

JON THOMPSON: INTERVIEW WITH MOD'S NEW TOP CIVILIAN

# DefenceFocus

Royal Navy | Army | Royal Air Force | Ministry of Defence | ISSUE #264 OCTOBER/12



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ERRORS**

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

## DefenceFocus

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## TRISTAN KELLY

I think that if there is any theme that emerges from this issue of *Defence Focus* it is change.

While the eyes of the nation might have briefly been turned to happier images over the summer months as the Olympics and Paralympics filled our TV screens, recent events in Afghanistan have shown that this is an ever-evolving campaign and remind us that the men and women of our Armed Forces are still putting their lives in harm's way in the line of duty.

And in this issue, while we look back to those heady days of the Paralympics with a photomontage and feature on civilian Games Makers, the list of those who have died while on operations is a harsh reminder that there is still much hard work yet to be done in Afghanistan.

Reporting from the country, Ian Carr looks at what is being done by

scientists to help protect those deployed and also at the work of the Royal Military Police. Meanwhile, closer to home, Shell Daruwala spoke to those who will be taking on the mantle of transition during Operation Herrick 17 as they prepared to deploy to Afghanistan.

Just as the Armed Forces are being deployed as a force for change in Afghanistan so at home a new initiative is looking at how the cadet schemes can be used to improve the lives of young people in the UK – Leigh Hamilton investigates.

At the other end of the Armed Forces' life-cycle the head of the SPVA fills us in on what is being done for those leaving the Services and moving on.

Change too continues unabated in the MOD and we caught up with the Department's previous finance supremo, Jon Thompson, to get a view on his vision as he steps up to the role of PUS.

One thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to get you the best stories in Defence and we hope you enjoy this issue.

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### The Defence News Blog

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# IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS – 16 AUGUST TO 23 SEPTEMBER 2012



**Sergeant Jonathan Kups**

Sergeant Jonathan Eric Kups, from 104 Force Support Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, died in Camp Bastion, Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, on Friday 21 September 2012.



**Captain James Townley**

Captain James Anthony Townley, from the Corps of Royal Engineers, died in Camp Bastion on Friday 21 September 2012 from wounds sustained while serving at Forward Operating Base Shawqat in Nad 'Ali district.



**Sergeant Gareth Thursby**

Sergeant Gareth Thursby, from 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, was shot and fatally wounded by a rogue Afghan Local Policeman in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province on Saturday 15 September 2012.



**Private Thomas Wroe**

Private Thomas Wroe, from 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, was shot and fatally wounded by a rogue Afghan Local Policeman at Checkpoint Tora in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province on Saturday 15 September 2012.



**Lance Corporal Duane Groom**

Lance Corporal Duane Groom, from the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, was killed on Friday 14 September 2012 when the vehicle in which he was travelling struck an IED in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province.



**Sergeant Lee Paul Davidson**

Sergeant Lee Paul Davidson, from The Light Dragoons, was killed on Sunday 9 September 2012 when, while on patrol with the Afghan Uniform Police in the Nahr-e Saraj district, the Ridgback he was travelling in struck an IED.



**Guardsman Karl Whittle**

Guardsman Karl Whittle, 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, died in Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham on Friday 7 September 2012 from gunshot wounds he sustained in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province on 14 August 2012.



**Guardsman Jamie Shadrake**

Guardsman Jamie Shadrake, 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, died of gunshot wounds when his checkpoint was attacked by insurgents in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province on Friday 17 August 2012.

# PARALYMPICS 2012

Picture: Sergeant Alison Baskerville CFC



Picture: Richard Watt



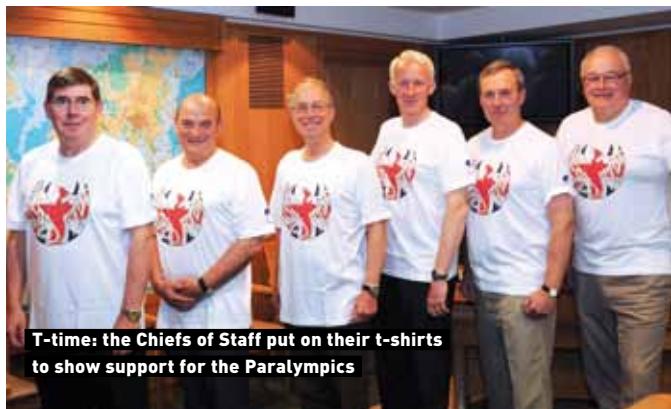
Picture: LAFPHOT Dave Jenkins



Picture: Corporal Mark Larner RY



Picture: Sergeant Jez Doak, RAF



Picture: Corporal Dylan Browne



# THE PARALYMPIC GAMES SAW RECORD TICKET SALES AND HELPED CHANGE THE PERCEPTION OF DISABILITY SPORT



# SCIENCE BASE

**IAN CARR TALKS TO DR PETER HARVEY AT CAMP BASTION ABOUT THE ROLE OF DSTL'S SCIENTIFIC ADVISERS**

The light is disappearing rapidly, but the heat is lingering and the brooding bulk of the Mastiff parked on the road is starting to fade into the darkness. The anticipation is rising. We are just waiting for the Americans to arrive. For the last few months Dr Peter Harvey has been engaged in what he describes as a kind of detective story, a whodunnit. Who or what is causing the random, intermittent interference with various types of communication inside Camp Bastion?

