

# Defence**Focus**

Royal Navy | Army | Royal Air Force | Ministry of Defence | ISSUE #248 FEBRUARY/11



## MARKET FORCES

With improved security in

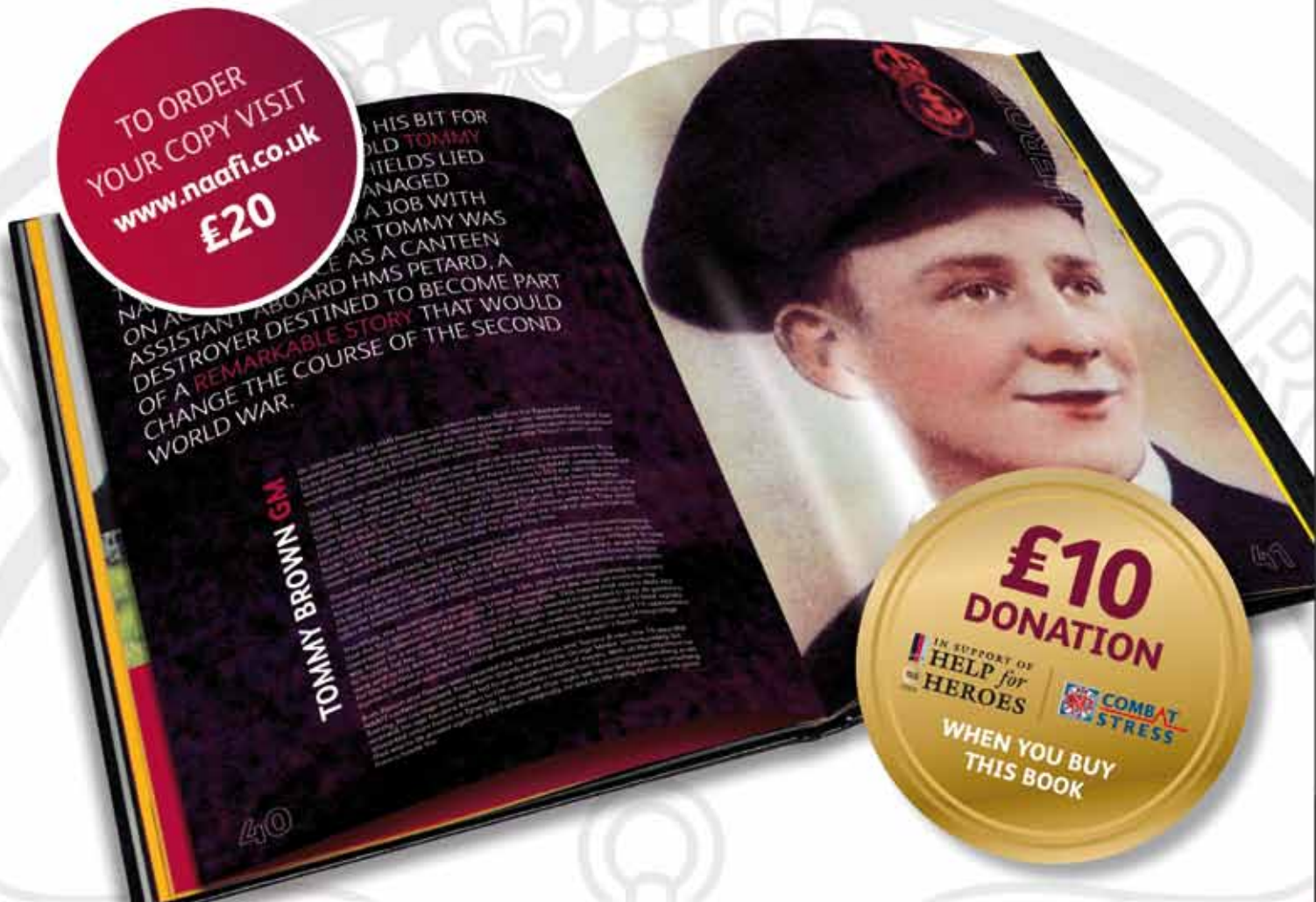
Nad 'Ali South, the locals are taking control



# A BOOK FOR HEROES

'CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF NAAFI SERVING THE SERVICES'  
THE STORY OF A VERY BRITISH INSTITUTION

TO ORDER  
YOUR COPY VISIT  
[www.naafi.co.uk](http://www.naafi.co.uk)  
£20



From its inception in 1920, NAAFI has supported the Armed Forces in good times and bad, delivering its famous 'Char & Wad', maintaining morale and providing a vital link to home for the brave men and women of The British Army, The Royal Navy and The Royal Air Force.

From simple beginnings to the trials of World War II, the Falklands, Operation Desert Storm and Afghanistan, NAAFI's history is littered with tales of bravery, dedication and extreme conditions.

Including contributions from Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton, Sir Jock Stirrup, David Beckham and Dame Kelly Holmes, 'Celebrating 90 Years of NAAFI Serving the Services' tells this unique story and celebrates NAAFI's many heroes, old and new.

*"Our Service men and women know that, whatever they are asked to do, NAAFI will be with them."*

The Prime Minister, David Cameron

*"There must be very few Service men or women who have not had some cause to be deeply grateful for the existence of this remarkable institution at some point in their careers."*

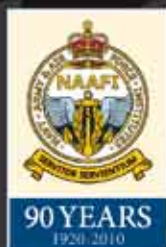
Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir David Richards  
KCB CBE DSO ADC

*"It is difficult to understand a war zone unless you have actually been to one. The one thing you look forward to while you are out there is getting back to the NAAFI and to the good things it provides."*

Actor and Award-Winning Presenter, Ross Kemp

*"NAAFI and in particular the 'NAAFI Girls' have always had a special place within Armed Forces life. Whether it is a cup of NAAFI tea, a chocolate bar or a comforting and reassuring chat, you all do a great job..."*

Forces Sweetheart and TV Presenter, Lorraine Kelly





# NAVIGATOR

**KINGS OF THE ROAD:  
THE CHELSEA POP STAR  
PENSIONERS P32**



## Regulars

### P5 IN MEMORIUM

Tributes to this month's fallen

### P11 BIG PICTURE: EYE OF A SNIPER

A sniper en route to Camp Shawqat

### P18 PODIUM

The Sun's Duncan Larcombe on Wikileaks

### P22 VERBATIM

DG HR Susan Scholefield on MOD changes

## Exclusives

### P8 STABILISING HELMAND

Changing pace in Nad 'Ali

### P12 MY MASTIFF DAY OUT

Ian Carr on tour with the Royal Irish

### P16 BASTION ON TAP

Fresh water from the desert

### P36 TALES OF VALOUR

Medals exhibition celebrates heroes



## Lifestyle

### P26 PHOTO MOMENTS

Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey

### P29 MY MEDALS

Sergeant Stewart Clarke looks back

### P30 SHARP BLADE

Two pocket tools to give away

### P39 FREE SKIWEAR

£500 worth of skiwear could be yours

# Protect your home & kit for less

Low cost worldwide insurance for all MOD personnel. Kit cover from just £3.15 a month - full details online.

**ForcesPlan.co.uk/df**

Specialist military insurance from Cherish Insurance Brokers.  
Authorised & regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## DefenceFocus

For everyone in defence  
Published by the Ministry of Defence

Level 1 Zone C  
MOD, Main Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB  
General enquiries: 020 721 8 1320

**EDITOR:** Danny Chapman  
Tel: 020 721 8 3949  
email: danny.chapman709@mod.uk

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Ian Carr  
Tel: 020 721 8 2825  
email: carr\_ian@btconnect.com

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Leigh Hamilton  
Tel: 020 721 8 5988  
email: leigh.hamilton933@mod.uk

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Lorraine McBride  
Tel: 020 721 8 2341  
email: lorraine\_mcbride@btconnect.com

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Tristan Kelly  
Tel: 020 721 8 4252  
email: tristan.kelly569@mod.uk

**ART EDITOR:** Mark Eagle  
Tel: 020 721 8 3658  
email: designer\_defencefocus@btconnect.com

**DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPORT:** Shell Daruwala  
Tel: 020 721 8 1320  
email: shell.daruwala932@mod.uk

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

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

**Advertising**  
Advertising sales are handled by  
Ten Alps Media. Tel: 020 7 657 1816  
www.tenalps.com

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

Printed by Corporate  
Document Services  
Ltd on 100 per cent  
recycled paper



## DANNY CHAPMAN

The Christmas and New Year break seem a long time ago now and like us I am sure that staff across Defence have fallen back into the normal routine of the working day. If, that is, anything in Defence is normal anymore.

The year ahead it seems will be another interesting one with 'Transforming Defence' a big theme for everybody, military and civilian.

It is almost certain that UK Defence will look quite different at the end of the year to what it is now. And of course many staff will be concerned whether there will be a place for them in the brave new world.

We hope to keep you up to date on how the organisation is changing throughout the year on the MOD's online news pages and in this magazine. Indeed, in this issue we hear from the Director of Human Resources about the challenges of reducing staff numbers.

Of course the main focus for the MOD and Armed Forces remains Afghanistan where 'normal' routines took barely a moment's pause over the Christmas season. In fact our reporter Ian Carr almost found himself in Helmand on Christmas Day, arriving home from his visit there late on Christmas Eve. So dedicated has he been to writing up articles from his visit, the first of which can be found in these pages, he still hasn't got round to buying his family Christmas presents!

Afghanistan will of course remain our key priority too and we hope to keep readers well informed as to how the UK's military and civilian personnel are progressing the mission there.

As a break from the 'normality' of everyone's work though it's not all serious stuff on these pages and, should you feel like surprising your colleagues, maybe the Chelsea Pensioners can inspire you to start up a sing song – hi ho, hi ho, it's off to work we go!

Download Defence Focus magazine PDF online

[www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews](http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews)



### The Defence News Blog

Get a daily update of all the major defence stories running in the media with the MOD's official position on the key issues, as well as a Defence Diary with upcoming events of interest.

Visit [www.blogs.mod.uk](http://www.blogs.mod.uk) and subscribe to the daily alerts

### Facebook/Twitter

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

### YouTube

At Defence Headquarters YouTube the latest videos from across Defence can be found including clips of soldiers on patrol in Helmand and briefings from senior personnel.

### Afghanistan Blog

Updated daily with official news on the UK mission in Afghanistan as well as with stories from across the media and personal blogs from Armed Forces personnel currently deployed.

[www.blogs.mod.uk/afghanistan](http://www.blogs.mod.uk/afghanistan)

**FORCES**  
**CarsDirect**  
[www.forcescarsdirect.com](http://www.forcescarsdirect.com)

Get the  
best for less.



CALL **01522 814010** NOW TO SAVE UP TO **52%** OFF ANY CAR

# IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS – 18 NOVEMBER 2010 TO 17 JANUARY 2011

## Private John Howard

Private John Howard, from 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan on Sunday 5 December 2010 when he was fatally wounded during an action conducted against insurgents operating in Lashkar Gah.

Aged 23 and originally from Wellington in New Zealand, Private Howard, known as Jack to his friends and family, joined the British Army in 2007.

After basic training, Private Howard was posted to 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment. Throughout his career Private Howard served with distinction and was

identified by his regiment as a potential high flyer with much to offer. He had been at the very forefront of all the Brigade Reconnaissance Force operations up to when his life was tragically taken.

He leaves behind his parents Roger and Anne, two sisters Charlotte and Isabella, and his girlfriend Sophie.



## Corporal Steven Dunn

Corporal Steven Thomas Dunn from 216 (Parachute) Signal Squadron, attached to 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment Battle Group, was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 21 December 2010 while he was travelling in a Jackal which hit an

improvised explosive device. Corporal Dunn, aged 27 from Gateshead, joined the Army in September 2000.

With a tour in Iraq and two previous tours of Afghanistan already under his belt, he relished the opportunity to deploy on Op HERRICK 13.

He was a courageous, fit and deeply professional

soldier who knew his duty lay in the heat of battle. He eschewed the desk-bound opportunities of the headquarters to accompany his colleagues into the very heart of enemy territory, to reconnoitre options for those who followed.

He leaves behind his wife Cheryl and daughter Emily.



## WO2 Charles Wood

WO2 Charles Henry Wood from 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC, serving with the Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Task Force, was killed when caught in an IED blast in Afghanistan on Tuesday 28 December 2010.

Trained to coordinate all

aspects of improvised explosive device detection, he was assigned to lead the clearance of a route through the Kushal Kalay area of the Helmand River Valley to increase the freedom of movement and safety of the local population.

Aged 34, WO2 Wood, from Middlesbrough, joined the Army in 1994. Operationally

experienced, he completed deployments to Iraq and Bosnia. A talented warrant officer with masses of potential, he had late entry commissioning firmly in his sights.

He leaves behind his wife Heather, his mother Barbara, his father John, and his sisters Samantha and Amanda.



## Private Joseva Vatubua

Private Joseva Saqanagonedau Vatubua from The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (5 SCOTS), was killed in Afghanistan on Saturday 1 January 2011 when he was caught in an explosion while

deployed on an operation to interdict enemy fighters and bring peace to the district of Nahr-e Saraj.

Aged 23 and from Suva in Fiji, Private Vatubua joined the British Army in 2007. He was posted to B Company, 5 SCOTS as a rifleman, where he has served ever since.

A keen rugby player who was

one of the stars of the battalion team, he had recently begun representing the Army at Rugby Sevens.

