herrick" said Lieutenant Colonel Henson. "So we will have to do even more with what we have got by improving our capacity, driving up our pass rates and developing our techniques and use of simulation and emulation to make the training as safe and as real as possible."

Which was exactly in line with CGS's vision of the future.

"Over the last few years our opponents have kept us hard at it with their primary weapon of choice the IED," he said. "I don't see that changing, even when we are drawing down in Afghanistan. We have to keep on top of the game in combating these devices that highly motivated people will use to try to hinder our freedom of movement in future operations, be they humanitarian or military."

"It will be in this place where we will prepare to deal with that. It is the instructors and the students that will come through here every year that will have the serious responsibility to keep us intellectually and militarily on top and taking the initiative against this all too pervasive threat." **DF**



The new Operating Model will see money and decision-making delegated to the Services

THINKING DEFENCE: THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW OPERATING MODEL

WE’VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT FOR SOME TIME BUT THE NEW OPERATING MODEL FINALLY LAUNCHED THIS MONTH. BUT WHAT IS IT, WHY DOES IT MATTER AND WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Since Lord Levene’s Defence Reform Report in June 2011, teams across Defence have been working hard to bring into reality his recommendation for a new operating model based on more responsibility sitting with the Commands, and Head Office being a smaller and more strategic body.

Defence Reform sits under the ‘Transforming Defence’ umbrella and it’s the first change programme since the eighties to directly tackle the way the department is fundamentally organised. The simple premise is that the people who know best how to deliver something are empowered to do so and their leaders are held accountable for it.

When it comes to ‘Transformation’ though there are probably two types of people in Defence: those who are tired of being told about it and those that don’t think it’s relevant to them.

Jonathan Slater, Director General Transformation and Corporate Strategy, explains why it does mean something to all of us: “When you see a news story about the MOD it’s often not complimentary, and that’s not nice for any of us. Over time, the new Operating Model will make the department work better and will help to change that public perception.”

There were 53 recommendations in Lord Levene’s report and implementing all of them impacts on every part of Defence. Recognising how

fundamental the changes are, the new Operating Model has been developed using input from specialist teams across Defence, expert reviews and through staff engagement.

WHAT'S CHANGING IN THE TLBS?

There are now seven Top Level Budgets (TLBs) that make up Defence: Head Office and Corporate Services, Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and the three Commands – Navy, Army, Air - have been joined by Joint Forces Command, which became fully operational at the same time as the Operating Model was launched.

All these TLBs are directly affected. From this month the new Operating Model delegates money and decision-making from Head Office to the other TLBs, so they are now more free to run their business without day-to-day interference.

The big change for DE&S is that they will be facing five customers (the four commands and Head Office) instead of one. And to avoid a repetition of past history characterised by bad investment decisions and budget overspends, DE&S will only agree to deliver a project if the customer can prove they have the resources to fund the programme and DE&S is confident it can deliver it.

Group Captain Rob Woods works in the DE&S team responsible for ensuring they can handle the change and explains how it may help them better understand their customers: "Rather than going through a middle-man in Head Office, DE&S staff will be creating a much closer working relationship with our end users. Over time, this should simplify the process, strengthen relationships, and provide a better understanding of our customers' requirements. All this should help us make better decisions."

One of the ways to ensure we make better investments is to apply more evidence-based decision-making to the process. Defence Science and Technology is looking at how to link science and technology and capability investment decisions in order to deliver what the Services will need not just now but in the future.

A fundamental element of the new Operating Model is the delegation of financial and military capability planning to the Service Commands. So the existing teams responsible for managing capability have been bolstered by experts moved from Head Office, and the new 'Director of Resources' posts in each TLB will be responsible for the 'hard-headed

approach' to what we can afford outlined in the Defence Vision.

Colonel Max Joy works in the capability team at Army HQ and explains: "Over time the equipment programmes will feel less like something we've been told by the Centre to buy and more like something we've decided on for ourselves."

DIO and Defence Business Services were formed very early in the programme to deliver services across Defence in place of the individual TLB teams. Both are looking at how commercial sector expertise can deliver more customer-focused services at reduced cost.

Martin Warman works in the team delivering the enhanced Operating Model in DIO, also launched this month. He says: "DIO was born of Defence Reform and we're committed to providing the best services we can in a more cost efficient way. We needed to embrace private sector best practice to help us do that and we're well on the way."

WHAT ABOUT THE CENTRE?

Lord Levene's recommendations were all about supporting the front line better by reducing non-front-line costs and ensuring every pound spent on Defence counts.

In line with this Head Office is taking a more strategic role, reducing duplication with the TLBs and focusing on providing clearer direction, as well as holding TLBs to account for delivery. It is also reducing its headcount to less than 1,600 staff by 2015. A smaller Head Office will be forced to stay strategic and let the TLBs get on with their work.

Jonathan Slater says: "The organisational changes make sense, but it's not going to work unless the behaviour of staff in Head Office also changes. They can't get involved in



the detail or they'll undermine the accountability of the TLB holders."

WHAT NEXT?

Now the new Operating Model has launched, it will be no easy task to make sure the changes work and really do start to make things better.

Jonathan acknowledges the need for us all to get behind the changes, especially the new ways of working: "Changing the behaviours and culture of an organisation as large and set in its ways as Defence isn't easy, but I believe it's something we all want and we can't do it without everyone pulling together." **DF**

TRANSFORMING DEFENCE OPERATING MODEL

The new Operating Model is based on six core functions which sum up everything we do:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Direct: a smaller Head Office directing all Defence activity ■ Operate: PJHQ focused on the deployment and use of military forces ■ Generate and Develop: how the Commands deliver military capability ■ Acquire: DE&S leading on procuring and supporting military capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enable: DIO and DBS delivering support services across Defence ■ Account: our leaders answering to parliament on our performance <p>If you want to know more go to 'How Defence Works' from the homepage of the Defence Intranet under 'Policy and Guidance' for the pdf or interactive version of the model.</p>
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BASING: ON TRACK, ON TIME AND ON BUDGET

MOVING 16,000 TROOPS FROM GERMANY TO THE UK SOUNDS TRICKY. ANDREW MANLEY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE DEFENCE INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATION (DIO), SHARES HIS £1.8BN REBASING PLAN WITH LORRAINE MCBRIDE



Right Manley for the job:
Andrew Manley is Chief
Executive of the DIO

Picture: Harland Quarrington

DF: Who took the decisions on which bases will shut and the movements of troops back to the UK?

AM: In July 2012 the Defence Secretary articulated the future design and structure of the British Army through the Army 2020 report. The Regular Army Basing Plan supports the implementation of the Army 2020 strategy and accommodates the forces returning from Germany. It's been developed through close working between the Army and DIO.

The Army decided on the necessary unit moves to ensure each type of unit is based in the right location to allow it to train in the best and most effective way with other units - both regular and reserve - and the DIO led on proposing infrastructure solutions to meet the Army's needs.

DF: Were the Prime Minister and Chancellor also involved and was there any debate?

The Defence Secretary agreed the overall plan and funding, which was then approved by the Prime Minister

and Chancellor. I think there was a remarkable degree of harmony about the overall plan. The political view was that the British Army's presence in Germany no longer served a strategic purpose. That was a legacy of the Cold War and gave us an opportunity to consolidate the Army back inside the UK.

DF: Under the rebasing plan, thousands of homes will be built as troops return to the UK. When will construction get underway?

