

# Defence**F**ocus

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## **SOPHISTICATED SOLDIERING**

We speak to the Deputy Commander of ISAF about the Afghan Army



### **DISABLED SKI TEAM**

p20 rehab on the slopes

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Picture: Sergeant Pete Mobbs



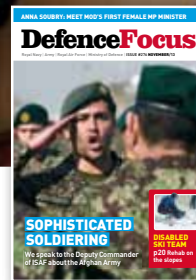
**MY GREAT ESCAPES: CHELSEA  
PENSIONER JOHN HUMPHREYS P24**



**P8**



**P18**



**Main cover picture:  
Corporal Jamie  
Peters RLC**

## Regulars

### **P14** VERBATIM

Surgeon General Paul Evans on keeping troops 'fit for purpose' and much more

### **P26** BOOK REVIEWS

Riveting new reads from James Wharton and Frederick Forsyth

### **P28** HEALTH

Heart disease is a silent killer but a few tips can keep you healthy

### **P30** CHESS CONUNDRUM

Carl Portman reports on the NATO Chess Championships in Poland

### **P31** COMPETITIONS

Your chance to win a break in the Peak District or a war game for your PC

## Features

### **P6** SHARPSHOOTERS

Mesmerising winning entries from the Army's photographic competition

### **P8** STABILISATION

Job's done for the Military Stabilisation Support Group

### **P16** SERVICE SPOOKS

Catherine Walton talks about Defence Intelligence in Afghanistan

### **P18** MILITARY MASTERCLASS

General John Lorimer, Deputy Commander ISAF, talks to *Defence Focus*

### **P20** PEAK PRACTICE

Skiing has huge benefits for troops whose lives are touched by illness or injury

### **P22** C'MON HAVE A GO IF YOU THINK...

The Royal Marines Reserve is expanding and joining up could change your life

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## DefenceFocus

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## FIONA SIMPSON



As usual we have a fabulous feast of a magazine for you this month. For starters we have a first for *Defence Focus* as we interview the new Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Anna Soubry. She is the first female MP to become a minister in the department. Surely that can't be right? In this day and age? But, somewhat shamefully, it is so. Anna talks about how she is approaching her new role and how, essentially, she just wants to get on and get stuff done.

For a meaty main course you can get stuck into the latest from Ian Carr on our ongoing operations Afghanistan. As we move into our final year of

operations, this month Ian looks at some of the areas not always at the top of the headlines, including the work of the Military Stabilisation Support Group and one of the secret squirrels who works in Defence Intelligence.

Care of the wounded from recent conflicts is also on the menu this month. There's an interview with the Surgeon General Air Marshal Paul Evans who talks about the legacy of medical training that we are leaving with the Afghans, showing that building capability is not just about military security.

And for a veritable ice cream sundae of a desert there's an interview with the disabled ski team, whose life-changing injuries have done nothing to dim their bravery or competitive spirit as they look forward to a season of hair-raising downhill action, and maybe even a paralympic medal or two.

So all I have left to say is bon appetit.

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# IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS - 23 MAY TO 14 NOVEMBER



## Lance Corporal Brynin

Lance Corporal James Brynin was killed in Afghanistan on 15 October 2013. He had deployed in the early hours with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) from Camp Bastion into the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province to counter an imminent threat to both the Afghan population and the International Security Assistance Force. Towards the end of the operation Lance Corporal Brynin's section became the target of enemy fire. Together with a sniper and a machine gunner of the BRF, Lance Corporal Brynin returned fire, but while extracting from the area he received a fatal gunshot wound.

Lance Corporal Brynin was born in Shoreham-by-Sea on 22 December 1990. Joining the Army in February 2011, he was immediately identified as a bright, motivated, self-starter and joined the Intelligence Corps. Following

his initial training he was posted to 14th Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare).

Such was his calibre, and having already served a tour in Afghanistan in 2012, he volunteered to train with the BRF and deployed back to Afghanistan in August 2013. Lance Corporal Brynin, who was known as Jay to his friends, excelled in the Army; he had already been selected for promotion to corporal, and had grand ambitions.

Lance Corporal Brynin leaves behind his parents, his sister Yasmin and girlfriend Olivia.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Slack, Commanding Officer of the 9th/12th Royal Lancers, the Brigade Reconnaissance Regiment, said: "Lance Corporal Brynin was a star, burning bright and rising fast. From the moment he joined the Brigade Reconnaissance Force it was clear that we were blessed with a truly special individual. His loss is one of the real tragedies of this military campaign."

## Warrant Officer Class 2 Ian Fisher

Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2) Ian Fisher was killed in Afghanistan on 4 November 2013.

WO2 Fisher deployed with his company on a 2-day operation to disrupt insurgent activity in the vicinity of Kamparak. As a meeting was being conducted with Afghan National Security Forces, WO2 Fisher's vehicle was subjected to a vehicle-borne suicide attack. WO2 Fisher was evacuated by air to the military hospital at Camp Bastion, where it was confirmed that he had been killed in action.

WO2 Fisher was born on 6 October 1971 in Barking, Essex. Hewon a place at Staffordshire University, obtaining a Bachelor of Science honours degree in 1993. Alongside his studies, WO2 Fisher joined the Territorial Army. In August 1996 he volunteered to go to Hong Kong as a regular private with B Company, 1st

Battalion The Staffordshire Regiment. WO2 Fisher's extensive operational experience includes four operational tours: once to Northern Ireland, twice to Iraq and a previous tour of Afghanistan.

WO2 Fisher deployed to Afghanistan on 19 August 2013 as the Warrior fighting vehicle Sergeant Major for the Task Force Helmand Armoured Infantry Company of A Company, 3rd Battalion The Mercian Regiment.

His colleagues described him as the epitome of an infantry sergeant major; straight-talking and obsessive in his pursuit of excellence and gaining the most from his subordinates while ensuring their well-being.

WO2 Fisher leaves behind his wife Emma and two sons. WO2 Fisher's wife paid the following tribute: "He will be remembered as a doting father, loving husband and a true professional soldier. He loved being a soldier, that's what he lived for. We are all so proud and always will be."



# SHARPSHOOTERS



Picture: Sergeant Adrian Harfen

**Giss a kiss: a famous army horse bids farewell to Troop Leader Captain Charlie Fitzroy before he trots off into retirement after 19 years' loyal service**



Picture: Sergeant Adrian Harfen

**Snow patrol: the Life Guards riding onto Horse Guards Parade**



Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC

**Military tattoo: Private Ross Cunningham cleans his weapon after a patrol in Afghanistan**



Picture: Captain Dave Scammell

**Reflective: Staff Sergeant Paul Zaman from 32 Regiment Royal Artillery**



Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC

**Grafters: sappers from 21 Engineer Regiment working to deconstruct a Hesco Bastion building at Patrol Base Nahidullah**



Picture: Corporal Mike O'Neill RLC

**Trench warfare: Corruna Company, 1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, on operations**



# ARMY PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2013: BELOW ARE SOME OF THE WINNING IMAGES THAT DEPICT LIFE IN TODAY'S FORCES



**Boxing clever: Private Woods vs Private Francis, Inter Company Boxing Night, 1st Battalion The Princes of Wales's Royal Regiment**

Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC



**Flower power: Soldiers from 1st Battalion Welsh Guards chat to Afghan children during a break in a patrol**



**At ease: Private Ballan takes a breather to grab something to eat while on exercise in Kenya**

Picture: Sergeant Jonathan Lee van Zyl



**Dog's life: a military working dog attached to the Welsh Guards takes a rest in the shade during an operation in Helmand**

Picture: Sergeant Jonathan Lee van Zyl

Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC



# A SIGNPOST POSTING

TROOPS OF THE MILITARY STABILISATION SUPPORT GROUP CAN RELAX KNOWING THEIR WORK IS DONE. WELL NEARLY, WRITES IAN CARR FROM LASHKAR GAH

From almost the first moment that ISAF boots stepped onto the sand and soil of central Helmand province, the Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG) have been instrumental in winning the hearts and minds of its people.

Their role has been described by some as unique. It has certainly been complex, and fluid. Ultimately their central purpose has been to provide the link between the citizens of Helmand province and their government, a convention that simply did not exist in any meaningful way in the early days.

As civilian-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) from government departments such as DFID, FCO and MOD began the arduous and dangerous task of bringing stability to the

war-torn province it was the MSSG who were their eyes and ears on the ground, giving them access to places and people that otherwise they could not reach.

At first, MSSG teams spent most of their time following in the wake of fire-fights, paying immediate compensation for damage to crops, buildings and ditches. They would take over land and compounds needed by ISAF and report back to the PRTs, helping them to focus on local needs and on projects that would bring stabilisation and development where it was most needed.

As these projects took shape the MSSG would monitor progress, forging links with the locals and building up databases of trustworthy contractors.

Since then the MSSG has been instrumental in every step of the journey

which has led to the citizens of central Helmand being able to lead normal lives, enjoying safety provided by their own security forces, and making their own decisions about their future delivered by their own system of government.

Over the last two years MSSG's role has been about signposting. Major Will Miller who was based at Lashkar Gah during Herrick 18 explains. "When we were training for our deployment we were told we would be doing no more build projects, and little in support of operations. We would be going out on the ground when necessary, but instead of doing the projects to support the locals we'd be signposting them to whichever Afghan government department should be delivering the work."