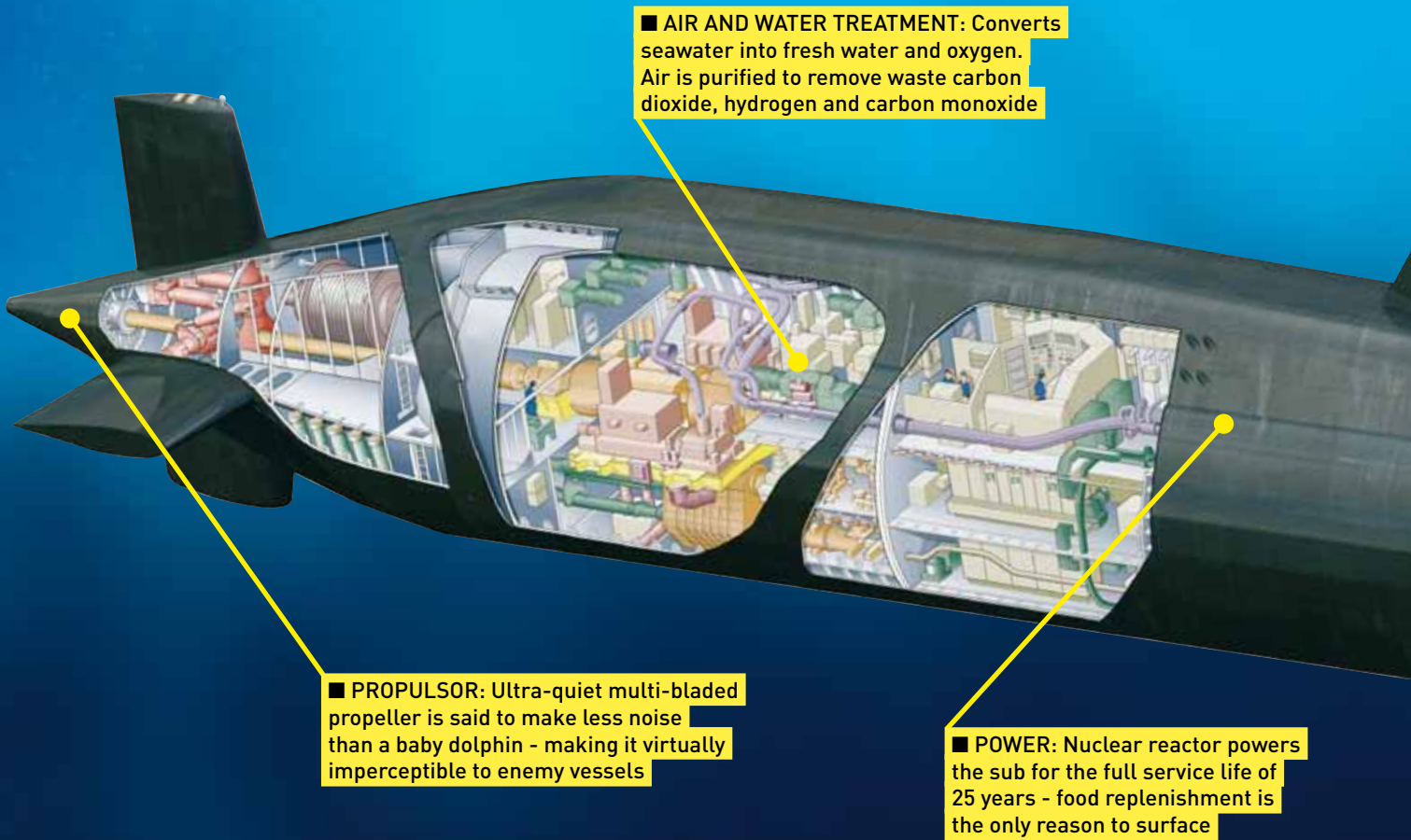
Private Joseva Vatubua, known to everyone as "Big Joe", approached everything he did with an infectious sense of humour and a commitment.

Private Vatubua leaves behind his wife Claudette.





# AMBUSH



■ **AIR AND WATER TREATMENT:** Converts seawater into fresh water and oxygen. Air is purified to remove waste carbon dioxide, hydrogen and carbon monoxide

■ **PROPULSOR:** Ultra-quiet multi-bladed propeller is said to make less noise than a baby dolphin - making it virtually imperceptible to enemy vessels

■ **POWER:** Nuclear reactor powers the sub for the full service life of 25 years - food replenishment is the only reason to surface

## AMBUSH SETS SAIL

The latest addition to the Royal Navy submarine flotilla, *Ambush*, has been rolled out of BAE Systems' shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness. The submarine is the latest of the Astute Class vessels which, once in service, will find a home at HM Naval Base

Clyde. The Astute submarines are the largest, most powerful and technologically advanced submarines of their type ever built for the Royal Navy – regarded as one of the world's most complex engineering challenges. *Ambush* marks the 24th nuclear-powered submarine which has been constructed at the Barrow



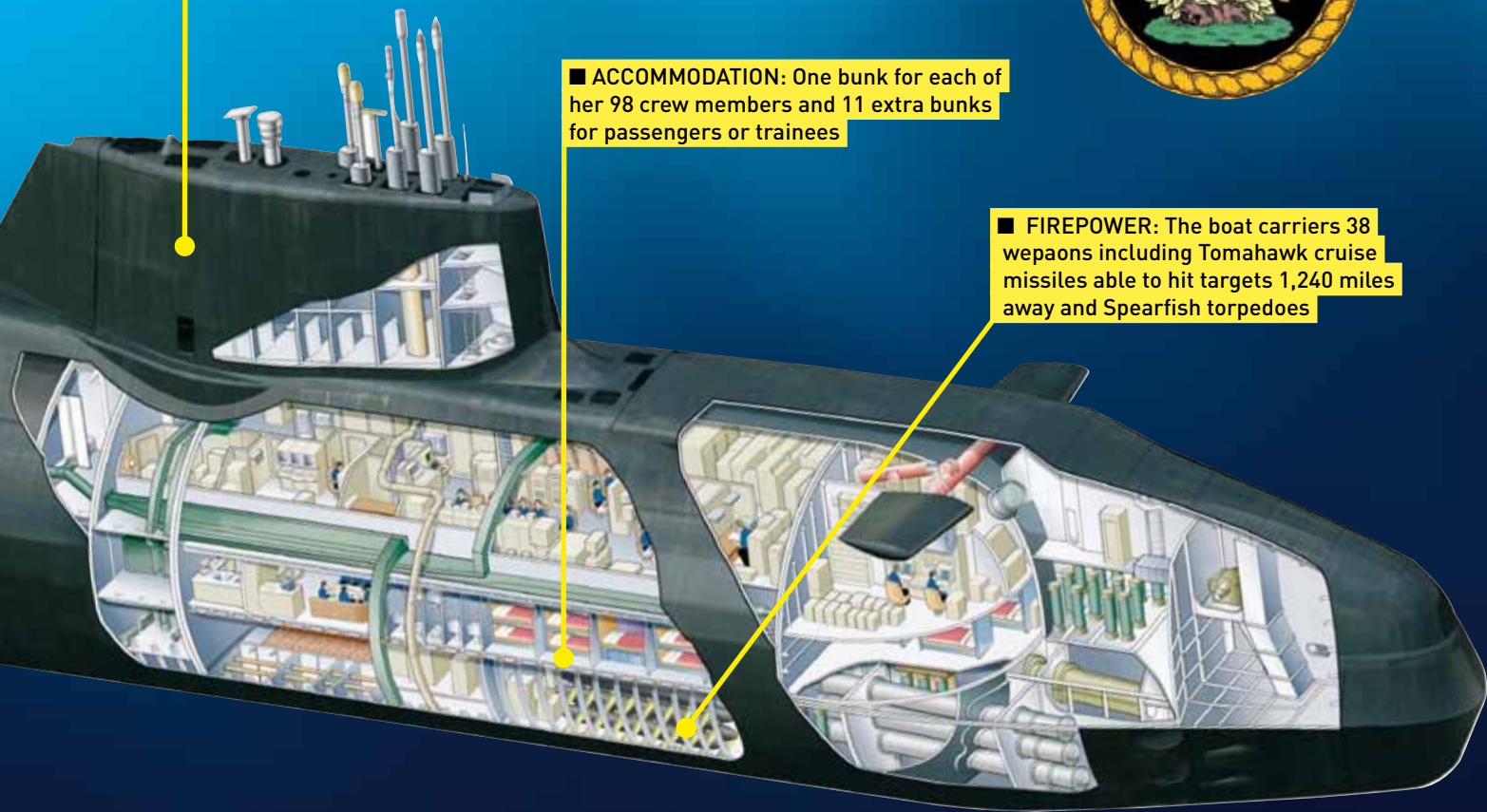
# THE NAVY'S NEXT SUPER SUB



■ **SONAR:** Detectors in the bow, flank, fin and another towed behind the boat are able to detect large ships up to 3,000 miles away

■ **ACCOMMODATION:** One bunk for each of her 98 crew members and 11 extra bunks for passengers or trainees

■ **FIREPOWER:** The boat carries 38 weapons including Tomahawk cruise missiles able to hit targets 1,240 miles away and Spearfish torpedoes



Ambush is officially named at a ceremony in Barrow

shipyards, stretching back to 1960 with the launch of the first, HMS *Dreadnought*. The building of the 7,400-tonne nuclear-powered attack submarine has been described as more complex than building the Space Shuttle. At 291ft in length and 34ft in width the Astute Class are significantly bigger than the Swiftsure and

Trafalgar subs they replace – though quieter and able to travel at more than 20 knots, enabling them to cover 500 miles in a day. Construction on the third vessel of the class, *Artful*, is continuing, with the command deck in place and work on the hull almost completed. Work on fourth in class *Audacious* is also underway.

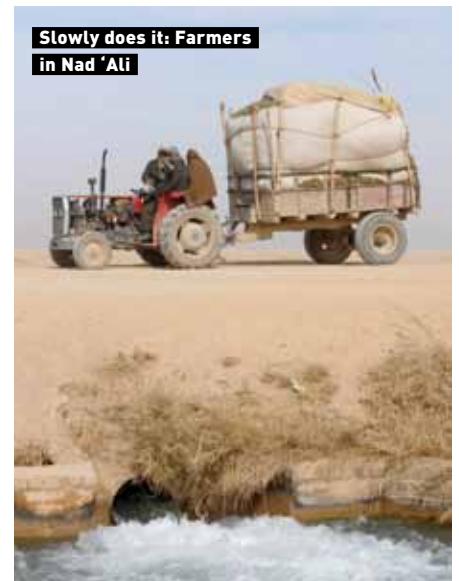


# ALPHA MALES AND AGRICULTURE

IAN CARR LOOKS AT THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT IN NAD 'ALI



Take it to the bank: Adrian Dubois considers a culvert that needs rebuilding



Slowly does it: Farmers in Nad 'Ali

Pictures: Martin Downs (RAF)

Without breaking step, Major Bayard Barron, officer in charge of B Company 1 Royal Irish Regiment, introduces himself as we march towards the Mastiffs.

"This is Afghanistan's Helmand province, the most dangerous place – in the world." Then, he adds, "Major Barron has no idea what he is in for today, but then, he has no idea what he is in for any day! Is that the sort of tabloid crap you are here to write?" I assure him it's not. I tell him that I'm here to look at provincial reconstruction. That seems to satisfy him, and earns me a ride in his Mastiff to go and see. Mind you, if I had been intent on writing a testosterone-filled piece about alpha males blasting their way through the badlands I've found my man.

Based at FOB (Forward Operating Base) Shawqat in Nad 'Ali (South), in just three months the Irish shredded the insurgents that had been controlling much of the area around the base, earning it the reputation of being a no-go area and the sobriquet the 'Red Wedge.' In the first two and a half months of their tour there were 546 serious incidents, 93 per cent of which involved direct fire. It's not like that now.

“ It’s a fast meets slow situation ”

"We haven't had a small arms incident in the centre of our operational area for weeks," says Major Barron. "We have created a secure space, now it's time for the locals to step in and decide what they want to do with it." The Major's view is simple. "The days of ISAF throwing money around are over, and we need to make that clear. If someone says to me their irrigation ditch is blocked, I ask what would they do if we weren't here?" Although trenchantly stated, the message the Major is keen to get across is this – it is time that the Afghan population understands that development is in their hands and must be done through their own government structures, with ISAF in a supporting role.

"We have to persuade people to

embrace GiroA (the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)," says Adrian Dubois, a lean ex-para, now head of the District Stabilisation Team (DST) for the area. He is an MOD employee sponsored by DfiD. His job is to liaise with the battle group, the district governor and the locals to put stabilisation plans into practice.

"I could easily dip into my big wad of cash and build a school for anyone who asks for it, but that's not the solution." he says. "I'm constantly having to manage local expectation by putting the handbrake on to ensure that the Afghan Government is seen as the right route to get things done." Building something solves nothing if the infrastructure isn't there to support it. "If we opened a school tomorrow, would it be registered in the District Community Council plan, would there be teachers, is it feasible, are there enough children registered to make it viable?"

The local government has drawn up sector plans based on seven main themes which include things such as security, agriculture and health. Having provided the security, Major Barron now feeds in ideas and information to the locals, and to Adrian



to take forward the rest. "I look at those suggestions in the context of GiroA plans," explains Adrian, "see if they are supported and consider the local legitimacy of what is being proposed." His approach needs to be balanced. If there is something he can do that will address an area of real and urgent need he will fund it, and if needs be advise the government to rebalance their plans.

To help him make informed decisions, Adrian is supported by Captain Jaco Van Der Merwe, a Royal Engineer, the Military Stabilisation Support Team representative. "I am Adrian's eyes and ears on the ground," he says. "I gather infrastructure information, for example I know where the electricity supplies in the area are and what they can generate."

Today he and Adrian are getting out to look at development projects that Major Barron needs to discuss. As we wait for the vehicles, Barron and Dubois explain how things are these days in their backyard.

