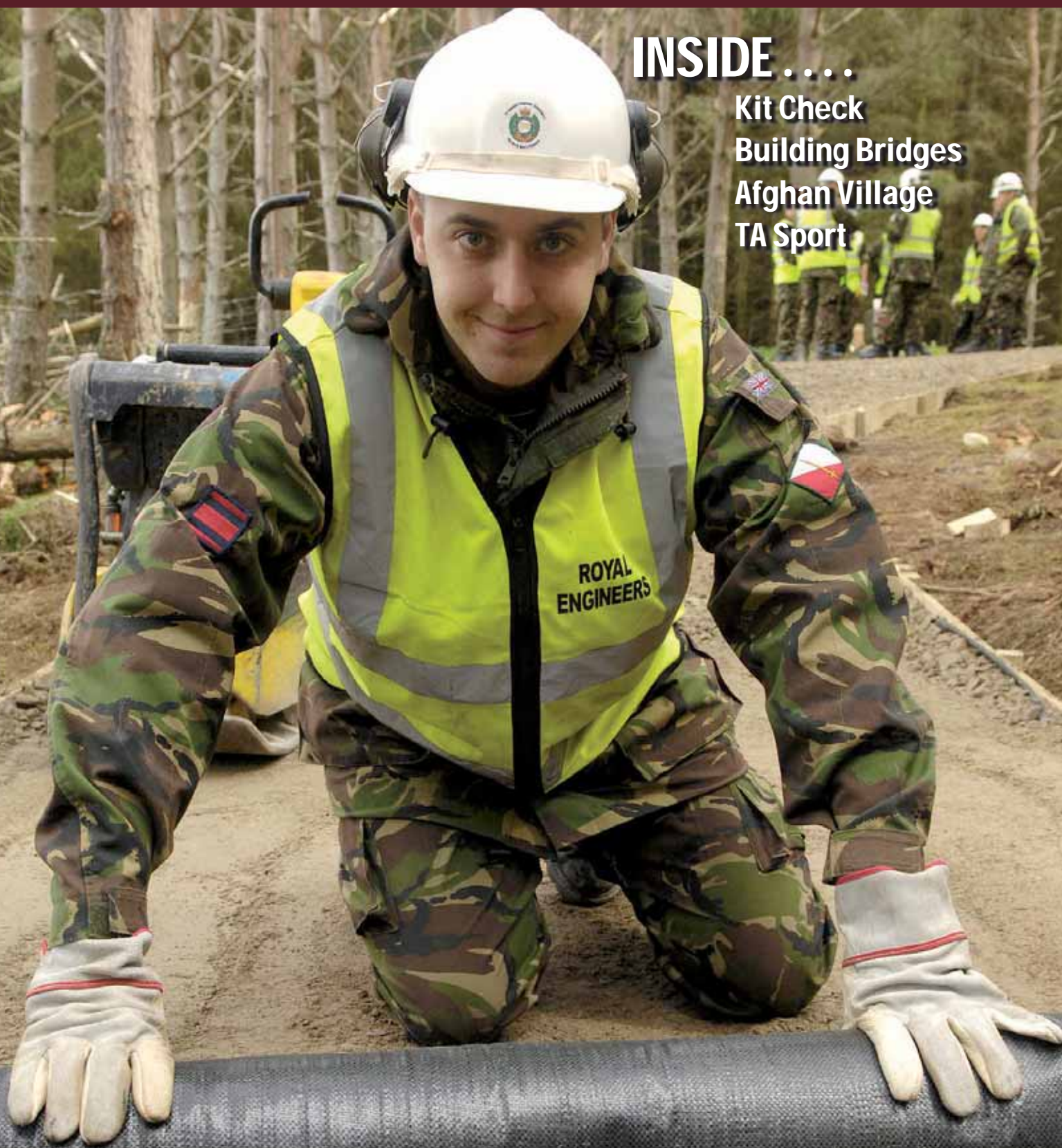


INSIDE

Kit Check
Building Bridges
Afghan Village
TA Sport



FOREWORD

By the Director Reserves (Army)
Brigadier Tom O'Brien TD ADC



Lieutenant General Sir Nick Parker CBE
Deputy Commander
NATO Forces Afghanistan



Commander Regional Forces/
Inspector General Reserves (Army)
Lieutenant General Mark Mans CBE



This edition of TAQ comes at a time when Commander Regional Forces – who is also Inspector General Reserves (Army) – is in the process of changing.

Lieutenant General Sir Nick Parker is moving on to take over as Deputy Commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan. During his time as CRF, General Nick has overseen some of the most fundamental changes to the TA, including the Strategic Review of the Reserves and work on the future structure of the Territorial Army.

He is replaced by Lieutenant General Mark Mans, who was commissioned into the Corps of Royal Engineers from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1974. General Mark has seen operational service in Northern Ireland, the Balkans and the Middle East and has also served in Germany, Africa and Canada. He assumed his current appointment as the Military Secretary in March 2008 and takes up the position of Commander Regional Forces this month.

On behalf of the Territorial Army I wish General Nick every success and best wishes in his new job, and a very warm welcome to General Mark.

Many of you will have been affected by the double round of cost savings that have been applied to the TA. First, our budget for the current year was cut by £7 million in May, and this was followed by a further cut of £16 million in June.

I would not insult you by passing this off with some glib 'line to take' or piece of spin, and I certainly do not underestimate the impact that these cuts have had on many of you. I know that in some cases, units have had their training nights reduced to one per month and their training weekends reduced by half.

The fact is that a protracted operation such as HERRICK is monetarily very expensive. Also, we are all aware of the greater cost in life and limb that many of our colleagues have paid, and continue to pay, and we have to concentrate all our resources on training and equipping our deploying troops in order to minimise that cost. The Treasury is putting pressure on every Government department to cut costs and save money, so we are certainly not alone.

I wish I could say with certainty that there will not be any further cuts this year. What I can say with absolute certainty is that the cost savings are not a measure of the value placed on the TA; everyone, from the Prime Minister down, recognises the irreplaceable contribution that the TA continues to make.

It's a tradition in the British Army – probably one of the factors that makes us the best in the world – that whatever is thrown at us, we hunker-down and crack on. That's what we will do now in the face of these spending cuts. They may make life difficult in the short term, but we will come through.

TAQ Online

If you don't get the chance to pick up your own copy of TAQ, don't forget you can access it online, via ArmyNET. Just log onto ArmyNET and on the Home page look for the 'Quicklinks' in the centre of the page, where you'll find a hotlink to the TAQ archive. As well as the current edition, you'll also find past editions to read electronically.

Cover Image: Sapper Paul Makin of 75 Engineer Regiment (Volunteers) helping to lay the base for the public pathway at the Highlands Wildlife Park, near Kingussie in Inverness-shire.

REALITY CHECK

First Infantry Troops Train In New £14M Facility

A new replica Afghan village has been constructed on Stanford Training Area (STANTA) to provide troops with an authentic environment for pre-deployment training.

The £14m facility, named Sindh Kalay, allows troops to develop the skills needed for operational action in a realistic Afghan village setting. It consists of a rural village and an urban complex, designed by the Operational Training Advisory Group (OPTAG) to replicate as closely as possible the situations, sights and smells that troops could face on operations.

They will hear the call to prayer, practise their patrolling skills in a network of high-walled, claustrophobic alleyways and face a bustling Afghan bazaar – all designed to test and develop the soldiers' tactics, drills and procedures and prepare them for the real thing. The 'local population' of UK-based Afghan nationals and Dari-speaking retired Gurkhas adds unrivalled realism. Pre-deployment training includes combat and non-combat exercises, ranging from classroom-based presentations on Afghan culture, to practical hands-on exercises on the ground with Afghan nationals enacting shura meetings, practicing dealing with the threat of IEDs and security patrolling.

The first units to try out the new facility were the Coldstream Guards and 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh, both part of the Army's 11 Light Brigade. Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, Lieutenant Colonel Toby Gray, said:

"The facilities at Sindh Kalay are superb. Not only is the physical infrastructure strikingly realistic, but the attention to detail is second-to-none. The bazaar is as close as we can get to the real thing outside Afghanistan."

"OPTAG is providing a carefully tailored package that not only allows us to experience bombs and fire-fights, but also to see some of the nuances of daily life. This will really orientate the battle group to what we may face in the future."

The training area is used for both live firing and non-firing training for 350 days each year and around 80,000 troops use the area annually.

Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh, Lieutenant Colonel Nick Lock, said: *"STANTA is a quantum leap forward in training for troops who are preparing for operations in Afghanistan. It gives the soldiers the opportunity to understand and practice engaging with the civil population, as well as being able to practise a combat role against the role-playing insurgents."*

"The guys are enjoying the training and can see real value in being able to practise in a replica situation. They are focused on developing their soldiering skills, and this exercise means that they will not be over-faced by what they will find when they arrive on an operation."



The first infantry soldiers deal with a situation in the new Afghan training village, deep in the heart of rural Norfolk



Security patrolling, clearing IEDs, reacting to suicide bombers, dealing with bomb factories and insurgents are tested in the most realistic training facility the British Army has ever put together



Pictures: Stuart Bingham

KIT CHECK

Hardly a day goes by without the subject of the Army's equipment in theatre appearing somewhere in the media. Whatever allegations are made, one thing is certain – the past couple of years have seen more new kit enter service than at any time since the Second World War.

Every year, the MOD's Directorate of Equipment & Supply (DE&S) shows off its latest kit at the giant Millbrook Testing Facility in Bedfordshire. This year, as well as demonstrating many of the enhancements to existing equipment, they were able to demonstrate much of the kit introduced under the Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) programme.

Over these pages we have included as much of the UOR equipment as possible, as well as some of the more familiar items that you may come across out in theatre.

Look out for a new series of wall posters coming to your TA centre soon, showing much of our latest kit.

MASTIFF

The Mastiff was introduced in December 2006 to meet the need for a protected transport vehicle to escort and provide protection in logistic convoys. There are two variants - troop carrier and ambulance. Mastiff's role has evolved considerably, especially on Op HERRICK, and it is now being used in ways more akin to armoured personnel carriers and armoured fighting vehicles. The first Mastiff 2 vehicles deployed to theatre in early 2009.



RIDGBACK

A 4x4 variant of the American Cougar, Ridgback will share many features with its big brother, Mastiff. The first vehicles arrived in theatre this year and will be supplied in three variants – troop carrier (with and without remote weapons station), battlefield ambulance and command & control post. Its smaller size enables it to provide protected mobility in urban and fringe urban environments. The vehicle will be fitted with Bowman, Force Protection Counter Measures, and a self-defence weapon.



VECTOR

A fast, lightweight 6x6 protected vehicle, Vector provides good ballistic protection and increased mobility and capacity compared with the Snatch Land Rover. It is ideally suited to the rugged terrain and long patrol distances that are a feature of Afghanistan.



SNATCH/VIXEN

In 2006 a number of Snatch vehicles were put through a significant mid-life improvement upgrade, provided additional protection and uprated suspension. In 2008 a number of Snatch-2 vehicles were upgraded to the new Snatch-Vixen, and a further tranche is being improved to Snatch-Vixen Plus standard, providing enhanced levels of protection.



JACKAL

The Jackal performs a long-range surveillance and reconnaissance role and supplements, but does not replace, the Land Rover WMK. The three-man crew is protected by a blast and ballistic protection system, and Electronic Counter Measures systems are built into the vehicle as standard. Jackal boasts a significant amount of firepower, mounting a 7.62 GPMG at the commander's position, while the top gunner can be equipped with either another GPMG, a 0.5 calibre machine gun or a 40mm grenade machine gun. Recent improvements to Jackal include the ring mount for the top weapon being moved further forward to spare the driver from muzzle flash and an uprated engine, now 6.7 litre.



COYOTE

Based on the Jackal platform and due to arrive in theatre in Autumn 2009, Coyote is primarily a tactical support vehicle, providing logistical support to Jackal units. In order to provide that support, Coyote has the same mobility as Jackal.



HUSKY

The medium platform in the Tactical Support Vehicle programme, Husky will join Coyote and Wolfhound accompanying our patrols in Afghanistan and transporting essential supplies such as food, water and ammunition. A high-mobility 4x4 vehicle, Husky is designed to fill the gap where heavier vehicles are limited by mobility and lighter vehicles are limited by payload. In addition to the flatbed Utility variant, Command and Ambulance variants with enclosed rear cabs are being procured. The Utility variant is due to enter service this year, with the other variants following in 2010.