AM: The delivery of the infrastructure as part of the Regular Basing Plan is possibly the largest infrastructure change in a generation.

DIO is in the process of refining a delivery plan to ensure the infrastructure is in place for Army personnel and their families.

We're likely to see construction get underway from 2014/15. We're already on track to bring the majority of soldiers home by 2015 and, while we can't confirm the delivery programme until the relevant planning and other approvals have been secured, we're confident that we will bring home the last major Army unit (20 Brigade) by 2020.

DF: Have any UK areas either resisted or embraced the changes against shrinking or closing given that millions of pounds are at stake?

AM: It was interesting watching the Secretary of State's announcement to Parliament when all the MPs were hugely supportive. I'd say the rallying cry was 'we want a piece of the Armed Forces in our constituency!' With the reputation of the Armed Forces rising high, MPs are very keen to keep the uniform in their community.

Local communities have also been largely supportive of the plans, which of course are subject to planning permissions and environmental assessments.

DF: A few years ago there was a push to upgrade single living accommodation? What are the priorities now?

AM: The key priorities within the Regular Army Basing Plan are to support the return of 16,000 soldiers from Germany. Delivering £1bn of single living accommodation, Service families accommodation and Service messes is a part of the plan, but our overall priority to provide a basing laydown that enables the people of Defence to live, work, train and deploy at home and overseas remains.

Single living has had a recent focus but now we

need to agree with the Chiefs how much do we need in future and what type do we provide? Do we want every soldier, airman or sailor to have an en suite or should recruits share rooms as part of team and training development? I think the investment will be spread across family, single living and technical accommodation.

DF: What will happen to the disused bases?

AM: The plan identifies seven sites that are no longer required for regular Army basing. The Defence Secretary announced that a small number of sites would be released: Craigiehall, Edinburgh, Claro Barracks, Ripon, Howe Barracks, Canterbury and Cawdor Barracks, Brawdy, and our intent is to close those barracks and recycle the assets for sale or for new housing.

Of course there is a drive from central government to release more public sector land for central government housing and we're an important contributor to that programme.

DF: Is the backdrop to all this purely because of pressure to make huge savings?

AM: No, but while financial savings don't drive the plan, we are able to realise efficiencies through rationalising the estate and bringing troops and their families back from Germany. For example, there's obviously an Army saving in not having to pay overseas allowances, travel and support for education, and medical and dental facilities abroad.

DF: What will be the total cost of relocation and how will you ensure value for money?

AM: The programme outlined by Philip Hammond will cost £1.8bn between now and 2020. DIO has sought to make the best use of facilities within the existing estate to optimise value for money.

Delivering Defence in the most effective, efficient and sustainable way continues to be one of the key priorities in the Defence Plan. The new buildings and refurbishments will be delivered in accordance with our sustainability policies to reduce waste, greenhouse emissions and water consumption. We are very much at the forefront of eco-friendly construction techniques. Rainwater harvesting, wind power and recycling sewage will help us to do everything we can to make sure that construction is as friendly to the environment as possible.

DF: What are the main challenges in ensuring the construction timescale is adhered to?

AM: The investment programme over the next 10 years is like building a mini-Olympics. While challenging, the disciplines are similar, involving good project management, understanding the requirement, contracting against a timeline and ensuring delivery is on time and within budget. It requires a huge amount of hard work by our technical advisors, our contractors and us.

DF: Salisbury Plain is already intensively used. How will DIO cope with 4,000 extra troops?

AM: The uplift of approximately 4,000 extra troops around the Salisbury Plain Training Area is indeed one



“ Everyone wants a piece of the Armed Forces in their constituency ”


of the main challenges under the basing plan but it's the only place in the country where the Army can carry out the complex and demanding training exercises they need to do and in which they provide support to each other. Having all three brigades located in close proximity around the Plain will enable them to train and fight more effectively in future.

Salisbury Plain is heavily used in part but significant areas are hardly used at all. Ultimately it's down to good planning to make sure that we're distributing the requirement to use it evenly across the land mass.

DF: DIO has been at the forefront of the Defence Transformation agenda. Are you confident that DIO can deliver this ambitious programme?

AM: The DIO has continued to transform into what promises to be a world-class infrastructure organisation, based on the new Enhanced Operating Model, which is about what we manage, how we manage it, the management information system that underpins it and how we organise our people around activities.

I'm confident that we have the right organisational design to adapt and meet such challenges and the right processes to deliver this programme against challenging deadlines.

Most importantly, I believe we have the right people - talented professionals, working as one team - to deliver the Regular Army Basing Plan. We see this as an opportunity to really make a difference to the lives of our Armed Forces colleagues and look forward to taking up the challenge. 

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

HEAD OF ARMY REBASING, MAJOR GENERAL NICK POPE, TELLS LORRAINE MCBRIDE WHY BRINGING BACK TROOPS FROM GERMANY MEANS A BOOST FOR THE ARMY

The Army is facing its biggest upheaval in a generation. In March, the MOD announced the details of its basing review. For the first time in more than 200 years, the British Army will be predominantly based in the UK. Around 12,000 British troops will return from Germany by the end of 2015, with the final 4,000 back by the end of 2019.

The head of army rebasing is Major General Nick Pope who knows that the mammoth drawdown will require careful logistical planning which he acknowledges will take time.

British troops have been in Germany since the Second World War, but while it's the end of an era, General Pope says it opens a new chapter for a fully integrated army with regulars and reservists.

"Bringing the Army back from Germany in many ways is poignant. We have fond memories of our time there," he said. "But it's time to move on to the new model. That enables us to give families more stability, to give soldiers certainty, and to give Army 2020 a good chance to deliver in the timelines we expect."

CATALYST

The catalyst for the army rebasing plan was the need to underpin the Army 2020 structure announced last year.

For while the Army has shrunk over decades, the size of MOD's vast estate has remained much the same.

The 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review made a number of recommendations to remodel the Armed Forces and reshape the defence estate, selling off tracts of disused MOD



Picture: Harland Quarrington

land, closing substandard bases and redistributing the Army more evenly around the UK.

General Pope is convinced that the basing review spells good news for the Army and peppers his speech with words like opportunity, surety, and certainty.

Thousands of troops will be based in Salisbury Plain, Edinburgh, Catterick, Aldershot, Colchester and the East Midlands. £1.8bn will be invested in the new basing plan, of which a significant £1bn will be spent on new accommodation.

This will see 1,900 new family homes and rooms for 7,800 single soldiers, the refurbishing of 800 rooms, and the upgrading of 450 family homes and SNCOs' and officers' messes. The rest will go on technical infrastructure and improving the training estate. Once complete, the

programme is expected to save £240m a year in efficiency costs.

From an Army 2020 perspective, General Pope talks of a journey to exploit basing. Implementing the plan will involve a long period of transformation that will require changes to the army's structure, vision and purpose.

Seven key hubs will be created to concentrate expertise such as logistics and communications to deliver the same output but more efficiently.

For example, units collocated in Aldershot can join forces and start thinking about how they best work together and cut repair costs.

While the rebalancing has resulted in the reduction of 23 units across the Army, General Pope says that having a collocated Reaction Force made military sense.

NAILED

"Once we nailed that particular part of the army structure, the rest of it is about representation around the rest of the UK army footprint.

We've planned for the Reaction Force to be based around Salisbury Plain and equipped for contingency, while the Adaptable Forces will be spread around the UK, capable of undertaking a range of roles including overseas deployment with homeland resilience."