"The MSSG would then report

Picture: POA[Phot] Sean Clee



Rocky road: soldier keeps watch during construction of Route Trident in Helmand





**Smooth operator: builders using traditional materials**

Picture: Grahame Hunter, architect, www.afghaneearthworks.com



**Big bake off: making mud bricks in Afghanistan**

Picture: Grahame Hunter, architect, www.afghaneearthworks.com

the situation to the PRTs, who could liaise with the relevant department to make sure they were fully aware of the situation. "The PRT would give us the overview of what the government departments should be doing, and what they were supposed to be providing to the projects, so we could then match that to what we were seeing on the ground," said Major Miller.

Now, government money is flowing down from Kabul and into departments who are putting together proper plans for expenditure. Which means that, at the provincial level, the Afghans can prioritise their own projects, allocate resources and place contracts with approved contractors who have had time to demonstrate their quality of work and relative trustworthiness.

With elected district community councils in place, holding those in power to account for spend and progress on projects, much of the stabilisation work of the MSSG and the PRTs is nearing an end.

During Herrick 18, most of the team's time was spent bringing to an end the last major build project, Orthodox Build Earthworks (OBE), and in closing or handing over patrol bases.

"I'd say around 40 per cent of the team have been working on the OBE project. OBEs are not part of the Helmand budget, the money is injected right at the source where it is needed," said Major Miller.

OBEs are buildings made out of mud, and constructed using traditional building techniques so that they can be easily maintained by local builders. They can be anything from a small checkpoint for four

or five men to compounds for as many as 100 army or police personnel. There are virtually no operational maintenance costs for the buildings. They have thick walls so they are warm in winter and cool in summer, so they don't need air conditioning. "And we put mechanical wells in, hand-pumped, so there's no need for electricity," said Major Miller.

Closing bases and handing back land and compounds that ISAF have been using is not as simple as it may seem. It's not just a case of handing over the keys and saying to the new owners 'we hope you will be as happy here as we have been'.

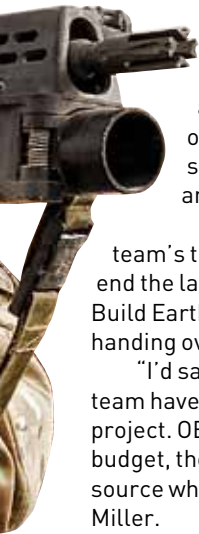
To start with, after decades of conflict and upheaval, how do you know to whom you should be handing the keys?

Even when the base is being handed over to a government department, it can

be far from straightforward. Take the Lashkar Gah main operating base. The Ministries of Education and of Finance and the District Governor each believe it should go to them. Claims can even be made on buildings that didn't exist before ISAF erected them.

"To find out who owns what we engage with local communities, consult our ISAF registry, and PRT legal experts search through whatever documentation there might be. Decisions about ownership of agricultural land are often made by the District Governor, but disputes go through the courts to establish proper ownership," said Major Miller.

With that tricky issue out of the way, the next thing to sort out is the payment for any damage that might have taken place. "If we have built a base on land



**Planners of action: Major Will Miller (left) and Captain Matt Eade**

Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC



**Hammer time: Royal Engineers building bridges in Afghanistan**

Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC



**Building sights: workers using traditional skills, and opposite**

Picture: Grahame Hunter, architect



Picture: Grahame Hunter, architect

that could mean we had to put in force protection measures, which might mean knocking down a compound on the edge of the base. We would then have to either pay compensation or arrange for that compound to be rebuilt," said Major Miller. "We'd call the owner in, hopefully with records of what it was like

before, and say 'right, this is what it is now; this is what we are going to do'. The engineers will remediate the site but we (the MSSG) will be there to determine if there are any valid damage claims to be made."

As bases close and with reconstruction work increasingly in the hands of the local

population, so the numbers of the MSSG are reducing. At one time there were as many as 50 MSSG personnel working in teams of six. "On the previous Herrick there were 27. I brought out 16 who were split between four locations. By the end of August that will drop to seven. And when the OBE project is complete there will be no further requirement," said Major Miller. "In September we will be handing over to the next Herrick who will have a team of just four."

PRT will move its HQ away from Lashkar Gah and establish itself in Camp Bastion and the plan is that the MSSG will continue until probably March 2014, with a contingency to hold over for a month or two if necessary supporting Task Force Helmand by providing stabilisation information.

As the drawdown rumbles on, ironically the MSSG have found themselves engaged in similar tasks to those they performed in the early days, organising the repair of infrastructure, and mending culverts and simple bridges broken as heavy ISAF vehicles return kit to Camp Bastion. "It's the damage you would expect from bringing heavy loads along roads that were not designed to take them. If we break something we have to fix it," said Major Miller.

So as combat troops move out, the MSSG's footprint is being replaced by Afghan boots. But they will not be leaving unthanked.

Knowing that some of the MSSG staff that they had been working closely with would soon be leaving, a group of the main Afghan contractors asked if they could organise a farewell party for them. "We had them all sitting around this table," said MSSG's planner, Captain Matt Eade. "An Afghan colonel turned up too. They had all brought food and we had a little party. They exchanged gifts, plaques and certificates of appreciation. It was a bit like the Oscars.

But there was genuine friendship. The colonel made a speech thanking us for helping them to provide a future for the people of Helmand province, and then everyone thanked everyone else. It was nice."

Tough nuts though the troops of the MSSG are, they, just like the rest of us, like to hear their efforts have made a difference and have been appreciated. "The kinetics have now quietened down," said Major Miller, "the government departments are functioning. I think the OBEs are our legacy and they will provide the infrastructure for maintaining security for many years. I think we should be proud of that, and of our part in it." **DF**



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A portrait of Anna Soubry, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a black blazer and a pearl necklace. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred office setting.

# JUST DO IT

**JUST TWO WEEKS INTO HER  
NEW JOB AS MINISTER FOR  
DEFENCE PERSONNEL, WELFARE  
AND VETERANS, ANNA SOUBRY  
SPEAKS TO IAN CARR**



Looking out across the Thames to the London Eye on a bright October morning, the view from this fifth floor Main Building window has to be a contender for one of the best in town.

Not that it's likely that Anna Soubry, our new minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, the first female MP to be made a defence minister, will be spending much time appreciating it.

That's not so much down to the weight of work on her desk, but more to do with her approach to the task ahead. With nearly two decades experience as a criminal barrister and a famously busy brief at the Department of Health under her belt, heavy workloads come as no shock to the system.

It doesn't take long to realise that Anna Soubry is all about wanting to get things done, and being office-bound, you suspect, is not her preferred way. "I hugely enjoy getting out and meeting people, understanding what's going on, what the issues are, having frank discussions, identifying problems and seeing what I can do to move things on," she said.

Just two weeks into the job when she spoke to *Defence Focus*, Anna Soubry had already met plenty of people: "All the big bosses... erm." Her PA helps by intervening with the acronyms: "You've met CDS, VCDS, PUS and CDP."

The new minister laughs. "Yes I have to learn all that," she continued, enthusiasm undimmed. "Some have been full-on briefs, especially from General Andrew Gregory, [Chief of Defence Personnel]. I had a good long chat with him."

When asked about the nature of that chat, she indulges herself in a bit of what might well be trademark leg-pulling. "Can't tell you. Top secret." There's a heavy pause, and a full-on stare, which is then lightened by smiles and laughter. "No, no, he was explaining his brief, which of course will be a large part of my brief." You feel that working for this minister is going to be enjoyable, as long as you keep on your toes.

Already she has a firm view about the priorities. "Recruitment of reserves and the Armed Forces Covenant – making sure that it is working in the way that we want it to," she said. As the Reinforcements Training and Mobilisation Centre, which prepares all branches of the reserve forces and civilians for service with the regular forces, is in her constituency, these issues are perhaps not totally new to her. Especially as the centre is also home for many Service families.

She has also already reached the conclusion that MOD is going to suit her. "One thing that I'm already finding really enjoyable is that we are actually making

## “ politics is supposed to be about doing stuff ”

some decisions which are important, that touch people's lives and which make differences," she said.

For some newcomers to MOD, taking up positions of power in a department where decisions can occasionally literally be a matter of life and death, the responsibility can be sobering. "That doesn't trouble me at all," said Anna Soubry. "I'd rather do that than endless meetings that don't achieve very much."

In the world of personnel, or HR as it is now known, personality profiling is all the rage. If you were bold enough to attempt to pigeonhole Anna Soubry you would have her down as a completer-finisher.

"Absolutely. Politics is supposed to be about doing stuff," she said. "One of the things that drives me bonkers in politics is when you don't just get on and do it. That's when I start to get exceptionally frustrated." What really appealed to her, she says, about being a criminal barrister was that there was always a result.

But you would be wrong to interpret this as haste at all cost. There is, she readily admits, a place for measured thought. "Sometimes it might take you longer because you need to do it right, and the process involves going out to talk to different people to do research and develop a good policy. I've no difficulty with that. As long as there is an end game. Or if you have to say 'we can't do that, we'd like to, but we haven't any money'. That's fine, because you know where you are."