WOLF HOUND

A truck variant of the Mastiff, Wolfhound is now on order following the signing of a £90m contract. It will provide a highly protected, load-carrying vehicle perform out a variety of tasks such as moving bulky stores for use in the construction of forward bases; as a Gun Tractor and Gun Limber for the Royal Artillery's 105 Light Gun and to carry general stores such as ammunition, food or water.



WARTHOG

A replacement for the trusty Viking in Afghanistan, Warthog will provide higher levels of protection whilst maintaining the vehicle's terrain-crossing capability, including crossing trenches greater than two metres, climbing walls of more than one metre and swimming at a Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) of 16 tonnes. There will be four variants - Troop Carrier, Command, Repair & Recovery and Ambulance. The first vehicles should be delivered by the end of 2009.



SPRINGER

A brand new all-terrain vehicle, Springer will deliver vital equipment to front-line troops and is designed specifically for rugged, desert conditions, making it well-matched to the operational environment in Afghanistan. Springer will carry a crew of two and a payload of one tonne. The photograph shows the unmodified prototype.



QUAD BIKE

The upgraded quad bike can reach speeds of up to 75km/h and can carry up to almost 160kg with the trailer attached. They are used to deliver food, water and ammunition to troops on the front line in difficult-to-access areas, or where it is more appropriate to offer a lower profile. A new contract with Yamaha and Logic will see a further 200 vehicles and trailers delivered to British troops in Afghanistan. The upgrades to the bikes include a left-hand throttle, which provides a dual throttle fit giving greater manoeuvrability in theatre and dual stretcher fit on the trailers to evacuate two casualties at a time, thereby speeding up emergency aid.



WMIK

The vehicle that has arguably had the most impact in almost every theatre of operations is the Weapons Mounted Installation Kit (WMIK) Land Rover. The latest version, in service in Afghanistan, has additional protection and special weapons mounts. Tough, manoeuvrable and with huge amounts of firepower – from grenade machine gun and 50 calibre heavy machine gun to new night vision sights and Javelin missiles – the WMIKS have been dubbed 'porcupines' by local Taliban.



PANTHER

Weighing more than seven tonnes, the Panther protected vehicle is fitted with the latest high-tech developments, including a remote-controlled weapon system that allows the user to operate a machine gun with a camera and joystick from inside its turret. It can operate in all weather conditions, day and night, using thermal imaging equipment that 'sees' in the dark, and the vehicles are protected against a range of threats including small arms and blast and anti-personnel mines. Panther is air-transportable and can be underslung beneath a Chinook helicopter. It is armed with a 7.62mm GPMG-equipped remote weapon station, which can be upgraded to a 12.7mm weapon if required, and an appropriate day/night sighting system. The armoured citadel provides crew protection from small arms fire and blast mines. More than 400 Panthers are being assembled by BAE Systems under a £160m contract.



COMBAT LOGISTICS

Tactical logistics is fulfilling a vital role on the ground, ensuring that everything from vehicle spares to water is in the right place at the right time. Proven vehicles such as DROPS and Close Support tankers have been armoured and armed, and are proving their worth supplying vital supplies, despite atrocious driving conditions and the constant threat of ambush.



HONOURS AND AWARDS

Around-The-Clock Support Recognised With Special Certificate

'Indispensable' was the term used to describe Lance Corporal Steven Furby when he was awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for exceptional service at a special ceremony at Peninsula Barracks in Warrington, Cheshire.

LCpl Furby is the civilian driver for the Regimental Headquarters of 75 Engineer Regiment at the barracks, as well as being a TA soldier, labourer, barman and assistant caretaker. His wife, who is caretaker at Peninsula Barracks, as well as being a TA Lance Corporal in the Regiment, was there as a special guest to watch the presentation by the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, Colonel William Bromley-Davenport on 21 April.

The citation for LCpl Furby's award described him as *'providing indispensable support to the effective running of the Regiment Headquarters. He transferred to the Royal Engineers from The Kings and Cheshire Regiment in 2007 and has made the Regiment's transition from Manchester to Cheshire much easier through his supportive and willing manner. He has adapted to his new cap badge and his role without a break in stride and is fully deserving of the award of the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate.'*

The award is the only one for the entire county of Cheshire for 2009.



Lance Corporal Steven Furby with his certificate, HM Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, Colonel William Bromley-Davenport and Mrs Karen Furby

COOL PADDLING...

You might think that a gentle paddle along the canal was an easy way to raise money for charity. We suspect that SSgt Ray O'ram and LCpl Chris Barras of 299 Para Sqn, Royal Engineers thought so too. After all, what can be difficult about canoeing from Liverpool to Leeds along the canal, even if it is 127 miles and involves 90 locks and 150 bridges?

In the end, the trip took a great deal of planning before they even got into the water. *"We had to consider scores of possible hazards and inhibitors and work out how we would deal with them,"* recalls SSgt O'ram. *"Things such as dangerous debris in the water, equipment for night paddling, stoppages due to works on the canal, possible danger areas*

and the timing of when we would encounter them, means of transporting the boat around locks, tunnels and other obstructions, correct licences, insurance, risk assessments, permission from the waterways to travel, keys for swing bridges, toilets, water points, correct type and amount of kit, maps, emergency drills..."

Cycling the route to recce the trip didn't help much either – *"Seventeen hours of pouring rain and muddy puddles...hardly saw a thing!"* recalls SSgt O'ram.

But, in the end, braving all the hazards they had planned for and a few they hadn't (such as swan attacks – it was the nesting season), they succeeded in completing the trip, raising £2,500 for Help for Heroes.



SSgt Ray O'ram in red vest and LCpl Chris Barras in yellow vest

FREEDOM FOR SIGNALLERS

In June 1215, Runnymede saw the signing of Magna Carta, an event that established the basis for the laws, rights and freedoms that today underpin liberty throughout the world.

Seven hundred and ninety-four years and one month later Runnymede witnessed another historic event. It may not alter the course of history but it was nevertheless a milestone, being the first time a TA unit has been given the Freedom of Runnymede.

The honour went to 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron, who marched through the streets of Chertsey and Addlestone on 25 July on their way to receive an illuminated scroll from the Mayor of Runnymede, Councillor Paul Tuley.

Freedom of Entry to the Borough is the highest honour that a civic authority can bestow on a military unit.

THE EVEN BIGGER BREW UP

Last year, a record-breaking 400 events around the world raised over £100,000 for SSAFA Forces Help – just by making cups of tea.

This year's Big Brew Up, between 3rd and 11th October, will be even bigger and will hopefully raise more money to support our Armed Forces past and present.

Just getting together and making a simple cup of tea for your family and friends can directly help our Regular and Reserve troops and their families, while they are still serving and after they leave the services.

To register and receive an event pack including posters, stickers invitations and balloons, visit www.ssafa.org.uk or call 0207 4639222.

SSAFA Fundraising Director Claire Hoather says: *"To hold a Big Brew Up you just need to get together with friends and put the kettle on. We provide all the bunting and posters to promote your event and you can be as imaginative as you like. Some people make cakes to sell, others have games for everyone to play. Your Big Brew can be as big as you like."*

"Each year we are overwhelmed by the support and enthusiasm shown around the world - even those on operations have taken part. All the funds raised are spent locally, allowing SSAFA volunteers to continue their important role supporting our service and ex-service personnel and their families."



... AND COOL RUNNING



Spr Lee Cross (left) and Spr Ian Chapman

Anybody who launches him - or herself - down an ice-covered track in a glorified go-kart should spend some time lying down in a padded room. Yet bobsledding is a hugely popular sport among those who have tried it, and is just one of the sports you can access through the Army Winter Sports Association.

Sapper Ian Chapman of 299 Para Regt RE travelled to Igls, Austria to attend the novice training camp on the Olympic bobsled track.

"I've done some crazy things in my time, but I can honestly say that this rates as one of the best," says Spr Chapman. *"If you like total commitment that requires 150 per cent concentration during a fast and furious high-speed white knuckle ride, then this is for you!"*

Having been taught all the aspects of the sport, including how to maintain, service, brake and drive a bobsled, he was among those invited back to participate in the Army Novice Bobsleigh Championships in February - this time accompanied by Spr Lee Cross, a volunteer first-time bobsleigh brakeman to make up the team. *"Nine teams spent five days training with top quality coaches who are members or ex-members of the British team,"* says Spr Chapman. *"The priority was the sprint starts at the top of the hill to gain as much speed as possible on the track."*

The competition itself comprised each team making two runs of the track, with the fastest aggregate time being declared the winner. The Chapman/Cross team, the only non-Regular team competing, began with an excellent sprint from the starting block and continued in the same vein through all 14 bends along the 1.2km course. *"We had our best drive of the week and literally flew through the course to record the fastest first run,"* says Spr Chapman. *"Our second run produced an even faster start time but I managed to bump one of the walls after the exit of a turn, which slowed us down a fraction. My error cost us badly and we were beaten into second place by only hundredths of a second."*

"Still, it was an awesome achievement nonetheless, and beating the Regular Paras made it even sweeter!"

If you fancy trying your hand at winter sports, or any other sports, see our article on page 11, and speak to your unit.

UNIT FOCUS

The Only Job Worth Being Fired From

Sergeant Jamie 'Shannon the Cannon' is the 27th man tasked to fire the world-famous One O'Clock gun at Edinburgh Castle. Here he describes a typical day as the only district gunner in the British Army . . .

Being district gunner at Edinburgh's historic castle is a dirty job, but someone has to do it.

It's one of the highest profile jobs in the Army, and the incumbent has to appear in thousands of holiday photos and videos as tourists from all over the world flock to see the UK's only time gun fire six days a week, as it has done for centuries.

Contrary to popular belief, the district gunner does work for more than 10 minutes a day. Sergeant Jamie Shannon usually starts at 0830 when he checks in with 105 Regiment. He then services and cleans the gun. *"If it's shiney, keep it shiney,"* he says.

As the gun is electronically fired, Sgt Shannon also checks the circuit each day to ensure that it is in working order. In addition to the One O'Clock gun, Sgt Shannon is also in charge of two other ceremonial guns, which he services regularly.

Before becoming the full-time district gunner almost four years ago, Sgt Shannon was in 105 Regiment Royal Artillery, the Scottish Territorial Army Artillery regiment, for 23 years.

As a good friend of the famous 'Tam the Gun', who fired the historic shot for almost a quarter of a century, Sgt Shannon took over the post when Tam was absent due to ill health and was eventually offered the job full time after Tam sadly passed away.

As the successor of 'Tam the Gun', Sgt Shannon needed an equally catchy title. The name 'Shannon the Cannon' was thought up simultaneously by three people who had never met - a title by which he is now known worldwide.

Having fired the gun countless times, the district gunner recalls his proudest memory as firing at the Queen Mother's 100th birthday and, again, for her funeral.

"These were times that I will never have a chance to be a part of again," 51-year-old Sgt Shannon says.

When asked what is the best thing about his job as the district gunner, Sgt Shannon replies that he sees Edinburgh Castle as being a "living history" and he loves helping to keep the country's traditions alive.

He adds that Tam always said that he was the second most photographed man in the city after Adam 'William Wallace' on the Royal Mile.

Sgt Shannon's worst memory was his very first day on the job. He remembers the pressure of the crowd waiting for the gun to go off.

"That fraction of a second felt like an eternity," he says. Luckily, the gun went off without a hitch and, in his four years, he has experienced only two misfires. If the 105mm light gun fails to go off, Sgt Shannon must shout *"Misfire!"* to alert Historic Scotland, which runs the castle on behalf of the Government, who then seal off the area to the public. Sgt Shannon then changes into his Soldier 95 uniform and waits 30 minutes to unload the gun. The gun is then checked to see if the misfire was due to a fault with the gun or with the ammunition. The Bomb Disposal Squad and 105 Regiment are then alerted to advise Sgt Shannon on what action to take.

Any district gunner dreads a misfire. Sgt Shannon says: *"People just coming into the castle might not hear the bang of the gun going off, but everyone hears the click of a misfire."*

As people travel from all over the globe to see the One O'Clock gun fired, they can be disappointed if it doesn't happen. Sgt Shannon puts a humorous spin on it by telling people that they have come on a lucky day as *"everyone sees the gun fire, but not so many have witnessed a misfire"*.

Another duty of the district gunner is to fire the 'Mons Meg' cannon during the BBC's Hogmanay Live on television. Although Sgt Shannon describes this as being a great honour, he says the event is *"a bit Hollywood"*.

He says the gunpowder seen to be loaded into the cannon is not actually used. In fact, only a small amount of gunpowder is exploded. This is because the last time the cannon was fired - at King James's wedding - it fractured the barrel, making it unsafe to be fired again. The cannon is linked by cables to speakers, which simulate a bang and start the fireworks.