Adrian and the Major are the ying and yang of the development process, working closely to make things better. Clearly they have tremendous respect for each other, understand the other's point of view and broadly agree about what needs to be done. The main issue is pace of change.

"At the pre-deployment stage we need to prepare incoming battle groups that this is a fast meets slow situation," says Adrian. "For 12 months troops train hard to come here for six-month

tours. They arrive adrenaline-fuelled. They are highly capable and keen to get on with it. Their job is to create the security bubble as quickly as possible, and they want to see progress quickly, especially when they have worked as hard and fought as superbly as the Irish have done. Bayard did what was considered impossible clearing out the Red Wedge. But the Afghans don't fit our timescales, they are not just here on a six-month-tour. Having sorted out security, we need to stop from time to time and let GiroA catch up."

In recently cleared areas, local cooperation can last only until the next round of intimidation occurs, but here the Royal Irish have maintained the security bubble giving the locals, for the first time in years, a chance to discuss what they want for the future. Major Barron describes this as a positive challenge, "When we talk to the people the first thing they ask for is security, we've given them that, then it's, 'we want a school.' All the kids want to be interpreters or doctors. The thing is, if they want a school they have to understand that they have to lobby their District Community Council, get it in the plan, get it properly resourced through the Department of Education."

Both men feel the message is filtering through, but they sympathise, up to a point, with those who feel the need to get whatever they can from their benefactors. Maybe, in the early days, in an effort to win hearts and minds, ISAF

largesse may have created a culture of ask and it will be given. And in an area that has known 30 years of war, the wise man soon learns to get what he can while it's on offer because tomorrow the well may run dry, or you might be dead. So impressing people that GiroA is how to get things done requires understanding and patience.

Long-term success depends on the careful nurturing of relationships and the development of trust with the locals. For Adrian, that includes tempering the battle group's natural urge to crack on while ensuring that sustainable progress is made. Then, having "tamed" the Irish, although he would never put it that way, he will have to do the same again when they end their tour in April and another group of alpha males, the Royal Marines, arrive determined to make their mark.

Building up knowledge and an understanding of the area, who holds power, who can be trusted, is also crucial. Partly for this reason Adrian has signed up for a 12-month tour instead of the usual six.

"Bayard knows his operational area better than anyone else. He is absolutely brilliant at building relationships with both the good and the bad boys around here, and you have to be pragmatic," says Adrian. "Some of them do have political aspirations and want to work with us to build government infrastructure. But Bayard will be going home in a couple of months, so I have to keep that impetus going."

The vehicles are now ready and we climb aboard. *To read about our day in Nad 'Ali turn to pages 12 - 15* **DF**



**And another thing: Major Barron makes his point to DST's Adrian Dubois**



## JON DAY'S CV

- **2008-2010:** Director General Security Policy (formerly Policy Director).
- **2007-2008:** Director General Operational Policy (now Director).
- **2007:** Head of the MOD Streamlining Project.
- **2004-07:** Command Secretary Fleet.
- **2001-03:** Director of the Secretary General's Private Office (NATO).
- **2000-01:** Chief of the Joint Intelligence Committee Assessments Staff (Cabinet Office).
- **1999-2000:** Weatherhead Fellow in International Relations at Harvard University.
- **1997-99:** Director of Defence Policy, coordinating the Strategic Defence Review.
- **1995-97:** Deputy Command Secretary Land.
- **1992-95:** NATO International Staff team.
- **1988-92:** First Secretary Europe in the UK Delegation to NATO (FCO).
- **1979-88:** Policy and operations posts in MOD including Assistant Private Secretary to the Armed Forces Minister and the Naval Operations Secretariat during the Falklands War.

# PROUD AND EXCITED

## JON DAY CBE EXPLAINS WHAT HE BRINGS TO HIS NEW ROLE AS 2ND PUS AND WHAT HE THINKS MATTERS MOST

Last week an old friend congratulated me on getting the 2nd PUS job: "You must be proud and excited but also rather nervous – if you really understand what is being asked of you." All true.

So what is the job and why did I think I was the right person to do it? The theme of the job description is change: to help PUS and CDS drive implementation of the changes flowing from the SDSR and Defence Reform. This is a huge agenda that affects everyone in Defence.

It will be my main focus at the outset. But the 2nd PUS is, along with the VCDS, one of MOD's chief operating officers.

I have seen the fruits of success and the price of failure. And I have been involved in leading change at TLB and MOD level, and in NATO.

So I have a pretty good idea, based on experience, of what works and what doesn't, and of the human consequences of change.

I am proud of what we have and continue to achieve across the whole of Defence. But I am not complacent about our weaknesses, nor the challenges we face. Most important in my view, I care about what we do. It matters.

Achieving our aims in Afghanistan matters. Stopping future Afghanistans matters. Working with our allies to deter,

“Treating people as well as possible matters”

We are tasked not only to implement change but to make the organisation work effectively and deliver while we are doing so. The world won't stop just because we are trying to change our piece of it.

And I also run, again with VCDS, the Central TLB, which covers the central staffs, corporate services and bodies as diverse and important as the Defence Academy and the MOD Police.

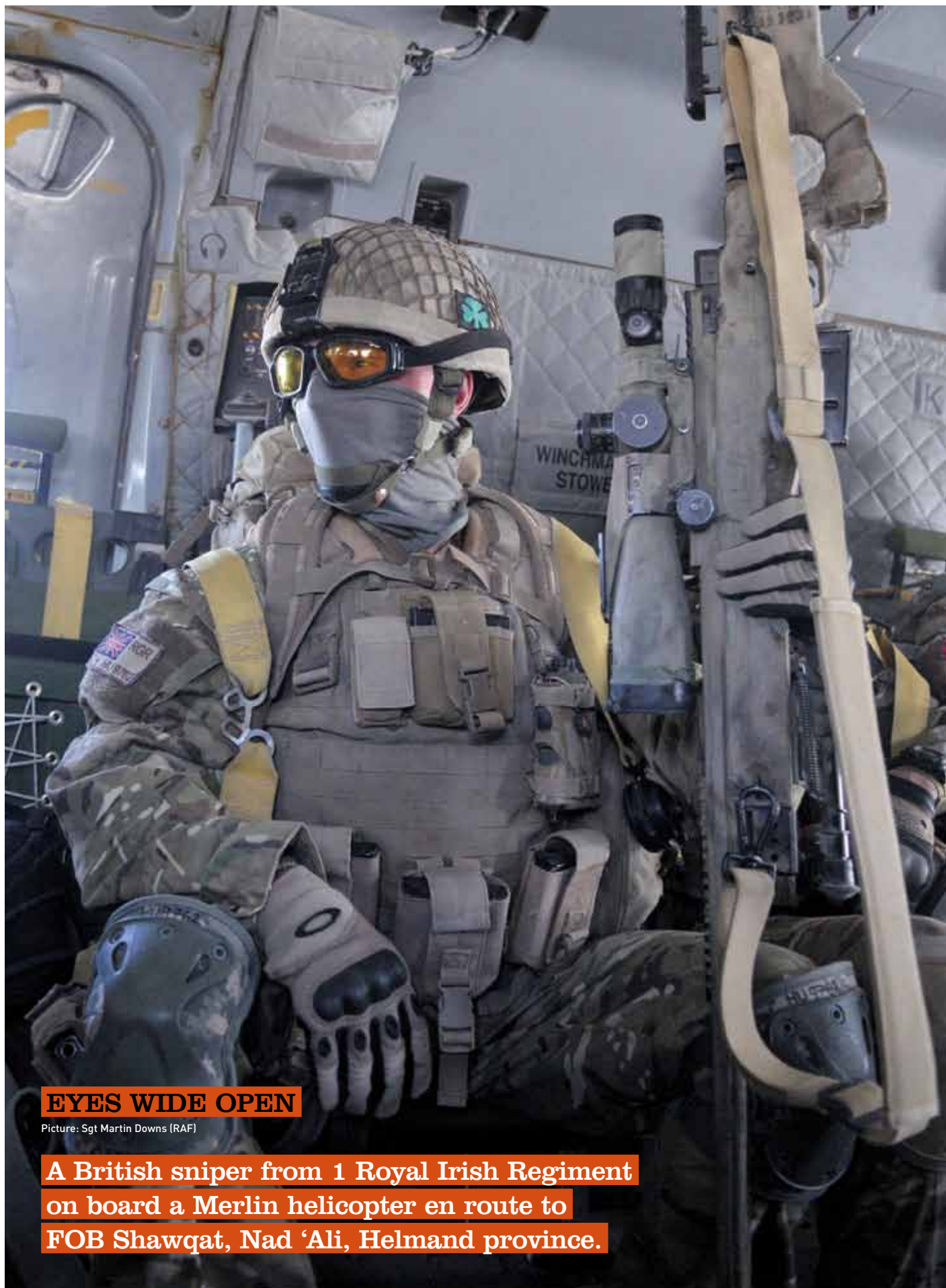
What do I bring to this job? First, I understand Defence – its national security context, operations and other outputs, and the relationship between the Centre and the TLBs.

I have worked as much in front line TLBs and in the wider security environment (including the Cabinet Office and NATO) as I have in Main Building. I have worked closely with, and for, all three Services but I have also championed the distinctive role of civil servants in Defence. I have been involved in one way or another with all of our major military operations since the Falklands.

coerce and contain threats to our nation and interests matters. Making sure we have the right equipment and well trained people, now and for our Future Force 2020, matters. Making sure that we use resources of all kinds effectively, efficiently and properly matters, especially in today's financial climate. Helping Ministers to run the Department and discharge their democratic responsibilities matters. Treating our people, in and out of uniform, as well as possible matters. I could go on but I hope you get the point.

We are a huge organisation. No matter that I have over 30 years' experience in and around Defence, I am very aware that I have only a limited and partial view of what the vast majority of you do for most of the time. I will be trying to fill in some of the gaps by getting out around Defence in the coming months and engaging with as wide a range of people as I can. I hope those I meet will be frank with me. I will certainly try to be frank with you. **DF**





**EYES WIDE OPEN**

Picture: Sgt Martin Downs (RAF)

**A British sniper from 1 Royal Irish Regiment on board a Merlin helicopter en route to FOB Shawqat, Nad 'Ali, Helmand province.**



# MOVING FORWARD

**HAVING FOUGHT HARD TO ESTABLISH SECURITY IN NAD 'ALI (SOUTH), 1ST BATTALION THE ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT ARE SETTING THE SCENE FOR STABILISATION. REPORT BY IAN CARR**



**T**en minutes have passed since we rumbled out the gates of FOB Shawqat in Nad 'Ali (South). Just a few weeks ago, the Mastiff we are riding in would, by now, have come under attack.

Adrian Dubois, Head of the District Stabilisation Team for this area, has invited me to go with him to look at how the various development projects in the area are going. We are travelling with Major Bayard Barron, and his men from B Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment. It's comforting to know we're in such good hands.

Our first stop is at Chah-e Mirza. We are at a crossroads where along one road runs a fast-flowing irrigation ditch turning over a basic, but working, water wheel producing electricity. Captain Jaco Van Der Merwe, the Military Stabilisation Support Team (MSST), representative responsible for keeping an eye on infrastructure, takes a closer look. "It seems OK. I'm not sure it's wired up to anything though." One of Adrian's objectives is to build up a picture of the area's various power supplies, where they are located, who owns them and who keeps them maintained.

From the new District Stabilisation funded solar-powered streetlights fly afghan flags. Someone has





**Talking business: Adrian Dubois greets a village elder in Chah-e Mirza**

moved into one of the mud buildings and opened up what looks like a thriving shop, hectic with god knows what for sale.

"That's a good sign," says Adrian, "I wonder if he has registered his shop?" There's a good chance he won't have. If he has he will have to pay tax. Adrian makes a note to check. "I will have to find out from the mayor what plans he has for shops round here."

We have stopped here because Major Barron wants Adrian to have a look at a newly built, freshly painted but empty building opposite the shop. "This is a training school for mechanics, it's gone up in the last few days, but isn't open – is someone supposed to be giving lessons or what?" He wants to know.

This is part of a scheme known as the Young Afghan People's Organisation, set up to develop trade skills in young males and females in the area. Adrian is keen to get this project up and running; he makes a note and promises to let Major Barron know what's happening.

Children start to gather round. My notepad, and what I am writing in it is, it seems, fascinating. I find myself hoping that my editor feels the same when I get home. Inevitably requests for pens start.

A few hundred metres away, surrounded by scrub and dirty ditches is a two-room mud building, the entrance is full of bird droppings. The feeling is that this inherited project might turn out to be a white elephant. "We think it was supposed to be a shura centre, but if it is then it's in totally the wrong place out here. They hold their shuras in town," says Barron. Adrian will have to check to see if he can find out what the plan was for this building, and maybe rethink things.

Adjacent to it, but set back, is a much more encouraging project. A large mud compound surrounds an impressive area of land with a building at the far end. It has been promised by its owner, one of the local elders, as a temporary school. It is ideal and easily big enough to accommodate 100 children. The need for a school of this size has been discussed and is in the District Community Council plan.

The owner is well respected. "A key figure on both sides, by the good guys and the bad," says Major Barron,

"he has to be. He is looking for us to make repairs and lay down a drive. I organised a meeting with him here recently, and I got all the kids in the area in so we could make a big deal of his generosity offering this up as a school. That will make it difficult for him to back down without losing face."

The deal is that after being spruced up, the owner has promised the compound for use as a school for three years, after which he will get it back. Adrian is convinced, it solves a number of problems and delivers a subtle but strong political message, going through government channels works.

The next stop is Tor-Jan. "If we had stepped out of the vehicles here three weeks ago, we would have immediately been under sustained, heavy, accurate fire. Look around. Everywhere is a firing point. It took three days of fighting, but we cleared it," Major Barron says with satisfaction.