Under the plan, there is an ambitious repatriation programme split over two phases. General Pope said: "Over the next four years we've got to bring a substantial swathe of individuals back from Germany because battalions are merging, disbanding or moving into the adaptable footprint around the UK.

"The second phase is bringing back the final brigade from Germany. Once we clear the German garrisons in Rhine and Hohne, we're left with a central hub – 20th Armoured Brigade in Paderborn – and now we've got an operation to move the remainder back to Salisbury Plain. That's the big move that will take time."



Picture: Cpl James Williams RLC

Auf wiedersehen: British troops have been a military presence in Germany since the Second World War

A key change is the move of 4,000 troops onto Salisbury Plain, but General Pope allays fears of overcrowding.

"It's worth remembering that Salisbury Plain has seven sites," he said, ticking them off on his fingers, "Warminster, Upavon, Larkhill, Tidworth, Bulford, Perham Down and Ludgershall. We've got the ability to sensibly accommodate troops and families over a number of areas.

3,000 SINGLE SOLDIERS

"We're talking about 3,000 single soldiers moving onto the Plain. We'll probably focus on two or three barracks locations like Larkhill, Tidworth and Perham Down where we'll build accommodation blocks and technical infrastructure. Then we're looking for other sites to build housing. I suspect you won't see a super garrison but a number of housing opportunities and barracks developed on a need basis."

General Pope believes that the moves will provide stability for military families. He said: "It will enable children to spend their entire education going to just one or two schools rather than five or six. That has real benefits for the local authority, school and family, so it's a win-win situation."

He thinks the new world-leading

accommodation is a powerful recruitment incentive and, on a recent visit to Tidworth Garrison, he was struck by the high-calibre junior ranks en suite accommodation, dining facilities and gym, and felt a pang of envy. "I just wish I could join the Army today!"

Perhaps surprisingly, given Army redundancies, General Pope expects the army's long-term footprint to stay broadly unchanged once troops return from Germany. "We've got around 79,000 regular troops in the UK now; we'll have 79,000 regular troops in the UK in future. We're centralising resources more around Salisbury Plain and modestly recalibrating elsewhere around the UK to make that happen. For example, there'll be an increase in the number of soldiers in Scotland and a modest reduction in the South East as we move out of Canterbury."

While the construction programme is testing – with 74 unit moves over the next six years – the senior army officer says that around half are routine. The remainder to move into new accommodation will be carefully choreographed over six years.

Moving house is famously one of life's most stressful events so how stressful is it moving 16,000 soldiers from Germany as


well as 6,000 soldiers across Britain?

"Oh I think in the Army we get inured to moving," he said. "Since I left home as a youngster, I'm now on my 30th house so it's part of the army psyche."

For soldiers with itchy feet, he promises fresh opportunities, pointing out that The Rifles has five battalions spread across Northern Ireland, Scotland and Salisbury Plain. "So if soldiers want a new challenge, they can settle down if they want to, or move, and that's a great choice for our soldiers that we never had before."

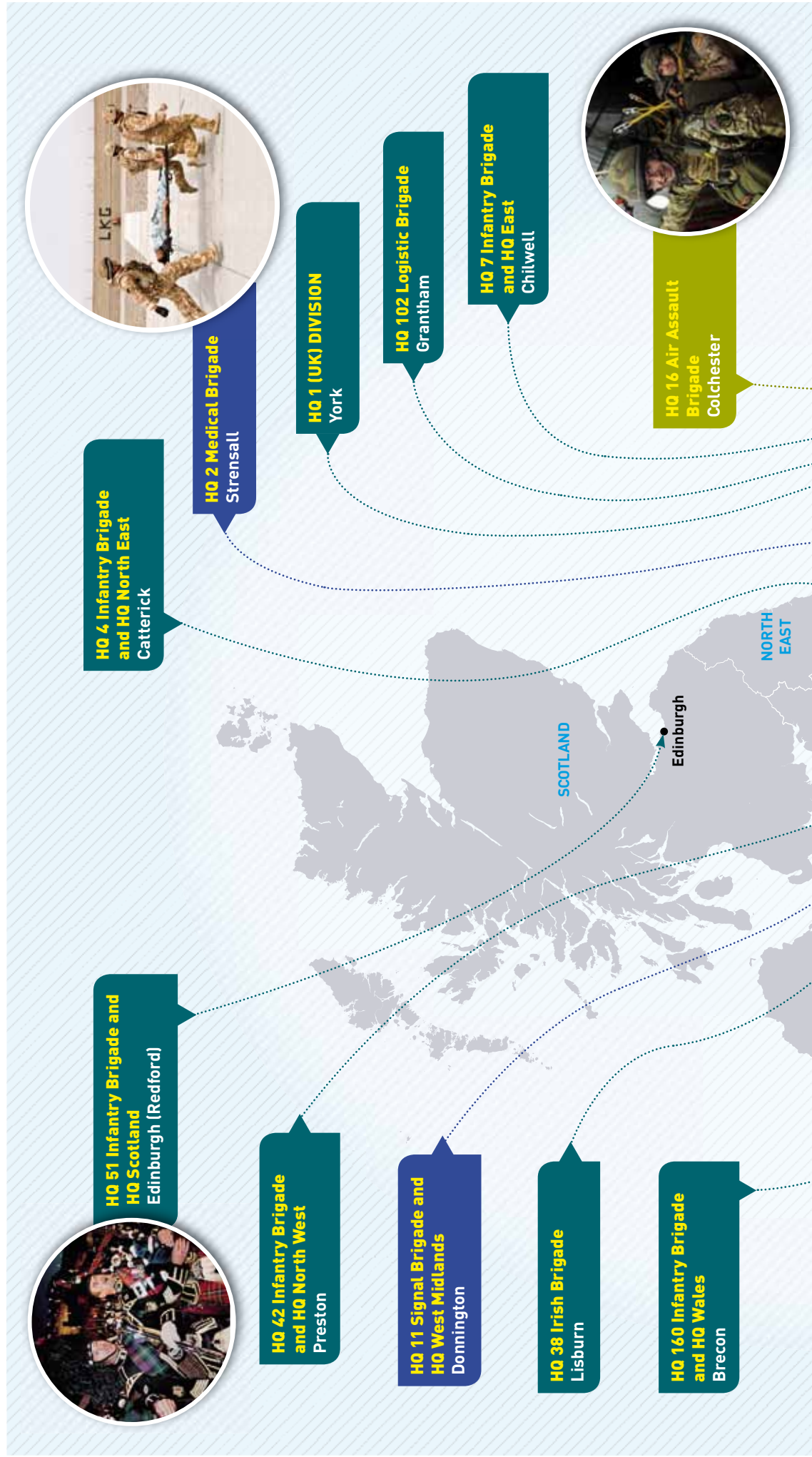
Head of the Army, General Sir Peter Wall, hailed the basing changes as welcome news. For his part, General Pope talks of flicking three switches.

"It's a militarily coherent plan that meets the army requirement and delivers Army 2020. Secondly, it's family-friendly and gives families more surety about where they live and some ability to make their own decisions in future, and thirdly, it's also affordable and will deliver value and steady long term savings."

In many ways, he admits the job was a poisoned chalice. But a year on he's convinced that the reshaping of the Army is firmly on track. "I think we've come up with a really sound plan that I'm proud of." 