You can imagine that our Permanent Under Secretary Jon Thompson will be delighted to hear this kind of stuff. He, as we should all know by now, is eager for change and reducing bureaucratic blockages in favour of better delegation of authority and accountability. "That sounds about right," said the new minister. "As long as change is fair and smooth and includes people knowing where they are, and that's what most people want in their lives isn't it? To know where they are."

"You should always want to work with people and persuade them. Sometimes there will be a parting of agreement. Then you have to agree to disagree in as amicable a way as possible so that you can make the advances you need to make. But I'm still learning about the Department, so I'm not saying any more about that."

Early days it may be, but what are her immediate impressions about her big

priorities, the reserves and the Armed Forces Covenant? "I had conversations with regulars and reservists from 1st Mechanized Brigade when they returned from Afghanistan and the buzz I got was very positive. I asked the regulars about their experience of the reservists and they didn't hesitate in saying they were first class. We see our Armed Forces as heroes, and I'm not decrying that, but we should also see them as professionals who are extremely good at their jobs. In terms of recruiting we're not where we would like to be I think, so I am keen to understand the problems and do what I can to unstick things. It is doable."

And the covenant? "We have had two freedom parades through my constituency. On the last the weather was appalling, yet you couldn't move because of all the people who had come out to show their support. I think the level of respect for our Armed Forces has never been so great in our lifetime. It's going to be my job to make sure our troops are well looked after, and then let the people know that is happening."

An important part of achieving that will be establishing a useful dialogue with the Service charities, something on which Anna Soubry has already made a start.

"I have had an excellent meeting with the biggest charities and there was a lot of frank talking about the need for us to work together, to be more joined up, but also to recognise that each of us needs to know what we actually want. So when we say things like we want people to have proper access to the NHS, what does that actually mean, what does the model look like?"

It must help that she comes into the debate with fresh eyes, and that she has experience of working with charities at the Department of Health. It is an area that she intends to take a lead on.

There is time for one last question; in this day and age is it relevant to point out that she is our first female MP minister?

"Well I'm very proud of it; I had no idea that was the case. I don't think there are many departments that haven't had a woman MP as a minister. I think what has surprised people is that it is 2013, and I'm the first one. But I am chuffed silly." Immediately you can see her previous experience as a journalist kicking in. "Oh God, you're going to use that as a quote now aren't you?" The meeting with the minister finishes as it started, with laughter. **DF**

# HEALTH CENTRE

## SURGEON GENERAL AIR MARSHAL PAUL EVANS TALKS TO IAN CARR ABOUT SPORT, SIMULATION AND SKILLS RETENTION

**DF: You have been in post for nearly a year now, what developments have you seen?**

**SG:** Afghanistan is of course still our main effort, so we have been making sure that we are delivering the medical support that the coalition requires of us. Nowadays we are putting a lot of effort into mentoring the Afghans, both in primary healthcare and in the hospital environment.

**DF: What does that involve?**

**SG:** There has been a definite improvement in the practice of medicine there. Most Afghan doctors train abroad, so the competence levels are generally good. We are not teaching them how to do surgery; we are helping them by increasing the opportunities that they have to practise in their own facilities and on their own people.

**DF: What developments have there been in providing medical care to our troops in theatre?**

**SG:** There have been many developments over the years. I'd say that a real strength is in the weekly communication between the hospital in Camp Bastion and the hospital in Birmingham, where they have multidisciplinary meetings to discuss how cases have been handled.

What's important is that there is a really good feedback system, right out to the medics in primary healthcare and to the medics at the front line. Our lessons learned capability is really powerful.

**DF: How do the lessons learned make a difference?**

**SG:** It gives us the opportunity to examine the particular treatment that an evacuated casualty has had and either change or reinforce our practices.

Let's take the life-saving application of a tourniquet for example. Feedback to the on-scene medic that the procedure did indeed save life is a massive confidence-booster. Conversely, if lessons can be learned, they are, with rapid feedback to the training system ensuring that evidence-based techniques remain at the fore.

**DF: With the drawdown from Afghanistan, how will our relationship with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital change?**

**SG:** The dynamic will change of course, but the relationship will be the same. We have a long-term relationship with them and with the university.

It is a teaching hospital, and a trauma centre, so irrespective of a reduction in the number of casualties coming from Afghanistan, which is already happening, it is a very good place to have our doctors, nurses and allied health professionals

working to gain experience, and it's a good place for us to retain those skills that we need to deploy to theatre.

I have around 400 medical personnel embedded there delivering care on a daily basis, the majority of which is going to civilian patients.

We have nurses on neurology and neurosurgery wards, where most patients are from road traffic accidents, so they are gaining the best experience and skills that UK medicine can provide. Birmingham will remain the receiving hospital for casualties from overseas, for example from places like Cyprus.

I think the important thing is that if we find ourselves in a crisis situation in the future, we can be confident that at Birmingham we have a system that can respond rapidly and effectively. We wouldn't have to start from scratch.

**DF: Maintaining those clinical skills is not going to be easy?**

**SG:** It isn't easy. It needs careful thought. And it's one of the major issues for me today as Surgeon General. One way we can do it is by placing our people in NHS trauma

Picture: Corporal James Williams RLC

Stay with me: soldiers training to provide immediate treatment to stabilise casualties on an exercise





centres and hospitals with busy emergency departments to help our people retain their skills. Which is why being able to place people at Birmingham is so important.

**DF: How will medical research be affected?**

**SG:** Research is also a really key way to build and encourage enthusiasm and maintain a cutting-edge. Defence Medical Services (DMS) have a strong academic presence at Birmingham. We have eight defence professors there whose job is to develop and maintain research links. And we are a partner in the pioneering National Institute for Health Research Surgical Reconstruction and Microbiology Research Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

We also have strong links with other academic institutions and organisations. For example, we are interested in the effects of blast. Thanks to our links with Imperial College London and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory we can mimic them in a lab environment. So we may not be seeing the direct effect from an explosion in Afghanistan, but we do have the talent and expertise to look at the effect of blast on a vehicle; this can inform the sort of boots personnel should be wearing or what sort of floor a vehicle should have.

In future we may not have the casualties where you can link a specific injury to a particular circumstance. We can take the lessons we have learned and modify them and continue the process of research even after hostilities have ended.

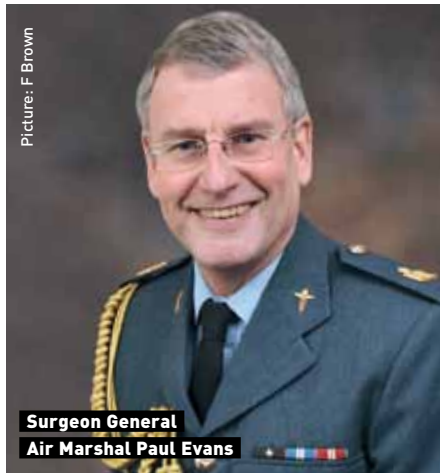
**DF: Will our experiences in Afghanistan continue to influence research?**

**SG:** Absolutely. If we look at rehabilitation for example, both mental and physical, the consequences of injury will go on through life. So what we are already doing is studying the effect of injury, not just amputation, in its broadest sense.

**DF: Will simulation also play a part?**

**SG:** Yes it will. From training individuals in how to fix an artery or mend a leg, through to collective training simulation. All those medical personnel who serve in Bastion undertake pre-deployment training at Hospex; the complete and realistic simulation of an entire field hospital in which staff work through real-life scenarios in real-time.

In future we will also use simulation to help us work with our immediate international partners. What we will do is create exercise programmes that mimic the sorts of things that we might be doing in other conflicts. And at the individual training level it may be that we develop simulations in conjunction with the NHS as their doctors



and nurses will need to develop similar skills.

**DF: Are there any other real-life opportunities you are looking at?**

**SG:** Yes, this is an area where we have got to look at how we can achieve giving secondary care personnel the opportunity to practise in the operational environment. That might be supporting charitable work in the developing world, or it might be moving people around the UK or sending teams to work with our international partners and vice-versa. It needs to be carefully thought through and like all budget holders I have to be conscious of getting the best value from every pound my organisation spends. Recruitment into DMS over the last 10 years has been enormous; what we need to do now is to continue to maintain opportunities that will encourage people to join DMS.

**DF: How do you encourage people to choose a medical career in the military?**

**SG:** For me it was sport. I joined as a medical cadet because I wanted to compete seriously in athletics. The military was a way I could do that.

Medical training is conducted within the NHS. What we (MOD and DMS) add is the polish and the training that allows our people to operate effectively when deployed. We make people good leaders. So we attract people who are interested in the way the military do things. Of course we already have many reservists who work in the NHS who see it as a good way of developing their careers.

When we do recruit, the experts from the Royal Colleges comment time and again on the quality of the people we attract. By the time they have finished their training with us they are very competent individuals, and that is obvious in the extremely high level of research and clinical work that they do. Recruitment might start to drop, but there's no sign of that at the moment.

**DF: The primary role of DMS is to ensure that Service personnel are 'fit for task'. What does that involve?**

**SG:** We provide primary healthcare for Service personnel, but it is much more than an NHS GP would deliver.

We include an operational element looking at maximising fitness for task. So, if someone presents with a twisted ankle for example, we give them the clinical treatment required, as would the NHS. But we also think about the consequences for their work. Are they capable of working light duties, do they need two days off to get them back to fitness quicker, do they need a programme of rehabilitation or physio?