We are at a junction. Along the right-hand side of the road runs an important irrigation channel; another road crosses over it where it runs through a large culvert. Because of the passage of heavy combat vehicles the culvert is in danger of collapsing, as are some of the banks of the ditch. Adrian has no hesitation



**Shopping list: Adrian Dubois explains to me the plans for this compound**

**Hard over: A Mastiff negotiates a tight turn in Nad 'Ali**



**Coming through: This boy is too busy to stand and stare**

about the need for action. "This is a vital water supply. We smashed it so I'll spend some conflict budget to get local people to repair it and put in a proper turning circle for vehicles. I could legitimately call in the Royal Engineers to do it, but I want to stimulate the local economy and this is a perfect project for that."

Adrian estimates the work will cost him \$200k. He will competitively tender for the work as he does all projects. The locals are used to it. There is a premium to be paid for a security element to any work, but as the threat level in an area reduces he expects to see a price drop in the quotes he receives. "I'm also working with the governor to establish building standards, we're starting from scratch, but it's important."

Looking across the road he points out a small shop. "You have to admire these people, within an hour of the fighting ending that chap had opened that shop and rented out the other two rooms as workshops."

The next stop is Noorzai to look at a new police station and a proposed site for a temporary school. The police station seems small for its \$20k cost, but it includes a premium for security during its construction.

It is well placed to control the junction of two main roads and the major canal that describes the boundary of the operational area. Beyond it lies the desert, the badlands where the insurgents fled to after the Irish chased them out. Major Barron has a suggestion to make to Adrian. "How would you feel about funding



**Shop talk: Children pass the time outside a shop in Nad 'Ali**

a footbridge across the canal?" His reasoning mixes military thinking with developmental opportunities.

Although the desert region is not in the government plan for development, Barron feels that access would kill two birds with one stone. "With the police station here you would control who comes and goes and that spreads your influence without having to go across with a fighting force, and it would give access to the town and allow children to come across to go to the school."

Adrian admires the boldness of the plan and says he will think about it. But first he has to think about another offer being extended by a local to lend a compound to be used as a temporary school. He doesn't trust the man who is claiming that he has been made promises by ISAF to rent his property for three months.

Adrian is not impressed. It is clear that the quickest way to get on his bad side is to talk about ISAF promises. "It's not about ISAF anymore, that is not how we do things, it's about what's in the district plan," he says for the umpteenth time that day. Anyway, the building is too small and being used to slaughter poultry.

The close protection guard is getting twitchy, "Can we get a move on, we've been here too long and we are too far away from the vehicles," he advises. Adrian has seen enough. "This won't do, I'll set up a tented temporary school on the other side of the river instead."

On we push to Zaborabad, dropping in at Patrol Base Pimon for a five-minute lunch. The padre asks for a lift but doesn't heed the two-minute notice to move. The last we see of him is through the back window of the Mastiff as his ride disappears through the gate, "I'm sorry Padre, I said two minutes, not even god will get you a ride in here now," jokes Major Barron.

Around 450 people live at Zaborabad. It is still seen as volatile. We are here to look at a proposed community centre and a building being offered as a school. Neither looks suitable. It seems they may be more legacy problems. Captain Van Der Merwe is sceptical. "You've got to ask yourself why a community centre? Did they have one before we came? No. Will they ever use it? No." The stop is a short one. Adrian will discuss the way forward with the District Governor.

By now it's getting late. Maybe we have time for one last stop, but we never make it. In the gathering gloom the young driver misjudges a three-point turn and reverses the 28-ton Mastiff over a large grain storage jar. The Major jumps out and goes into a well-practised routine to ease what could turn into a nasty situation. "How much was it?" he asks. Suddenly on the spot the local says "\$40." In moments he has this amount in his hand and is posing for a picture with the Major. It's all good humoured, but the picture will go into the record that reimbursement has been made.

Further on the young driver's day gets worse. The sides of the track crumble under the weight of the Mastiff, we sink into an irrigation ditch. As the light fades we wait by the vehicle while the wrecker is sent to drag us out. Locals turn up to make fun and joke with the soldiers. What is bad for the driver is good for me as it offers an opportunity to see the MST in operation, dealing with the local Mirab (a local with responsibility for the irrigation channels). A deal is struck and the work to repair the banks can get under way the next day. What could have been a problem is now another chance to build relationships with the locals. **DF**





www.cshealthcare.co.uk  
0800 917 4325

CS Healthcare offers a selection of health insurance so you can choose what best suits you and your budget. Our mutual status means we re-invest surplus funds back into the Society to keep premiums low. We pride ourselves on our personal service and transparent approach to pricing. Unlike some insurers we don't reduce or remove occupational discounts if you leave or retire from the MoD, we just offer straight forward good value.

**Other benefits:**

- First 2 months FREE when you apply online\*
- Access to over 300 UK hospitals
- Fast, direct claim settlement
- Personal services from professional staff

CS Healthcare is authorised and regulated by the FSA, reg. no. 205344.  
\*Full details of how free months are applied are available on request.



For a full information pack or to discuss in more detail, please phone the dedicated HM Forces and MOD office on: 0800 281 440. Lines are open 9am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, or go to [www.bupa.com/hmforces](http://www.bupa.com/hmforces)

Are you aware that MOD personnel and their families are entitled to the following discounts off our fully-comprehensive BUPACare private medical insurance scheme?

- **Armed Forces and families 47 per cent**
- **MOD civil servants and families 47 per cent**

BUPACare provides cover as soon as a GP refers you for out-patient consultations, therapists, diagnostic tests, hospitalisation and operations (including comprehensive cancer cover) as well as aftercare.

Cover is also provided for all dangerous sports and pursuits. For military personnel, if you join while serving you are able to take the military discount into civilian life.

BUPACare gives you access to private medical care when you need treatment for eligible conditions. No waiting. No delays. Just prompt access to private health care from a name you can trust.



# Save ££'s on your Airport Parking

## Defence Focus readers offer

For hassle free Airport Parking pre-book with APH and as a reader of Defence Focus you receive great discounts...

**10% off participating Airport Car Parks  
off participating Airport Hotels  
off UK Airport Lounges**

For Big savings, wide choice, flexible cancellation policy and fantastic customer service choose APH - Airport Parking & Hotels

**0844 871 7598** quote 'MOD'



for secure online bookings

**www.aph.com/mod**

Terms and Conditions apply. See T's and C's on the above web link for full details.

# Union Jack Club Your Club for you and your family

All serving members below commissioned rank of HM Armed Forces are members of the Club. Ex-service personnel are welcome to become members whilst all serving officers are fully entitled to make use of the Union Jack Club.

Make it your Club in central London.

Close to Waterloo, it offers a wide selection of affordable accommodation and facilities to meet you and your family's needs. The Club's relaxed atmosphere and casual dress code make it truly a home from home.

Online booking facility is now available to all members.



[www.ujclub.co.uk](http://www.ujclub.co.uk)

**For online bookings, special offers  
and other information visit**



Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London SE1 8UJ



**020 7902 6000**

IAN CARR VISITS CAMP BASTION'S  
BOTTLING PLANT TO SEE HOW DRINKING  
WATER IS SUPPLIED FROM THE DESERT

# LIQUID ASSETS

Clear enough: Plant manager Colin Howell points out the clean stuff. The sample furthest away is straight from the Helmand River



Picture: Cpl Lynny Cash

If you are ever wandering around the baked, bone-dry desert base that is Camp Bastion, you could be forgiven for rubbing your eyes in disbelief if you suddenly stumble across what looks suspiciously like a water bottling plant.

No, it's not a mirage. Beneath your dusty boots, 150 metres down through hard coral strata, flow tens of thousands of litres of drinking water, fresh from the snow-capped mountains of the Hindu Kush. And every day, from four boreholes, 48,000 litres of that water are pumped to the surface to quench coalition force thirsts, at Bastion and the Forward Operating Bases as well.

"In fact we draw up roughly 100,000 litres a day, but only 40 per cent of that goes through the full treatment process," says plant manager Colin Howell who has been running the wholly MOD-owned plant since 2007. The rest is used for things such as dust suppressant and keeping the fire brigade topped up.

Being able to provide potable water in this way saves MOD the cost of transporting it in, and ensures there is a safe, steady supply, literally on tap, as well as in the unmistakable square-shaped Bastion bottles, which are also produced at the plant.

The empty bottles arrive as pallet loads of preforms, tiny plastic test-tube-shaped containers. These are placed into a mould and air is blasted into them at 84 degrees C, pumping them up to their one-litre size. This too saves transport costs. "From one pallet load of preforms we can make 11 pallets of full-sized bottles," says Colin. "I reckon that since 2007 that has saved the MOD having to pay for around 5,000 truck load deliveries. Add in the cost of security for deliveries, and that's quite a saving."

Like the plant, the bottles and their labels were specifically designed to meet military requirements demanded by PJHQ.

They are tougher than commercially available bottles increasing the shelf life of the water to two years - in an ordinary bottle the water would only last for 12 months, or probably less if exposed to the sort of baking and bashing a Bastion bottle has to put up with.

"We left a pallet outside for two years then sent samples to the Institute of Naval Medicine in Gosport for testing, and it was fine," said Colin. As well as lasting longer in harsh conditions the more robust bottles can be airdropped without giving those on the ground an impromptu shower.



## “ We can make bottles landing craft shaped if you want ”

The bottles are square so they don't roll around and so they fit into troops' webbing. Some soldiers say they would prefer smaller bottles. "We produce what MOD tells us to," says Colin. "We could do any size or shape. We could produce landing craft shapes if you want."

The quality of the water is critical and standards within the bottling plant are high. Colin reckons that the filtration system is so good it could take out biological warfare contamination if absolutely necessary.

Every batch of water is tested in the purpose-built water-testing laboratory. Each week samples are sent to the Naval Medicine Institute for independent verification, "We've never recorded a failure, and we don't expect to. Our water is compliant with the Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Water (England) Regulations 2007 and the Water Supply (Water Quality Regulations) 2000," said Colin.

Normally the plant operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no shut downs for meal breaks or shift changeovers; there are two 10-hour shifts followed by a rigorous four-hour cleaning and maintenance routine. "We are at least as clean as the hospital," says Colin proudly, "after all, the worst the hospital can do is kill all its patients - we could kill everyone on the whole base."

Colin believes Bastion bottled water compares favourably to anything you will find on a supermarket shelf. So could there be a commercial outlet for the product? "Absolutely not," insists Colin, "we are not allowed to profit from Afghan-produced resources, and we are not geared up for that kind of production." That may be, but it is not unheard of for a bottle to attract healthy bidding on eBay it seems. **DF**



# WIKILEAKS THREAT

**THE WIKILEAKS SCANDAL PROVOKED A DIPLOMATIC CRISIS, BUT IT MAY ALSO THREATEN BRITAIN'S SECURITY**



By Duncan Larcombe, Defence Correspondent, The Sun

**T**HE actions of those behind WikiLeaks is at best bad journalism and at worst criminal negligence.

It is the duty of the media to scrutinise the actions of governments and public bodies. And at times of war the need for this role is more important than ever. But any journalist who has worked in a war zone knows a line has to be drawn in what is reported.

The golden rule is that you must take all reasonable steps to avoid publishing material that has the potential to put the lives of soldiers and or civilians at risk.

This is not turning a blind eye, this is about the practical responsibility of being privy to sensitive information in the heat of battle.

When British journalists "embed" with our troops, we agree to allow a senior officer to view our copy to test it for operational security. This is not censorship. It is a safety net to prevent people dying as a direct result of what we write.

Not one of my colleagues in the defence

reporters' press pack would want the death of a soldier on their hands. Reluctantly we accept that in times of war, exceptional circumstances have to override the desire for a scoop.

Take for example the D-Day Landings in 1944. Being a war correspondent may have meant you knew the invasion was about to take place. A great scoop for any journalist. But what would be the consequences of writing such a story in advance of the big push? Your tale could cause bloodshed, may even turn the course of the war.

My concerns with WikiLeaks is that its authors have crossed that line between independent journalism and the need to consider the consequences of what they publish. It may feel like a great scoop to be able to reveal what low-level US diplomats think about their host countries. The line that the King of one country may have begged the Americans to invade another probably seemed too good to resist. But as far as I can see there has been little consideration of the consequences of publishing such sensitive information on the internet.


The diplomatic process in one of the world's worst trouble spots may have been set back years by WikiLeaks revelations. In Afghanistan, information leaked on the internet has been used by some members of the media to question the behaviour and motivation of British troops.

Having spent time with our servicemen and women in the front line, I have seen their dedication to try and bring about a better lot for the people of Afghanistan. But what was published by WikiLeaks was largely out of date, out of context and out of line with what really is happening out there.

It seems the priority shown by WikiLeaks is to get as much information out on the web as quickly as possible, with little regard to its accuracy or the consequences of the leak.

Inevitably some have seized on areas of the leaks to cast the mission in Afghanistan into doubt. But doing this without a thorough attempt to put the information into context and test its accuracy is poor journalism.

By all means, investigate if the war in Afghanistan is failing, or if history deems it a mistake, but simply leaking raw data in this way is not the proper way to report on a conflict.

If WikiLeaks continues this onslaught then I fear it may only be a matter of time before British soldiers start paying for these leaks with their lives. 







## NEW PELVIC PROTECTION FOR FRONT LINE TROOPS

Greater pelvic protection for troops in Afghanistan has been introduced to help mitigate the effects of IED blasts.

The three-tiered system of clothing and armour consists of special protective underwear and detachable armoured modular trousers. It has been designed to integrate with current kit being used by troops on operations.