2020 ARMY BASING

FOLLOWING BASE CHANGES IN LINE WITH ARMY 2020, THE ARMY'S 1* AND 2* HEADQUARTERS WILL BE TRANSFORMED TO LOOK LIKE THIS



MISSION TO MALI

AS THE UK'S INVOLVEMENT IN SUPPORTING MALI'S MILITARY INCREASES, *DEFENCE FOCUS* LOOKS AT THE MISSION SO FAR

As *Defence Focus* goes to print, 21 UK Armed Forces personnel have deployed to Mali. They have joined Irish and French troops as part of the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) to develop the infantry and artillery skills of the Malian armed forces currently fighting extremists in the north African country.

After initially providing two RAF C-17s and a Sentinel, the UK has committed to providing 40 people for the mission.

Troops from 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment are carrying out infantry training and additional personnel will be responsible for mortar and artillery training. However, UK troops are not in

combat or force protection roles.

In addition the UK has provided four headquarters staff and three civilians who are responsible for human rights and gender awareness training.

The mission is under the command of French Brigadier General François Lecointre and is expected to continue for around 15 months.



14 JANUARY 2013

Prime Minister David Cameron agrees that the UK will provide logistical support to French military operations in Mali.

14 JANUARY

Two Royal Air Force C-17 transport aircraft arrive in France as part of the UK's logistical support to French military operations.



17 JANUARY

EU Foreign Ministers agree a mission to advise and train Malian armed forces, to help them regain security and stability.



14 FEBRUARY

An RAF C-17 aircraft flies Ghanaian troops to Mali's capital, Bamako, as part of the UK's support for the international intervention in the country.



18 FEBRUARY

The EUTM launches and marks a significant partnership between the UK and the Republic of Ireland as troops from both countries will work together.

29 JANUARY

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond announces that the UK is to support the EUTM by providing up to 40 British personnel either in a headquarters or training team role.



28 FEBRUARY

An RAF C-17 aircraft transports the first of 20 Nigerian Army vehicles to Mali's capital, Bamako. The vehicles, including five-tonne trucks and water tankers, will be used by African forces as they continue to combat the terrorist insurgency in the north.



27 MARCH

21 soldiers from 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment arrive in Mali to assist in the training of the Malian military as part of the EUTM. Troops from 45 Commando Royal Marines will complete the 40-man training team.



25 JANUARY

An RAF Sentinel aircraft deploys from the UK in support of French military operations.



4 MARCH

William Hague is the first British Foreign Secretary to visit Mali.



23 MARCH

UK Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir David Richards visits The Gambia for talks with Gambian government officials to discuss the ongoing military conflict in Mali.



Leading man: a soldier armed with an SA80 with underlung grenade launcher leads a patrol in Afghanistan

Picture: Sergeant Andy Reddy RLC

AN HONOUR TO MEET YOU

ROLE MODELS FOR A GENERATION. THREE HEROES FROM HERRICK 16 TALK TO IAN CARR ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES

We are lucky at *Defence Focus*. In the line of our work we meet some extraordinary people and see some

astonishing things. But the pinnacle is when we are privileged enough to meet those remarkable people at the operational honours and awards ceremony.

We call them heroes but they shy away from such accolades, even though the rest of us wonder how could anyone do what they have done? Here are just three of them.



Picture: Corporal Steve Blake RLC

CAPTAIN MICHAEL DOBBIN, GRENADIER GUARDS: MC

"I'm single, 28 and from Reigate, if that's my Blind Date starter question," replies Captain Dobbin with a glint of amusement as he sits down to answer questions about his newly-awarded Military Cross.

But after the introductions he quickly gets down to business, explaining the events that singled him out in last year's summer fighting in Helmand province.

He speaks as only a polished British officer can, clearly, factually precise and dispassionately. He would rather speak of the actions of his team than of himself, and, when he does, it's with pride and admiration.

Captain Dobbin commanded the Reconnaissance Platoon in the 1st

Battalion Grenadier Guards Battle Group operating almost exclusively in insurgent safe havens during a time of particularly savage fighting.

"The area where we fought was forward of the patrol bases. The primary threat was from IEDs, which the insurgents would sow in the treeline. When the crops grow, and particularly at night, it's hard to spot them or the tell-tale markers. The guys who go at the front of the line can't use torches, as they would give our position away. They are phenomenally brave guys."

Captain Dobbin was recognised for his repeated gallantry by leading his men to victory on four occasions against significant odds, one of which led to the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to Lance Corporal James Ashworth.

On the first occasion, having been ambushed deep behind enemy lines and with insurgents determined to prevent the platoon extracting its two casualties, Captain Dobbin waited for the medical helicopter to lift off before launching an audacious counter attack. After two hours hard fighting, the insurgents were defeated, having been driven back more than a kilometre.

Three days later, Dobbin's platoon launched an air assault behind enemy lines to take out a tenacious insurgent sniper team. Landing in heavy fire, Captain Dobbin led his men as they charged across 200 metres of open ground. Although two of his men were killed, he pushed on, attacking with grenades and small arms fire, braving machine gun fire from as close as five metres. "The compounds are made from mud with high walls and instead of streets like a British village the alleys are only wide enough to get a donkey down.

"So when you turn corners the doorways and apertures that the insurgents fire from can be pretty close range," he said. The action ended with the enemy's rout.

Three days later lead elements of the platoon, emerging from a field of maize, found themselves facing four armed insurgents at very close quarters. A fierce fire fight ensued with a Guardsman being shot. Again, without hesitation, Dobbin charged the enemy and saved the situation.

The very next day, the platoon, while occupying a temporary checkpoint, again came under ferocious assault.

Attempting to breach the front door the insurgents came face to face with Dobbin and attacked him at close range. Grabbing his kit, Dobbin fought off then pursued the enemy. Inspired by his example the platoon charged after him, enabling the perimeter fence to be secured and a wounded comrade to be treated.

"Physically the conditions were very exhausting," said Captain Dobbin. "The enemy had the advantage of fighting on their own turf and laying IEDs, but the morale was great within our very tight platoon."

Speaking of his award he said: "In every single incident I witnessed courageous acts on the battlefield. Whenever I put the medal on I will absolutely think of every man that was in that platoon.

"It will bring memories of days where things didn't go perfectly well, but it will also remind me of many, very happy days of working with an amazing platoon."



Picture: Corporal Steve Blake RLC

LANCE CORPORAL LAWRENCE KAYSER, THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT: MC

Never get into a game of who's first to blink or Patience with Lance Corporal Kayser. You will lose.

The action in which he was recommended for a Military Cross came after he and his platoon had lain silently for four hours just metres away from the enemy. But when action was called for, the

27-year-old was decisive and unwavering. Lawrence was part of a platoon airlifted deep into enemy territory in the Gereshk Valley to clear a notorious insurgent stronghold. For ten days the platoon was involved in a series of ferocious battles, one of which could have ended badly if it hadn't been for Kayser's incredible valour and determination.

On this occasion the platoon's task was to deal with a well-known enemy infiltration firing point. "We knew they were in the area and had a habit of firing from the same place," said Kayser. "It's a relatively flat place with very dense vegetation on either side of the river. The crops and the trees which are hundreds of years old restrict visibility and the compounds are muddled about with lots of low walls, tunnels and rat runs."