Tonight in his role as sleuth, Scientific Adviser to UK forces Dr Harvey is conducting the second in a series of trials to eliminate possible suspects from his enquiries. It all started when his predecessor, Dr Neil Higson, while

working on another task, was told that there may be a comms interference problem on site where scientific investigation may help solve the mystery. During the handover between Dr Higson and Dr Harvey the issue was raised again by the military. "They described the problem and said 'we've tried, but we can't find out what's causing it. You're the scientist, can you do it?'" said Dr Harvey.

At the moment the problem is only seen at Camp Bastion and, whilst it is not affecting operations, everyone is keen to sort it out before it gets worse.

"So we had a think about what the possible causes could be, and how we might test them. You look at the most likely suspects first," said Dr Harvey.

In this case, the most obvious

source was thought to be ISAF vehicles unintentionally causing interference on the base – hence tonight's appearance by the Mastiff crew. They are going to drive to a number of waypoints, fire up their vehicles, and the science team in Bastion are going to investigate any resulting disruptions.

Further trials will seek to eliminate other nations' vehicles. "The US Marine Corps have equipment, as do the US Army, and the Jordanians, and the Danish – there are a lot of different types. So we are talking to each of these nations and asking – can you help us solve this problem?" said Dr Harvey.

As one of the largest multi national bases in Afghanistan, there are a number of ISAF partners who could both assist



**Dream team:** Lance Corporal Claire Scott, Corporal Amanda Giltrow and Lance Corporal Michelle Arnott of the Royal Signals prepare to take part in a trial using equipment in their Mastiff

with the investigation and benefit from the solutions that Dr Harvey and the science team discover.

It is a good example of the kind of thing that the Dstl SciAd, who are collocated with the Equipment Capability branch in Joint Force Support HQ at Camp Bastion, are brought in to advise on. "We are here to provide impartial scientific advice to the commander and his staff, whenever it's needed," said Dr Harvey. "That could be a very quick turnaround to make a quick decision, or it could be something that needs deeper investigation."

The requests, which can come at any time, cover a huge range of subjects. Sometimes it involves the team in detailed trialling and research, such as when new protective equipment is being developed and tested. Often it's an on-the-spot query such as "we've found some bags of fertiliser – is it suspicious?"

Solutions may require cutting-edge science and technology or involve no 'Tomorrow's World' style input at all – for instance ensuring that road signs can be clearly understood by a range of different cultures.

The problem may be low-tech but the ramifications could be huge – imagine a situation where an innocent local misunderstands a series of road signs and finds himself driving the wrong way towards the heavily guarded gates of a base along a prohibited lane; it could provoke a tragic escalation of force. But a few well-designed road signs based on a scientific understanding of signage and human behaviour could help to avoid a bad situation.

But brainy as they undoubtedly are, how can the SciAd possibly be expected to know about all the areas of specialism that affect their military colleagues in theatre? Well of course they cannot, nor do they need to. What they do have is a hotline to the best science and engineering expertise that the international defence community can offer. It's a process called 'reachback'. "If we need technical advice we reach back in the first instance to Dstl. If it's about equipment then the route is through DE&S and into industry if needs be," said Dr Harvey. Advice can also be sought from academia or other government departments.

In situations like this the SciAd provide an intelligent link between the military and the external experts by breaking down the problem into its essential parts. They then formulate the right question in scientific terms and back it up with all the relevant information that the experts will need to provide an answer. "We first describe the problem.

Then we suggest a possible solution. The first question we then ask is 'am I talking rubbish?' Then we ask the experts if they can suggest an in-theatre solution," said Dr Harvey.

Then, having received guidance from the experts, the SciAd must translate the response from science babble into military speak. There's an art to it. "Look at this," says Dr Harvey brandishing what looks horribly like some advanced maths homework. It's a detailed response from the UK to a question Dr Harvey posed about the value of external ditches in protecting a perimeter wall from vehicle-borne explosives.

"This is excellent. He [the UK scientist] has done a lot of work on this, and like any professional scientist he has shown that there is never just one answer to a problem." Using graphs, equations and probability curves the report shows a range of results depending on different factors – how deep you dig the trench, the distance you put it from the wall, likely speed of vehicle. "But in this format it would be no use to the Colonel. What I will tell him is 'if you dig a trench like this, you will have a 98 per cent chance of failure, if you build it like that, then you will have a 98 per cent chance of survival in these circumstances'. Then it's up to him to decide the risk and whether it merits taking action."

In Dr Harvey's world precision is important. You can't get away with simply saying A is bigger than B. "If I said that I'd be asked 'what do you mean? How much bigger is A than B – is it always

bigger or does that vary over time? Does temperature affect that result? When you say bigger do you mean wider, taller, heavier? Every time I write a report I feel as if I am writing a PhD thesis."

If, as sometimes happens, the good doctor is presenting to the Brigadier, then the approach is even more tightly tuned. "The first question you ask is 'how much time have I got?' If it's seven minutes, you make your pitch last six minutes – and you make sure you get all the main points into the first three in case he gets called away. It's the reverse of how you would present a scientific paper, where you work through the methodology and explain your findings at the end."