The first tier consists of shorts manufactured from scientifically-tested ballistic silk material. A second layer consists of detachable pelvic body armour, which can be rolled up and clipped to a belt and then pulled



through the legs to form a protective pouch. The third and final layer, for troops whose role demands even greater levels of protection, such as those operating hand-held metal detectors to search for IEDs, is being developed to offer even greater coverage of the upper leg and wider abdominal region. Design trials are planned to take place in early 2011.

The MOD has spent £10m on the new armour system to date. It balances protection with the necessary comfort and manoeuvrability for troops to undertake operations, enabling them to wear one or more of the protective layers depending on the task. They are already being worn by troops on operations.

A new vehicle is destined for the front line after the MOD signed a deal for a total of 200 new light protected patrol vehicles. The new Foxhound vehicle, the British Armed Forces' name for the Ocelot vehicle produced by Force Protection Europe, has been designed to provide unprecedented levels of blast protection for its size and weight. Light and agile, the vehicle will allow troops to carry out a wide range of tasks in environments that may restrict larger, heavier vehicles - for example, moving with ease through narrow alleyways or crossing bridges.

The Foxhound's engine can be removed and replaced in just 30 minutes and it can drive away from an ambush on only three wheels. Crew and passengers also sit inside a protective pod, which can be quickly adapted to transform the patrol vehicle into an ambulance or supply truck. The first vehicles are expected to be available to troops for training in 2011, and will add to the wide array of protected vehicles already being used on operations in Afghanistan, including Mastiff and Ridgback.

## FOXHOUND *joins the pack*







The official HQ ARRC farewell to Germany parade took place in the presence of the Princess Royal

# GETTING AROUND: THE ALLIED RAPID REACTION CORPS

**2010 SAW THE ARRC MOVE HUNDREDS OF ITS PEOPLE FROM GERMANY TO THE UK. THIS YEAR THEY ARE DEPLOYING TO AFGHANISTAN. REPORT BY LEIGH HAMILTON.**



HQ ARRC's farewell to Germany was a milestone in its history



HQ ARRC personnel train for their upcoming Afghan deployment

Headquarters ARRC faced one of its most challenging prospects last year - to move - in just two months - 900 personnel and 400 families (2,000 people) from their base in Rheindahlen, Germany, where they had been for 18 years, to the former RAF barracks at Innsworth in Gloucester.

HQ ARRC is the British-led multinational headquarters whose task is command and control of NATO land forces on operations. As one of NATO's seven High Readiness Force Land Headquarters they are able to spring into action and deploy at very short notice.

The ARRC, which was formed in 1991 at the end of the Cold War, consists of 14 partner nations with Britain as the framework nation and providing the life support.

### MOVING HOME

Personnel took part in their final parade in Rheindahlen on 18 June 2010, marking the end of their almost 20-year residency in Germany. They then completed the move, ensuring the accommodation in

the UK was ready, organising school places for forces children and making sure that ARRC staff were in work on 23 August 2010.

Colonel Justin Hodges, Deputy Commander of 1 Signal Brigade and a HQ ARRC Staff Officer, was intimately involved in the move.

"It involved a new development of headquarters in terms of building work," he said. "There is new and renovated officers' and sergeants' mess accommodation, new and renovated single living accommodation, a new armoury, new nursery, and a lot of work on the families' accommodation.

"We moved 900 military personnel and 400 families from 15 nationalities including the British. 1 Signal Brigade were tasked to do that and everyone made this as family-friendly as we could.

"A lot of the organisation went around ensuring that the amount of upheaval for the families was minimised and well organised so we could actually help people across to the UK in good order.



"It was a challenge, but we had a plan and moved people through smoothly and we were able to spot problems when they occurred and get the right people in place to react."

### CULTURE SHOCK

"I think the other aspect here," adds Col Hodges, "is that we were very keen to support our partner nations, a lot of whom were coming here for the first time. There was a reputational piece here for the UK which we were aware of and keen to make sure that when people came here, they settled and were willing to bring their families across. Generally speaking, it was a huge success."

The feedback has been largely positive. Lieutenant Colonel Pierluigi Verdecchia from the Italian Army said:

"I came here with my wife Sabrina and our two children. For them, although we were living in Germany, they were accustomed to the UK lifestyle which we were used to within the base."

"The move for me and my family went particularly well. We were surprised that everything went so smoothly, it was a fairly straightforward procedure."

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Bateman from the United States has found that life in the UK has its challenges, but that those same challenges are exactly what gives the country its appeal. He said:

"Life in the UK is fascinating. I like that fact that I have a 'local' which as I understand is a requirement in the UK - you're issued with your helmet, your rifle and your 'local'."

### LOCAL RECEPTION

It seems that the military aren't the only ones to be pleased with the move, as the Gloucestershire local community have welcomed them with open arms.

"The amount of support that we've had from the Gloucester community has been fantastic," said Col Hodges.

"We were welcomed to Gloucester with a service at the Cathedral and the Lord-Lieutenant made the point that it is great to have the military connection back in the city. We also had a Fresher's Fair with more than 100 local businesses showing us what's available in the area."

Commander of the ARRC, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Shirreff added:

"Gloucestershire has opened its arms to us. I cannot stress what a great county Gloucestershire is to be a regular soldier in."

"It's a county with very strong military links, they're very proud of those links and they're delighted to see Imjin Barracks occupied by soldiers again."

"They've gone beyond the call of duty

# “ We moved 900 military personnel and 400 families ”

and really gone the extra nine yards to support us and look after us at every level, from the top end of the county, as it were, to local people, local shops and local businesses."

### AFGHAN DEPLOYMENT

Now that the ARRC personnel and their families have settled into their new home, all eyes are on the future and what is expected of them.

Most immediately, the ARRC headquarters staff are to deploy to Kabul to augment the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command for 2011, with the first rotation heading out in January and the second replacing them in July.

That commitment will last for 12 months, after which the ARRC will be focused on preparing to be the standby HQ for the Land Component of the NATO Response Force commitment in 2013 with an extensive programme of training. Brigadier Paddy Allison, Deputy Commander Rear, explained:

"In 2011 we're going to Afghanistan as part of ISAF, then we're back here at Innsworth and we're doing high readiness and NATO Response Force preparation; we then move on to become the NATO Response Force for a whole year on standby when we'll be on 10 days' notice to move for any crisis worldwide."

"We're due to go back to Afghanistan in 2015 and therefore in 2014 we'll spend the year preparing for it."

To coordinate the logistics of operational training and conducting of the missions themselves is no mean feat. Lieutenant Colonel Simon Butt is the Commanding Officer of the ARRC Support Battalion whose job is to ensure that everything runs without a hitch.

The Support Battalion boasts more than 28 trades and some 22 different cap badges providing defence and security for the HQ and artisan and medical support.

Lt Col Butt and his logistics troops are responsible for the provision of the life support and sustainment of HQ ARRC, both in the barracks and perhaps more importantly on exercise and operations. Explaining his unit's role in the Afghan deployment he says:

"The Battalion itself will be supporting the ARRC on its deployment in January and we will support the second

tranche going in July and the recovery of the first tranche and then the final recovery of staff in February 2012.

"When the ARRC and elements of my battalion come back in March 2012, we'll be gearing up to support its NATO formation readiness training in 2012."

"Also probably at that stage, the Strategic Defence and Security Review will be coming into play in which the support to ARRC was mentioned. We will face these challenges as they come."

### THE FUTURE

Lt Gen Shirreff concluded: "I'm very optimistic about the future. We've got the operational experience to look forward to, which we will pull together in 2011 and 2013, and we will continue the process to develop and fine tune our ability to deliver command and control of multinational NATO operations." 



German Armed Forces honour ARRC's role in Germany with Grand Tattoo

## ARRC'S HISTORY

- 1991 ARRC activated in Bielefeld, Germany
- 1992 moved to Rheindahlen
- 1995 deployed under Lieutenant General Sir Michael Walker to Bosnia
- 1999 deployed to Kosovo under Lt Gen Sir Mike Jackson
- 2006 deployed to Afghanistan under now Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir David Richards, when the NATO mission was expanded across the whole country.

# EVERYONE IS ASKING...

## “WILL I STILL HAVE A JOB IN MOD?” SUSAN SCHOLEFIELD TELLS LORRAINE MCBRIDE THE CHALLENGES OF GUIDING CIVILIANS THROUGH CHOPPY WATERS

**DF: As DG Human Resources and Corporate Services, what is your greatest challenge in 2011?**

**SS:** Transforming defence while reducing our civilian numbers by 25,000 is an enormous challenge. I think we can do it but don't underestimate the pressure it will put on people and the professionalism it will require.

**DF: Press reports suggest that public sector job cuts may be less savage than first feared. Does this mean a reprieve for some MOD departments?**

**SS:** It's hard to be exact on numbers but fundamentally we have to balance the nation's books and MOD needs

to make its contribution. For me, it's really about looking at new and novel ways of delivering what we must do in Defence, but I don't think there is any way of approaching this without making considerable reductions. We must also be open to the possibility of civilianisation as there may be areas where civilian skills might be more appropriate and give better value. Head for head, a civilian costs just half of what a military person does, for good reasons.

**DF: In April, MOD will launch a huge redundancy scheme. What factors will determine who goes?**

**SS:** The most important thing is that we retain the range of skills and diversity we need to build the Department for the future. That must be our focus. We will look at what skills we are going to need, skills we have and skills people can acquire which we will agree with the Trade Unions. We've really strengthened our approach to strategic workforce and skills planning which is good, because this is the moment when we really need it. We must also ensure that we become more and not less diverse as a Department.

**DF: Did streamlining fail to achieve what it meant to?**

**SS:** I don't think it failed. It's just that the challenge nationally is that much greater. So we need to look again at how we do everything in the most effective way, starting with a blank sheet. We will ask, "Do we need to do this at all?" and if so, let's think in the most radical way we possibly can. It will be exhilarating and a real leadership challenge, asking, "What are we really trying to achieve to defend the nation?" and "How can we use all the skills of our people to very best effect?"

**DF: Civilians are often slated as "lazy penpushers" by the media? Do you plan to try to change their image?**

**SS:** Inevitably civilians are an easy target for a cheap shot but it is not just troops that are in harm's way. Many of our civilians are deployed on operations doing vital work in dangerous places. Most actually work supporting the front line commands and delivering kit to our Armed Forces. "Pushing pens" in MOD can also be extraordinarily challenging, supporting ministers when they really need it. You need deep understanding of Defence and real clarity of thought - policy and strategy is going to be one of our prioritised skills as we look forward. So yes, we are determined to change the image. Our ministers and all our military as well as our civilian leaders are at one on this.

**DF: Will MOD be a less attractive workplace with many "perks" like first class travel, overtime and training budgets having been slashed?**



Looking ahead: Susan Scholefield is guiding MOD through challenging times



**SS:** I am not sure that these should ever be seen as “perks” but negotiated terms and conditions to enable staff to do their jobs to the best of their ability. In future, I think that the MOD will be a fascinating place to work. It always has been, particularly during challenging times. I remember the Cold War days, Greenham Common and when I came back to MOD following the dark days of Bosnia, it was a pretty challenging place to be. That’s the nature of what we do and the intensity of operational work over recent years has made its mark on the MOD. Now we are trying to succeed in Afghanistan against unprecedented national financial pressures so it really requires all our skills and ingenuity to come through this with success. That’s exactly the kind of challenge that makes MOD a great place to work - now and in the future.

“ I always think never waste a good crisis ”

**DF: Is there a silver lining to MOD’s redundancy scheme such as moving around more easily?**

**SS:** I always think, never waste a good crisis. We’re all going to have to be far more flexible in the future in the way we work. This will mean much more variety and moving around - so fascinating, really challenging work.

**DF: By shrinking MOD, will we cut certain areas of work and if so, when will decisions be announced?**

**SS:** I think decisions will become clear incrementally. It is tough because many of us won’t know the answer to the question that everyone asks, “Am I going to have a job in the new organisation?” In some cases, we may not know for some time. When Gus O’Donnell addressed the top 200 civil servants recently (“soon to be 120,”) he said: “I’m asking three things of you. To celebrate what the civil service does in this country. To lead, even though you may not know what your own future holds. And to deliver through our values.”

**DF: How will you help bosses prepare staff to meet the new tasks required of them?**

**SS:** Leading effectively through difficult times like these requires a lot of support. This is as much about resilience and emotional intelligence as it is about programmes and numbers. It is not just leading people to get results, but doing it in a way that is supportive, recognises people’s concerns and treats them with respect. We’ll be focusing our learning and development effort on the lay skills for the future. We have a series of leadership programmes with the Defence Academy to help bosses prepare people for what lies ahead. Our leaders at every level have got to work very closely with their teams to understand the challenge. Leaders need to dig deep to give their teams support at a time when they might not know their own future. It is a big ask but it brings out the Dunkirk spirit in our people who are our greatest strength. **DF**

# VITAL NUMBERS

## THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE READY TO HELP YOU

**RN Benevolent Trust:** Grants, advice and income supplements for veterans. Call 0239 2690112 or email [rnbt@rnbt.org.uk](mailto:rnbt@rnbt.org.uk).

**RN Association:** Comradeship for all serving and ex-service members of the RN, RM, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves, RFA and RNXS. [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)

**Royal Marines Benevolent Fund:** Relieves hardship among serving and former Marines and dependents. [www.royalmarines.charities@charity.vfree.com](http://www.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. [www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org) or call 0800 1692942.

**Civil Service Benevolent Fund:** Helps anyone who has worked for the Civil Service and their dependents. Advice about support and financial help. [www.csbf.org.uk](http://www.csbf.org.uk) or call 0800 056 2424.