As one of the most prominent figures in Scotland's tourist industry, 'Shannon the Cannon' has fans from all over the world.

He receives letters and even Christmas cards from as far afield as New Zealand, South Africa and California - many of which invite him to 'drop by if he is ever passing'.

Sgt Shannon jokes that he might just do that as he often visits California. Another aspect of the district gunner's job involves answering tourists' questions - the most frequent of which is:

"What time is the one o'clock gun fired?"

NEXT OF KIN TO RECEIVE QUEEN'S MEDAL IN NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THEIR LOSS



The families of service personnel who have died in conflict are to be honoured with a new medal as a national recognition of their loss.

It will be the first medal granted by a reigning monarch since the George Cross was instituted in 1940 by King George VI for acts of bravery by both civilians and the military.

Prior to this, the Victoria Cross was introduced in 1856 by Queen Victoria for acts of gallantry by the Armed Forces.

Next of kin will receive the Elizabeth Cross - a sterling silver emblem in the shape of a cross over a wreath - plus a memorial scroll signed by The Queen, which will bear the name of the person who died.

The medal and memorial scroll will not just be granted to families who have lost loved ones in the recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Queen's recognition will also be available to the families of those who died in conflicts dating back to 1948, including the Korean War, the Falklands conflict and operations in Northern Ireland.

In a message to the Armed Forces, Her Majesty The Queen said: *"This seems to me a right and proper way of showing our enduring debt to those who are killed while actively protecting what is most dear to us all."*

"The solemn dignity which we attach to the names of those who have fallen is deeply engrained in our national character. As a people, we accord this ultimate sacrifice the highest honour and respect."

The Queen's message concluded: *"I greatly hope that the Elizabeth Cross will give further meaning to the nation's debt of gratitude to the families and loved ones of those who have died in the service of our country. We will remember them all."*

Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, said: *"I*

hope that the families of those who have given their lives will wear the Elizabeth Cross with pride and pass it on to future generations so that they, too, might know the price that has been paid for their freedom and way of life."

"We owe so much to those who have died to protect our country and our way of life. The Elizabeth Cross was recommended by the military chiefs to Her Majesty to recognise the huge debt this country owes to the families of those brave individuals who have left behind."

The arms of the Elizabeth Cross bear floral symbols representing England (Rose), Scotland (Thistle), Ireland (Shamrock) and Wales (Daffodil). The reverse of the Cross will be engraved with the name of the person in whose memory it is granted.

The Elizabeth Cross and memorial scroll have been inspired by precedents from the First and Second World Wars. A scroll and memorial plaque were presented to the families of those killed in World War One. A scroll was given to the families of those who died in World War Two and in the Korean War in the early 1950s.

In June 2008, the MoD announced plans to introduce a new national form of recognition for those Armed Forces personnel who have died on operations or as a result of terrorist activity while on duty. These plans were based on the recommendations of the military Chiefs of Staff, and the final details were confirmed by Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth on July 01 this year.

Families of Service personnel who have died since 1948 are invited to read the information on the MoD Medal Office website, which includes information on the eligibility criteria and how to apply. Information and an application form can also be obtained by calling 0800 085 3600.



BE A SPORT

Fitness, competitive spirit, teamwork and pride are all valuable attributes for soldiers and officers. Sport provides the opportunity to build all of these qualities. Since 1979 the TA Sports Board (TASB) has been the designated body charged with governance and funding of sport in the TA. The board works in close cooperation with the Army Sport Control Board (ASCB), and in line with the One Army concept. TA personnel are now able to represent their Regular Army corps teams.

As well as promoting and encouraging involvement of sport, the TASB oversees many TA sporting championships, competitions and representative matches. It also administers the funds of the Board to the best advantage of sport in the TA.

If you are interested in sports, there is a host of opportunities for you through the TA.

And it's not all about elite athletes - all TA personnel can enjoy sport. Formation HQs are responsible for organising TA sporting events for their units. These events could be independent sports leagues or knockouts held throughout a season, or they could be one-off sports days/weekends held once or twice a year. Ask your OC or Training Major about events in your area and how you can get involved.

Formations G7 PD Branches:

HQ 2 Div: 0131 310 2085
HQ 4 Div: 01252 347454
HQ 5 Div: 01743 262269
HQ LONDIST: 0207 4142402
HQ 38 (IRISH) Bde: 028922 63206

In addition, National competitions are held for cross country and orienteering, and if there is not enough interest in the unit to enter a full team, you can enter as an individual.

Being in the TA opens the door to a wealth of opportunities to take part in sports that might be less accessible in your civilian life. Examples of regional activity include tennis, golf, football, swimming, rugby, skiing and boxing. In London District alone last year, units took part in thirteen sports overseas tours that included rugby, cycling, skiing and snowboarding championships. Where else could you get involved in this kind of activity without racking up considerable costs?

Sporting opportunities are for everyone - ability and enthusiasm is the key, not your rank. All commissioned and non-commissioned personnel can get involved, including OTC cadets.

In this edition of TAQ you'll find plenty of examples of Territorials taking advantage of the wide range of sports on offer. So what are you waiting for? Ask your unit Trg Maj or nominated sports rep about events in your area and how you can get involved. Event Sports Notices are sent out via Formation HQs and also posted on ArmyNET, and you can contact the relevant person in the list below for details of how you can get involved.

The Territorial Sport Board

Secretary (Tel: 0207 414 2402)
Maj AJ Chapple BEM: andrew.chapple154@mod.uk

Basketball
Lt Cvancara: 516cvanc@armymail.mod.uk

Boxing (London area only)
Capt R Wilmont: 106RA-RHQ-RRRWO@mod.uk

Cresta
Capt R Morgan: ricmorgan@lineone.net

Cross Country/Half Marathon
SSgt J Castle: castle@armymail.mod.uk

Football
Maj W Jones TD: wynne.jones@de.mod.uk

Golf
Capt GF Donoghue: 103REME-128-PSAO@mod.uk

Hockey
Capt MR Murphy (Spud): 143bde-rtc-adjt@rtc.ta.mod.uk

Orienteering
Major B Spence (Boris): ceo@northumbria-acf.org.uk

Polo
Maj T Petersen: tjp@petersen.co.uk

Rifle Shooting
Maj S B Fraser MBE: simon@taraccrs.co.uk

Rugby
Maj IC McAuliffe: Bcoyglamorganacf@aol.com



BUILDING BRIDGES WITH THE COMMUNITY

A Polar Expedition with a Difference

The UK's only polar bear has a luxurious new home, thanks to a team of TA Royal Engineers.

Not content with building bridges in the Highlands (see opposite), a team of 80 sappers from 75 Engineer Regiment (Volunteers) deployed with all their digging equipment to a wildlife park in the Highlands of Scotland. They usually build camps for service personnel in Afghanistan, but their mission this time was to build a four-acre enclosure for Mercedes, a polar bear currently living in Edinburgh Zoo.

The Regiment, which has bases in Warrington, Failsworth, Birkenhead and Stoke-on-Trent, agreed to get involved in the Mercedes project at the Highlands Wildlife Park, near Kingussie in Inverness-shire, through the Military Aid to the Civil Community (MACC) scheme.

Commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Ricketts, said: "As Royal Engineers, it is vital for us to keep on top of our construction skills. Moving from North West England to the Highlands gave us a chance to complete some challenging tasks in an unfamiliar environment. We were also able to make a real contribution to the community by providing a worthwhile cause with some new infrastructure."

Gary Wilson, Director of Business Operations for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS), which owns Edinburgh Zoo and the Highland Wildlife Park, said: "This is the latest in a series of enclosures that the Army has helped us with. Thanks to them, the cost of building a new home for Mercedes will be £75,000 instead of the original cost of £300,000. As we are a charity, assistance such as this is of great benefit



The team from 75 Eng Regt

to us and we are extremely grateful for their support. We are launching a public fundraising appeal to help us secure the remainder of the funds, and if people are interested in donating they can do this at www.rzss.org.uk."

In addition to the polar bear enclosure – which is the largest in Europe – the soldiers built a new cattle grid to ease access to the wildlife park, as well as developing a woodland walk for visitors who would like to experience it on foot.

Mercedes has been at Edinburgh Zoo since 1984 after being rescued from her native Canada, where she was scheduled to be shot. Then a wild animal, she had started to make visits into a town (presumably to go clubbing, visit a few bars and generally hang-out) and the authorities became concerned that she posed a dangerous risk to residents. Luckily, a local family became fond of her and asked RZSS to provide her with a new home.

Mercedes got her name from the famous car company, which assisted with the costs of her transport to Scotland.



1 - 3. The new cattle grid. 4 - 6. The woodland walk pathway. 7 & 8. The new polar bear enclosure

Bridge to Beauty

It has been almost two and a half years since the public has been able to visit the waterfalls in the Fairy Glen near Fortrose in Ross-Shire, after the bridge across the Rosemarkie Burn was destroyed during a storm in October 2006. Now, the TA soldiers have replaced the old bridge and opened up access to the glen once more. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Assistant Central Highland Reserves Warden Kate Horsfall said: "It's fantastic that we can once again allow visitors to use this popular crossing."

"We know that the local community was keen to be able to access the area again, and the waterfalls are popular with visitors, helping to draw valuable tourism into the area."

Local councillor Billy Barclay said it was a recognised pathway with excellent facilities. He added: "Now that the bridge is up - with many thanks to the Army - the locals and visitors can once again enjoy this superb walk."

Lt Col Henry Ricketts, Commanding Officer of 75 Engineer Regiment, said: "We are delighted to be able to practice our construction skills by completing tasks that offer a real benefit to the community."

"It gives the soldiers a great sense of satisfaction to be able to deliver something tangible to people at home."

The work was funded by the Biffaward Small Grant Scheme, Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund and Highland Council's Black Isle ward budget.



Fairy Glen bridge - before and after



LET'S BE FAIR

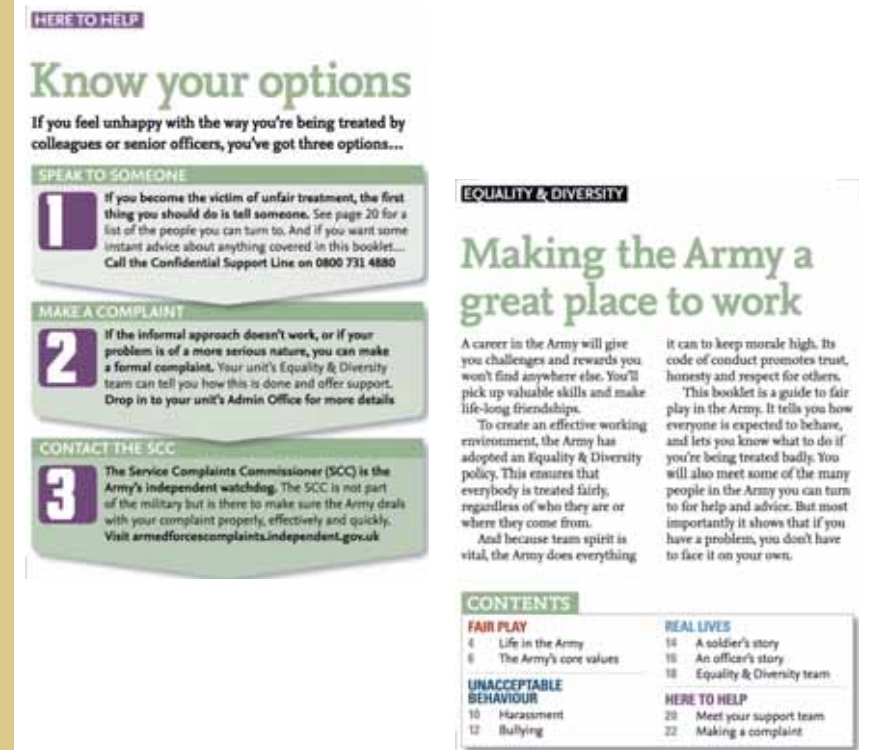
A fair environment, free from bullying and harassment and where every member of the Army is treated equally is at the core of our operational capability. Equality and Diversity (E&D) is not just the responsibility of commanders; it's up to all of us.

A new booklet, published by the Directorate of Manning (Army) (DM(A)) and sent to every unit, sets out guidelines on maintaining a fair environment for everyone.

But as well as providing guidance, the Army is keen to reward activity that supports and promotes E&D, either directly or by recommending units and individuals for external awards.