And then there are projects like tonight's where the SciAd, working closely with their military colleagues, devise and run scientific trials to test new equipment or to solve problems. It is work that goes way beyond job satisfaction. "The responsibility of getting it right hits you like a sledgehammer when you get here," said Dr Harvey. "Everything you do really matters. How often can you say that in a career?" And because it matters so much the attention to detail is absolute.

And what of tonight's trial? Well, all you need to know is that the Mastiffs can be ruled out of the inquiry. Dr Harvey is pretty sure now what is causing the problem, and what to recommend to solve it. The rest is up to the military. 

**Find out more about working as a civilian in theatre at [Support to Operations through DII People Services>Moving Jobs>S20](#)**

## DSTL ON OPS

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has deployed staff on operations in Afghanistan since 2002. This deployed science and technology team is made up of a Scientific Adviser (SciAd), supported by two deputies, plus a Lead Operational Analyst (OA) and two other OAs. The team is spread between Joint Force Support Afghanistan and Task Force Helmand headquarters where they provide the senior UK commander and his staff with impartial science, technology and analytical advice on a wide range of issues that UK front line forces may encounter. Advice is rapidly turned around to give our forces the winning edge in a fast-paced military environment.





**Crash test: RMP pass on incident investigation skills**



**Point duty: training to gather and record evidence**

# GUIDING BLUE LIGHT

**HALF-SOLDIER, HALF-POLICE, WHOLLY COMMITTED, IAN CARR WRITES FROM CAMP BASTION ABOUT THE WORK OF THE ROYAL MILITARY POLICE**

**F**or those of you whose view of the Royal Military Police [RMP] is still influenced by the BBC TV series "Red Cap", there's more to life in the RMP than that.

Speaking to *Defence Focus* over a tea (in a proper mug) outside the Theatre Provost Company HQ at Camp Bastion, Captain Dave Tracey, the RMP company ops officer, explained how they support the military in theatre. "We are about company strength and our operational area extends beyond Helmand province out to Kabul and Kandahar." So they are busy bobbies.

Their main effort is spread across the Special Investigation Branch (SIB), where personnel are drawn from the RMP SIB and the RAF Police Close Support Element, and, working alongside the Welsh Guards,

mentoring and advising as part of the Police Advisory Teams and the Police Mentoring and Advisory Group. They are the subject matter experts in all aspects of investigation, policing and detention. What they provide is a unique combination of front line soldiering and policing skills.

In Afghanistan the SIB element of the RMP's work means not only investigating serious Service offences, just as they would anywhere else in the world of soldiering, but they are also brought in when someone is killed in action. The death of every Service person killed on operations has to be thoroughly investigated in accordance with national police procedures. It is extremely difficult and sensitive work. "The SIB effectively acts as the coroner's representative out

here," said Captain Tracey. Thanks to their military training, the SIB can go where others can't to gather evidence at the scene and establish the facts surrounding the death.

A member of the RMP, usually SIB, will also support the coronial process by accompanying the body from the hospital in Bastion to the coroner's in the UK. "We have to ensure continuity of evidence," said Captain Tracey.

All of this is designed to ensure that the next of kin, through the coronial process, have a full understanding of the circumstances in which their loved ones have died.

RMP also work alongside troops right across the area of operations giving advice and guidance on policing matters. They make sure that what has been taught on the training ranges is applied on the ground.

"That means things like making sure that detainees' basic human rights are protected and that they are treated properly as laid down in the Geneva Convention," said Captain Tracey.

"Another thing we involve ourselves in is forensic surety – that means working in conjunction with the WIS guys (weapons intelligence) and the counter-IED guys to ensure that anything lifted off the ground is properly exploited either in terms of being used as evidence or in providing intelligence." Some of this advice and guidance is about reminding soldiers to use proper policing skills and drills that they have been taught. For example, when dealing with evidence, not to handle it with bare hands and risk contaminating it or covering it with fingerprints.

If this makes the RMP sound like an aloof, brooding presence staring over the soldier's shoulder, Captain Tracey will set you right: "Our guys are right there in the thick of it with the infantry. They patrol daily with the ground call signs (the soldiers) and are very much a part of the teams."

To build that working relationship the RMP embed with the troops as soon as they can, sometimes training with them for 12 months before they are deployed.

"We can't send people forward, especially if it's a mentoring or advisory job, unless they are fit and confident. We need people who are physically robust and who can conduct themselves as soldiers. I'm not saying we are first through the door if we are clearing a compound, but we have to have those green skills and be tactically aware," said Captain Tracey.

So, RMP personnel need to be soldiers first. But they also need to be mature enough to know what each situation demands, when they need to step in, when they need to focus on a policing role, and when to provide mentoring.

"One of the things we do is, if the soldiers are going to recover evidence, first we make sure it's worth recovering, and if it is that it is done properly." For example, for a drugs find to count in an Afghan court, the cache must weigh at least five kilos. That may sound like a lot to us, but although opium is illegal under Afghan laws, there are still situations where poppy is the only crop and the farmer may be growing small quantities under duress.

"That said, finds of 65 to 70 kilos and even ones of 300 kilos are not unheard of. It's then that the RMP step forward and say this is the five-kilo sample we are taking and the rest is destroyed in place."