The Defence Medical Rehabilitation Programme has been a tremendous success over the last 10 years. It's a tiered approach. The first level is the primary care you would get on your base. Then there are the 15 regional rehabilitation units (RRUs) spread throughout the UK and Germany that can help with diagnosis, and advise on treatment. The RRUs have rapid access to MRI scanners, which means that effective treatment plans can be worked out quickly, often doing away with the need for surgery.

That's made a tremendous difference in getting people fitter, quicker. Lastly there is Headley Court. Although they hit the headlines with their treatment of complex trauma cases, their bread and butter work is diagnosis of complex muscular and skeletal injuries.

**DF: What is the approach to treating mental health issues?**

**SG:** If you can keep people at work and manage their treatment in the workplace then you get much better results. Outreach clinics from our departments of community mental health visit units so they can talk to individuals in their working environment. That gives a better and more holistic view of what the problems are. So in many cases, the individual can receive the right treatment and still get the support from their mates at work.

**DF: Isn't it true that mental health issues can sometimes take years to surface?**

**SG:** I fully acknowledge that might be the case for some people, and issues could arise after they have left the Services.

Clearly we do everything in our power for those people. For those who present as a veteran, we work very closely with the Department of Health and the charitable sector to try and help them. But there is a clear distinction. I am responsible for those who are in service, and the NHS is responsible for veterans and reservists once they return to civilian life. **DF**

# I WON'T TELL YOU A SECRET

CATHERINE WALTON HAS JUST FINISHED A SIX-MONTH TOUR AS SENIOR ANALYST IN AFGHANISTAN. SHE TALKS TO IAN CARR, VERY DISCREETLY, IN KABUL



Knowledge and power: Lieutenant Sid Wareham (RN) and Catherine Walton, Defence Intelligence analyst, outside the Afghan's MOD

In the world of intelligence everything has the potential to be significant. For those who seek out the meaning of events, linkages and trends, the flap of a butterfly's wing might amount to no more than a bit of downdraft, or it could be the beginning of a political hurricane, so an eye for detail is essential.

"When you are putting forward key judgements about a situation to senior people who are basing their decisions on what you tell them you don't want to miss a trick," said Catherine Walton, senior analyst in theatre based at the ISAF HQ in Kabul. "One piece of information could change everything, and you don't want to miss it."

Catherine, as you might expect, had to be very careful about what she said. "I've been told in very strict terms what I'm not supposed to talk about," she said, smiling.

Fair enough. So what would be a safe question to start with?

So is being inherently nosy a natural advantage in this line of work? "No! I'm not nosy! I'm quite a private person, but I am analytical. So I do think things through very thoroughly, which can be annoying for my family and friends," said Catherine. Once, to see what kind of people work in intelligence, Catherine and her colleagues took personality tests. "Worryingly, we all turned out to be quite geeky. We're all analytically-minded and interested in the same kind of stuff. The work attracts that kind of person. I think they call it geek chic these days."

Not that these personality traits would bother four-star US General Joseph Dunford, commander of ISAF, or his deputy, Major General John Lorimer. These are the people that Catherine had to brief on

a regular basis, and one suspects that thoroughness is a quality they hold in high regard.

So it was no surprise when Catherine said: "The thing about being an analyst is you keep your powder dry until you are absolutely certain. In Defence Intelligence (DI) we do use the language of uncertainty and probabilities, so we will say things like 'it is highly likely from our assessment and from what we have seen in reports that we can do x'."

Tactical intelligence on the threat is provided for the top brass by the regional commands and PJHQ. What the generals required from Catherine was intelligence at the strategic level.

For example, information about what is happening at the political level, which may influence the direction in which the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) might travel next.

Or it might be that they need to know about issues arising from the Bilateral Security Agreement between Kabul and Washington. It was Catherine's job to help them reach informed decisions about what stance to take on such things.

As an analyst, Catherine didn't go out and gather the information herself. "I do not have sources, I am not a collector," she said, using a term which could come straight from the pages of John le Carré. Instead, it was her job to keep monitoring the feeds she received and corroborate the information to make sure it all made sense, and then spot any anomalies.

Her days in Kabul would begin at 0730 in the morning and often didn't finish until 10 in the evening. She was a regional specialist, and the region she was expected to know all about was the whole of Asia! Which might explain the need for the long days. "It has to be that wide because there is an intricate collection of things that influence each other.



“There are so many things internationally that influence GIRoA, such as special cooperation agreements. Ultimately it is the region that will support this country in the long term, post-ISAF. So it is important to encourage these regional partners to support this country in a positive way. So we feed into our senior intelligence cells information that is pertinent to that goal,” she said.

“The work involves a lot of liaison with all our ISAF partners, making sure that our assessments are not too way out there or controversial, and that we are in the right swim lane on issues. Or, if not, then I have to find out why my path has diverged.”

Seventy per cent of Catherine’s work was evaluation and constant re-evaluation. Does this intensity turn the analyst into a mini-expert? “I think it does,” she said. “But what we instil in everyone is that we are drawing material from other experts. So you reach back to London, or into Washington, and you will get the real experts, who do this kind of stuff all year round, feeding into your assessments, so you can’t go far wrong.”

But there are also bespoke activities, described excitingly as ‘deep dives’, where analysts spend two or three days looking at a particular issue in more detail.

An opportunity that came Catherine’s way was to put together a short training programme to introduce Afghan analysts from the Afghan MOD to some of the methods and processes of defence intelligence at Chicksands.

Her Afghan counterparts were all military, so they were very experienced in going out on the ground and gathering intelligence for use at the tactical level. What Catherine was asked to do was to help them to conduct more strategic assessments that would feed into their policy-makers, a concept that was wholly new to them.

“It was really exciting, and very interesting. Because they were military it was a surprise for them to see how civilians, especially female civilians, could fit into all that,” she said.

But they rapidly channelled that surprise when they realised how much they stood to learn from the half-day pilot session, and the questions soon started coming. “It was a pleasant surprise that they were so keen to question me directly rather than through an interpreter. It enthused me and I was able to get really involved with them on the exercise itself.”

The idea grew out of a visit that General Ferahi, the Afghan equivalent of our Chief of Defence Intelligence, had made to look at the structures of defence in the UK and the courses on analysis held at Chicksands.



Picture: Sarah Yuen

**Eyes down: watching the ballot count in Lashkar Gah during the September 2010 elections**

“One of the big differences between tactical and strategic intelligence is the shelf-life of the information. At the strategic level we are taking a view of things years from now that will feed into our policies and strategic guides. The Afghans are just beginning to think in those terms,” she said.

Catherine began by giving the class of 25 Afghan officers an introduction to the way that intelligence works in the UK, including a short history of its development since the Second World War. Then they were given an exercise to complete.

“The idea is you work towards an end state stemming from a potential political scenario. You then use your intelligence to check for the milestones that you would expect to see as you head towards that end state. The example I gave them was how would security look for a successful election in a year’s time, and what sort of intelligence cells would you have to create to give you that? That was non-controversial and something they could relate to,” said Catherine. “I used our experiences during the Olympics to show them how we did it.”

From Catherine’s description it sounds like the course went well and provoked a lot of debate. “I made the point that



**Paper exercise: Catherine Walton with a class of Afghan analysts**

it was important that analysts present their assessments with confidence and objectivity, and that you shouldn’t be pressured into saying something just because your senior wants to hear it. I think that classes like that will help them to realise that intelligence is so much more than just a response to a threat.”

Careful thought is now being given to what further training our DI might be able to offer the Afghans. Of course, it’s not for Catherine to say what that might be. At the end of her tour her lips might be sealed, but they are still smiling. “I’ve really enjoyed it. There’s been lots of opportunities to do some really interesting work.” And that, you might argue, says it all. **DP**

# FIGHTING TALK

## DEPUTY COMMANDER ISAF, LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN LORIMER, TALKS TO IAN CARR ABOUT ADDING VALUE

A few years ago, waiting in a dusty queue for a flight home from Camp Bastion, two grizzled British soldiers were chatting.

One suddenly nudged the other and said, with some pride, pointing to an Afghan soldier: "He's one of mine. Never seen fighting spirit like it. The thing is though, they can get a bit carried away when running into battle."

This was in the early days when training the Afghan soldiers meant teaching them the basics of organised soldiering and fighting alongside them in almost equal numbers.

As natural warriors the Afghans have no shortage of courage. What they lacked then was the military framework and discipline to achieve an objective in the most effective way.

Speaking to *Defence Focus* at the HQ in Kabul, ISAF Deputy Commander Lieutenant General John Lorimer

certainly has experienced that warrior trait. Talking about his time when he commanded 12th Mechanized Brigade during Op Herrick 6 in 2007 he said:

"We can't teach these guys how to fight. Sometimes it was a difficult thing to get them to stop. I remember on a couple of occasions pulling people back saying 'it's OK, we've gone far enough'."

Veterans from those years would be staggered to see how things have changed. Now it is the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) who are leading the show, planning and carrying out around 95 per cent of operations with ISAF forces very much in support.

A crucial coming of age was reached this summer when the ANSF took the lead for the first time during the traditional fighting season. Last summer ISAF was involved in 41 per cent of operations, whereas this year it was just nine per cent.

By ISAF stepping back in this way, the ANSF were given the opportunity to prove to themselves that they could be confident in their own abilities. And there's no doubt that they rose to the challenge.