There are a number of awards schemes already available that recognise achievement in promoting E&D. These range from local and organisational commendations, which can be the simple but much valued 'thank you' or a formal commendation, to recognition by awards such as the MBE.

Where units or individuals have identified a project that could promote Diversity or improve the E&D climate within the organisation, then funding is available through Employment Branch within DM(A). In the past they have funded Diversity Days for units or provided outside consultants to assist unit training programmes. Units should submit their ideas in writing, clearly stating what they require and an estimated cost, to: SO2 Employment DM(A), Trenchard Lines, Upavon, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 6BE.



TA CENTRES

Buildings Named after Abingdon VC heroes

Two of Oxfordshire's TA units have a brand new home. Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester officially opened Abingdon's new TA centre, Edward Brooks Barracks, at a ceremony attended by more than 200 people on Saturday 18 July.

Named after a local Territorial Army hero who was awarded the Victoria Cross, the new £4m centre is home to A Company of 7th Battalion The Rifles and D Squadron of 202 Field Hospital, as well as the Headquarters of the Thames Valley Air Training Corps.

Reflecting the resident units, each of the building's wings are named after local TA soldiers who were awarded the VC; Captain Chavasse belonged to the forebear of today's Royal Army Medical Corps and Lance Corporal Wilcox served with the Oxon & Bucks Light Infantry, now The Rifles. During the Duchess's tour of the building she was introduced to relatives of these VC winners.

The new facility certainly meets with the approval of its new residents. Major Marcus Dicks, OC of A Coy, said: *"The building is fantastic. It's a really good training facility."*

LCpl Tim Smith, from Abingdon, said: *"We can use the airfield, go off-road driving and practice section attacks. We also have a lot more classrooms, which is much better."*

Territorial Sergeant Major Edward Brooks was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1917. Many of his family attended the opening, including his three grandchildren. His grandson, Keith Brooks, commented: *"It's a shame that Edward can't be here to see it."*



Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester unveils the plaque to officially open the new TA Centre



After the opening ceremony, Her Royal Highness inspects members of 7 RIFLES and 202 Fd Hosp

Duke of Gloucester opens 'jewel in the North West crown'

The Duke of Gloucester visited Merseyside to officially open a new Territorial Army Centre in Bootle.

It has been named the RG Masters VC Territorial Army Centre after ambulance driver Private Richard George Masters.

He was awarded a Victoria Cross for saving the lives of almost 200 soldiers during the First World War.

His 89-year-old nephew John Masters was present at the event and said the choice of name for the new centre made him "very proud".

The new centre in Pelham Drive is built on land provided by Sefton Council. Supermarket chain Asda has funded the entire cost of the project.

The Duke of Gloucester met TA soldiers and cadets based there.

These included soldiers from the 238 (Sefton) Transport Squadron RLC (Volunteers), as well as cadets from the (RLC) Troop of Merseyside Army Cadet Force and 1908 (Bootle) Squadron, Merseyside Wing, Air Training Corps.

The Duke of Gloucester unveiled a plaque and talked to volunteer soldiers who have served in Iraq, Afghanistan and Cyprus.

Major Roy Bevan, of the Reserved Forces Cadets Association North West, said: *"It all went brilliantly well. The Duke was very relaxed. He thoroughly enjoyed his visit and took time to speak to everybody. I think the centre is the jewel in the North West's crown."*

Return to Halifax

The Territorial Army is returning to a West Yorkshire town a decade after the unit was folded due to cutbacks and reorganisation.

Now the Halifax unit is to reopen, and garages near where it used to be based will be turned into a new HQ.

Major Simon Routh, recruiting for the Yorkshire Regiment, said: *"Halifax has always been a really good area for us, probably because of its strong links with The 3rd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment (Duke of Wellington's)."*

"We're looking to form a new platoon, which would mean more than 30 members. We've held an information evening and delivered 2,000 leaflets across the area."

Since the unit closed, TA personnel in Calderdale district have had to travel to Huddersfield.

Calderdale councillor Grenville Horsfall, who fought for the Halifax branch to stay open back in 1999, said he was delighted it was returning.

"It's fantastic news. The TA in Halifax was very well organised and a lot of people joined. When the branch closed they just disappeared. One or two went to Keighley or Huddersfield, but most left."

"It'll be great to see the TA back in Halifax."



ENHANCE YOUR CAREER AT A REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

The Regional Training Centres (RTCs) were formed from the Brigade Specialist Training Teams early in 2006, when 10 RTCs were created. The intent was that RTCs should be centres of training excellence, staffed and resourced by the Chain of Command of the TA units that use them.

The RTC aim is to deliver quality, timely training and training support to prepare TA officers and soldiers for unit appointments, further specialist training, and for mobilisation.

Their main purpose is to deliver:

- TA recruit selection for those wishing to join the TA.
- Phase One training to those recruits who have passed a TA recruit selection weekend. This is the main effort in most cases.
- TA Potential Officer (TAPO) training - specifically modules 1, 2, 3 and 5.
- TA specialist courses - including BCDT, DITs, SAA, CBRN to name a few.
- External assistance, as directed.

The RTCs are commanded by a lieutenant colonel and draw staff from local units who are posted in for a period of two to three years, supported by a team of Regular and TA permanent staff. This creates excellent opportunities for high-quality instructors to further their experience and qualifications in a pure training environment. In most cases there is no requirement for staff and instructors to attend an Annual Training Period (ATP) to qualify for Bounty - although many do. Quite rightly, all RTCs are subject to high assurance standards. Training is conducted according to the Defence Systems Approach to Training (DSAT), and RTCs conduct their own internal validation and self-assessment, as well as undergoing a rigorous inspection framework.

Many RTCs are now Institute of Leadership and Management 'Accredited Centres'. Lieutenant Colonel Julian Ladd, who commands London District RTC, says: *"Being recognised as an Accredited Centre is an excellent step and, as such, we can now begin to offer ILM-accredited vocational qualification for our courses."*

Life within a RTC is busy but rewarding, and they have a continual requirement for high-quality TA JNCOs, SNCOs and officers who are currently, or wish to become, instructors.

Colonel Simon Chapman, TA Colonel (North) for London, comments: *"The recent Review of Reserves stated 'training is pivotal to the proposition' and clearly recognised the opportunity for the Army Regional Training Centres to become more involved in collective training."*

"As far as individual development for officers and senior ranks goes, our RTCs are one of the best-kept secrets - they offer rewarding postings for both commanders and instructors, not to mention a career edge when they return to their units."



LONDON DISTRICT REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

SPECIALIST TRAINING TEAM



DITs Wing



SAA Wing



CBRN Wing



BCDT Wing



Officer Training Wing

Full details are on our ArmyNET URL: -
<https://www.armynet.mod.uk/club/navigate2.php?pageID=39402>

CORRECTION

In our last edition we featured the work of the TA Field Hospital shown in the three-part TV series Doctors and Nurses at War. In that article, we wrongly said that the unit concerned was 205 Field Hospital, it was actually 203 (Welsh) Field Hospital. Our apologies to everyone at 203.

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU!

Virtual reality experience takes Army recruitment to another dimension

Members of the public have a chance to really start thinking and acting like a soldier in a powerful new recruiting drive using groundbreaking gaming technology.

The Start Thinking Soldier campaign takes Army recruitment to a new and exciting dimension, providing the public with a fast, fun and challenging experience.

Throughout the summer, the Army Recruiting Group has been holding events across the country to give the public a taste of what it's like to be a soldier on operations.

The computer technology enables people to test their physical fitness, mental agility, problem-solving, observation, leadership, team-working and decision-making skills.

They then receive in-depth feedback from Army personnel, helping them to find out more about themselves, their skills and potential.

It follows on from the successful TV campaign, which encourages the public to go online and decide on the best outcome to a mission shown on television. Those who took part on the online challenge were invited to a local event to further test their skills.

The Start Thinking Soldier campaign offers two types of gaming technology - virtual reality headsets using army training simulation software to test skills in helicopter navigation and observation tactics. And online gaming pods, featuring real-time graphics combined with

real-world video footage. The performance of those taking part online is logged via electronic wristbands, after which they receive a one-on-one debrief.

Certificates are given to those successful in their missions and personalised career consultations can be arranged for those who are interested in joining up.

Start Thinking Soldier is taking place at 16 events across the UK until October, including air shows, festivals and skills days. A full list of the events can be found on www.armyjobs.mod.uk/startthinkingsoldier.

Lieutenant Colonel Eilean Cunningham, of the Army's Recruiting Group, commented: "The events provide us with an exciting opportunity to take the online experience of Start Thinking Soldier to a truly interactive and personal journey for participants, giving a valuable understanding of their skills, but also broader personal insight."

"It also represents an opportunity for the public to meet and interact with real soldiers to find out more about life in the Army."

"We need to recruit approximately 15,000 quality soldiers each year and, in order to do so, we must continuously look to exciting and innovative new ways to engage with our target recruiting base. We believe the Start Thinking Soldier events have an important role in our engagement with young people."

And What Did You Do With Your Weekend?

Ever tried explaining to your boss what you do in the TA? Whether it's carrying out ambush drills and laying a minefield, or running a cookhouse catering for hundreds of hungry soldiers, it can often be difficult equating that to your usual job - especially if it's in a completely different line of work.

But if your boss knew that TA training developed your skills in leadership, team working and communication, they'd probably look upon it differently.

To help Reservists translate their role into 'civvy speak' and deal with difficult issues such as mobilisation and time off, Support for Reservists and Employers (SaBRE) has teamed up with recruitment specialists monster.co.uk to produce a series of practical guides and online videos.

The videos include humorous 'How not to do it' sections, dealing with the sometimes tricky area of discussing your Reserve Forces commitments in a job interview.

Corporal Jon-Paul Smith of 131 Independent Commando Squadron RE(V), who is a maintenance team leader with First Great Western in civilian life, had a first look at the

guides during a break from a commando training exercise in Norway.

His view was that "The fact sheets help me to express what I've done for my two weeks away in the snow to my employer, in a language he understands rather than in military speak."

SaBRE Campaign Director Tim Corry acknowledges that the current financial crisis has changed the atmosphere in many workplaces. He said: "Approaching managers about Reservist commitments can be tricky, particularly in the current economic climate".

Julian Acquari, Managing Director of Monster UK and Ireland, urges Reservists to be even more conscious of the relationship with their employer. He said: "The current employment climate means that it's more important than ever that Reservists know how to discuss their military service with employers, and help them see the value of the additional skills and experience they can bring to their civilian workplace."

The guides can be downloaded and the videos viewed at www.sabre.mod.uk/monster. There is even a handy fact-sheet to give directly to your civilian boss which explains the basics of employing a Reservist.



Cpl Jon-Paul Smith checks out the new SaBRE guide

PERSONAL CHALLENGE AND SENSE OF DUTY MOTIVATES TA SOLDIERS

Most Territorial Army officers and soldiers have great pride in their unit, are satisfied with their pay and bounty, and enjoy serving their country, according to the latest Continuous Attitude Survey (CAS) directed at the TA.

Of the 32 per cent of personnel who responded to the survey - up on the previous year's 23 per cent - 77 per cent of officers and 74 per cent of soldiers said they were satisfied with TA life in general. They tended to be young, single or separated personnel and those without children.

Of the 93 per cent of officers and 71 per cent of soldiers who had trained or served alongside the Regular Army, 68 per cent of officers and 59 per cent of soldiers viewed themselves as being of equal status to Regulars of the same rank.

And half of both officers and soldiers felt they were well integrated with the Regular Army.

It was not all 'sweetness and light' of course; the 2008 Survey showed dissatisfaction with employers' attitude to mobilisation and access to the JPA system.

Most still signed up to the TA on the recommendation of friends and family; they rated the challenge of being a volunteer, followed by being part of the British Army, having an adventurous lifestyle, defending the country and personal achievements as important.

The survey also revealed that almost half of TA Officers - 48 per cent - and around one-third of soldiers - 35 per cent - had been mobilised during their time in the TA.

Most felt they were well informed about mobilisation and more than 70 per cent said they would volunteer to be mobilised for overseas peace

support and/or enforcement operations, including overseas hostile and UK-based operations.