"We are warrant holders, so we have that degree of autonomy within the battle group we are embedded with, even though we work closely with them. Our chain of command is through our platoon commander straight through to the HQ," said Captain Tracey.

That degree of independence and



separation is important for what Captain Tracey describes as a tough part of the job, the provision of police support to the unit they are working with so that Service discipline and Service law are maintained.

"It is a tough ask, because if you have been embedded with these guys, in some cases for over a year, if you see something inappropriate you have to instantly say 'you've got to stop that and follow the rules before it becomes serious and I have to do something other than just tell you about it,'" said Captain Tracey.

That takes moral courage, especially if the RMP is a brand new Lance Corporal having to tell a Lieutenant or a Captain that what they are doing is wrong. "The guys have really stepped up to the mark, and for the most part there hasn't been anything that has developed into a real drama," said



### Captain Tracey

For the most part, the behaviour of soldiers that the RMP serve alongside has been exemplary. But it would be naïve to think that in a pressurised environment like this soldiers won't occasionally get themselves into bother. So what sort of things do the RMP have to deal with?

"Minor assaults, they may not be serious, but fighting is breaking the Service law, so we have to get to the bottom of who started it, and who did what to whom. But one we do see, especially when guys are at the beginning of the tour, is people leaving their weapons behind, for instance in the dining facilities." The RMP investigate and report the incident to the chain of command, and it is then their responsibility to take the appropriate action. "They decide if it's enough just to call the person an idiot. Sometimes we have soldiers turning up looking sheepish, one arrived just seconds after we received the weapon because he had been chasing the person who handed it in down the road."

Sometimes the RMP have to investigate more serious incidents, including allegations made by local nationals against Service personnel. All such allegations have to be investigated thoroughly and with an open mind. Occasionally, this will result in Service personnel being referred to the independent Service Prosecuting Authority so that they can decide whether to bring charges. Thankfully, however, such cases are few and far between.

As the Afghan forces increasingly take the lead in Helmand province, so the RMP's role mentoring the instructors is developing. "We coach them in witness-handling and taking statements, just making sure that they are delivering what they need to."

On top of this there is a small RMP section providing support to the Afghan Prosecution Support Section, ensuring that professional standards are maintained in the UK holding facility at Bastion, and that evidence-based case files are compiled to support the transfer of detainees to the Afghan authorities.

And at the end of a tour the RMP are on hand to wave the troops goodbye – and make sure that their Bergens don't contain any illicit war mementos. But Captain Tracey is keen to throw off the mantle of being the anti-fun police. "In fact there are things that are allowed to be taken back, you just need to be sensible and go through the right process, and we can help and direct people so they get it right."

And with the help and guidance of the Provost, can there ever be any excuse for not getting it right? **DF**

# LIVING IN A GROWN UP WORLD

**AT THE END OF HIS FIRST WEEK AS MOD'S NEW PERMANENT SECRETARY, JON THOMPSON TALKED TO IAN CARR ABOUT HOW HE IS STRIVING FOR NORMALITY**

**I**t's Friday afternoon, and at the end of his first week as MOD's new Permanent Secretary, Jon Thompson admits that he is looking forward to a weekend playing with his Schnauzer. No, our new PUS doesn't spend his downtime getting in a bit of target practice. Lovers of Crufts will know that a Schnauzer is a breed of pedigree dog, not a handgun.

"It was a silver wedding anniversary present for my wife," our new PUS explains. "I'm looking forward to a cracking weekend trying to train it."

But before MOD's most senior civil servant goes off to shout "Sit" and "Fetch", he was keen to talk to *Defence Focus* about what his appointment means both personally and for the Department.

Thompson makes no bones about being thrilled with his appointment. "It is a fantastic, fascinating and exciting job, but it's not until you get here that you appreciate the breadth of the role, the things you have to try and have an understanding of, the number of things that come across the desk that you have to either decide on, give a steer on or advise on. I wouldn't say it's overwhelming, but it is incredible."

But surely with more than three years' experience as our Director General of Finance, the new job cannot hold too many surprises? "Sure I had an appreciation of the role, but there are a lot of classified secret things to be briefed on – I've been to three briefings already about compartments that I didn't even know existed."

Despite the fact that the scale of the job means that thousands of emails flow into his office every week, one of the first actions he took on appointment was to encourage staff to contact him with their views and ideas. Does he regret that now? "Absolutely not. It's important for me to be open and try and engage as much as I can with people and find out their views and what's worrying them."

Engagement is undoubtedly the new PUS's watchword, and he takes great pride in the fact that he writes all his own "Ask The Board" replies. On top of that, in the last three years he has notched up around 100 site visits, and he doesn't intend to let that slide.

But is there a danger that he might be setting himself up for a fall if problems can't be sorted out? "Sure there's a risk, but I'm convinced it's the right thing to do. I have to listen to what people think about the organisation then see what sort of a difference I can make. Then people will have to judge me on what I do. Let me give you a practical example. I'm as frustrated as everyone else is about having a 100 meg mailbox, or not being able to connect to DII. Well the least I can do is go and have a look at the problem. I won't be able to address every single frustration people have, but I can give them some sense that they can engage with me and debate with me."