Having set out three hours before dawn, the platoon took up position within a few metres of a compound wall by the line of a ditch. There, in complete silence, they waited for hours for the insurgents to walk along the track. "By dawn it was still quite comfortable, not too warm and the birds had come out, but it was still quiet." Then, a single insurgent popped his head over the wall. "He spotted all of us laid out in our positions. It was one of those chance things, he didn't know we were there, and we hadn't realised that they were asleep inside the



Silent order: soldiers from the Royal Anglian Regiment stop and observe during a patrol in the Green Zone

Picture: Sergeant Andy Reddy

HONOURS AND AWARDS



Safe hands: an RAF Regiment Gunner provides force protection to Army colleagues during a casualty evacuation

Picture: Sergeant Martin Downs (RAF)

compound. And that was it, it turned into a 10-metre fire fight.”

From previous tours, Lance Corporal Kayser had learned about Taliban tactics and was determined that the insurgents didn't get between his mates, causing confusion. “I have learned that if you are ambushed the best thing to do is to attack back because it takes their shock and awe off you and puts it right back on them.

“So I decided to get up and push through the doorway to make sure they didn't get away.” As he did this, from a doorway five metres to his right, there appeared another insurgent.

“I think it was a surprise for both of us. As we saw each other we both raised our rifles and fired. I shot from the hip. He missed but I clipped him and he dived back through the door.”

With the adrenalin flowing, Kayser chased after him, but, as he struggled through the narrow doorway in all his kit, a Taliban grenade landed at his feet. “I just saw something hit the ground like a stone about five metres away. My body armour took most of it and I got a face full of dust and dirt.” And, although he didn't realise this until later, his arm had also been hit by shrapnel from the blast.

By this time another member of the platoon had caught up with him. “We decided we had to clear the rooms in the compound so I said ‘let's go, let's do it’.”

But when he had first leapt to his feet, had there been any moment of doubt in his mind that he was doing the right thing? “No. Everything just came off the top of my head. You see danger and you think of your friends. I knew if I didn't react the enemy could've come through and cut us in half.”

Speaking of the award he said: “I feel really humbled. My platoon is made up from the best members of the battalion. This is not just my medal – it's the whole platoon's, and I will say that to everyone.”



Picture: Corporal Andy Reddy RLC

PRIVATE ABBIE MARTIN, ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS: QCVS

When Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Peter Wall presented the Operational Awards he said: “the remarkable acts of gallantry performed by these young men and women show that they are role models for their generation.” There can be no better example of that than Private Abbie Martin.

It was the 20-year-old combat medical technician's very first patrol in Afghanistan when she was tested in a way that most can only imagine. She was supporting a company operation in the Green Zone, the highly fertile area of farmland, woodland and marshes on either side of the Helmand River, when they fell prey to an insurgent ambush. “We had just left our compound when we were attacked. I was quite naïve and didn't know what to expect.”

Naïve or not, while under fire from multiple enemy firing points Martin headed across open ground with the platoon sergeant to treat a Grenadier Guardsman who had been shot in the chest. “I've never

felt so scared in my life. No one can prepare you for the first time you are shot at. When you hear the whizz go past and you know it's really close, you feel your heart beating in your head and it's just so loud, and you think ‘what am I doing here?’ But the second you hear that you've got a casualty your instincts start going and you just think ‘I've got to get there, I've got to try and save this guy's life.’”

Due to the severity of the Guardsman's injury, Martin stayed with him, conducting manual resuscitation throughout the whole casualty extraction, selflessly exposing herself to enemy fire. “At one point I remember seeing the poppies moving next to me within metres and the rounds hitting a wall behind me. So I knew the bullets were close. But I couldn't stop working on the casualty. I had to focus on him.”


Throughout all this, Martin had to keep a clear head and make crucial decisions. “They tried to get the helicopter near, but because the contact was so bad they couldn't land, so they asked me if I could move the casualty 600 metres so they could land safely. But I had to say there was no chance; if we had moved him he wouldn't have survived. So I made the decision to bring the landing site to where I was.”

Once safely back in base later that day, Martin admits to going through it all in her mind and thinking “I'm never going out again – not a chance. But then when it comes to it you think ‘they need me, and I need them’. You are scared, but when you are in contact and you look into the soldiers' faces you know that they're scared too. Then you know you are not the only one and that you are all in it together.”

Her mates assured her that she had just suffered a bit of bad luck, having to face all that on her first patrol. But then, barely a week later, Martin had to step up to the plate again.

Insurgents had attacked a compound leaving multiple casualties after a grenade had landed inside it. “People were screaming and falling off ladders. At this point I was the only medic so I had to run round triaging the casualties, conducting an initial assessment of their injuries to let the helicopter team know what they would be dealing with.”

Her citation says: “Throughout each action Martin was steadfast putting her patients before herself, despite the dangers.”

Speaking of her award, she said: “I feel really proud. I looked around the room at the other people who had been given awards and felt that I didn't deserve to be there, because they had such amazing stories. I'm such a shy girl. I never thought I would achieve as much as I have in the Army.” 

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BLUE BERET SKILLS

SINCE 1964 THE UN HAS HELPED TO KEEP THE PEACE IN CYPRUS. IAN CARR MET THE TROOPS TRAINING FOR OP TOSCA

“UN Out, Brits Go Home, UN Out, Brits Go Home...” A gang has gathered in Nicosia’s Ledra Street, one of the most poignant symbols of the division of Cyprus. Tensions are rising as the chanting crowd of protesters edge forward shaking their banners.

A UN patrol comprising four unarmed soldiers is trying to contain the situation. As more protesters appear, and with the Turkish guards opposite getting increasingly twitchy, the UN soldiers call for back up from their Quick Reaction Force. A TV news crew are not helping to calm things down as they shove cameras and microphones in the soldiers’ faces demanding to know if they think they are being too heavy-handed in the way they are treating the civilian crowd.

Back at the UN base, the soldiers’ report has been noted and riot shields are being deployed, in case things escalate.

A face in the crowd screaming abuse at a soldier looks familiar. Wait a minute, wasn’t he a Greek soldier who, just hours ago, was making trouble in the buffer zone, claiming that a Turkish soldier had fired at him from an opposite observation post? Of course it is, because this is not the green line buffer zone separating Turkish and Greek Cypriot opposing forces, but the

British Army training area at Nescliff in Shropshire.

This month (April) 130 regular and 120 reservist troops will be deploying for six months on the UN peacekeeping mission known as Op Tosca. Today’s activities are the pinnacle of six months’ intensive training to prepare them for their tour.

“We have been doing a lot of fitness training, practising the sorts of scenarios that we might face, reporting on incidents. We have learned a lot about the history of Cyprus and the situation,” said Craftsman Zac Willis, one of the members of the patrol that had to deal with the morning’s exchange of fire accusations. “It’s important that we know why things are the way they are, because, if



Picture: Sgt Russ Nolan RLC

Craftsman Zac Willis

we get something wrong when we are on patrol, it could have a big effect on things that you might not otherwise realise.”

This will be Zac’s first tour, as it will be for many of his colleagues from the Southampton-based 17 Port and Maritime Group, which includes a company from 4th Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Territorial).

Keeping the peace on the green line may not carry the threat of a tour in Helmand province, but it would be a mistake to dismiss it, as some have done in the past, as merely a sunshine tour. The soldiers’ awareness, negotiating, and public order skills will all need to be at their peak to deal with situations which can



Picture: Sergeant Russ Nolan RLC

Shout out:
troops train in public order at Nescliff Camp

Picture: Sergeant Russ Nolan RLC

quickly escalate from the seemingly trivial to a potential powder keg if they are not understood correctly and dealt with.