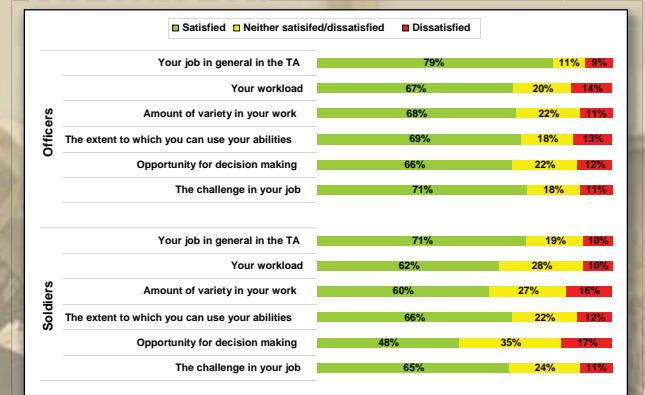
In general, both officers and soldiers were satisfied with the training they receive, including individual skills training (MATTS), unit training and training at Annual Camp in relation to their operational role.

Two-thirds of officers and 65 per cent of soldiers were satisfied with the development of their personal potential. Satisfaction was lower for other aspects, such as the opportunities to gain educational or vocational qualifications, career management by their unit or organisation and by the wider Military Secretary's (MS) system.

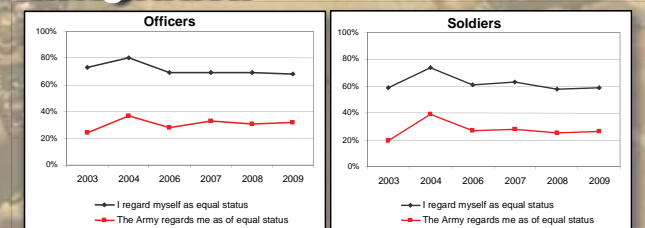
This was, however, a seven per cent increase in satisfaction with personal development over the previous survey. Commenting on the results, Lt Col Simon Freeland, SO1 Regional Forces, said: "There are still some in the Regular Army who don't recognise the TA as the vital component of the wider Army that it is. But there has definitely been a shift away from that, largely due to the TA's support to the Regulars on ops."

Brigadier David Clements, Director of Army Personnel Strategy and the man responsible for attitude surveys, said that he was pleased to see an increase in the number of questionnaires returned (up from 23% in 2008 to 32% this year): "We've worked hard with the chain of command to improve response rates, because it's vitally important that we know what members of the TA think. Their responses are really important, and are used by the chain of command to improve current conditions of service and to determine future policies. I'm very grateful to everyone who took the time to complete a survey - their views do count."

Satisfaction



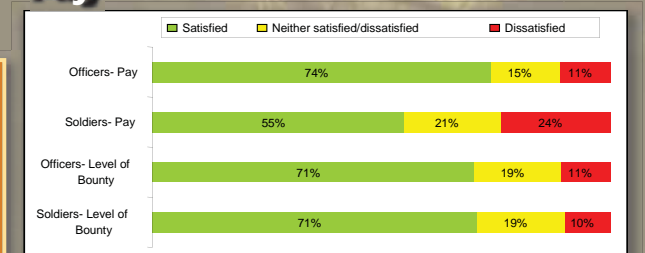
Integration



Retention

Retention Positive		Retention Negative	
Officers	Soldiers	Officers	Soldiers
1. Friendships and social activities	1. Friendships and social activities	1. Impact of TA commitment on family and personal life	1. Impact of TA commitment on family and personal life
2. Satisfaction with your TA job/role	2. Opportunities for personal development	2. Demands of your civilian job	2. Demands of your civilian job
3. Leadership in your unit	3= Variety of training	3. Demands of interests, pastimes or hobbies	3. Organisation of training evenings
4. Professionalism in the way the unit is run	3= Satisfaction with your TA job/role	4. Living conditions on training weekends /annual camp	3= Satisfaction with your TA job/role
5. Opportunities for personal development	5. Professionalism in the way the unit is run	5. Satisfaction with your TA job/role	5= Living conditions on training weekends /annual camp 5= Demands of interests, pastimes or hobbies

Pay



What is It?

The TA Continuous Attitude Survey (CAS) is the annual survey which serves to give Officers and Soldiers a chance to voice their opinions about life in the TA.

Well done, and thank you!

HOMECOMING

The RIFLES March Through City

Hundreds of people lined the streets of Exeter to welcome back members of the 6th Battalion, The Rifles after a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

It was the first time the TA battalion had been honoured in its own right with an official march through the city. About 80 members of the Battalion deployed on Op HERRICK, and earlier they were reunited with their families at their base in Wyvern barracks.

The homecoming parade included an open-air service outside Exeter Cathedral, during which the men were presented with Campaign Medals by the Duke of Gloucester. Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Tom Merryweather, said: *"The men arrived home with big smiles on their faces, pleased to get their feet back on the soil and smell fresh air. They're happy, relaxed and looking forward to going home with their families."*

Rifleman Dion Tantrum, from Dorchester, said it was great to be home. The tour was *"long, tiring and good fun,"* he said, adding: *"Getting towards the end we were just counting down the days."*

John Pentreath, County Manager of the Royal British Legion, said: *"I believe it is the first time this has happened involving solely the TA here in Exeter. What better way to welcome them home than by the whole of Exeter turning out."* Despite the joy of returning to the South West, the battalion's thoughts were with the family and friends of one colleague who lost his life during the tour.

Sergeant Christopher Reed, 25, from Plymouth, was killed in an explosion on New Year's Day in Helmand Province.



Centurions at the bridge. Pictured Left to Right: WO2 Des Boyle, SSgt Mick Whittall & Maj Jake Baker

AFGHANISTAN

Mercians Have Taliban On The Run

Territorial Army soldiers from the West Midlands had the Taliban on the run after a patrol came under mortar and small arms' attack in Lashkar Gah in Helmand Province.

The patrol from the 4th Mercian Regiment's Normandy Company suffered no casualties during the 30-minute fire-fight. It is not known if any enemy was killed or wounded during the engagement.

The regiment is made up of TA units from throughout the West Midlands and Staffordshire. Lieutenant Colonel Martyn Forgrave, 4 MERCIAN's Commanding Officer, said: *"This is the first time that they have been in direct contact with the enemy and they acquitted themselves extremely well, as you would have expected."*

"This demonstrates the utility and relevance of the TA and is further proof of the close support they give to the Regular Army."

"They are now an integral part of the operation and indistinguishable from other troops. They

are fully trained for the role and would not be sent into action unless those in authority were confident that they could deliver the goods."

The fire-fight came shortly after half the 120-strong Normandy Company switched to new duties after carrying out mainly security duties at Camp Bastion.

They began patrols with the Welsh Guards and the Afghan Army in the 'green zone' where the Taliban are more active.

Lt Col Forgrave added: *"There is a higher threat profile with the new role but they have been fully trained for it."*

In an incident unconnected to the Lashkar Gar attack, a member of Normandy Company also saved the life of a wounded soldier while providing security on a medivac mission to the front line. Lance Corporal Ashley Scriven, from Birmingham, managed to resuscitate the injured man.

Lt Col Forgrave explained: *"He was responsible for saving a soldier's life by conducting chest compression."*

CENTURIONS TAKE PART IN COMMEMORATION OF 65th ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Between 4 and 6 June, TA soldiers from across the UK took part in Project 65, a gruelling 65 mile ultra-run to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of D-Day.

Among those running were three members of 100th (Yeomanry) Regiment Royal Artillery (Volunteers) - Maj Jake Baker, WO2 Des Boyle and SSgt Mick Whittall. The aim of Project 65 was to replicate the Pegasus Bridge operation of D-Day 'man-for-man', and to raise £500,000 for the care and support of our wounded Service veterans.

The three joined 200 others and followed the route that the men from 52nd Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, under the command of Major John Howard, took from a small airfield in the heart of the Dorset countryside to their objective in occupied France: two vital bridges over the Caen Canal and Orne River now known as Pegasus Bridge and Horsa Bridge respectively. The operation was the very spearhead of the largest invasion in history - D-Day.

When the run started on Thursday 4 June at Tarrant Rushton Airfield, near Blandford, it was marked with a fly-past by a Dakota, Spitfire and Hurricane from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, while another Spitfire from Rolls-Royce

performed aerobatics. After weaving their way through towns and villages to Portsmouth and a six-hour ferry crossing to France, all the runners assembled into six glider groups. Each runner represented a member of the Coup de Main force of 1944, wearing a Project 65 T-shirt displaying the name of one of the Coup De Main members on the back. After jogging, walking and limping the final three miles along the Caen Canal towpath, the group arrived on Pegasus Bridge at precisely 0016 hours - the very minute that Glider No 1 crashed through the barbed wire defences to the bewilderment and no small surprise of the German occupiers exactly 65 years before.

They were greeted on Pegasus Bridge by some 4,000 people, including General Sir Richard Dannatt, the Chief of the General Staff, who shook the hand of every participant. They were also met by Lance Bombardier Ben Parkinson 7 Para. Ben was severely injured two years ago after he lost his legs and suffered brain damage as a result of a land mine left behind by the Russian occupation in Afghanistan. It is for the likes of Ben and countless other heroes that the Project 65 runners were there.

As we go to press money is still coming in, but Project 65 has so far raised more than £300,000.

TA MEDICS SAY THANKS



From left: Councillor Alf Doran, the Mayor of Sefton; Councillor Gillian Cuthbertson, the Mayoress of Sefton; James Birrell, Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Chief Executive; Colonel Peter Jackson, Commanding Officer of 208 (Liverpool) Field Hospital (Volunteers); TA medic Tracey Smith-Straney; Christopher Baker, the Hospital Trust Chairman and TA medics Dawn Jamieson and Samantha Law

The role of TA medics on operations is rightly recognised as being irreplaceable. Running the British Field Hospital at Camp Bastion, as well as manning the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT), these largely-unsung heroes have been responsible for saving countless lives among coalition forces, Afghan civilians and even Taliban fighters.

Yet, in order to provide that service on ops, they also need the support of their employers, mostly hospitals and healthcare trusts. Just as any other employer of a Reservist, they have to cover for what are often key staff for up to six months while they are away. In recognition of that support, the Army Medical service has been presenting a number of limited-edition prints to hospitals and other trusts around the UK.

One such hospital is University Hospital Aintree and Walton Hospital in Liverpool, where seven staff, including doctors and nurses, are currently volunteers with 208 (Liverpool) Field Hospital (Volunteers).

The large print of a painting called 'Safe Return', showing TA medics in action, was presented to the Trust during a short presentation. Colonel Peter Jackson, Commanding Officer of 208 Fd Hosp, said: *"We are indebted to the support we receive from the hospitals, helping provide first-class medical care to our soldiers on the front line. We*

couldn't do that without the support of our employers back at home. "Everybody who joins the TA medics does so in anticipation that they can go and give care to the sick and wounded, often in arduous and harrowing circumstances. The staff from Aintree have been absolutely fantastic. They should be very proud of themselves, and the Trust should be proud of them."

James Birrell, chief executive of Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which runs both hospitals, said: *"Life-saving skills developed here at the hospitals are being used in a crucial way in Afghanistan and elsewhere. This is a voluntary decision by our staff and we give them our full support."*

"We value our association with the TA and look forward to further developing this relationship. I'd like to thank the Army on behalf of our staff for this magnificent print - it will take pride of place in our Clinical Sciences Centre."

The Trust is given up to 18 months' advance notice of staff being called up, and the Ministry of Defence pays for cover. Volunteers consist of consultants, surgeons, nurses, doctors, radiographers, biomedical scientists, anaesthetists, general medics, healthcare assistants, burns specialists and paramedics.

Anyone wishing to find out more about TA medics can ring the 208 (Liverpool) Field Hospital (Volunteers) on 0151 488 6655.

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Live firing small arms is always popular, but 106 (Yeomanry) Regiment Royal Artillery decided not to keep it to themselves at a training weekend in July.

As well as the unit's soldiers, they invited a wide range of people to join them, including a group of amateur boxers from South London, some members of the Wheelwrights and Saddlers livery companies, a group of Combined Cadet Force (CCF) cadets from Dulwich College and

various other members of the London community.

But the guests were not allowed to hang around watching what was happening instead, they were encouraged to take an active part in some of the training, including weapon handling and, in the case of the boxers, assault course techniques.

Prizes were handed out by the Regiment's Honorary Colonel, Major General Andrew Gregory

ARMY 1

A dust cloud rises, and through the haze caused by the searing heat the distinctive shapes of the newest British Army vehicles race through the sand, covering the soldiers in a thick coating of dust.

A dust cloud rises, and through the haze caused by the searing heat the distinctive shapes of the newest British Army vehicles race through the sand, covering the soldiers in a thick coating of dust.

The commanders move the vehicles to high ground. They line up and open fire on the enemy vehicle trying frantically to escape the firepower.