It seems that the phrase "what you see is what you get" could have been coined with Thompson in mind. He values trust, openness and common sense. In fact these are the qualities that underpin his drive for greater delegation. As Director General of Finance, Thompson helped to engineer the Herculean task of balancing the MOD's budget. And while he admits that the complexity of MOD business means that the budget can never be 100 per cent risk-free, he believes that Lord Levene's recommendations to delegate financial responsibility and create a strong, more strategic centre that controls the approval and negotiation of the planning process will put the Department "in a good place".

"I famously said that, CGS is the best person to administer the Army's budget. It isn't possible for me, the Finance Director, and the corporate military staff to solely run a £35bn organisation employing 250,000 people. It is my absolute instinct that we should delegate."

It is what Thompson describes as one of the mega-decisions that he has to make before Christmas, to what extent and at what pace will delegation be introduced in 2013. "There are risks, but we have to try and live in a grown up world where you trust that people will be grown up and do the right thing." One of the things, he confides, that he, the Secretary of State and the Service Chiefs are very keen on is, from next April, to align authority, responsibility and accountability. "That's the quid pro quo of delegation."

How the Services approach delegation, and how far they push it down their organisations, is for them to decide, says Thompson. "I just want to hold one person to account. How they choose to run their business is up to them, as long as they are in control. But having said that, we do have to strip away some corporate controls." For Thompson, simplicity is the key. "Why," he asks, "do we have to write business cases for every overseas flight, or for using the train, or all kind of strange things – what's the point?"

But overall what the new PUS is striving for is normality. "I aspire to stabilising the organisation so we can turn around things like recruitment, development and promotion. Once you have stabilised you can return to more normal times."

To achieve that though, he confesses the reality is that there are things that the MOD will have to prioritise, and some which we will probably have to stop doing altogether in order to stay within budget and to meet staffing targets. "I want to bring the military and civilian leaders together so we can discuss, as a collective leadership, where we are going as an organisation and what sort of a future we want." 



“Once you have stabilised you can return to more normal times ”

# MILITARY REMUNERATION



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE SERVICE PERSONNEL AND VETERANS AGENCY, AIR VICE-MARSHAL ROSS PATERSON, SPEAKS TO LEIGH HAMILTON ABOUT THE CHALLENGES FACING AN OFTEN UNDERESTIMATED ORGANISATION

**DF:** What is the role of the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA)?

**RP:** We're an organisation that people perhaps think they know, but might be surprised at the range of our activities.

Primarily we're here to provide operational service delivery and personnel support to around a million people - about a quarter-of-a-million serving, regular and reserve, and about three-quarters-of-a-million veterans.

We've got around 800 contractors and 740 MOD

staff, of which only 40 are military, working across four sites in Glasgow, Blackpool, Gloucester and Gosport. We also run a care home in Devon for 98 surviving Poles who Churchill made a promise to after the Second World War.

Joint Personnel Administration plays a key role in operational human resources support and it is used to ensure our people get the correct pay, pension and any compensation due.

We also provide all the medals for Defence and run the Joint Casualty Compassionate Centre, so we're on duty 24/7 responding not only to incidents in theatre, but also across Defence worldwide. So when people are in need of help, often under very difficult and sometimes tragic circumstances, we're there to provide that immediate support and to look after them.

**DF: What is your role in the organisation?**

**RP:** As Chief Exec I'm responsible for all of its outputs. I've been in post for 10 months now and the main focus has been the high volume of change happening in the agency.

At the same time, we must ensure that everything we do is accurate and as efficient as we can get it. We have some very stringent targets set on us which I'm delighted to say we continue to meet.

**DF: What has been the highlight of your SPVA career so far?**

**RP:** Every area within Defence is pressurised and being in a position where you can hopefully make a difference and provide direction to steer it through is a privilege.

In terms of highlights, although it's work in progress, in the next few months we're changing our contractor, IT and software for our HR processes. That's a huge change on top of the day job. Again, we're hitting all of our milestones but we can't take our foot off the gas as failure isn't an option.

**DF: Do you feel a lot of pressure as you are responsible for ensuring that members of the Armed Forces receive the correct financial remuneration?**

**RP:** I led military remuneration policy for Defence previously which means that I've got a pretty good understanding of what matters to people.

For example, we pay out £161m a year in compensation and make just over half-a-million compensation and pension payments every month. We're currently clearing a big increase in Armed Forces Compensation Scheme applications born out of operations and the redundancy scheme that we're also running.

Even though we're enacting other people's policy, ultimately our customers just see us and it's down to us to explain things as clearly and as fairly as we can.

**DF: How do you deal with negative media coverage?**

**RP:** Inevitably there will be some people who aren't happy with the answers they receive. I'm not at all surprised by the coverage that we get because it

is very emotive stuff that we're dealing with, but that means accuracy and clarity are even more important. It is sometimes frustrating the way things are reported, but we work hard with MOD media staff to get the correct message across.

**DF: Are the members of the Armed Forces getting a fair pension package?**

**RP:** Most people must realise that this is part of wider changes both in the Armed Forces and across the country.

I absolutely believe that the package we will end up with under the New Employment Model, albeit a slightly less valuable pension, will still easily bear scrutiny compared to what is available outside of military service.