The UN peacekeeping mission was set up in 1964 to prevent further fighting between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot forces, and to help set the conditions for a return to normality. Ceasefire lines were rapidly established, creating the buffer zone which measures 180 kilometres across the island. At its widest it is nearly seven and a half kilometres across but in places in Nicosia it narrows to just 3.3 metres.

To this day, no formal political agreement exists. As the buffer zone occupies around three per cent of the island, it's easy to see how disputes over exactly where the boundary lines fall and who owns which piece of land can easily flare up. So, to keep things on an even keel and to deal with the 1,000 or so incidents that occur each year, around 850 unarmed UN troops and 60-plus police officers are sandwiched between two opposing forces of around 60,000 troops who jealously guard every inch of land and scrutinise every sandbag that separates them.

Most incidents may seem trivial, after all, why worry about a bit of name-calling or even some bored soldiers throwing stones at each other?

"It's a very complicated situation," explains Major Ken Wilson, now a reservist, but with 22 years experience as a regular soldier. Five months into an Op Tosca tour as a Military Observer and Liaison Officer he is at Nescliff to validate the training.

"Things could very easily and very rapidly escalate if they're not handled properly. If a soldier doesn't understand things and know what to do, a local incident



Major Ken Wilson

Picture: Sergeant Russ Nolan RLC



Strong green line: keeping public order is just one of the skills needed on Op Tosca

Picture: Sergeant Russ Nolan RLC

can become an international situation."

With the current financial situation in Cyprus, the UN troops might face extra challenges. But even without those pressures, there is enough to cope with.

Many opposing force checkpoints are merely yards apart and are often manned by conscripts who serve on them for periods of up to 18 months. Boredom is an ever-present threat as it can lead to taunts, which can all too easily get out of hand.

Name-calling can escalate to stone-throwing and possibly to pot shots. It is the UN troops' role to defuse situations before they get that far.

When 17 Port and Maritime take over they know that the opposing forces will test them and maybe reopen disputes that may have been settled, but not to their partisan satisfaction. "We've been warned that they might try it on with us. We are prepared for that and the training we have had here has been very good," said Craftsman Zac Willis.

In fact often the calm presence of the blue beret is enough to keep the peace. The

UN may be unarmed, but each opposing side recognises the importance of having an impartial and disciplined professional keeping a cool head, recording each incident as it happens and reporting it promptly. "It's a core soldiering skill," said Major Wilson, "but everything has to be noted. It has to be accurate with nothing embellished. We're there to observe, and that is understood. Each side knows that we are witnesses and that what we report could be used as evidence by the UN if they have to deal with a disturbance or a protest."

As in all operations these reports build up an overall picture of the situation, where trends can be spotted, and hot spots identified and planned for.

This is the longest running of the UN's peacekeeping missions. And by and large, thanks to the UN, peace has held dominion for nearly five decades.

Although the troops patrolling the buffer zone may not carry weapons they are armed with negotiating skills, situational awareness, patience and self-control. All of which are essential tools to have and to develop in the world that our Armed Forces must inhabit. **DF**



Reporting on duty: troops send in a patrol sit rep



Front line: buildings in the buffer zone are stark reminders of the war

Picture: Staff Sergeant Raitsev Ochoznicky

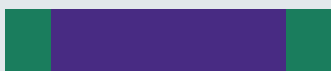
Highly decorated: W01 Mick Flynn has been awarded 12 medals over his remarkable career



MY MEDALS

W01 Mick Flynn is officially the Army's most decorated soldier and a veteran of campaigns in the Falklands, Northern Ireland, Iraq, Bosnia and Afghanistan with 12 medals to his name. Here, he looks back on his extraordinary career.
Interview: Lorraine McBride

Picture: Harland Quarrington



NORTHERN IRELAND

I survived an ambush in the Falls Road in 1979 when I was just 18 years old. One night, I was preparing for stag duty. It was my turn to drive our Land Rover but my mate Trevor jumped in the front, saying, "I'll

drive!" We argued a bit until eventually I jumped in a Pig [an armoured vehicle] and set off to drive the three-mile-distance to the Andersonstown Royal Ulster Constabulary station and British Army base in Belfast.

In those days, the guard changed on the dot of 11am but, as we approached the station, a gunman opened fire and

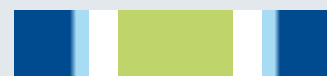
killed Trevor. As we opened the doors, shots rained down from a house 30 metres away. We saw net curtains flicker but, as we ran towards the house, we came under terrorist machine gun fire from a bus stop. We hit the deck while bullets whizzed overhead.

Trooper Tony Thornett was killed on guard just outside

the base and another soldier got shot, but luckily the bullet grazed his flak jacket, merely leaving a scorch mark.

We raced to the back of the house where I saw a guy jumping over a wall and I managed to fire off a few shots. My mate and I entered the house to find a couple of hostages tied up. By then, both gunmen had fled.

We were taken to Musgrave City hospital for a cup of tea but just hours later we were back patrolling the streets.



SOUTH ATLANTIC

I was with my girlfriend Alison, a nurse in Kingston, when my mate called me: "Mick you've got to get back to Windsor - we're going to war!" I told him to pull my other leg, but when I turned on the telly it was all over the news, so I rushed back excited like any young soldier by the prospect of going to war.

Seven days later we set sail from Southampton on HMS *Canberra* as the engineers were still welding platforms for helicopters to land on. We sailed slowly to Ascension Island for training, which was boiling hot in our winter gear. It was all we stood up in. We landed in the Falklands on my 21st birthday.

The marines warned that no vehicle could cross the boggy, rocky ground but our Scimitars flew across and we made it to our observation post just four hours later.

Although many Argentine soldiers were conscripts, they were well equipped with better boots than we had, rifles and puffa jackets, while we wore combat jackets. It was just that their leadership and soldiering skills were rubbish.

We killed quite a few from our Scimitars and Scorpions, engaging them with machine guns. It was either kill or be killed and we just did our job.

There was a lot of confusion over the surrender, our flag flew above Stanley, but

some units carried on fighting, so it was stop-start. During the war, I saw many bodies, witnessed the *Sir Galahad* going down in flames, and there was loads of blue-on-blues. War is total mayhem.

For me, coming home was strange. Before the war, I'd recently split up with my wife after just five months of marriage. It was a massive mistake, but my mother decided to invite my wife to meet me at the docks not knowing that I'd asked Alison to be there.

As I stood on the decks, looking out over the gathered crowds of families and sweethearts holding up posters, I remember thinking "I don't want to be here!"



CYPRUS

On Exercise Lion Sun in Cyprus in 1991 we lived out in the mountains for two weeks, culminating in a night out in Paphos. We got blind drunk and ended up in a den of iniquity.

My mate Jimmy disappeared upstairs with a girl, but before long, a row broke out outside. I rushed out and saw a Cypriot man punching Jimmy, trying to rob him. I ordered him to leave Jimmy alone when a Cypriot bouncer smacked me in the head.

A fight followed, and I got hit on the floor, but two guys were now beating up Jimmy. Suddenly, the guy on the floor got up, came towards me and hit me in the stomach.