The driver's window on the hijacked car winds down and a taunting, familiar voice shouts *"You missed"*. Jeremy Clarkson then speeds off in the Mitsubishi EVO VII, using the billowing dust cloud behind the rally car as cover from fire.

What first appears as a 'typical' contact played out in Afghanistan was actually a game of cat and mouse, with Jeremy Clarkson taking on the might of the British Army for an episode of the popular TV motoring magazine Top Gear.

British Bulldog

The newest operational vehicles were being put to the test in a classic game of 'British Bulldog'; Jackal 2, Panther and Mastiff 2, along with support from the Royal Engineers' newest tracked variants, Titan and Trojan Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineer (AVRE).

The soldiers driving these new vehicles were from the Infantry, Armoured and Royal Engineer Trials and Development Units, and were challenged by the straight-talking Top Gear presenter to chase him on a mock Afghanistan 'film-set'.

Bovington Training Area, used to deliver first-class off-road driver training, created a perfect backdrop with plenty of sand and obstacles to put the vehicles through their paces.

To make the scene even more realistic the staff officers

organising the event had booked the hottest day of the year to increase the heat placed on Clarkson.

A difficult match

It was no surprise that Jeremy's rally car, which was confiscated by the police from a drug dealer and donated to Top Gear, beat the Army vehicles in a straight line. But the Bovington Training Area proved a difficult match for the super high-performance car.

"Even though an EVO is a 4x4, across this country it hasn't got a hope in hell in beating us!" explains Lance Corporal Kevin Twyford, who commanded the Panther.

He added: *"The Panther is a great vehicle for what it is designed to do and now that is getting proven out in Afghanistan."*

The other vehicles on display, Jackal 2 and Mastiff 2, have been improved from the original variants, which have proven themselves as battle-winning assets on operations. Mastiff has improved suspension and axles, whilst the Jackal has more space so that a fourth team member can sit inside.

'Extremely good shots'

Jeremy, an active supporter and patron of Help for Heroes and who recently dropped in to see injured servicemen at Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham, visited troops in Afghanistan with his co-presenters last year.

Speaking of his most recent exploits with the British Army he said: *"It seems the Army are extremely good shots - to hit the car without hitting me even slightly, and even once, shows a level of skill that boggles the mind."*

The programme concluded in the studio with Trojan 'disposing' of the Evo using its giant grab crane.

Top Gear, which is one of BBC2's most popular shows, regularly pulls in an audience of over 350 million people worldwide. You can see an abbreviated version of the programme on the Army YouTube site www.youtube.com/user/armyweb.



RAISING THE FLAG FOR VETERANS' RIGHTS

A number of organisations in a Nottinghamshire town have marked the first National Armed Forces Week by pledging to honour the rights of service veterans.

Gulf War veteran Jason Rathbone was invited by Mansfield District Council's Executive Mayor to raise a special flag, which flew throughout the week.

During the ceremony at the Civic Centre, partners including the District Council (Housing, Homelessness and Benefits sections), Jobcentre Plus, Nottinghamshire Police, the Royal British Legion, National Gulf Veterans and Families Association, and Mansfield Community and Voluntary Service came together to sign the Mansfield Service Veterans' Charter. In the charter, the various organisations pledged to contribute to a service veterans' returning home pack, as well as provide signposting and information on their websites.

They were also to ensure that staff were briefed on issues affecting

service veterans, as well as give information on any specialist charitable assistance that may be available.

Executive Mayor Tony Egginton commented: *"We are, rightly, proud of the loyalty and dedication to duty of all members of our armed forces."*

"The preparation and signing of the Mansfield Service Veterans' Charter shows that, as partner organisations, we recognise that veterans may have issues which affect them adjusting to civilian life."

"By coming together in this way, not only do we recognise the first National Armed Forces Week, but we are also ensuring that, by coming together and delivering services that are tailored to suit the needs of veterans, we show our pride in them long after they have left the field of battle."

He added: *"I am confident that, as more partners come on board, further services will be offered and this charter will be a living document of real benefit not only to current service veterans, but also to those who are currently serving or who may serve in the Armed Forces in the future."*

STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE IN GATESHEAD

Territorial Army Royal Engineers in Gateshead presented an evening of military music in June, courtesy of the Nottingham Band of the Royal Engineers at The Sage, the city's eye-catching venue and landmark.

The Lord Lieutenant for Tyne and Wear took the salute alongside the mayors and Lord Mayor for Gateshead, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne and Sunderland, hosted by Lieutenant Colonel Graham Finch, Commanding Officer of 72 (Tyne Electrical Engineers) Engineer Regiment (Volunteers).

A cocktail party honoured civic leaders and local employers for their continued support for the Regiment and the families of its soldiers deployed overseas on operations. The Regiment, which has units throughout the North East, currently has 24 personnel deployed in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Two veterans of recent operations in the province were guests of honour at the party along with their families.

The party was followed by the Beating Retreat, performed by the Nottingham Band of the Royal Engineers. The Beating Retreat has its origins in the practicalities of early warfare, when it was used as a signal for troops to disengage from combat as light faded. The original Call of Retreat was beaten by drums alone. Today's practice of having a band parade is a modern innovation to add spectacle.



Drum Major Andy Garner leading the band in a rendition of the RE Corps March Wings
[Courtesy of Doug Hall Photography]



Top right: LCpl Paul Davies (left) and Cpl Stephen Henderson as they prepare to lower the Standards, with the Gateshead Millennium Bridge as a backdrop
[Courtesy of Ian Chapman Photography]

SPIRIT OF THE PARADE LIVES ON IN NEW CD

A new CD of pipes and drum music has been released following overwhelming public support during the homecoming parade for the two Royal Irish Battalions in Belfast at the end of last year.

Clear the Way! is performed by the Band of The Royal Irish Regiment (TA), along with the Pipes and Drums of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment. The CD features pieces such as *Highland Cathedral*, *The Last of the Great Whales*, *Eagle Squadron*, *The Great Little Army*, *The British Legion March* and the R IRISH regimental march *Killaloe*.

The Band of The Royal Irish Regiment (TA) was formed on 1 November 2007 following the disbandment of both the North Irish Territorial Army Band (NITAB) and the Regular Army Band of The Royal Irish Regiment. They take part in a large number of community events, providing a vital link with the Armed Forces and the local community. Since 2007, the band and pipes have helped raise almost £30,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund (NI) and more than £5000 for other service charities, including the R IRISH Benevolent Fund and the Royal British Legion (NI). The inspiration for the title was taken from the translation of the R IRISH regimental motto *Faugh a Ballagh* ('Clear the Way'). It also aptly describes the CD's cover picture of the drum majors and bugle major during the parade when the band, pipes and drums had to literally clear the way for the marching troops behind.

The CD - the first to be released since the rebranding of the Royal Irish (TA) Band - was recorded at the band's new practice facility in Kinnegar,



near Holywood, under the Director of Music, Capt Mike Smith, and Pipe Major, WO2 Jimmy Knox MBE.

A combined band of 50 musicians performed the music, including 40 members of the band and 10 members of the pipes and drums.

The recording was made possible by kind donations from the Services Sound and Vision Corporation, and the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (Northern Ireland).

A copy of *Clear the Way!* can be obtained by sending £11.00 (P&P inc) to: The Band of The Royal Irish Regiment (TA), Kinnegar, BFPO 806. All cheques should be made payable to Central Bank 2 R IRISH.

AWARD FOR THE LITTLE MUSEUM WITH A BIG HISTORY

Two veterans of the 1944 Battle of Kohima were present when national accreditation was awarded to the Kohima Museum - North Yorkshire's smallest military museum.

The certificate from the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council Accreditation Scheme was presented to Major General David McDowall, General Officer Commanding 2nd Division, at the museum in Imphal Barracks, Fulford, York, by the MLA's Dr Keith Bartlett.

The presentation took place as more than 20 veterans of the Battle of Kohima gathered for an annual memorial service at York Minster to remember the fallen of 65 years ago.

After the service, wreaths were laid at the Kohima Memorial in the Minster Gardens by Maj Gen McDowall and Kohima veteran Major Gordon Graham MC and Bar, late The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

Those that fell in battle were remembered by a minute's silence, and a bugler from the Band of the King's Division sounded the Last Post and Reveille.

Afterwards, the veterans and their families attended a reception at Imphal Barracks, where they had an opportunity to browse around the newly-accredited museum, which houses many photos, letters and memorabilia from the period - the majority of which have been donated by the veterans. Kohima, a hill town 30 miles from the border of Burma, was the scene of one of the most bitterly fought battles of World War Two. The savage fighting lasted from April to June 1944 and resulted in the Allied forces halting the advance of the Japanese army in Asia.

During a 13-day siege, the Royal West Kents and the remainder of the

161st Indian Brigade, supported by other allied troops, held the town to prevent the Japanese gaining control of this vital area and the main logistic route to Imphal.

The Army's 2nd Division was sent to their aid and mounted its famous engagement. Despite being hampered by monsoon rain and treacherous terrain, allied soldiers succeeded in regaining Kohima in hand-to-hand fighting - much of which took place in the gardens and tennis courts of the District Commissioner's bungalow.

The battle was to be the turning point of the Burma Campaign and was described by Earl Mountbatten as *"probably one of the greatest battles in history"*.



Kohima veteran Major Gordon Graham MC and Bar, late The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders [Picture by Chris Barker]

When you go home, tell them
of us and say,
'For your tomorrow we gave
our today'

- Kohima Memorial



ARMY TAKES ON GLASGOW'S CURRY KINGS

Scottish Army Officer Cadets spitted their culinary skills, not to mention their sales technique, against one of Scotland's leading curry houses to see who could produce Glasgow's best curry.

Curry has been a staple meal for the British Army for hundreds of years, and Army chefs from Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities Officer Training Corps were keen to take on the professionals from the city's Ashoka Ashton Lane Restaurant.

For Big Curry 2009, an Army field kitchen was set up outside Glasgow University, offering members of the public six types of curry for £2 a portion. Customers were asked to vote for each type.

Student Katie Potts, studying Neuroscience at Glasgow University, said: *"It was a fantastic change from pasta and pesto! The curries are almost good enough for me to join the Army!"*

At the end of the day the Army had accumulated the most votes. More important, they raised £865 for the Army Benevolent Fund.



Officer Cadet Faye Heslop, student Katie Potts and Chef Dali from the Ashoka Ashton Lane Restaurant take part in Big Curry 2009.

Tributes paid to 'Figurehead' as TA's oldest soldier is laid to rest

Edwin Cooper - the oldest TA soldier - has died peacefully in his sleep on 29 May, aged 105. It was a gentle end for a man who had signed up for his country 85 years ago.

Eddy, as he was known to his friends, was laid to rest at Bron y Nant Crematorium in Colwyn Bay, North Wales, where there was standing room only as memories of his life were shared with everyone.

Only two months earlier, family and friends had gathered for a surprise birthday party at his residential home in nearby Abergele. His great-granddaughter, Signaller Natasha Allonby, who serves with 16 Signals Regiment, flew over from Germany to join the celebrations. And members of C Squadron 203 Field Hospital (Volunteers) visited him in an Army ambulance and presented him with a cake bearing the Royal Army Medical Corps crest. The event was covered in the last edition of TAQ. Born four years before the inauguration of the Territorial Army, in his lifetime Edwin had witnessed many historic events including two world wars, the death of millions in the 1918 influenza epidemic, the sinking of the Titanic and the first Moon walk.

Following in his stepfather's footsteps, Edwin joined the TA in Oldham, Lancashire, in 1924 aged 20. He was called for active service in the Royal Army Medical Corps the day war broke out in September 1939. The former Lance Corporal served in North Africa with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment before fighting in the Italian peninsula with the Eighth Army until the end of the war.

During that time he collected wounded and dying men from the battlefield and cared for them in the field hospitals. His stepdaughter Susan Allonby said the memories were so horrific that he would breakdown in tears, despite the passage of time.

At his funeral, the Territorial Army paid tribute to a lifetime of service. Brigadier Tom O'Brien, the Director of Reserves (Army) and the senior serving Territorial, said: *"None of us will forget Edwin's enthusiastic contribution to TA100 or the generation of service that he represented."*

"In a way, he was a figurehead for the TA and for all our veterans, and he was an example for all serving Territorials."

Michael Allonby, Edwin's stepgrandson, offered the family's tribute to *"one of nature's gentlemen and a true hero"*.

"Edwin was born on April 15, 1904," he told the congregation. *"The*

events in history he witnessed unfolding are astonishing.