**DF: What else does the SPVA focus on?**

**RP:** We issue 49,000 medals a year. People contact us about a relative's Service records to see if there are any medals that they can get on their behalf.

We also provide a service of looking at historical casualty work. From time to time remains are found around the world; we had some recently in Malaysia where some aircraft wreckage had been found in the jungle. DNA work was undertaken and we were able to identify the crew members through the surviving family and conduct a proper burial for these men. It's a small but hugely important part of our work.

**DF: The SPVA stores wills for military personnel – is this a major part of the SPVA's work?**

**RP:** We typically get 3,000 will transactions every month due to the turnover of people and operational movements. It is crucial that people make sure that they have an accurate will in place – SPVA handles that on behalf of Defence and we currently have around 100,000 in store. Managing their storage is vital in the event that they are needed.

**DF: What support do you provide to veterans?**

**RP:** A veteran can be a youngster who has served for three to four years or someone who is in the later stages of life. We work across a huge bandwidth of people to help them understand what their entitlements are, and we're working with MOD welfare policy staff to see how we take that forward for the future.

Our role is two-fold: to signpost people to help that's out there; and providing niche advice on the back of military entitlements that they've had to try and help them through that process.

**DF: How does the future look?**

**RP:** One of the outcomes of the Strategic Defence and Security Review was the formation of the Defence Business Services (DBS) organisation and at the moment we're in the midst of doing some work with them to see what the benefits would be for SPVA becoming part of DBS. Meantime, we change contractor in November and then there's a big technical refresh ahead of us next year, so we have some big, big milestones ahead of us. I'm really pleased with our progress so far; there's a lot still to do but we're on track to succeed. 

# BEST PREPARED EVER

IT'S ALL CHANGE IN HELMAND AS THE BLACK RATS OF 4 MECH BRIGADE COMMENCE OP HERRICK 17



## FOXHOUND ROLLS INTO ACTION

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**Ready for duty:** members of 4 Mech Bde conduct their final field exercise before deploying to Helmand on HERRICK 17

This month sees the Black Rats of 4th Mechanized Brigade (4 Mech Bde) take the baton from 12th Mechanized Brigade to lead the UK's military contribution to ISAF in southern Afghanistan.

4 Mech's commander, Brigadier Bob Bruce, says that his will be "the best prepared and the best equipped British Task Force ever deployed on operations".

Already committed to sending home 500 of his men and women by the end of 2012, Brigadier Bruce is taking over in Helmand at a crucial point in the transition process. The rapid maturation of the Afghan National Security Forces is

allowing coalition military commanders to restructure their front lines, handing control of security over greater areas to the Afghans themselves and devoting more efforts to their development into a professional force capable of delivering Afghanistan's security after 2014.

As Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said: "The ultimate measure of success must be the extent to which we can leave Afghanistan in a state that will continue to deny its territory to international terrorists."

Brigadier Bruce writes exclusively here as 4 Mech Bde's HERRICK 17 deployment begins. **DF**



# 4TH MECHANIZED BRIGADE PRE-DEPLOYMENT THOUGHTS ON HERRICK 17

As the soldiers and marines of Task Force Helmand for Op HERRICK 17 deploy to Afghanistan, they are superbly well prepared and equipped for the challenges that lie ahead. I am very proud of them all. They have launched into the training for this tour with exceptional energy and commitment, reaching an exemplary professional standard.

This Task Force was last in Afghanistan over the summer of 2010. It consists of 4th Mechanized Brigade reinforced with 40 Commando Royal Marines and specialist Army units. About half the soldiers and marines in the Task Force were on that last tour in Afghanistan.

As beneficiaries of a process of continuous improvement, I'm sure that we will be the best trained and best equipped British force that has ever deployed on operations. That gives our soldiers, marines and their families real confidence. It also places the responsibility squarely on our shoulders to use this foundation to deliver success on the tour.

There will be three aspects to our work that will be fundamentally important:

■ as the ANSF move ever more effectively and powerfully into the lead, we will reduce our own profile and begin sending manpower and equipment back to the UK home base.

R B BRUCE  
Brigadier  
Commander Task Force  
Helmand  
Op HERRICK 17

■ recognising that our contribution will be part of a wider NATO campaign, we will cue our successors in 1st Mechanized Brigade for success on their tour.

The critical ingredient will be 'confidence'. We have it in spades as we deploy and we now want to nurture the confidence of our Afghan allies. This, in turn, will inspire the confidence of the Afghan people and the insurgency will find itself increasingly marginalised. This is unlikely to appear as an identifiable momentous event - indeed there are likely to be setbacks on the way - but the momentum of progress will be irresistible.

I think we're very fortunate to be deploying at this stage of the campaign, on the back of the tremendous efforts and achievements of those who've gone before us, and at a time when we are sure to see the process of transition draw the flame of pride, self-reliance and confidence in the Afghan people.



Picture: Corporal Mike O'Neill RLC LBIPP



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# ROYAL NAVY LIEUTENANT PETE REED SPEAKS TO LEIGH HAMILTON ABOUT WINNING HIS SECOND OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL AND HOW, AFTER EIGHT YEARS, HIS LOVE OF ROWING STILL HASN'T ABATED

**F**or someone who has won two Olympic gold medals and, in turn, won the adoration of the British public, Royal Navy Lieutenant Pete Reed is surprisingly humble.