**Army Welfare Service:** Confidential support for soldiers and families. [www.army.mod.uk/aws](http://www.army.mod.uk/aws) or call (UK) 01722 436569.

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

**HIVE:** Tri-Service information covering issues like education and health. 167 offices. [www.hive.mod.uk](http://www.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. [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.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. Royal Navy: 023 9272 7331. Army: 94 391 Ext 7922 (01264 381 922). RAF: 95471 ext 7026. Civilians 0800 345 7772 (+441225 829572 from overseas) or email: [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.

**Confidential support line:** Support for Forces personnel and families. Lines open 10.30 to 22.30 every day. UK, 0800 7314880. Germany, 0800 1827395. Cyprus, 800 91065. Falklands, 6111. Anywhere in world, (call-back) +44 (0)1980 630854.

**Service Personnel and Veterans Agency:** Pay, pensions and personnel support for the Services and veterans, including pensions, the JPA system, and Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre: 0800 0853600: 0800 1692277 or [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info)

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

**Service Complaints Commissioner:** To make a complaint or seek advice, contact: [SCC@armedforcescomplaints.independent.gov.uk](mailto:SCC@armedforcescomplaints.independent.gov.uk)



## **TOGETHER WE FLY HIGHER.**

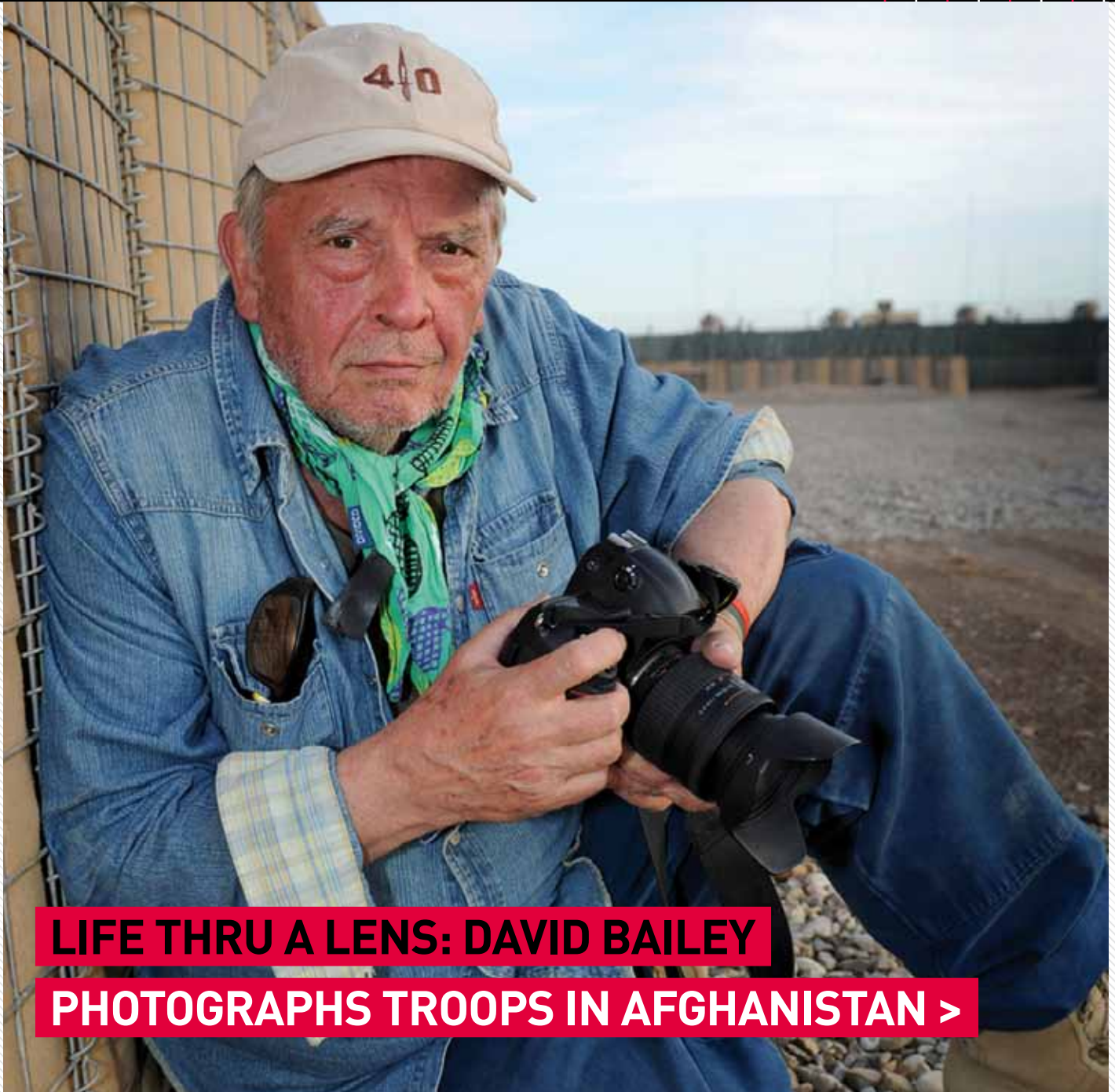
Ready for take-off? Thanks to our British partnerships, more UK Chinooks are ready than ever before. Our Through Life Customer Support (TLCS) programme provides maintenance and engineering support for Britain's Chinook fleet, setting a benchmark for future MoD sustainment contracts. Together, we're taking logistics to new heights. Discover more at [boeing.co.uk/together](http://boeing.co.uk/together)

 **BOEING**



# LIFESTYLE

BOOKS HEALTH COMPETITIONS PUZZLES PEOPLE



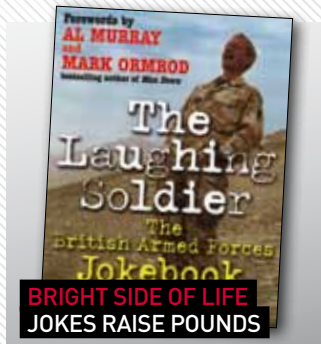
**LIFE THRU A LENS: DAVID BAILEY  
PHOTOGRAPHS TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN >**



**ROYAL COMMAND**  
POP PENSIONERS ARE A HIT



**OUT FOR THE COUNT**  
HOW TO TREAT A FAINT



**BRIGHT SIDE OF LIFE**  
JOKES RAISE POUNDS



**MY MEDALS**  
A MILITARY LIFE



**1 AFGHANISTAN**

In July, I was able to visit Afghanistan and see the excellent work that our troops are doing over there in the most demanding of circumstances. As well as visiting Helmand, I was also able to meet both Afghan and ISAF officials in Kabul and get the latest assessment of how the mission is progressing.



**2 DENMARK/ESTONIA**



My visit to Denmark and Estonia in December was a great opportunity to thank these two close allies for their great efforts in Afghanistan: working alongside British forces, conducting joint operations, sadly sustaining casualties but always focused on delivering the best security possible for the Afghan people and, ultimately, their own national security. Above, I'm chatting with Minister Jaak Aaviksoo, when our common understanding was really in evidence, along with a shared determination to succeed.

# NINE MOMENTS

**LORRAINE MCBRIDE ASKED ARMED FORCES MINISTER NICK HARVEY TO DOCUMENT SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS TIME IN OFFICE TO DATE**

**3 RAF WADDINGTON**

One of the best parts of my job is meeting up with servicemen and women across the country to talk about the work they do. I'm always impressed by their professionalism and enthusiasm. In this photo, I'm watching the RAF Regiment do their bomb disposal drills during a visit to RAF Waddington. The RAF also arranged a surprise Tornado GR4 'show of force', which I think I'm still recovering from.



**4 RALEIGH: PASSING OUT**

In July I visited HMS Raleigh and saw newly-trained sailors pass out into the Royal Navy. I was honoured to be the one to take the salute. I had a tour of the base to see the type of intensive training they are required to undergo. What they achieve in just nine weeks is quite amazing and something that they and their families should be very proud of.



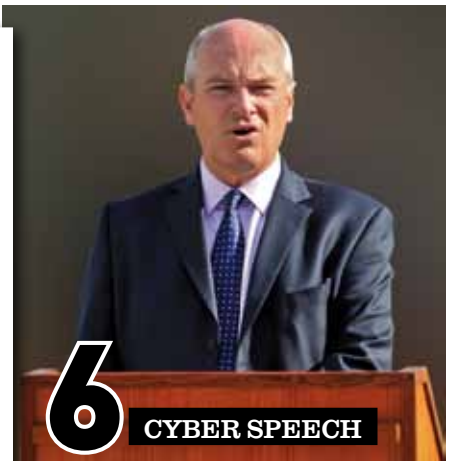




5

**ARMY: KENYA**

Here I am in Kenya with UK and Kenyan forces, who are talking me through the final attack in Exercise Askari Thunder. The threat's not just from enemy forces there but wild animals like lions as well! The British Army does some truly excellent training, which helps make our soldiers the best in the world. While Afghanistan is our top priority, it is important to keep training for a variety of scenarios and be prepared.



6

**CYBER SPEECH**

I gave a speech at Chatham House on cyber security as it is something I am very interested in. We have come to rely on digital networks and protecting cyber space is vital. As part of the SDSR, we put £650m aside especially for cyber and we are creating a new UK Defence Cyber Operations Group.



7

**VISITING A LOCAL SCHOOL**

I spend time each week in my North Devon constituency. As an MP I regularly meet local families, residents, schools and businesses to discuss their concerns and key issues facing North Devon – to fight for their interests in Parliament. When I visited this local school, the children asked if the Commons had any ghosts. I said, "They are more likely in the Lords!"



8

**CARBON MONOXIDE WARNING**

As part of my Parliamentary activities, I regularly attend information sessions and receptions hosted by advocacy groups and charities. By attending these events and reporting back to my local community, I help raise awareness about important issues like warning people about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning.



9

**FAMILY**

As a husband and father of two young children, balancing Ministerial, Parliamentary and constituency responsibilities is a major priority so that enough time can be reserved for being with my family.

I return home to North Devon at the weekends, where I can often be found playing with my children and Crumpet, our golden retriever, on the glorious nearby beaches.







The Open  
University

Business School

## “ The MBA that suits military life ”

Our distance MBA is an internationally recognised benchmark of managerial ability and is based on the latest business thinking and research.

It has the flexibility to fit perfectly around your service life, wherever you are stationed or posted. You can take between two and a half and seven years to complete the MBA depending on how you pace it. With real world learnings from our MBA behind you, you can be more confident of your career both in the Army and when you leave.

### Did you know?

- Your ELCs can help fund your MBA
- Wherever you are, you'll have full support from experienced business tutors
- There are face-to-face tutorials and residential schools or online equivalents
- Our business school is among the top 1% in the world with recognition from the top 3 international accreditation bodies - AMBA, AACSB and EFMD
- You can network with, and learn from, 6,000 other MBA students
- The Open University has over 20,000 MBA alumni in more than 75 countries.



### Explore our MBA programme

- ▶ [www.oubs.open.ac.uk](http://www.oubs.open.ac.uk)
- ▶ 0845 366 6035



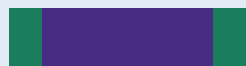




**UN CYPRUS**

THIS WAS my first medal and I received it in 1988. I was on the UN line in Nicosia between the Greeks and the Turkish keeping the peace. It was quite a traumatic tour.

The medal means a lot to me as it was my first. I just thought it was great to actually get a medal at such a young age – just 18.



**NORTHERN IRELAND**

I RECEIVED this medal for a tour in 1989. There was a lot of hard work to get it; in the late '80s it was still all going on and there were lots of shootings, a lot of bombings and a lot of riots we had to go through.

There was one particular incident where I saw a sniper waiting to shoot into our base. I saw the scope and alerted the patrol that was going out to go around the back instead – so hopefully we saved a life or two.



**GULF MEDAL**

THIS TOUR was hot and windy. I was a Challenger tank driver and my greatest memory is the feeling just before we went over the sandbank – we felt pride in what we were about to do even though we didn't know what was going to happen.

When we were told

to go, our hearts lifted and we thought "we're going and we're doing a job we have actually been put here to do", because there was a lot of hanging around.

There aren't that many people still around in the Army that have this medal so I see it as an achievement. I'm proud that it shows experience that I can pass on to the younger guys in today's Army.

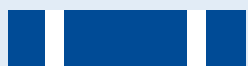


**UN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

THIS MEDAL was for Op GRAPPLE – the UN mission in Bosnia in 1992. I was a Warrior commander for this tour.

My memories of it are not very good ones. People were getting killed daily and we were there to try and prevent them from being killed from various sides. We would actually park in the middle of towns so that one side could not get to the other. We would pick people up in our Warrior and take them to safety so we probably saved a lot of lives.

Looking at the medal now it means a lot to me and I think about the lives we saved.



**NATO BOSNIA**

THIS MEDAL was the NATO Bosnia medal for when we went back in 1997. I was a chief force store man with the Royal Military Police (RMP) for this tour and would take stores to various camps within the RMP.

The biggest memory is driving around in an old four-tonne truck helping people out of minefields that had driven or wandered in by mistake – just helping people wherever we could.



**GOLDEN JUBILEE MEDAL**

2002 WAS the Queen's Golden Jubilee and this medal is to mark being in Service that year.



**ACCUMULATED CAMPAIGN SERVICE MEDAL – NORTHERN IRELAND**

I GOT the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal for work in Northern Ireland.

I went back there for a two-year posting. I received the medal in 2004.

Not many people know what it is for. They see the gold line down the middle and they think it is another Northern Ireland Medal, when I tell them it's an Accumulative Service Medal, and I have spent 1,085 days in an operational theatre, they are impressed as not many people had done it in those days. It shows how long I have been in operational zones and how much experience I have to pass on.