"The ANSF have prevented the insurgents from controlling populated areas or key terrain throughout the year," said General Lorimer. "Across the country the vast majority of violence has taken place away from populated areas. In the top 10 areas which have experienced 35 per cent of the total violence, those areas contain only three per cent of the population.

"The ANSF emerge from the fighting season confident in themselves and credible in the eyes of the people."

So credible in fact that recent surveys revealed that among the civilian population the overall favourability rate for the ANSF was 88 per cent, with the Army rated at 92 per cent.

Speaking at the end of his tour, Task Force Helmand Commander for Herrick 18, Brigadier Rupert Jones' comments certainly bear this out. Talking about the manner in which the Afghan 3rd Brigade of 215 Corps had reinforced their sister brigade in Sangin during the summer he



Drill skills: Afghan soldiers on parade



said: "They put on what I can only describe as a masterclass. As a fighting force they can plan, integrate their resources, bring in reserves and do all the things that you would expect of a professional army."

The development of this professional force has meant that ISAF troops are increasingly standing back at the company and brigade level and letting the ANSF get on with things in their own way.

International efforts are now being targeted at developing the institutional architecture that will help the ANSF to build on their self-confidence and sustain their future.

"Those are things such as manpower and resource planning, acquisition and budgeting, all the things that happen within a Ministry of Defence that develop and sustain capability," said General Lorimer.

"We in ISAF command started the year with three questions," he said, leaning forward across the table. "Could the ANSF secure the population throughout the fighting season? The answer to that is yes. Can they provide the security for the population during the elections next April? And again the answer is yes, they are way ahead of the game in comparison to the elections in 2009. And lastly, will they be able to effect a full security transition in December 2014? The answer is a qualified yes, but we still have work to do to enable that to happen."

Much of that work is now at the ministerial level, helping the Ministries of Defence and of Interior and the organisations that support them to become effective departments of state, working together with a common purpose.

"Every level in the organisation must add value so that the soldier can go out on the ground and do the business. It's a question of helping them to recognise how to get political direction, strategic intent and turn that into tactical activity," said General Lorimer.

But that doesn't mean all of ANSF's issues now have a pinstripe pattern. "Below the ministerial level we will be helping to improve the sophisticated aspects of soldiering," said the General. "Elements such as command and control, leadership, collective training and combined and integrated operations, by that I mean getting the infantry to work with the gunners and engineers for example."

Most important of all you could argue, and General Karimi, head of the Afghan Army, certainly does, is the need for good leaders. "Every time I chat to him, about all sorts of issues, he always raises the issue of leadership. If he could, he would like



Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC

Table top talks: Lieutenant General John Lorimer at ISAF Headquarters


all his commanders to be ex-Sandhurst. Which is why he is so determined to make the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) a success."

The ANAOA is based at Qargha, roughly 14km to the west of Kabul. It opened its gates to its first cadre of students in October. For more than a year the UK has been leading the NATO Training Mission to support the Afghan National Army in developing its academy,

which mirrors the famous Sandhurst military model.

"General Karimi is convinced that if you get good platoon commanders then you get good platoons, and this good leadership eventually feeds right through the Army's structure. Which is why we will be helping with the ANAOA right through 2014 and beyond," said General Lorimer.

So when midnight strikes on 31 December next year, General Lorimer harbours no Y2K-style portents of disaster. Instead he predicts a smooth start to another year's soldiering. "We are planning for a Resolute Support Mission. We are clear about that and we're planning how we will continue to train, advise and assist starting from 1 January 2015. The ANAOA will be one of the UK's main areas of input," he said.

And after all the fuss and doom-mongering that led up to New Year's Eve 1999, when the sun rose on the first morning of a new millennium, no aircraft fell out of the sky, no computers plunged us into an apocalypse. We just all went about our business as usual. 

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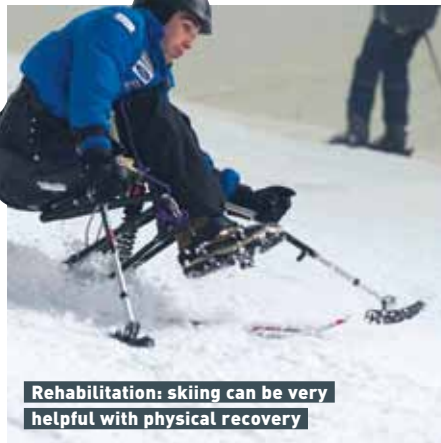
# THE SKI'S THE LIMIT

**ALTHOUGH THEY'VE LOST LIMBS AND EXPERIENCED MORE TRAUMA THAN MOST PEOPLE, A GROUP OF SERVICE SKIERS ARE LIVING ON THE EDGE. REPORT BY LEIGH HAMILTON**

**S**port can play a large part in physical rehabilitation. For Armed Forces personnel recovering from medical treatment as a result of an injury sustained on operations or illness, it can be vital. In addition to the more obvious physical benefits including building strength and motor skills, sport can increase confidence and create a setting where camaraderie provides a joint goal or focus.

One such sport is skiing. The Combined Services Disabled Ski Team (CSDST) is a charitable organisation that helps to rehabilitate serving and retired Service personnel who have been injured during their military service, through the medium of adaptive (Alpine) skiing.

Following the amputation of one or more limbs, the future must seem quite daunting and full of seemingly impossible challenges. CSDST coach Warrant Officer Class 2 Mark Scorgie believes that skiing can bring even the most reticent out of their shells: "A lot of people say 'you won't be able to do this, you won't be able to do that'. They have to figure out for themselves what they can and can't do.



"When you're skiing you're doing a fun activity, but it's very physical. Because you're enjoying it you gradually build up your strength and your fitness.

"With skiing you put yourself on a level playing field. The exhilaration you can get from throwing yourself down a hill at 70 miles an hour, although scary, can be fun."

Mark, who himself has skied for the Royal Engineers team, the Army team and did a couple of seasons for the CSDST, says that sometimes throwing yourself

into something is the best way of getting over your fears. "With a bit of tough love, most people can figure out a way of doing everything for themselves, whether that is carrying your own ski equipment, learning to ski on your own, learning to get on and off a lift or learning to get up after a fall."

This approach appears to have worked for paralympian hopeful ex-Army Sergeant Mick Brennan, one of the members of the recently unveiled 2013/14 season CSDST squad. Mick lost both legs in a car suicide bomb attack while serving with 30 Signal Regiment in Iraq in November 2004 on Operation Telic 5. As well as losing his legs, Mick was in a coma for 14 days and suffered from brain damage as a result of the incident.

Having never skied before, joining the CSDST wasn't top of Mick's to-do list. After being invited to attend an adaptive event, he was headhunted by the British team manager and was encouraged to join the CSDST at the same time, and he's never looked back.

Mick is the CSDST's high-flier, winning prestigious titles including a silver medal at the Europa World Cup Super G and a bronze at the Alpine World Cup. He's also one of five hopefuls gunning for one of two available slots on Team GB's squad for the Winter Paralympic Games in Sochi in Russia next year.

The CSDST, along with their sponsors, works with each skier to build their own adaptive ski kit and Mick is no exception. He says: "I'm a sit-skier. I ski like everyone else; however, whereas an able-bodied person wears a ski boot, I wear a seat. I had the seat cast by a prosthetics department so it's snug and fits like a boot.

"You've got a frame and suspension which is designed for my weight and the way I ski. I use a normal ski, but it has a stronger binding so in theory it shouldn't come off."

Even with state-of-the-art equipment, Mick has still managed to sustain injuries, such as a broken sternum, and is currently not skiing due to a broken arm, but that's all part and parcel of a sport that relies on speed and dexterity to produce winners.

Once he's ironed out any kinks and



Pictures: Senior Aircraftman Dek Traylor





**Top dog: the team's top racer  
Sergeant (Retired) Mick Brennan  
formerly of the Royal Signals**

recovered from his latest injury, Mick believes that he will be top of the pack: "I think I'll make it into the Sochi team, as long as I don't mess up.

"I'm still making mistakes and I need to work on that and it will come with coaching. I just need to alleviate those little mistakes and I'll become world class.

"My big goal is the Winter Paralympics in Korea in 2018. At the moment I'm taking part to compete and get the experience, but by Korea I want to go to win."

Another CSDST member with more humble aspirations is RAF Flight Sergeant John Kirk who lost his right arm after he was diagnosed with soft tissue sarcoma in August 2010. After 'a quarter of his body' was removed, instead of feeling depressed following his operation, John decided to grab life by the horns.

As well as completing a skiing instructor's course, John took part in Battle Back exercise Snow Warrior in Bavaria and through that joined the CSDST in May 2012.

With a completely new outlook on life, John's existence has changed over the past three years: "I never thought I'd be an international athlete at 44 years old. I thought all that sort of stuff was long gone, but I can give these able-bodied guys a run for their money. I did the RAF indoor championship the other week and I finished ninth out of 32 against able-bodied athletes."

Like Mick Brennan, the gear that John uses is tailored to his needs, although there

are rules and regulations that have to be adhered to. He says: "I ski with one pole. I have to ski with a pole in my discipline. The hardest bit is the balance, having one arm you can use and absolutely nothing on the other side is a challenge."