I spoke with Lieutenant Reed three weeks after he secured his London 2012 Olympic gold medal and, as we sit in a private members club in West London, the 6'6" athlete is still flying the patriotic flag by dressing head-to-toe in Team GB colours; even his socks match his red, white and blue ensemble.

The Navy Lieutenant is visibly still high on adrenaline following his victory at Eton Dorney as part of the coxless four team along with Andy Triggs Hodge, Alex Gregory and Tom James. Watching the foursome in that race, you could see the exhaustion etched on their faces immediately after they crossed the finish line and then that

exhaustion turning into pride and elation. Lieutenant Reed explained: "Over the line there was a massive mix of emotions, I was in a lot of pain, you really empty yourself. You go from feeling as good as you've felt in four years when you're on the start line, to as bad as you've felt in four years six minutes later. When I was being interviewed immediately afterwards, my thoughts hadn't caught up with me, I couldn't think fast enough. I did manage to thank the Royal Navy, I think that was the only thing I did remember!"

The adrenaline generated by the pressure and expectation only lasted so long during the Olympic race this year and, according to Lieutenant Reed, the 30,000 people who had congregated at Eton Dorney gave him the valuable boost that he desperately needed.

"I started hearing them from around

750 metres gone and at that stage you're exhausted already, but you could really feel the crowd inside you. When you're rowing along, the boat makes noises, you can hear a thud as the oars come out of the water and a splash when they go into the water, but the crowd was so loud, we couldn't hear any of that. It was like we were flying."

Although the thousands of spectators obviously offered enormous encouragement, having members of the Armed Forces providing security at Eton Dorney also gave Lieutenant Reed an extra



# ROWING TO GLORY

boost. He said: "The military personnel were the first security people we saw and we saw them all day and they were the last people we saw at the end of the regatta. It was an outstanding presence. I spoke to everyone that I saw from the Army, Air Force and Navy. They were really proud of us and we made sure that we told them how proud we were of them as well. Everyone on Team GB was really behind them. There weren't any security problems at the Olympics that we were aware of, so they obviously did a great job."

Many Team GB athletes commented during the Games that having the 2012 Olympics on home turf was a massive advantage for them. According to

Lieutenant Reed, this home advantage made such a positive difference to the British team that it caused some minor controversy.

"The support was just amazing. Every seat was filled and they were all going completely bonkers for the GB boat. I heard that Australia put in an official complaint because the crowds were too one-sided. I laughed at that."

As this is his second Olympic gold medal, you could be forgiven for thinking that Lieutenant Reed may be used to the whole process and might take the success in his stride. Contrary to this assumption, Lieutenant Reed admitted that he found that the overwhelming sensation which

comes with holding onto your world championship somewhat surreal.

"Quite a few times I made sure I looked around, attempting to memorise everything and take mental pictures just to remember what it was like. After Beijing there were things that I tried to remember but couldn't and the podium part was one of them, so this time I really paid attention to what was going on."

"Just before the National Anthem was played, they handed out the medals in reverse order so bronze first, then the girl came along with four silver medals on a tray and walked past us, that was the only time I was actually welling up."

"I was pretty strong and enjoying it



**Engine room: Lieutenant Pete Reed enjoys his golden moment**



Picture: LAI (Phot) Dan Rosenbaum

## MILITARY OLYMPIAN

Top deck: Lieutenant Pete Reed in the Team GB victory parade through London



and being robust and military for the whole thing, but when I saw those silver medals going past us, my throat was sticking."

Speaking of military, Lieutenant Reed waxed lyrical about how the Royal Navy's support is paramount to his success and how, without it, he wouldn't be what he is today, a world champion.

"The Royal Navy has been amazing, they're the ultimate employer. If I had a job with any other company, they probably wouldn't have supported me like the Royal Navy has.

"I joined the Navy before I started rowing. I signed up to have a career in the engineering department, went through all my training and went through university with that in mind. When I picked up rowing it was almost on a whim. I knew I was good at it and knew I had a chance, but I didn't know how good I was or what my potential was.

"If it wasn't for the Navy I don't think I would have had the determination and the discipline to make it as a rower. I think you have to have a certain kind of personality to be an elite athlete and that is the sort of personality that you get drummed into you at Dartmouth."

Lieutenant Reed explained that he is very aware that he is extremely lucky to have the Navy's support and that he doesn't take it for granted: "Once I had

won the World Championships and got an Olympic gold medal, it would have been very easy for them to say 'right, you've got your gold, we've given you three years, you need to come and give us a bit of time now sunshine'. But they didn't do that, they had faith in me. I can't say it enough, but thank you very much."

As one of the UK's elite athletes, he stands shoulder-to-shoulder with media darlings Jessica Ennis and Victoria Pendleton as a member of the country's most exclusive sporting club: Team GB.

This membership however is viewed as a bonus by Lieutenant Reed as his priorities lie in perfecting his craft as a rower. He loves his rowing career and dedicates his whole life to ensuring he's the best he can be.