**IRAQ MEDAL**

THE IRAQ medal was



**LONG SERVICE AND GOOD CONDUCT**

I JOINED up in 1987 and received this medal in 2004. For me it was in recognition for doing 15 years without getting caught. But seriously, it is a good medal to have; not a lot of

people get them so it is probably the best one I have got.

Of all the medals this one probably means the most because if it wasn't for my time in the Army I think I would be off the beaten track in terms of my life.

Because I have been on operations ever since I joined the Army I have always kept my nose clean and got on.



**MY MEDALS**

Sergeant Stewart Clark joined the Army in 1987. He has served in five different regiments and been awarded nine major medals over his 23 years in Service. He is currently deployed with 16 Medical Regiment in Afghanistan

for my deployment to the country in 2005. I was a company clerk then for 39 Regiment Royal Artillery. I was basically doing the mail and daily administration duties.

The most memorable moment of the tour was going up to the front line at Al Amarah and getting mortared 17

times in one night. I only went up there to sort the guys' pay out! I just needed to show I was with the lads on the front line and I even managed to take someone his £2,000 back pay he knew nothing about.

As with all the medals I would rather be on the front line than sitting in the rear.



# SHARP MEMORY

We have two of these useful pocket tools to give away. For the chance to win one, just email your name and telephone number to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk), before 28 February 2011 putting the words 'Swiss flash' in the subject line.

For more details on the Victorinox range visit [www.victorinox.com](http://www.victorinox.com)

## VICTORINOX SWISSFLASH LASER

RETAIL PRICE £43

On business trips how often have you felt the need to snip off that annoying thread dangling from the sleeve of your power suit, before peeling an apple then plugging a memory stick into your Apple?

Well, at last, with this dinky bit of multiple prize-winning kit you can do all of that. The SwissFlash Laser is the business pocket tool par excellence, and we have two to give away. Good luck.

Picture: Harland Quarrington





## War portraits

Heroes by David Bailey and Dylan Jones, Thames and Hudson £24.95



WORLD-FAMOUS photographer David Bailey swapped beautiful models for war-weary soldiers in his latest project documenting British troops in Afghanistan.

Bailey flew to Afghanistan to take photographs to raise cash for Help for Heroes. As he clicked away taking thousands of images, the ex-National Serviceman clearly struck up an easy rapport with troops, aided by his trademark sarky banter.

"Great," he griped, lining up a large group of marines, "fifty years after I started and I'm still taking school pictures." In fact, author Dylan Jones notes that Bailey was treated like a rock star with soldiers of all ages, coming up for autographs and he had his photo taken nearly as often as he took them himself.

Surrounded by the rifles, pistols, machine guns, sandbags, uniforms and boxes of ammo, what shines through the photographs is the easy camaraderie.

All the photos were taken in and around Camp Bastion and in the large coffee table format the photographs are blown up and their impact is extraordinary, featuring biblical landscapes, derelict buildings, abandoned tents and Helmand-style graffiti.

Bailey captures burly non-commissioned officers plastered in tattoos, squaddies hunched over playing cards, row upon row of kit, a soldier grabbing a sneaky fag and the tension of a lone soldier gazing pensively from a Chinook. A minor gripe is that the amazing portraits cry out for captions to add context but this doesn't detract from an amazing tribute in any way.

Sales of the book, which Bailey describes as a tribute to all the personnel serving in Afghanistan, will benefit Help for Heroes. **DF**



## A soldier's survival

By Paul Burns, Harper – True £6.99

YOU'VE just been blown apart by a terrorist bomb and you've lost your best mates, what would you do? This book is an autobiography of an ex-Para who was serving in Northern Ireland when the four-tonne truck he was travelling in was destroyed by an IRA bomb. He tells his story matter-of-factly, placing no emphasis on his triumphs such as taking up parachuting as an amputee or his tribulations like enduring months of excruciating pain following

the bombing. There's humour too like when he relates losing his prosthetic leg during a parachute competition in Germany. But there's no mawkish sentimentality or pity-poor-me. A roller-coaster of highs and lows, it is an inspiring story of a man determined to be treated as "normal" after losing his left leg below the knee. His writing style is easily digested and the book moves at a good pace - you won't want to put it down. **DF**



## Combat Relief

Casemate £6.99

WHAT has four legs and an arm?\* This is one of the jokes and messages of support for British troops submitted by people from all over the globe that is collected in The Laughing Soldier.

It also raises money for Project 65 – The Veterans Charity, which raises funds for the care and support of veterans and their families affected by injury or trauma. The book, with forewords by comic Al Murray and triple amputee Marine Mark Ormrod, is split between clean jokes and dirty jokes

– easily identified by the (appropriate) blue heading at the top of the page. As you would expect, the content ranges from laugh-out-loud to "why is that funny?"

A word of warning to any feminists out there - there are several Essex girl jokes in this collection which are extremely sexist.

A donation is made to Project 65 with the sale of every book so cheer up your New Year and buy a couple, one for you and one for a friend.

\*a happy Rottweiler. **DF**

# MEET BRITAIN'S OLDEST BOY BAND

**RACING INTO THE TOP 20, THE CHELSEA PENSIONERS' DEBUT ALBUM HAS TAKEN THE CHARTS BY STORM, REPORTS LORRAINE MCBRIDE**

**W**ith 550-odd years between them and an age range from 68 to 89, a group of Chelsea Pensioners are taking on the likes of *Take That* and Pixie Lott in the charts. When they released their debut album *Men in Scarlet* in November it smashed into the Top 20 of the pop charts with just a dozen places separating them from the multi-millionaire pop stars and topped the easy listening chart, going gold.

The band comprises Michael Allen, 68, Tom Fox, 80, John Shuter, 89, Malcolm Smart, 70, Denis Shiels, 83, Paddy Fox, 77, and David Poultney, 81. They were brought together through their love of singing at their home, the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, where most pensioners sleep in a tiny berth, and to where all royalties from the album will go.

By 2017, the hospital must raise £30m for refurbishments. The group won't get a penny. "The only benefit we've had is the front line glory," says Michael, "and the people we've met."

The album, recorded at studios around the UK, including Pinewood, is stuffed with classics like *Danny Boy*, *White Cliffs of Dover* and *White Christmas*. One highlight is Denis's stirring solo on *I'll be Seeing You*, which drew thousands of hits on YouTube.

As walking, talking tourist attractions, the Chelsea Pensioners are accustomed to strangers pointing at their distinctive, iconic outfits. But it seems that their newfound fame has rocketed off the scale.

Like any A-lister, the Chelsea Pensioners have even had media training to deal with tricky questions on issues like Afghanistan or the Royal Hospital's three lady Pensioners, Winifred, Dorothy and Marjorie.

"Obviously we're all men of the world but we learnt how to cope with it," says Mal. "If we say 'no comment' it means we're thick or hiding something so we have to be careful to answer in the right constructive way."

Their TV appearances include BBC Breakfast, Songs of Praise, QVC, This Morning, Titchmarsh, the Royal Variety Show and Weekend with Wogan. Michael popped up as a guest on Chris Evans' Radio 2 show.

They have notched up so many appearances, they blur into each other. "It is a lot of fuss," says Michael. "At the Royal Variety Show, we spent nine hours at the London Palladium waiting to go on. Apart from a rehearsal in the middle, the rest of the time we were sat on our arses just for a three-minute slot."

"It was worth it though," says David. When the curtain raised, they stepped out on the Palladium stage and were instantly buoyed by the warmth from the crowd. "We almost feel that when we're wearing the scarlet we're halfway home," says John, a gentle debonair chap. "The audience made it very easy for us. There was an extraordinary atmosphere."

When Paddy looked up at the royal box, he was chuffed to spot Prince Charles singing along. Their appearance was a triumph and the Pensioners were blown away when the audience gave them a standing ovation. Cheryl Cole, *Take That*, Russell Watson and Kylie all starred on the bill. By all accounts, the stars were lovely. Andrew Lloyd Webber told Mal, "I'll tell you how good you are and you are good. You would beat half of them on *X Factor* so keep it up."

"Now he didn't have to say that," says a touched Mal. When a Welsh cast member of *Les Miserables* met David, within minutes they were singing together in their native language. "We said hello to Cheryl [Cole] but we didn't have our footballer shirts on," chuckles Tom. As they left the stage, they teased Robbie Williams: "Alright Robbie, we've just warmed them up for you" and the frontman laughed.

Their album features Dame





Vera Lynn and Katherine Jenkins. When Mal and Michael were interviewed on Sky television alongside Jenkins, who was promoting her single, the Chelsea Pensioners gamely plugged their album and stole the spot, egged on by the Welsh songstress.

"Katherine Jenkins was the real reason I became a Chelsea Pensioner," discloses John. Six years ago he was on a four-day visit to the Royal Hospital and when he dropped in on the hospital social club he spotted a beautiful blonde singer accompanied by a pianist.

"Nobody took much notice and I felt a bit cross but realised she was rehearsing before the real show. I thought, if this is what a normal evening is like, then I'll buy it!" says John happily.

There is also a more poignant reason for their camaraderie. The majority of Chelsea Pensioners are widowers, many having nursed a dying wife over years. "We look after each other in a remarkably rough and ready way," says John. "But it is a very effective way."

"You can't become depressed or ill without somebody knowing," adds Mal. "It is very comforting, and bearing in mind most of us have been regular soldiers, it's about coming back to your own."

But don't folk outdo each other with war stories? "Oh yeah, but you can't tell lies in here about your military record," says Mal. Or as Michael puts it: "If you say you were the last man on the beach at Dunkirk and there are four blokes who were there, they will say, 'You weren't there!' so you don't tell fibs."

It is more than 42 years since Paddy, then a young NCO, visited the Royal Hospital and met a Pensioner aged 97 who joined the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars in 1892. "He drank with men who fought in the Charge of the Light Brigade, and I drank with him," he marvels.

Undeniably, the Chelsea Pensioners have clocked up a couple of hundred years' service collectively but none can hold a candle to Paddy who clocked up 38 years. "They call me Khaki Brain, I talk nothing else but Army," he beams.

Perhaps inevitably, while most of their fellow Pensioners are hugely supportive, there are a few sour grapes. Mal says: "One guy, who has probably had the most uneventful life in the world, told me: 'You buggers can't sing,' just after we got our gold record. "Well, I know 100,000 people who don't agree," shot back Mal, and his critic piped down.

Although a second album is on the cards, the consensus is that the boys are in need of a rest. "We've had an extremely strenuous eight months," says Michael. "But when we're together, we're relaxed, laughing, joking, taking the mick, we are young men."

"I'd love to perform at Prince William's wedding," says Mal, confiding that his record company have put a word in.

Do they ever yearn for peace? "If you want a bit of peace, you can go and shut your door," says Michael, a divorcee. When he left the Army at 40, the soldier's son admits that Civvy Street was a "strange place and I didn't speak the language." Aged 65, he moved into the Royal Hospital and now is a recording artist and pleased as punch that their hit album will help make life better for everyone at the hospital.


"We've got great pride singing together but also in that we're doing something for this fine and noble establishment," says Mal, as chat turns back to the Variety Show.

"When we got back, the lights were out and there was nobody to tell," says Tom. "Our feet came straight back on the ground again." In Mal's wing, his fellow pensioners waited up to hear his tales.

"All our hard work has been a trial," says Mal. "But when we came off stage I said, 'Gentlemen, we are seven old soldiers but we have emotionally pulled 2,500 people by the nose. It was wonderful.'"

They don't mind a jot of the press coverage that has nicknamed them Britain's oldest boy band. "If it sells records, they can call us what they like," says Tom.

New Year is a time that is apt to bring out the sloth in most of us. As inspiration, with their indomitable zest and joie de vivre, you'd be hard pushed to find better role models than The Chelsea Pensioners.

***The Chelsea Pensioners' album, Men in Scarlet, is out now.*** 



# PASSING

**FAINING IS VERY COMMON SO NICK IMM EXPLAINS WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE KEELS OVER BEFORE YOUR EYES**



By Surgeon Commander  
Nick Imm in Portsmouth

Hello from Portsmouth and Happy New Year. This month I thought we'd talk about why people faint or "pass out". Fainting is a brief loss of consciousness which usually causes the individual to fall to the ground. It is really common and it is estimated that by the age of 40, over 90 per cent of people will have fainted at least once. Fainting is much more likely as we get older and during a pregnancy.

So, what happens when people faint? It happens because not enough oxygen is reaching the brain to keep you awake. The person might feel dizzy, clammy and nauseated and perhaps hear ringing in their ears or have blurred vision. Shortly afterwards, they collapse to the ground. This can occur for several reasons.

The most common cause is a vasovagal episode. This is caused by overstimulation of a big nerve called the vagus which slows the heart rate and lowers the blood pressure. This causes a brief reduction in blood supply to the brain. A vasovagal faint can be caused by situations such as intense stress, fear or pain, seeing something distressing such as blood, or standing for long periods of time.

Another important factor is dehydration. If you are working hard it's very easy to forget to drink enough fluids. All servicemen and women are taught to drink fluids regularly and to check the amount and colour of urine they produce. If you get dehydrated, your blood pressure can drop which may trigger a fainting episode. Don't forget that drinking alcohol can make you dehydrated (part of a hangover). This is why it's important to drink plenty of water when you've been drinking alcohol.

More rarely, fainting can be due to a problem with the rhythm of the heart. The heart needs to





# OUT parade

beat regularly to keep the blood pumping around the body. An abnormal heart rhythm or rate can cause episodes of fainting and this needs to be investigated by a doctor to rule out any underlying cause.