My mate Andy said "Mick look down!" and I saw a mass of blood pouring from my stomach with my entrails hanging out. Everything stopped and my attacker did a runner. At first, the bar refused to call an ambulance because they didn't want trouble so they tried to push me out the door. I remember thinking "of all the places I've been to, Ireland, the Falklands, Germany, I don't want to die here in Cyprus."

Later, when I came off the



Palace investiture: W01 Flynn with wife Shelley and daughter Gabrielle

operating table, I decided it was time to grow up.

I left the Army in 1993 and got a job in civvy street exporting fishing tackle. Later I bought a shop, but when the pound got too strong, business suffered. Eight years later aged 41, I rejoined the Army, promising my wife that I'd be home every weekend. By now it was 2001, and I rejoined just in time for Iraq.



CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY CROSS

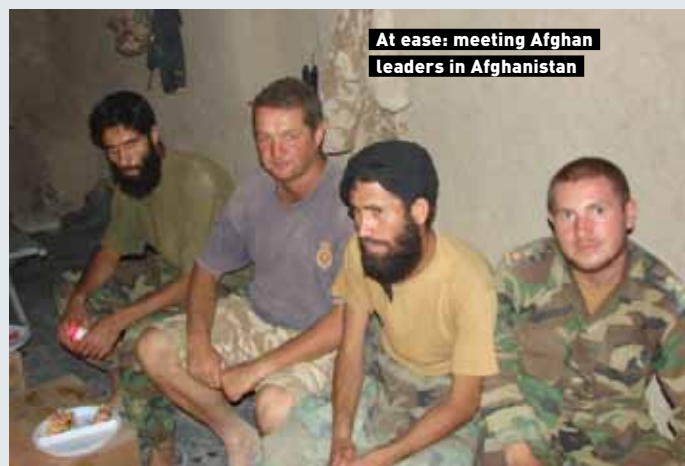
In 2003, I deployed as a

reconnaissance vehicle commander of a Scimitar tank to Iraq. North of Basra, we pushed forward and I came across what I thought were trooper tanks.

It turned out that I was facing 550 tanks alone. We were hunkered down so the enemy couldn't see us and I called in American planes to bomb enemy forces.

My armoured vehicle called down more fire than any other in the second Gulf War after I uncovered the location of the entire Iraqi 4th Armoured Division.

I was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross



At ease: meeting Afghan leaders in Afghanistan

for my action, including holding off an armoured column with my single tank for four hours and protecting two light tanks from friendly fire.

In a separate incident, a soldier was killed when his vehicle missed the bend and fell in a river. I managed to get Lieutenant Alex Tweedie out but sadly he later died from his injuries in hospital.



MILITARY CROSS

We were advancing in Musa Qal'ah in Afghanistan to secure an area, but en route we were ambushed. The vehicle was blown up behind us but I pushed on and managed to hold them off. At the end of the lane, rather than drive left or right deep into Taliban territory on my own, I reversed into the ambush where we were attacked.

With our vehicle soon demobilised, I got out and fought through the ambush. The vehicle behind was blown up, which blocked our exit with bodies everywhere. I thought everyone in the vehicle was dead, but when we fought our way back to the end of the lane, I heard that a soldier was in a ditch, so we moved forward under fire to find Matty Compton.

I thought he was dead as he was a real mess with 80 per cent burns, no hair or eyelashes and staring fish eyes. When we moved his leg, he screamed, so we picked him up, and, under enemy fire, managed to get him into a Scimitar and he's still alive.

I leave the Army after serving as the Regimental Corporal Major with the Royal Yeomanry at Fulham in 18 months time but I've really enjoyed it.

I even married a soldier I met when I fought a fire on Lutworth Heath. Shelley's Land Rover got stuck with fire coming towards her so we pulled her out and have stayed together ever since. For me it's been a good life but, after I leave, I plan to buy a boat and sail the world.

SKINDI

ECZEMA IS AN UNSIGHTLY SKIN CONDITION THAT CAN CAUSE DISTRESS FOR SUFFERERS, BUT WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?



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

Hello from HMS Excellent, on Whale Island in Portsmouth.

This month I thought we'd talk about eczema - a condition that affects one in 12 adults in the UK. The unusual name of this diagnosis comes from a Greek word meaning "to boil over" and people who suffer with this uncomfortable skin condition can probably

understand this origin. Often, the term eczema is used interchangeably with dermatitis, although there are various different categories of these conditions.

Usually our skin cells act as a barrier to physical damage, chemicals and bacteria. The skin cells are full of water and the gaps between the cells are filled with oils. In eczema the skin becomes dry, the cells are less well-hydrated, and there is a reduction in the natural oils in the skin, weakening the natural barrier.

Although it's very common, we don't know why some people get eczema while others don't. Atopic eczema is linked to other allergic conditions such as asthma and hay fever, and these can run in families.

Contact dermatitis develops when someone becomes sensitive to a particular substance, such as a chemical or metal - detergents and nickel are common culprits and you can imagine how tricky it can be to avoid all contact with them.

The symptoms of eczema are dry, itchy skin. It's difficult to stop scratching but this tends to make things worse and starts a vicious cycle that can lead to breaks in the skin and infections. The skin appears red and inflamed, often with scratch marks and sometimes with small blisters.


Atopic eczema tends to particularly affect the skin in the elbow and knee creases while contact dermatitis appears wherever skin contact is made with the offending chemical or metal - around the neck from a nickel necklace or between the fingers from washing-up liquid, for example.

So, how do we manage this condition? The most important things to do are to keep the skin well moisturised and avoid anything that inflames it. Moisturisers (also called emollients) come as ointments or creams. Ointments tend to work best but are a bit greasy; creams take longer to work but tend to be better tolerated by people. Soap substitutes (which don't contain detergents) should be used to clean the skin. Avoid using cosmetic moisturisers as they often contain preservative

chemicals and perfumes.

As well as emollients, steroid creams are really useful and come in varying strengths. They should be used thinly, once per day on the affected area, and only for as long as prescribed by your doctor. If they're used too liberally for too long, they can lead to thinning of the skin. Sometimes, a break in the skin leads to an infection and this needs to be treated with antibiotic cream or tablets.

If you have a skin condition, which appears to get worse at work, your medic or GP may refer you to an occupational medicine consultant. This is a type of doctor who specialises in the effect of work on health. Occasionally, people have to leave the Services due to contact dermatitis but often work patterns can be altered to improve the condition.

Stay healthy and I'll see you next month. 

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

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. royalmarines.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.

The Charity for Civil Servants: 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. Contact the Defence Business Services on 0800 345 7772 (+441225 829572 from overseas) or email: 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: NPFS & RMW have three main offices in the UK, where the serving person's next of kin resides determines which office to contact.
Eastern area office - HMS Nelson - Tel: 023 92 722 712 - after hours 023 92 726 159.
Western area office - HMS Drake - Tel: 01752 555 041 - after hours 01752 555 220.
Northern area office - Helensburgh - Tel: 01436 672 798 - after hours 01436 674 321 (Ext 4005)
RM Welfare - 01752 836 395 (via duty officer, guardroom RM Stonehouse).

CHESS



Compiled by:
Carl Portman

Welcome to the 200th edition of my chess column. I am proud to say that it continues to stand the test of time and I am grateful for all the support past and present which justifies the time I put in on a voluntary basis.

Bringing chess to people has always been a great passion of mine and I do know that a great many people, military and civilian, have enjoyed the puzzles and my scribbles over the last 19 years.