"Edwin met his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and so many other heads of state and dignitaries, actors and heroes - there are just too many to list."

Michael added: *"In later years, he never forgot the fallen men he lost, sometimes turning to tears as he remembered them. He said: 'I treated those that could be treated and tried to make the dying comfortable'."*

"Edwin used to laugh and joke with them all and told me that a smile and laugh helped a lot in those days for the men in his care."

"I remember pushing Edwin for miles in his chair for different events and parades, and he loved them all. He won many hearts at the TA100 Centenary in June last year and was always ready to take part in any occasion that helped the TA and the armed services, putting his all - and my back - into it."

Edwin's last remaining ambitions were to meet the Queen and get to summit of Snowdon - both of which he was, sadly, unable to fulfil.

Michael said: *"I took him up Snowdon at the age of 92 and he planned to go back this year aged 105. We will still do the trip in his memory."*

"My wife Selena and I have a serving son and daughter in the Army, following on from their great-grandfather's tradition, which made Edwin extremely proud."

"The Buffs was a passion for Edwin and he was a long-serving member to them. We will never forget his cheeky smile or his passion, or all the songs that he sang on our adventures out. Edwin will live on in all our hearts for ever."



Edwin Cooper, the TA's oldest veteran, who passed away on 29 May

BAND OF BROTHERS ON THE ROAD AGAIN

On Sunday 24 May, 240 cyclists set out to pedal 350 miles (528km) from Portsmouth to Paris in this year's Band of Brothers charity cycle ride. The journey, organised by Help for Heroes, was a challenge for everyone taking part, but especially for several of the riders who were wounded on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Among them was Trooper Adam Cocks of the Honourable Artillery Company. Adam was caught in two mine explosions in Afghanistan and then, while making a steady recovery from his injuries, was hit by a car while on his motorbike. He was left with a broken femur and further damage to his already injured knee.

While doctors work out what can be done to restore power to his leg, Adam is getting on with life. He did the Band of Brothers bike ride using a three-wheeled hand bicycle using his arms, cycling 10 to 12 hours a day.

"I trained with the hand bike for about eight weeks, but the hills were still an absolute killer," commented Adam.

The riders were waved off by actor Ross Kemp and, once on French soil, they wound their way to Paris via a number of battlefield sites, paying tribute to the different Allied nations as they went. Remembering the Americans they visited Omaha beach, scene of the D-Day landings, and on British Day they headed to Pegasus Bridge, where the first house to be liberated from the Germans in June 1944 still stands. Days four and five of the trip remembered the Canadian, Polish and French efforts and involved former members of the French Resistance.

As the riders rolled over the finish line in the Champs Elysees they received a heroes' welcome. The news that they had already passed the £1 million mark in sponsorship added to the achievement.

You can still sponsor Adam by going to www.justgiving.com/help4heroescycle.

Uniform to Work Day

It began last year as a way of celebrating TA100 and was successful enough to be widened to include the other reserve services and adopted as an official part of the new Armed Forces Day.

This year, hundreds of reservists from the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR), Royal Marines Reserve (RMR) and Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) joined the TA and left their civvy clothes at home when they went to work.

Of course, not everyone was keen to take part and many reservists have jobs that don't lend themselves to wearing military uniform. But around the UK reservists from all walks of life did show their pride in what they do and reinforced the message to the public that reservists are among them, wherever they are.

Just as they did last year, the media enthusiastically supported the event. ITV and regional BBC stations around the UK broadcast interviews in combination with their coverage of Armed Forces Day (a live spot on BBC Breakfast for a TA soldier and his employer was only cancelled because of the untimely death of Michael Jackson).

The BBC did put Michael Jackson to one side to broadcast an interview by Defence Correspondent Caroline Wyatt

with Pte Ashley Middleton, a driver with 221 Transport Squadron RLC and a beautician in her civilian job. *The Sun* featured Robin Young as he worked in Sainsbury's, and around the UK regional and local newspapers printed features about reservists wearing their uniforms to work.

Col Alastair Bruce, who had the original idea for Uniform to Work Day last year, said this year's message is the same. *"It was another tremendous opportunity to put the Reserves in the centre of the community and to remind everyone that the TA is 'Among Us' in society. It is difficult for many of us, used to keeping it out of sight, to go to work for a day in uniform. However, every year more and more are getting involved and one day it will be the other work colleagues encouraging us to do it. This is the very best way Reservists can do something to support the success of Armed Forces Day and get affirmed for it too."*

For some Reservists, the day was rounded off by drinks with the Prime Minister at Number 10 Downing Street. Organised by SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers), the exclusive function saw around 30 reservists and their employers entertained by the PM at a special reception.



WO2 Dave Clark wears his uniform on his postal round in Edinburgh



Sergeant James Shemmeld, Cadet Instructor with Staffordshire Army Cadet Force and a bus driver at Alton Towers Resort



The Sun featured LCpl Robin Young as he worked at Sainsbury's



Regulars at The Baron's Rest in Astley Village, Chorley, Lancashire got a pleasant surprise when landlady LCpl Jade Anthony pulled their pints



Capt Samantha Brettell, Adjutant of the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry, and owner of Brettell's Auctioneers in Chester



Tpr James Osment The Royal Wessex Yeomanry (RWxY) at work in the offices of James Hay in Salisbury, Wilts



Tpr Stoddard oversees Lt Rawdon-Mogg securing a Land Rover

DORSET'S YEOMEN SHARE THE LOAD

Soldiers from A (Dorset Yeomanry) Squadron, the Royal Wessex Yeomanry, moved a fleet of 78 assorted vehicles across Salisbury Plain during 1 (Light) Brigade's Mission Rehearsal Exercise for Op HERRICK 10.

The bulk of the vehicles were loaded onto a train at Ludgershall, near the Hampshire border, for the move, with the remainder moved by road to their new base at the Land Training Fleet, Warminster.

Not only did this provide the Yeomen - who are the Army's only Armoured Replacement specialists - with a superb training opportunity, but also eased the burden of the Regular soldiers of 19 Brigade, allowing a significant number to enjoy a well-earned rest with their families between the rigours of Pre-Deployment Training (PDT) and their operational tour in Afghanistan.

SWINE FLU

If you have flu-like symptoms and/or are concerned because you think you have been in contact with someone who may have swine flu the message is simple:

Stay at home!

It is better to miss two days off work than 10 days and run the risk of infecting others.

The symptoms of swine flu are the same as those of ordinary flu, but may be more severe and cause more serious complications.

The typical symptoms are:

Sudden fever more than 38°C (100.4°F) and sudden cough.

Other symptoms may include:

Headache, tiredness, chills, aching muscles, limb or joint pain, diarrhoea or stomach upset, sore throat, runny nose sneezing and loss of appetite.

Telephone your nearest medical centre or local GP who will perform a telephone consultation and offer advice.

The Health Protection Agency suggests the incubation period for Swine Flu (time between infection and the appearance of symptoms) can be up to seven days, but is most likely to be between two and five days.

For more information see the NHS website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pandemic-flu/Pages/Introduction.aspx>



Nice work if you can get it -

WO2 Paul Lelliott and Pte Kieran Terry, surveyors for British Airports Authority, with BA staff

Signallers retain cup for third year

Two Squadrons formally from the North Irish Horse have recently competed for the McCorkell Cup at Magilligan Ranges on the coast of Northern Ireland. The cup was presented in memory of Sir Michael McCorkell KCVO OBE TD, former Commanding Officer of the Regiment and Lord Lieutenant of the County of Londonderry. The two Squadrons compete for the cup annually and it was won for third time this year by 69(North Irish Horse) Squadron from 40(Ulster) Signals Regiment. The winners were favourites to win again this year, the third time the competition has been run, as their parent Regiment have a strong record in Skill At Arms and are current Major Unit Champions in Northern Ireland.

The team from B(North Irish Horse) Squadron, The Queens Own Yeomanry had to be content with the runner up slot again this year.

The Competition was run at the end of May at a wet and windy Magilligan when Team Captains Second Lieutenant Davey Weir from B(NIH) Squadron and Staff Sergeant Clive Eagleson from 69(NIH) Signals Squadron led their teams onto the range.

At the end of the competition Staff Sergeant Eagleson said: "This has been a good day for the two Squadrons and I am delighted that we have held on to the McCorkell Cup for another year."



Team Captains second Lieutenant Davey Weir from B(NIH) Squadron and Staff Sergeant Clive Eagleson from 69(NIH) Signals Squadron hold the McCorkell Cup.

It's All Downhill For South Wales Volunteers

Members of 104th Regiment Royal Artillery (Volunteers) took part in Exercise WHITE DRAGON - an annual event that provides TA soldiers with the opportunity of learning Alpine skiing as part of Army training.

A total of 22 beginners from Raglan Barracks in Newport, Gwent, took part in this year's exercise in the Saalbach/Hinterglemm area in the Austrian Alps, with tuition provided by instructors from 104 Regt RA(V) and the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (R MONS RE (V)).

After an arduous 23-hour journey and a good night's sleep, everyone took to the slopes for their first taste of Alpine skiing and - quickly discovered that it is not as easy as it looks on Ski Sunday. By the end of

the first day, however, most people could safely navigate their way down the nursery slopes - even if, for some, it was face first!

By day five, 21 had passed the Basic Ski Proficiency (Alpine) standard and, in keeping with exercise tradition, all personnel who were successful skied the entire Saalbach/Hinterglemm course on the final day.

Our thanks to Capt Iain Wright of 104 Regt RA(V), Capt Dave Phillips and WO2 Ray Fray-Smith, both from R MONS RE (V), for the first-class instruction throughout.

We departed the exercise area for the long journey back to Newport with a huge sense of achievement, and we look forward to progressing further with the skills learned.

Geordie and West Riding Gunners celebrate 150th anniversary

The 101st (Northumbrian) Regiment Royal Artillery (Volunteers) - known as the Geordie and West Riding Gunners - celebrated their 150th anniversary with a parade through Tynemouth.

Afterwards, the regiment - formed in 1859 and based in Newcastle, Gateshead, Blyth, South Shields and Leeds - took part in a ceremonial service and tea party at the Priory.

The Anniversary Day concluded with two military bands playing a *Beating the Retreat* at the Newcastle Racecourse watched by the Lord Mayors and Lady Mayoresses of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Leeds, as well as other high-ranking military and civilian dignitaries. The celebrations ended with an anniversary dinner at the racecourse.

Earlier in the year, the unit welcomed home six of their soldiers from Op TOSCA in Cyprus. They were part of the 32 Sig Regt (V) Group that provided the UK contingent manning part of the UN Buffer Zone. The Geordie Gunners' contribution was recognised by a parade in Glasgow with the Lord Mayor, General Officer Commanding 2 Division, families and friends present.



Blue Berets in the City Hall, Glasgow, from left; Sgt Mark Poole, Gnrs Stephen Johnston, Russell Simpson, Stephen Phillips, LBdr Mickey Moan and Gnr Jimmy Phillips

Farewell to the Army

From General Sir Richard Dannatt
GCB CBE MC ADC Gen

When I took over as Chief of the General Staff in August 2006 I said that we were 'running hot' - as I look back I think that was putting it mildly. The Army was fighting vicious and organised insurgencies in both Southern Iraq and Helmand Province; we still had troops committed in Bosnia and Kosovo; and there was still another year to run of Op BANNER in Northern Ireland. Three years later, we find ourselves working towards campaign success in Afghanistan, and moving towards a more sustainable training and operational cycle. Getting to this point has been a difficult journey requiring courage, willpower, professionalism and loyalty from all of you - I congratulate and thank you for all that you have done.



Rightly, the Army has been focussed on operations. We have achieved a great deal in Iraq since we entered in March 2003. It has, on occasion, been a difficult and bumpy ride but through your determination to maintain our focus we have accomplished our goals in a comparatively short space of time. We will never forget the courage and sacrifice of the 179 servicemen and women who did not return home from Iraq - or that of their families - but in Basrah we left behind a city that is stable and beginning to prosper under Iraqi control. You should be proud of your achievements.

We now have the opportunity to focus fully on campaign success in Afghanistan. While this has been, and will continue to be, a tough and demanding mission, I know that we will succeed in assisting the Afghans in bringing stability to the governance, economy and social fabric of Afghanistan. This is a campaign that is among the people, about the people and for the people - success can only be achieved through sustainable security that is delivered ultimately by the Afghans themselves. This is a cross-Governmental and multi-national campaign that will take time but must succeed and I know that you will ensure that we do succeed.