Fusilier Andy Barlow has also had his share of obstacles to cross. After losing his left leg above the knee in a minefield in Afghanistan while on Operation Herrick in 2006, he decided to give skiing a go.

As he is a yacht instructor for the Army, being involved in a physically demanding sport wasn't new to Andy. After skiing occasionally for a couple of years with the CSDST, he decided that if he was going to take the sport seriously he had to dedicate a lot more time to it. "My sailing, although it's my job, it is only a job. Whereas skiing, I'm really enjoying my skiing at the moment and I want to do this seriously."


Although he has adapted well to life without his limb, once he gets on the slopes, there is a palpable feeling of equality. He explains: "When I'm skiing alongside able-bodied people there is a comfort in that there is life after injury. I thought my life was over. I'm enjoying my skiing at the moment so it's good for me."

With a confidence that has been buoyed by his CSDST experience, Andy has set his sights on the ultimate skiing prize. He reveals that Mike isn't the only CSDST member with his eye on Korea 2018: "It's a big commitment and it's a lot of work to get there, but it's where I want to go."

On meeting the CSDST members, one gets a distinct feeling of inadequacy. These people are extremely brave and have the most refreshing approach to life. Hurling down hills at breakneck speed isn't for everyone and these men have gone through more than most, yet are still living life on the edge.

Flight Sergeant Kirk explains that everything is a team effort and there is no room for divas: "Skiing has helped me a lot. It's given me a focus. It builds confidence and improves your interaction with other people."

"There aren't enough people to mollycoddle you, so you have to do things for yourself. It's not easy looking after skis and getting all the kit up and down mountains, but you have to do it. You have to look after yourself."

So, with brave, non-diva-like professional athletes, surely the sky is the limit? Coach Warrant Officer Class 2 Mark Scorgie has high hopes for the 2013/14 team: "Our goal was to get guys to the Paralympics and we do have a potential paralympian. Mick is looking good for it. He is proof that what we're doing works." 

# ARE YOU TOUGH ENOUGH?

## WITH TRAINING AND OPERATIONAL DUTY OPPORTUNITIES, BEING A ROYAL MARINES RESERVIST CAN BE LIFE-CHANGING

“There has never been a better time to join the Royal Marines Reserve,” so says Lieutenant Colonel Aldeiy Alderson, a tough-talking marine in charge of boosting reservist numbers.

Over the past 16 months, as Chief of Staff of the Royal Marines Reserve (RMR), he has been part of a team looking at ways of increasing and retaining the cadre of personnel able to quickly drop their roles on civvy street and serve alongside regular Royal Marines commandos.

But becoming a Royal Marines (RM) reservist is tough – every one of them is trained to the same high standards as their full-time colleagues, with the exception that, outside the Corps, they are regular people; students, policemen, bankers and youth workers.

Not everyone is cut out to be a RM reservist; the training is demanding, the commitment long, and not all volunteers make it. But fresh thinking is helping these men, and their employers, take advantage of one of the best packages available in Defence.

At present there are roughly 430 reservists in the Royal Marines with a target under Future Reserves 2020 of 630 by 2018. To achieve this the RMR is seeking to rewrite their offer.

“Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) is happening, and while 630 may seem a small number in comparison to the other military services, it’s quite a challenge when you consider the training and expectation that we place upon our

reservists,” Lieutenant Colonel Alderson said.

“We need to refine the training and support we have in place to maintain our reservists’ ability to integrate into regular commando units. We are also seeking to exploit the improved terms and conditions for reservists under FR20, and promote the opportunities for international exercises, deployments, adventure training and representing the Corps in sport. In short, we aim to provide the best offer in Defence to volunteers willing to commit their spare time.”

Royal Marines reservists are offered the chance to deploy with the Lead Commando Group, the opportunity to deploy overseas at least twice a year, an annual exercise in the UK, and the possibility of deploying to the US to take part in an exchange programme.

“These are the principal offers we are making as we recognise that, for many people, being a reservist is about being able to do something challenging and rewarding, gaining skills, qualifications and experience they can use in their workplace. Being able to say proudly ‘I am part of the Royal Marines, this is what I did at the weekend’,” said Lieutenant Colonel Alderson.


“But we have also identified a problem with training; it is too long from beginning to end and we are seeking to simplify this process.”

Devised and

currently being trialled by RMR London, Project Achnacarry is a recruit training programme that delivers increased tempo and introduces a second intake of recruits every year. Thus allowing a reservist who misses or requires additional training to rejoin another training programme quickly. Close relationships with the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines are also yielding benefits, with a dedicated training team of regular instructors delivering assessment and confirmation exercises for the RMR.

Ex-regulars who join the Reserve are now being reviewed on a case-by-case basis, dependent on time out of the service as well as the specialist skills they are bringing, especially when it comes to the upper age limit. In many cases, a man’s key skills are a compelling case for the Royal Marines to bring him into the reserves to deliver training and administrative support to the growing RMR.

Lieutenant Colonel Alderson said: “The work we are doing now and in the future is all about maintaining a robust and capable strategic reserve that the Royal Marines can employ with confidence.

“From high-end contingent operations to providing range teams and medics for regular training, the success of the Royal Marines Reserve will continue to rest on the quality of the offer it makes to volunteers, and the quality of those who take up the challenge.” 

Picture: PO [Photo] Sean Clee



**Opportunities: being a Royal Marines reservist can involve deploying around the world**





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 **BOEING**



John Humphreys at the Royal Chelsea Hospital

Picture: Sergeant Pete Mobbs

# MY MEDALS

During his 41-year army career, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) John Humphreys, 92, escaped twice from POW camps and was awarded 11 medals including two Mention in Dispatches. Interview by Lorraine McBride



## AFRICA STAR

In 1936 I became a boy soldier at the Army Technical School, Chepstow. At the end of it, you joined a man's regiment, and I went to the Royal Engineers in spring 1939 for a few short months before war broke out.

When war was declared, I was digging trenches in Shorncliffe. We were all

young and our reaction was "hooray!" because we were professional soldiers, only too keen to get stuck in.

In August 1940, I joined a field company and deployed to Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Egypt via Durban. I stayed in the Western Desert until the Germans captured Tobruk in 1942, when I was wounded and taken prisoner.

From there, it was nine months in a POW camp in Ancona, north east Italy.

A converted factory with wooden bunks, we were so tightly packed in that, if we put our knees together, we could play cards.

We were fed a slice of bread and a small piece of cheese five-days-a-week; we supposedly had meat soup on other days but I think they must have just waved an Oxo wrapper over it.

The POW camp was terrible but I learned to speak fluent Italian, which proved crucial in my escape. I finally escaped dressed

in Greek army uniform that looked very similar to Italian uniform. Our trick was that at dusk I marched my two friends up towards the gate to the commandant's office for 'punishment'. I was a bit apprehensive that the Italian guard would rumble us but we got through smoothly into the Italian barracks.

Hiding under huts until dark, we made our way to a perimeter wall and climbed over. Walking south, initially only at night, we persuaded an Italian farmer to swap our uniforms in return for scruffy old clothes. We risked walking by day and lived off the land. But food wasn't a priority as we'd been on starvation rations for nine months. My weight dropped to just seven stone but I was fit so we carried on walking.

We faced a major incident when we crossed the autostrada as a convoy of German vehicles approached. I always stood in front because I spoke Italian fluently and my mates would go to ground. Standing still, the trucks passed, followed by three sidecars, until the final one slowed and stopped. Speaking in broken Italian, the SS officer asked me where the nearest river was and with great joy I told him. Did my heart skip a beat? More than that!

From there, we crossed the mountains. In a hilltop village we overheard an Italian lad say that English soldiers were in the village below; we went down and found a patrol who drove us by jeep to Bari, 1st Para Brigade HQ.

Soon, we were on our way home on a troop ship for six weeks' leave.



## NW EUROPE BELGIUM, FRANCE AND GERMANY

In February 1944 I qualified as a parachutist. Posted to 1st Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers, we jumped into Arnhem in September.

I was eventually taken prisoner and moved to a POW camp near Emerich. When you're first taken prisoner, morale drops to your boots because we weren't trained in escape techniques. But the second time I wasn't at all demoralised as I knew a few



tricks and I was determined to escape again. Royal Engineers always carried a clasp knife on their shoulder and I dropped mine down my trousers. In those days, the Germans never touched around your crotch when they searched you.

At the POW camp there was a long building where all prisoners headed. I was more interested in escaping and spotted a small cookhouse with an open door.

Inside were two big stoves and two windows with iron bars. Closing the door I took my jackknife and scraped all the cement around the bottom of the bars to loosen them. I went to the stove, mixed the ashes with water and carefully covered the windowsill to conceal what I'd done. I looked for my friends to tell them that I was making a break.

At dusk, I planted both feet against the wall, grabbed the bars and bent them. I'd done nine months in a POW camp, so I was damn sure that I wasn't going back. I was just 22 and now I'd escaped twice, but, when you're young, it's all part of life's rich pattern.

When I arrived home, my mother was hanging out washing. She said 'I thought you were in a POW camp!' I told her 'I was but I didn't like it!'



## AFRICA (MENTION IN DISPATCHES)

I got the first of my two Mention in Dispatches (MiD) in Africa. The road leading down into Derna in Libya was a horseshoe shape in the mountains with a lovely harbour at the bottom. The Italians built this magnificent road out of the mountainside; a wall went straight up from the road while the other side sheered down.