When I began writing, Garry Kasparov was the world champion - as was Anatoly Karpov. The former was the breakaway Professional Chess Association champion and the latter the World Chess Federation champion. Politics and chess make easy bedfellows. Today there is more unity thankfully and

the Indian Vishy Anand (known as the Tiger of Madras) holds the crown - for now. A young, fit, intelligent and hungry Norwegian wolf in the form of Magnus Carlsen is eyeing up the crown and



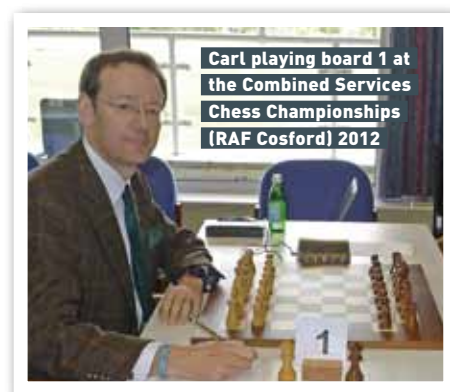
I think he'll get it too, later this year. Also whilst I was scribbling the first column, Hou Yifan the former Chinese women's world champion was busy being born, but Olga Rubtsova, the former champion, sadly died - yes it's been going that long folks. Next year sees my 20th anniversary and I would quite like to do something special for it. If you have any ideas please let me or the Editor know!

200 is a landmark but I look forward to writing many more columns. If you have any questions or want me to cover a specific topic don't be shy, just contact me and I will do my best.

Allow me to present one of my own games for this edition. It is from the game Mavinkurve - Portman, British Chess Championships 2012. White had just played his knight to e5. I was delighted with this. How did I continue now to get checkmate (as black to play coming down the board)?

Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please. The first correct answer selected wins two back issues of the KINGPIN magazine.

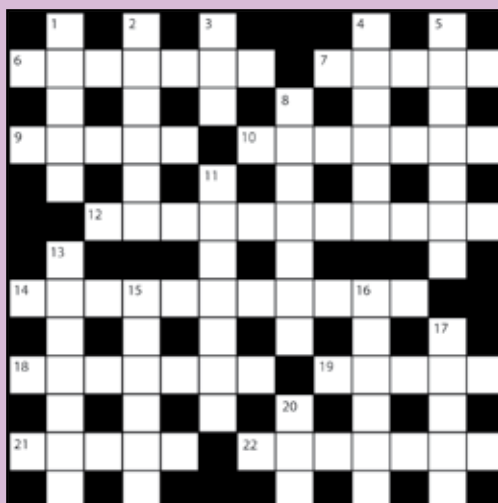
The answer to March's problem was 1...Rxh5+ 2.Kxh5 Qg6+ 3.Kh4 Qg5+ 4. Kh3 Qh5 mate (winner to be announced). Winner of February's problem was Mike Fitzgerald from Abbey Wood.



TOPICAL CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 6. His goal knocked Manchester United out of this season's Champions League (7)
- 7. Snake poison (5)
- 9. And 17 Down. In March this politician was sent to jail for perverting the course of justice (5,5)
- 10. Cause a person to remain alone (7)
- 12. US singer whose albums include 'Fearless' and 'Speak Now'...(6,5)
- 14. ...and the member of One Direction whom she dated (5,6)
- 18. And 22 Across. Belgian who captained Manchester City to the Premier League title in 2012 (7,7)
- 19. Freshwater food fish of the salmon family (5)



- 21. Freddie Mercury and Brian May's group (5)
- 22. See 18 Across

DOWN

- 1. Russian city which will host the 2014 Winter Olympics (5)
- 2. Harbour for small boats (6)
- 3. Poem written to a person or thing (3)
- 4. Homer Simpson's colour (6)
- 5. Another name for the Pope (7)

SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- 1. Sochi 2. Marina
- 3. Ode 4. Yellow
- 5. Ospreys
- 6. Ronaldo 7. Venom
- 8. Fish-eating hawks (7)
- 9. Chris 10. Isolate
- 11. Closing 13. Fatigue
- 12. Taylor Swift 14. Harry Styles
- 15. Rocket 16. Europe
- 17. Huhne 20. Cob
- 18. Vincent 19. Trout
- 21. Queen 22. Kompany

- 8. Fish-eating hawks (7)
- 11. The Who were the final act at the _____ Ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games (7)
- 13. Physical exhaustion (7)
- 15. Stephenson's most famous steam locomotive (6)
- 16. Paul McGinley has been made captain of this team for the 2014 Ryder Cup (6)
- 17. See 9 Across
- 20. Male swan (3)

PRIZE

Win a luxury break for two at the Apex City of London Hotel



suites, the Addendum Bar and Restaurant, business facilities, and a state-of-the-art gym.

Each room boasts a choice of pillows, a 40" LCD TV with Sky Sports and DVD player, Elemis toiletries, complimentary tea/coffee making facilities, air conditioning, Wi-Fi, internet access and 24-hour room service, all making your stay in central London chic and comfortable.

It is perfectly located to enjoy the city's must-see attractions including the Tower of London and the London Eye.

TO WIN

Email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by 17 May. Include 'Apex hotel offer' in the subject line.

All *Defence Focus* readers will receive 20 per cent discount off the best available weekend rate when you quote MOD. Subject to Apex terms and conditions. For more visit www.apexhotels.co.uk

APEX OF LUXURY LIVING

One lucky reader will win a delightful city break in the heart of London

Apex Hotels are offering you the chance to win a luxurious break at the Apex City of London Hotel where you and your guest will enjoy a weekend overnight stay with breakfast included.

Apex City of London is a four-star hotel offering the ultimate in comfort and elegance. The award-winning hotel is situated on the doorstep of Tower Bridge, close to Tower

Hill tube station and the DLR at Tower Gateway.

Designed for comfort, you'll feel at home in this modern, luxury hotel with its 179 stylish rooms and

LAUGH-A-LOT AT SPAMALOT

Win tickets to enjoy the legendary tale of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table

Two lucky readers will win a pair of tickets to see Spamalot that tells the famous tale of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and features a bevy of beautiful showgirls, witch-burnings (cancelled - health and safety), flying cows, killer rabbits and French people.

Monty Python's Spamalot has been described as "raising silliness to an art form" and few theatre-lovers would disagree.

The show includes the nation's favourite comedy song *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life* and the show's creator Eric Idle as God himself (albeit on screen). It has just about

everything lovers of comedy musicals hope for – a fun score, hilarious script, and a top-notch cast.

A huge hit on Broadway, fans will split their sides laughing at the affectionate jabs at many musical classics, demonstrating that the holy grail of musical entertainment is alive and well.

This wonderful production should delight Monty Python enthusiasts and might just convince those who have been resistant to the Python charms to make a conversion.

Terms & Conditions
Spamalot is showing at the

PRIZE

Two readers will win a pair of tickets to see Spamalot at London's Playhouse Theatre




Playhouse Theatre, London. Tickets are available for Monday to Thursday evening performances only (starting at 8pm).

Tickets are subject to strict availability, are non-transferable and must be redeemed by 30 October 2013. Tickets must be booked within

one week of initial contact with PR agency. Visit www.atgtickets.com/spamalot

TO WIN

Email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by 17 May. Include 'Spamalot' in the subject line.



We ensure global reach
from **up there**

to ensure smooth passage
down here

TS&A/CORPORATE / Aude Piers - © Astrium 2012. © Getty Images

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