If someone feels faint they should sit down with their head between their knees or lie down with their legs raised – as these positions increase blood flow to the brain. If you see someone faint they should be put in the recovery position and they should return to normal pretty quickly. Then, they should rest and be given a drink. If they don't rapidly wake up or seem odd afterwards then call for medical help immediately. If you experience repeated fainting episodes you should also visit your doctor for a check-up. Stay healthy in 2011 and I'll see you next month. **DF**

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



**Gone! McKeith hits the deck on the popular TV show and found notoriety**

Picture: Rex Features

## 5 STEPS TO A BRIGHTER SMILE

Looking after our teeth could also benefit the heart, according to research linking unhealthy gums to cardiovascular disease. With dental experts claiming that one in three of us aren't brushing properly, it's time we polished up on our oral hygiene.

### Do I need to brush twice a day?

"You need to keep teeth clean to remove debris and plaque, as plaque damages teeth and causes gum disease," explains specialist dentist Susan Tanner, at the Dawood & Tanner dental practice in central London. "Plaque is made up of bacteria and debris from food. It releases an acid that dissolves tooth enamel, which is why it's so important to remove it." Susan says that we need to brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste to strengthen tooth enamel and floss once a day to keep gums healthy, too.

### Am I cleaning my teeth correctly?

How you brush your teeth is just as important as how often. "A quick scrub left to right is not enough," explains Susan. "You have to brush every surface of every tooth to remove the plaque." Experts recommend brushing teeth for at least two minutes, but make sure you're doing it properly. "You can brush for ten minutes, but still miss out some teeth," explains Susan. Ask your dentist or hygienist to check your technique, or watch Susan's simple videos at [www.deliciousteeth.com](http://www.deliciousteeth.com)

### Which toothbrush is best?

The choice is yours, as long as you change your toothbrush every two to three months to prevent bacteria building up on the head. "The best is what you enjoy using and what does the job," says Susan. "If that's an electric toothbrush, fantastic, but nothing is better than something else, as long as you use it properly." Your dentist can recommend a suitable toothbrush if you can't reach your back teeth. For anyone having trouble flossing, a floss pick may help.

### How can I avoid bad breath?

If your breath could be sweeter, it's a good idea to try flossing first – before you decide to cut out garlic or coffee. "A lot of bad breath comes from a bad mouth," explains Susan. "If you have particles of food stuck between your teeth, they will make your breath smell." An infection, or inflammation of the gums, can also cause halitosis, so see your dentist if it's a concern.



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



# IN THE COMPANY OF HEROES

## NEW EXHIBITION SALUTES FORCES' FINEST

**A** SMALL room at the top of London's Imperial War Museum is now home to the world's largest collection of Victoria Crosses and the tales of courage behind them.

Housed in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery, the Extraordinary Heroes exhibition pays homage to the elite group of people who have been awarded the UK's top military honour for bravery in the face of the enemy.

The medals are accompanied by multimedia displays and interactive touch screens that reveal the fascinating personal stories behind the decorations and are joined on parade by nearly 50 George Crosses (awarded for the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger).

Lord Michael Ashcroft, whose personal collection of more than 160 VCs is on show in the gallery which he funded and now bears his name, said: "However these medals got out of the family, whatever the circumstances, the fact they are on public display in a place showing great respect for those acts of bravery is something many of the families wished for. What makes someone save that life or rescue the situation? It's a question that I've struggled with for a long time."

Since purchasing his first medal at auction in 1986, Lord Ashcroft has amassed 164 VCs – the largest collection in the world. All are now on permanent public display alongside the Imperial War

Museum's own 48 Victoria and 31 George Crosses.

"The medal collection is quite simply my pride and joy," Lord Ashcroft added. "The medals are the tangible mementoes of an individual's service and bravery."

Alongside the awards are tales of men – and a few women – running, riding, driving and even swimming into enemy fire with no thought for their own safety, which are told through video screens, life-size models and even comic books.

To mark the opening of the gallery, the museum commissioned war photographer Don McCullin to shoot a portrait of Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry who was decorated with a VC for two separate acts of heroism in Iraq.

"It's amazing because we all have different stories," said LCpl Beharry, one of just seven Victoria Cross-holders alive today.

The medal-winner, who still carries the physical scars from the head wounds he suffered in Iraq, acknowledged that being awarded the honour completely changed his life and career.

"Learning to live with it has been difficult," he added. "As a private soldier all I thought about was getting promoted – I didn't know what the VC was. Only twice since have I had a moment to sit back, think and take it in. Words can't describe it."

Commenting on the tattoo of a Victoria Cross which he now carries on



■ This is an edited version of an article by Sharon Kean which was first published in **SOLDIER** - the magazine of the Armed Forces



Christina Schmid, the widow of SSgt Olaf Schmid GC, stands by her husband's medals



his back, LCpl Beharry added: "I knew it would hurt – it took 64 hours and it was painful, but I always wanted a tattoo and the Victoria Cross has changed my life [for the better], so I would go through the pain for it."

"Actually it was easier getting shot than having the tattoo because I didn't know the round was coming."

The exhibition is divided to represent seven qualities of bravery – aggression, boldness, endurance, initiative, leadership, sacrifice and skill – and visitors to the gallery are encouraged to consider the medal winners' reactions to the decisions they had to make.

Among the VCs on display is the one awarded to Sergeant Ian McKay for his actions during the Falklands War in 1982. When his platoon commander was shot in the leg during a night assault on an enemy position, the paratrooper opted to take charge and lead an attack. The three men he was with were struck by Argentine fire so Sgt McKay ran towards a heavily-defended position alone and was killed just as he eliminated the threat.

His mother, Freda McKay, was at the opening of the Extraordinary Heroes exhibition.

"Sometimes I think 'how can I have a son that is what he is, among the company here?'," she said. "I feel happy about what's happened to his medal. At least I can come and see it

whenever I want and any of the family can too, it's not locked in somebody's drawer away from eyes."

The posthumous award given to Staff Sergeant Olaf Schmid for his bomb-disposal work in Afghanistan in 2009 is one of the 48 George Crosses exhibited. After disarming over 70 Taliban homemade devices, SSgt Schmid died instantly after being caught in an explosion. His widow Christina Schmid said she felt the gallery was a fitting tribute to her husband and all the other VC and GC holders.

"I'm incredibly proud but very sad that he's not here physically to see it," she said.

"To people who knew him and people in his trade and within his team, I think it means a lot, because they know they were part of that and that medal is as much theirs as it is his.

"I know a lot of people think the George Cross is a lesser medal but it's not – some of the acts of bravery are just as, if not more, incredulous."

Since its creation – by Queen Victoria in 1856 – the Victoria Cross has been awarded to 1,354 people, just seven of whom are still alive today. Since the George Cross was created in 1940, a total of 406 have been presented. **DF**



**The museum's new gallery has been funded by Lord Michael Ashcroft**



**LCpl Johnson Beharry  
VC, Tony Gedhill GC, LCpl  
Matthew Croucher**

# SUDOKU

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

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

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

Solution to the December 2010 puzzle



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

# CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

CHESS IS the game of kings and the king of games. Evidently a good many *Defence Focus* readers derive great pleasure from it and I am always pleased to receive your problem answers and general stories and queries about chess. Please keep them coming. In return I promise some nice prizes in 2011.

I am looking for some reader interaction today. I want to know what chess means to you and where you learned to play. Do you have any chess anecdotes or brilliant chess positions you'd like me to use in the column? What was your greatest or worst moment in chess? Who is your favourite player and why? Would you like to see the MOD pay more attention to chess in some way – it has great parallels with military strategy after all. You could send in a photo of the weirdest place you read the chess column. Is there anything you want me to cover in the column?

I am taking you back to the year 1851 for today's position. It is taken from the game Staunton - Jaenisch in London and it is white to play. The black king is in the centre



of the board but seems to be protected by the wall of pawns in front of him. How did Staunton as white (to move) show that this was not the case?

Send your answers to me at [carl.portman282@mod.uk](mailto:carl.portman282@mod.uk) The first correct answer out of the hat wins a copy of 'Chess Openings, Your Choice' by Stewart Reuben. Thanks to him and the English Chess Federation for donating this excellent prize which is an old favourite of mine.

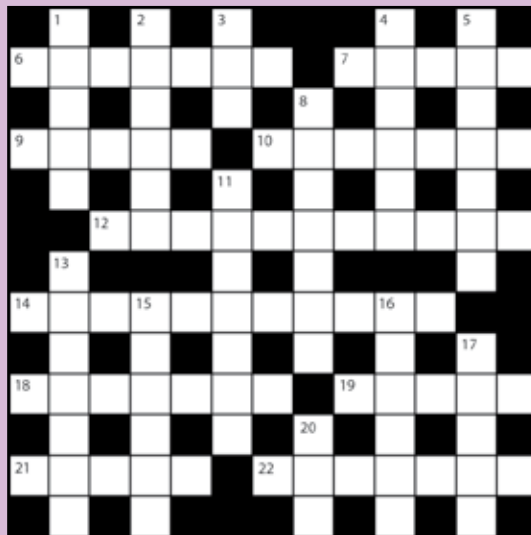
The answer to December's problem was 1...Bxb2+! 2.Qxb2 (or 2.Kxb2 Qxd1) 2...Qxd1+! And white resigned since if 3.Kxd1 R(a)-d8+ 4.Kc1 Re1 checkmate. Winner to be announced.

# TOPICAL CROSSWORD

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF NEWS, GOSSIP AND GOALIES. THERE'S NO PRIZE, BUT HAVE FUN

## ACROSS

- 6. Light vehicles drawn over snow and ice (7)
- 7. Low-value coin (5)
- 9. See 20 Down
- 10. And 22 Across. The title of the final two Harry Potter movies (7,7)
- 12. 'Going Back' was his 2010 hit album (4,7)
- 14. George Clooney's 2010 movie in which he plays an assassin (3,8)
- 18. Ben, the star of various Hollywood comedies (7)
- 19. Venomous snake which can spread the skin of the neck region into a hood (5)
- 21. In November, pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest by this country's leaders (5)
- 22. See 10 Across



## DOWN

- 1. See 3 Down
- 2. Brandy distilled from cherries (6)
- 3. And 1 Down. The first single from Take That's 'Progress' album (3,5)
- 4. 2010 Formula One champion (6)
- 5. Cricket country contesting The Ashes this winter (7)
- 8. Money put down on a house (7)
- 11. Carriage on a train for people travelling overnight (7)

## SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- 1. Flood 2. Kirsch
- 3. The 4. Vettel 5. England
- 8. Deposit 11. Steeper
- 13. Shotgun 15. Aptom
- 16. Apollo 17. Brown
- 20. War
- 21. Burma 22. Hallows
- 18. Stiller 19. Cobra
- 12. Phil Collins 14. The American
- 9. Horse 10. Deathly
- 6. Sleights 7. Penny

- 13. Gun which is used over short ranges (7)
- 15. Self-confident assurance (6)
- 16. \_\_\_\_\_ 11 made the first moon landing in 1969 (6)
- 17. His period as Prime Minister was ended in 2010 by the Coalition taking power (5)
- 20. And 9 Across. Steven Spielberg is directing a film version of this hit play in 2011 (3,5)





## WIN A TWO-NIGHT STAY IN LONDON

HOTEL VERTA, situated on the Thames at Battersea in south west London, offers a unique hotel experience and you can win an overnight stay for two including dinner and breakfast and use of the spa.

The hotel is designed with the feel of late 30's glamour and the golden age of aviation.

The fusion of gold metallic, anthracite and cream colours take guests and passengers back to an era of sophisticated travel. Every need is taken care of and every demand is met while the triple glazed luxury bedrooms offer perhaps London's best night sleep.

The subterranean two level spa offers a subtle design led experience where water, oils and heat combine in an oasis of calm which includes four treatment rooms,

sauna, steam room and sanarium and a hydro-vitality pool while the Technogym offers leading gym equipment.

The restaurant serves modern British and European dishes with excellent views of the Thames. Above the restaurant at Mezzanine level is the Vertilon Bar which offers an extensive selection of cocktails.

For more information visit:

[www.hotelverta.com](http://www.hotelverta.com)

**Terms and conditions:** This prize is a two night stay for two people at the Hotel Verta in Battersea, subject to availability. Prize must be taken by October 2011. No cash alternative. Non transferable. Must be booked in advance. Alcohol, travel and spa treatments not included. Dinner is included only on the first night

**TO WIN,**  
just email your name and  
telephone number to  
[dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk) by  
28 February 2011. Include the phrase  
Hotel Verta or Skiwear in the  
subject line.



## WIN £500 WORTH OF SKI/SNOWBOARD GEAR

ELLIS BRIGHAM Mountain Sports are the UK's premier ski and snowboard specialists. With a massive range of ski and snowboard clothing, equipment and accessories for adults and kids, 23 shops nationwide and an extensively stocked website, Ellis Brigham should be your first choice when seeking advice or buying snowsports equipment this winter.

Every store offers customised ski and snowboard boot fitting, a full range of clothing from The North Face, Salomon, Arc'teryx and many other leading ski and snowboard brands. You can also take advantage of the exclusive Ellis Brigham 'Demo for Free' offer whereby you can test skis at one of their four indoor slopeside stores – Xscape, Milton Keynes, Glasgow and Leeds or the Snowdome, Tamworth – for free (terms and conditions apply see instore for details or visit [www.ellis-brigham.com](http://www.ellis-brigham.com)).

Call 0844 372 1010 and request your free 200 page catalogue today or order your copy online.



**SSAFA**125  
FIRST IN LAST OUT



In our 125th year SSAFA Forces Help supported 47,745 serving and former serving members of the Armed Forces and their families.

**Because we believe that your bravery, dedication and loyalty deserve a lifetime of support.**

[WWW.SSAFA.ORG.UK](http://WWW.SSAFA.ORG.UK)

020 7403 8783