My company commander told me 'I want you to get that road ready to blow up'. I prepared it for demolition,

then found a track on the other side of the wadi that the Jerrys could use so I did that next. We didn't have any English explosives so I used German ones; I drilled holes but the explosives were too big, so I sawed them in half. When the Officer Commanding turned up, he nearly had a fit and I told him 'well you tell me how to get explosives in that hole'. His response? 'Carry on!'

Anyway I blew that road up and it was still being repaired when I was taken as a POW to hospital in Benghazi.

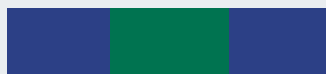
After my escape from a POW camp, I was sent to a resettlement camp to assess if we were fit to carry on soldiering. The CO told me that I'd got a Mention in Dispatches, but quite honestly I didn't know what it meant.



## NORWAY

When the armistice was called we were in Norway. We took the surrender of the Germans, removed explosives from the hydroelectric plants and started clearing minefields but realised we were daft and should have made the Germans do it. When we heard the war was over there wasn't any massive celebration because, before we knew it, we went to Palestine by train and troop ship.

I got my medal from the King of Norway with a diploma thanking me for my contribution towards the freedom of Norway. I also won a commendation from the Commander-in-Chief, General Montgomery, for services beyond the call of duty in North West Europe but you don't win anything, I just got three cheers. I met Monty once after the war. He asked if I'd been to Africa while I was stood there wearing the Africa Star. I thought 'Hell!'



## PALESTINE (MID)

Issued with short rifles and jungle warfare kit we awaited our next move in a camp near Weymouth. When the Far East War finished we were pleased, knowing that we'd have been part of the force to attack Malaya. So instead we went to Palestine until 1948.

My main role was with the engineers in cordon and search. We cordoned off the kibbutz and searched for armoury that the Germans had cleverly hidden. They laid mines under railway lines and made crafty switches to double-bluff us. They blew up the King David Hotel and we were first on the scene and found a few survivors. Our trucks were always loaded with everything we needed, all stored in a way that, if we wanted a pick and shovel, there it was.

I got my second Mention in Dispatches in Palestine when my name appeared in 'Part Two Orders' on our noticeboard. I don't have the faintest idea why. My military record says: 'For services beyond the call of duty'.



## NORTHERN IRELAND

In 1970 I was with the Para Brigade at the height of the Troubles. Based in Antrim around the time of Bloody

Sunday, my main challenge was making sure a sniper didn't kill me. The IRA booby-trapped mines and used all sorts of skullduggery. By now I was captain quartermaster and we did all the engineering tasks, building towers and sangars to obstruct the IRA. My outstanding memory was keeping my head down. Northern Ireland at that time was a difficult, nasty place.



## OBE

I served in the Army for 41 years and didn't know anything else until I retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1977. I met my late wife Brenda during the war and we married when I came home from Palestine.

The Duke of Kent presented my OBE at my investiture and we had a long chat about Hong Kong. He served there at the same time except he commanded a cavalry squadron while I was just a Tommy. I wasn't nervous because I previously met King George and Queen Elizabeth when we went to the Palace after Arnhem and presented to the Royal Family.

I enjoyed my army career. I saw quite a lot of the world so I didn't lack travel. After retiring, I was fortunate to become The County Emergency Planning Officer in West Glamorgan. My wife decided that we'd live in Mumbles, which seemed only fair given that I dragged her around the world.



## OUT IN THE ARMY

My Life as a Gay Soldier

By James Wharton,  
Biteback Publishing, £16.99

This is an easy-to-read biography, told with candour. Stephen Fry describes it as 'wonderful, stirring and thrilling'... he's obviously easily pleased. James Wharton's story, basically, is boy meets boy, after boy, after boy on the gay scene in London.

Realising his life is shallow and self-harmful he decides to embark on a stable relationship with his one true love, who, unfortunately, has other ideas and dumps him – mid-tour of Iraq.

Then, after meeting another lad and starting a proper relationship, James' first true love re-enters his life and it's James' turn to do the dirty on boyfriend two, whilst

getting back together with the one he really loves and, eventually, tying the knot in a civil partnership.

All this is told over the background of his day job of being a soldier in the Blues and Royals, which, quite frankly, I found more interesting. Especially the details about the two sides of the regiment, the ceremonial and the 'green' war-fighting when he was deployed to Iraq in 2007.

His pride in the Regiment, especially his time in Canada, training as a gunner on a Scimitar commanded by Prince Harry, leaps off the page. Also of interest was his work for the Army's PR machine, demonstrating the



new attitude within the service towards diversity; leading to his interview with representatives from the American military looking to dissolve their 'don't ask, don't tell' policy. This led to his collaboration with Stonewall, where a meeting

with a teenager from Wiltshire who had lobbied her council to provide a much needed venue for a teenage LGBT forum influenced him to leave the Army and become a part of Stonewall's Education for All campaign.



## THE KILL LIST

By Frederick Forsyth  
Bantam Press, £18.99

Frederick Forsyth probably needs no introduction to you, with 12 novels topping the bestseller's list.

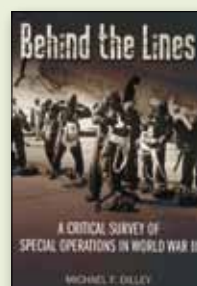
This latest offering from the master storyteller focuses on modern-day terrorism and, especially at the beginning, I had to keep reminding myself it was a work of fiction.

Forsyth's prose is flawless and no words are wasted. Several strands gradually weave into a single thread and my only gripe is the neatly tied up happy-ever-after ending, where everyone gets their just

deserts, presumably so the reader doesn't feel cheated.

Even the relatively benign Somali negotiator gets his comeuppance – something I feel would be unlikely in real life.

But that aside, it is fast-paced from start to finish. My absolute favourite bit came in the foreword: 'For the US Marine Corps, which is a very large unit, and for the British Pathfinders, who are a very small one. To the former, Semper Fi, and to the latter, rather you than me' – classic.



## BEHIND THE LINES

A Critical Survey of Special Operations in World War II

By Michael F. Dilley  
Casemate UK, £20

Looking at the work of the brave Special Operations personnel during the Second World War, Behind the Lines provides critical reviews of some of the best and worst examples of the time.

From an in-depth look at Britain's first paratroopers, to how Japanese Special Ops soldiers parachuted behind enemy lines to capture the Palembang oil refineries, Behind the Lines passes a magnifying glass over some of the best examples of how Special Operations were

successful during the Second World War, and also how they failed.

The no-nonsense way in which each case study is presented not only keeps each example short and succinct, it also provides the reader with enough information to picture each scenario in their mind's eye.

Using strict evaluation criteria, the author assesses 23 operations, grading them to provide the reader with a rounded review of each case study.





**TOGETHER  
WE REMEMBER.**



**75**  
YEARS  
1938-2013

BOEING | UK  
PARTNERSHIP

This Remembrance Day we honour the dedication of UK servicemen and women and their families. Together we remember all they have achieved and sacrificed.

 **BOEING**

# HEART HEALTH AND FITNESS

**CIRCULATORY HEART DISEASE IS THE UK'S SINGLE BIGGEST KILLER, CAUSING AROUND 82,000 DEATHS EVERY YEAR**



**C**irculatory heart disease occurs when the blood supply to the heart muscle is reduced because the heart's arteries become too narrow or are blocked. This is caused by a gradual build-up of porridge-like fatty deposits inside the coronary arteries. Most deaths caused by cardiovascular disease are premature and could easily be prevented by making lifestyle changes.

Diet has a significant effect on the

health of your heart. Around a third of the food we consume should be fruit and vegetables. Another third should be starchy foods, such as bread, cereals, pasta, rice and potatoes. Wholegrain and wholemeal varieties are best because of their fibre content. The remaining third should include a moderate amount of dairy food, meat, fish and vegetarian alternatives, and small amounts of food containing fat and sugar.

**Reduce your total fat intake** – especially saturated fat and trans fats. These lead to increased cholesterol and are therefore bad for your heart. Foods high in saturated fat include butter, hard cheese, fatty meat, biscuits, cakes, cream, lard, suet, ghee, coconut oil and palm oil.

**Moderate amounts of unsaturated fats** – monounsaturated and polyunsaturated – are good for your cholesterol levels. Foods high in unsaturated fat include olive oil, rapeseed oil, sunflower oil, nuts and seeds (such as walnuts, pine nuts and sesame seeds), and some margarines and spreads.

**Lower your salt intake** – eating too much can cause high blood pressure, which is linked to heart disease. The body only needs small amounts of salt, with the daily recommendation for adults being less than 6g, which is about one teaspoon. Cut down on processed foods as they contain large amounts of salt – at least 75 per cent of the salt in our diet comes from food such as bread, cheese, sausages, cereals and biscuits. Manufacturers often list sodium on the food label instead of salt, and 1g of sodium is the equivalent of 2.5g of salt. A food is high in salt if it has more than 1.5g salt or 0.6g sodium per 100g.

**Stopping smoking** – is the biggest step you can take to reduce your risk of developing heart disease. Smokers are nearly twice as likely to have a heart attack as people who have never smoked. Within a year of stopping smoking, your risk of a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker.