Preparations for the forthcoming Strategic Defence Review are well advanced and I know that the Army will play a critical role in determining the balance of the Armed Forces in the future. It is all of you that are ultimately bearing the operational 'heavy lifting' on behalf of Defence, and therefore your assistance, advice and opinion at every level will be critical to ensuring that the right issues are addressed as part of this debate. I encourage you to ensure that you are involved.

I have enjoyed my 40 years as a soldier immensely but as my time as your Chief of the General Staff comes to an end I would like to pay particular tribute to the courage, skill and professionalism that you, the young men and women of the Army who continue to put yourselves in harms way on behalf of the Nation, have demonstrated wherever you have been. Our nation has much to be proud of and the general public have shown fantastic support to you doing your tough and on occasion unpleasant, difficult and dangerous tasks on their behalf. It has been a tremendous honour and privilege and a deeply humbling experience to lead you all for the past few years - you are truly outstanding people. These are challenging times but I am confident that General Sir David Richards is exactly the right man to lead the Army through this difficult and turbulent period - I know that you will support him as you have supported me. As I march into the military sunset I do so confident that the Army's determination, professionalism and reputation remains where it should be; second to none.

MEETING A DRAGON

You come across some odd things when you go on exercise, but you don't expect to meet a dragon (unless, of course, your mother-in-law is in your unit). But that's exactly what happened to two soldiers from Cupar when they went on exercise in North Yorkshire.

Sergeant Alan Gardener and Lance Corporal Robin Edgar from C Squadron, Queens Own Yeomanry were pleased to show business entrepreneur and *Dragon's Den* star, Duncan Bannatyne around their Scimitar when he visited the Regiment at Catterick.

The soldiers helped Duncan and his seven-year-old son Tom climb aboard the reconnaissance vehicle to see its 30mm Rarden cannon, before they headed off into the Yorkshire Dales.

"It has been great to see him here and to be able to show him what we do," said Sgt Gardener. *"He has been really interested, and his son Tom climbed inside so we could show him the controls."*

The Regiment showed off its fire and manoeuvre exercises, how it hides and camouflages its vehicles, and manned a vehicle checkpoint.

"It has been a fascinating visit and great to see so many dedicated soldiers," said Duncan, who formerly served in the Royal Navy. *"I would like to see the troops again on operations sometime."*

"Tom has had a fantastic time and remains determined to join the Army, and the soldiers couldn't have looked after him better today."

The Regiment, which currently has troops deployed on operations in Afghanistan, has squadrons in Newcastle, York, Ayr, Cupar and Belfast, and recruits soldiers from across all communities and backgrounds in Scotland, the North of England and Northern Ireland.



Sgt Alan Gardener and Cpl Robin Edgar with TV's *Dragon's Den* Duncan Bannatyne and a very excited Tom.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A CELEBRITY?

OK, 'celebrity' is probably exaggerating a bit. But we are looking for TA personnel of all ages, ranks and both sexes to join our list of people willing to appear in the media.

Throughout the year, we are asked to supply TA people for a range of requests, from newspaper interviews and magazine articles to TV programmes. The requests are always 'vetted' to ensure that the intention is to give fair and balanced treatment, with the result that over the past few years the TA has received some excellent publicity and the public perception of the TA has been enhanced.

If you would like to represent the TA in the media, please send your details to:

Maj Alan Frost PWRR,
Media & Communication Directorate,
Falaise Block,
HQ Land Forces,
Wilton,
SP2 OAG

Or e-mail to alan.frost232@mod.uk

We will need:

Your name (first name & surname)
Address (if you prefer, just the town where you live)
Sex
Civilian contact number (landline and mobile if poss)
Your civilian job
Your TA unit
Unit address

Your rank
Your military job/role
Length of service in the TA
Details of any operational experience

Your details will be kept in the strictest confidence and only released with your permission, if we are approached with a request for subjects, we will contact you to get your permission before we pass your details to the media organisation requesting assistance.



Tpr Izzy Zakaria of the Honourable Artillery Company is interviewed by a TV crew at the official launch of TA100

TA ON THE TUBE

The explosion of social networking sites has revolutionised the use of the World Wide Web, and no more so than YouTube. Anyone can post movie clips, TV clips and music videos, as well as amateur content, such as video blogging and short original videos.

But did you know that the Army has its own YouTube site? On it you'll find videos under a wide range of subjects – Equipment, Sport & Adventurous Training, Military Training, Afghanistan, History & Ceremony, Iraq and Medical. On the Equipment site, for instance, you can watch demonstrations of everything from Challenger 2 to the new Combat Shotgun. The Afghanistan section contains film clips from broadcast television and our own Combat Camera Teams.

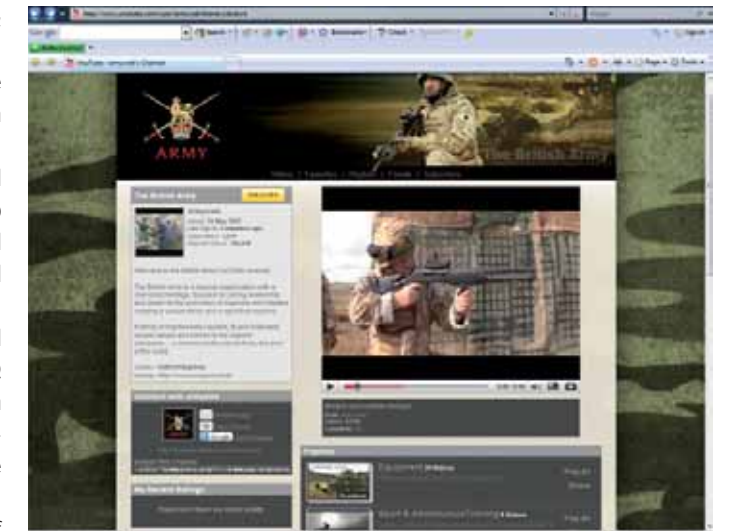
The Medical section includes videos showing the work of the field hospital at Camp Bastion, staffed by TA Field Hospital units. The video shows TA soldier Pte Anthony Myers being admitted with a bullet wound to his shoulder, and the work of the medical teams to stabilise him and operate on his wound.

The site, which has been running for two years, is regularly updated by the Army's Media & Communication Production Department at HQ Land Forces in Wilton (which is also the home of TAQ). Watchers can comment on the clips and hold online discussions with other viewers – perhaps correcting comments made earlier – and download them free of charge to embed in their own sites.

The 'hit' counters tell their own story – more than 22,000 viewings of The RIFLES in Afghanistan and some 26,300 for the Challenger 2 video.

"The site enables anyone who is interested in the British Army, whether it's Regular or TA, to view a huge range of footage whenever and wherever they want," say Pippa Norris, SO1 Digital at HQ Land Forces. *"It's obviously a good recruiting tool, but it also enables people to see our troops operating on the front line and to come close to experiencing the conditions in which they operate."*

You can find the Army YouTube site at <http://www.youtube.com/user/armyweb>



Army YouTube screenshot

NEWS

First Sword Winner

OCdt Edward Dutton of 131 Independent Commando Squadron RE was the first recipient of the Duke of Westminster's Sword. The sword was presented by the Reviewing Officer, Lieutenant General Nick Parker, Commander Regional Forces, at the Pass Out Parade for Territorial Army Commissioning Course 082. The sword is sponsored by Pooley Sword Ltd, who took over from Wilkinson when they closed their sword division in 2005.

First Military Swine Flu Death

A TA soldier has become the first to die of swine flu from Britain's armed forces. Bombardier Lee Porter of the Royal Artillery (V), who was an instructor with the Army Cadet Force, died in Frimley Park Hospital in Surrey, two weeks after falling ill whilst on cadet annual camp. Lee, who was 30, was suffering from underlying health problems.

Exercise Injury

A Territorial Army soldier was critical injured in an incident near Brecon, Powys. Glen Edwards of 3rd Battalion Royal Welsh Regiment was injured in an explosion during a training exercise in August. It is reported that as well as other injuries, he has lost his left arm from the elbow. As we went to press, he was off the critical list but was still 'serious but stable' in Morriston Hospital in Swansea. The Ministry of Defence is conducting an investigation into the accident.

IT'S OFFICIAL – Get Blogging

Service personnel are being encouraged to talk about themselves and their work online within new guidelines that give

advice on how they can protect their security, reputation and privacy. Social media, such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, are an increasingly important part of our lives and an effective way to engage with the public and keep in touch with family and friends.

Yet, just like any other form of unregulated communication channel, it carries its own risks, especially for military personnel.

New 'Online Engagement Guidelines' published by the MoD make it clear that, unlike our allies (see above) Forces personnel can make full use of websites such as Facebook and YouTube as long as they follow the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as they would elsewhere. That means always maintaining personal information and operational security and being careful about the information you share online.

Under the new guidelines, Armed Forces personnel can talk about their work online without prior authorisation from their chain of command, as long as they stay within that advice. This is an important change over earlier rules, under which personnel always needed to seek authorisation before publishing any work-related material.

At the same time as releasing the new guidelines, the MoD is actively seeking feedback on how they can be improved. If you have a comment or suggestion concerning the MoD's Online Engagement Guidelines, contact Robin.Riley459@mod.uk.

Marines offline

Washington The US Marine Corps has banned its troops from using Facebook, MySpace and other social network websites because of the risk of sensitive information being shared with enemies. The move is part of a Pentagon review. (AP)

Extract from The Times

TA EARNINGS AND STATE BENEFITS

In these difficult times, when unemployment looks set to top 2.5 million, an increasing number of TA soldiers find themselves having to draw various State benefits. But how does their TA pay affect those benefits? Members of the TA are apparently receiving conflicting information, with one long-serving member even being told he must leave the TA in order to qualify for Benefit. We asked the experts at the Department of Work and Pensions to clarify the matter, and this is what they say...

The elements involved are –

- Your income-related State Benefit entitlement – we have used Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) as an example.
- Your TA earnings in a month.
- The disregard – this is an amount of your TA earnings (currently £20 per week) that is ignored for the purposes of calculating your entitlement to benefits. For ordinary people this is £5 a week; the £20 allowance is in recognition of your Reserve service.
- The applicable amount – this is the amount of benefit you are entitled to after applying the disregard and taking into consideration your TA earnings
- Amount payable – where the amount of JSA left is less than 10p per week no JSA is paid for that benefit week. Where the amount payable is between 10p and £1 per week, a decision maker may choose to pay you quarterly in arrears. Where the amount of JSA is £1 or more per week the money will be paid once a fortnight in arrears. For example:

For the benefit year 2009/10, the weekly Job Seeker's Allowance for a single person over 25 is £64.30. Under 25s receive £50.95. Your actual allowance will depend on your circumstances, such as whether you are married, whether your wife/partner is working and so on.

Example 1:

Earnings from TA activities	£85.00
Deduct the disregard amount	£20.00
Deduct Job Seeker's Allowance	<u>£64.30</u>
	-£00.70

In this case, your earnings from TA activities have exceeded the Job Seeker's Allowance applicable amount by 70p, so you would not receive any JSA for that week.

Example 2:

Earnings from TA activities	£84.25
Deduct the disregard amount	£20.00
Deduct Job Seeker's Allowance	<u>£64.30</u>
	£00.05

In this example, your TA earnings, minus the disregard amount, come to less than the JSA. But, because the difference is only 5p, and less than the 10p minimum, you would lose your full Allowance for that week.

Example 3:

Earnings from TA activities	£80.00
Deduct the disregard amount	£20.00
Job Seeker's Allowance	<u>£64.30</u>
	£04.30

In this example, your TA earnings, minus the disregard amount, come to £60. That's £4.30 less than the JSA. To top up your total earnings to the JSA amount, you would receive the £4.30 three working days following your next fortnightly attendance.

So it's clear that if you are unemployed and receiving benefit, you should monitor your earnings carefully. Remember, also, that if you are away, say on exercise or Annual Camp, you are not available for work and, therefore, not entitled to Job Seeker's Allowance.

If you think you may not be receiving the correct level of benefit, the first step is to speak to your local Job-Centre. You can also get a lot of useful information on www.direct.gov.uk. Click on the 'Money, Tax & Benefits' link in the first column and in the various links you'll find the Benefits Adviser.

HAVE YOUR SAY

TAQ aims to cover issues that will or may affect TA soldiers and officers, and to ensure that you are kept as well-informed as possible about those topics.

If there is any topic that you would like to see included, or if you or your unit is doing something that you think would interest others in the TA, then we'd like to hear from you. If you request it, we guarantee that your identity will be kept confidential.

Items should preferably be accompanied by good-quality photographs, in JPG format, together with details of everyone in each photo.

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