**An active lifestyle** – can significantly reduce your chance of developing heart disease. Taking regular exercise can



lower your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, weight and your risk of developing heart disease. Activities can range from a fast walk to more vigorous exercise, such as running and dancing. Adults should do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week. **DF**

## 10 TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER HEART

**1. Get moving** - perform 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity every week.

**2. Give up smoking** - a year after giving up, your risk of a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker.

**3. Manage your weight** - stick to a well-balanced diet low in fat and high in fruit and vegetables, combined with plenty of physical activity.

**4. Drop the salt** - stop using salt at the table and try adding less to your cooking, or cut it out completely.

**5. Get your five a day** - eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

**6. Eat oily fish** - eat oily fish twice a week.

**7. Walk off stress** - if you're feeling under pressure, clear your mind with a walk; it will also count towards your daily activity.

**8. Cut saturated fat** - reduce the consumption of foods such as butter, hard cheese, fatty meat, biscuits, cakes, cream and lard.

**9. Drink less alcohol** - alcohol can be fattening.

**10. Read the food label** - understanding what is in food will help you make healthier choices.



This article comes to you from CS Healthcare, the specialist provider of health insurance for civil servants. Telephone 0800 917 4325. [www.cshealthcare.co.uk](http://www.cshealthcare.co.uk)

This article is general advice only. If you or a family member have any medical concerns contact your GP or medic.

# 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 [rnbtd@rnbtd.org.uk](mailto:rnbtd@rnbtd.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](http://royal-naval-association.co.uk)

**Royal Marines Benevolent Fund:** Relieves hardship among serving and former Marines and dependents. [royalmarines.charities@charity.vfree.com](mailto:royalmarines.charities@charity.vfree.com) or call 02392 547201.

**ABF The Soldiers Charity:** Support to soldiers and veterans. [www.soldierscharity.org](http://www.soldierscharity.org) or call 0845 241 4820.

**RAF Benevolent Fund:** Help for RAF personnel past and present. [rafbf.org](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://rafa.org.uk/welfare.asp).

**HIVE:** Tri-Service information covering issues like education and health. 167 offices. [hive.mod.uk](http://hive.mod.uk).

**Royal British Legion:** Charity providing financial, social and emotional support to vets and serving, and dependents. [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://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](http://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 em: [PeopleServices@pppa.mod.uk](mailto: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](http://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, email: [contact@oscc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:contact@oscc.gsi.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).

### The Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS):

Charity providing welfare support from frontline to recovery for wounded, sick and injured serving personnel and their families when they are in hospital, rehabilitation or recovery centres. [www.dmws.org.uk](http://www.dmws.org.uk) or call 01264 774000

# SUDOKU

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

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

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

Solution to the October 2013 puzzle

# CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

The NATO Chess Championships were held recently in Poland and the UK team competed against 13 other nations. Germany is the strongest chess team and once again they prevailed. The UK finished 10th out of 14 and the team captain, Lieutenant Dave Ross RN, said that they had hoped to finish higher.

I can vouch that this is a very tough tournament with titled players participating, and positive results have to be fought for, tooth and nail. There were though some bright spots for our team. The best score was accrued by Staff Sergeant Dave Onley with 4½/7. He has a very open, aggressive style of chess and (like the great Viktor Korchnoi) he does not offer or accept draws lightly. It's 'die with your boots on' chess for him. When he sees a weakness in your position he will exploit it ruthlessly.

I will give you one of his NATO games this month against Polish player Marcin Skwarczynski. In this position Onley is white and pressing as usual for the win. He has just played his queen to g3. His



opponent should now play 18...g6 to alleviate the pressure but blundered by playing 18...f6 (the pawn to f6). See if you can guess how white capitalised on this to either checkmate or win material. The nearest answer to what happened wins a chess book donated by Chess & Bridge Ltd of London.

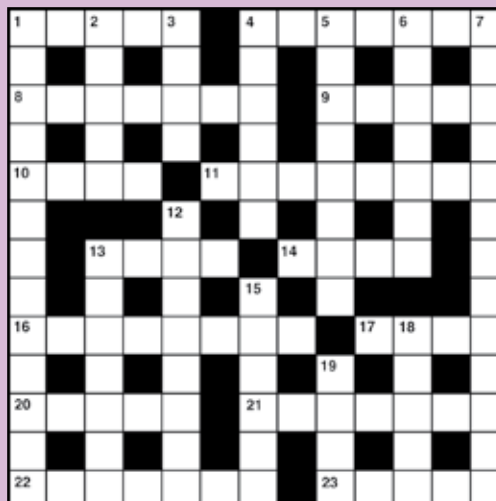
Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please.

The answer to October's problem was 1...Qxh2+ 2. Kxh2 Ng3+ 3.Kg1 Rh1-or 1...Bxd4 immediately. The winner will be announced. September's winner was Dr Andrew Malcolm from the Met Office.

# TOPICAL CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

- Shakespearean character who says 'O, I am fortune's fool' (5)
- It struck an iceberg and sank with the loss of 1,490 lives (7)
- Gold in bulk before coining (7)
- Table used in religious ceremonies (5)
- Narrow beams of light (4)
- Highly spiced, very hot Indian curry (8)
- US prohibition agent who led 'The Untouchables' (4)
- Kate, the British supermodel (4)
- Photographic materials are processed here (4-4)
- It is worn on a rider's heel to urge a horse forward (4)
- Gemstones made of hydrated silica and noted for their rich iridescence (5)
- Person who denies the existence of God (7)
- 'Blood \_\_\_\_\_', a Leonardo DiCaprio movie (7)
- See 2 Down



## DOWN

- He is the only actor in the 2013 movie 'All Is Lost' (6,7)
- And 23 Across. Her 2013 album 'Bangerz' went straight to the top of the charts (5,5)
- Columbus is the capital city of this US state (4)
- Andy Murray's sport (6)
- Hinged door in a ceiling (8)
- John, who plays Tom Barnaby in

## SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- Across**
- Romeo 4. Titanic 8. Bullion
  - Altar 10. Rays 11. Vindaloo
  - Ness 14. Moss
  - Dark-room 17. Spur
  - Opals 21. Atheist
  - Diamond 23. Cyrus
- Down**
- Robert Redford 2. Miley
  - Ohio 4. Tennis 5. Trapdoor
  - Nettles 7. Carbohydrates
  - Espresso 13. Nirvana
  - Poland 18. Prior 19. Chic

- 'Midsomer Murders' (7)
- Sugars and starches found in food (13)
- Strong coffee (8)
- Kurt Cobain's grunge group (7)
- England's final opponents in their 2014 World Cup qualifying group (6)
- England's wicket-keeper in their 2013 Ashes success (5)
- US disco group whose singles include 'Le Freak' and 'Good Times' (4)





**PRIZE**  
Win a two-night break for two in the stunning Peak District National Park



# PEAK OF COMFORT

**One reader will win a two-night stay in the Peak District**

The Charles Cotton Hotel is located in the beautiful village of Hartington (made famous for its cheese-making) in the beautiful Peak District National Park.

Since 2010 the new owners have refurbished the restaurant, bistro and bar, and designed each room to provide a sumptuous and relaxing place to stay.

Outside, they have a continental-style terrace dining and seating area – perfect for al fresco meals or for simply enjoying a drink.

Whether you visit the Charles Cotton Hotel for a tranquil break, lunch or dinner, you'll find a calming place where you can really unwind.

**TO WIN**

One lucky winner will enjoy a two-night break for two including breakfast. Email your name, address and phone number to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk) by 20 December. Enter Charles Cotton Hotel in the subject line.

Visit the Charles Cotton and enjoy 10 per cent off all dinner, bed and breakfast rates. Offer can't be used with other promotions, deals or offers running at the time. Quote *Defence Focus* when booking. Offer is valid until 30 June 2014. [www.charlescotton.co.uk](http://www.charlescotton.co.uk) or phone: 01298 84229.

# WAR GAMERS

**The ultimate game of modern warfare is finally here**



Gamers will love Command - Modern Air/Naval Operations but it's not for the fainthearted. You can relive fascinating historical operations in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and also the

Falklands or hunt down rogue nukes in Pakistan and much more.

The classic clashes of history, headlines of today as well as imagined battles of tomorrow, are all in this strategy-packed simulation.

Surface fleets, submarine

squadrons, air wings, land-based batteries and even satellite constellations are yours to direct as you see fit.

Command uses a realistic 3D earth globe for each of its scenarios. Rotate and zoom in and out of the action, from satellite view down to the trenches and wavetops. Play scenarios or build your own set anywhere in the world.

Game-makers USNI News claim: "Command will find a following not only among civilian gamers but might have value among military, government and policy circles as a simulator of modern warfare."

For more information, check out the website at [www.matrixgames.com](http://www.matrixgames.com)

**PRIZE**  
Three readers will win a game that pits your wits and tests your mettle



**TO WIN**

**Who wouldn't want to win this great game? Email your name, address and phone number to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk) by 20 December. Don't forget to enter War Gamers in the subject line.**



# Raising to Distinction



## Queen Victoria School

**Admissions Deadline  
Wed 15 Jan 2014**

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

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

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

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

Queen Victoria School  
Dunblane Perthshire  
FK15 0JY

**[www.qvs.org.uk](http://www.qvs.org.uk)**