He trains from 07.30 until 16.30 almost every day of the year and has the luxury of every fourth Sunday off. He has a regimented diet plan with strict eating times and menus. Once he arrives home after training, he is usually asleep by 20.00. Surely this punishing regime takes its toll eventually.

"It is worth it, otherwise I wouldn't do it. But it's close," Lieutenant Reed admits. "All of the fun stuff I get, the titles, the accolades and nice fun things when it goes right is great; even with those things it's

very close as to whether it is worth it or not."

His preoccupation and near obsession with rowing does have a knock-on effect on other aspects of his life. He rarely sees his family or friends and openly admits that for his fiancée 'it's hard being with a rower'. He explained: "Making sacrifices is hard, but the actual training and getting up early, I quite like that. When you're fit and ready to race, it's brilliant. You can't get fit without doing the hard stuff, so you just have to grit your teeth and get on with it on the tough days. Through the winter when the lake is frozen and you have to do three weeks on the rowing machine, that's hard. At the end of it, you can puff your chest out and say 'yeah, I did it' and be proud of yourself."

Although his passion for the sport gets him up in the wee small hours of the morning when most of us are curled up in bed, he is acutely aware that he is being depended upon to carry on the winning streak begun by rowing greats such as Sir Steve Redgrave and Sir Matthew Pinsent. This expectation appears to be a double-edged sword.

"We were in the top boat and the top boat is expected to win, so a silver would have been hugely disappointing," explained Lieutenant Reed. "The problem we've got in rowing is that our coach has won a gold medal at every Olympics since 1972; we're the only sport in the country to have won a gold medal at, I think, the past five Olympics. The eyes of the public are on us and there's massive expectation, and it's all for gold."

"The big old boys are Sir Steve Redgrave and Sir Matthew Pinsent; I think if you pick up anything other than a gold medal you won't be in that all-star gold-medal-winning pedigree. It's certainly not an easy sport, it's phenomenally difficult."

Many athletes have a shelf-life, with age being the deciding factor in terms of retirement. Lieutenant Reed is 31 which, in the normal world, would see him working for another 35 years. The world Lieutenant Reed lives in has completely different rules of course, and if he makes it to Rio for the next Olympics, that might be his swan song.

"Best case scenario is that I keep doing what I'm doing. I don't feel finished yet, I feel like my body is still improving, I pulled personal bests on the water and in the gym last year. I really don't want to retire before I reach my peak; I'm only 31, so I think that my age is well within the range to do another Olympics and, if it does depend on the Navy, best case scenario is I stay in uniform, I keep my commission, I keep the military on my side as that is really important to me and it helps me along."

It appears there's still life in the old dog yet. **DF**



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# THE CADET EXPERIENCE

PUPILS OF A STRUGGLING INNER CITY LONDON SCHOOL HAVE BEEN THROWN A LIFELINE IN THE FORM OF THE CREATION OF A NEW MOD-SPONSORED CADET UNIT.  
REPORT BY LEIGH HAMILTON



Shown the ropes: youngsters are taught to think 'aspirationally'

**A**s part of an overhaul of Islington Green School in North London, it was decided that a cadet unit might help the youngsters form plans for the future and therefore achieve their full potential.

Cadet units can provide challenging and enjoyable activities for young people, offer them the opportunity to learn new skills, engage youngsters in adventurous activities in disciplined and structured organisations, and help them gain vocational BTEC qualifications.

The transformation of what is now the City of London Academy Islington is being led by City of London Councillor Richard Regan. It was he who believed that a cadet unit was exactly the right way forward for the pupils of the school: "Getting kids together and giving them a structured existence to me is absolutely fundamental," he said. "It's my ambition to create a CCF (Combined Cadet Force) or cadet unit to bring these diverse kids together to get them to think 'aspirationally' and give them hope for the future."

Elsewhere in London, the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) was looking around for somewhere to spend their available funding on creating a cadet unit and so the perfect pairing was created.

The HAC has two functions. The HAC Regiment is an Army Reserves unit in the military chain of command. The other part of the HAC is a civilian body which has charitable status and this is the section that is sponsoring the cadet unit.

Major General (Retired) Simon Lalor, formerly Assistant Chief of Defence Staff Reserves and Cadets, is a trustee of the HAC's charitable body. He said: "Because we're a third party sponsor, we won't actually be involved in the running of the cadet unit. The regiment can however add value by offering equipment or cadets could go and train with the HAC. What is so good about this is that this is a local regiment with a local CCF unit in an academy."

Partnering with the HAC promises to provide the aspiration and inclusion that Councillor Regan is searching for. He said: "The HAC is the oldest regiment. They provide the Pikemen (infantry who carry spears) who escort the Lord Mayor's carriage in the annual Lord Mayor's Show. It's also an active unit. They've got guys out in Afghanistan. It's a very thriving organisation and they decided they wanted to do something in the community."

"When I met Major General Simon Lalor he agreed that this is a heaven-sent opportunity, saying 'we would like to start a cadet unit, you would like to start a cadet unit. You haven't got any funding, we will fund it for you for up to 120 cadets'."

Major General Lalor concurred: "We had an extraordinary situation where we had the HAC as a potential sponsor with money available and the City of London Academy with a cadet force aspiration without any money. Perfect timing."

"From the HAC's perspective it couldn't be better. The HAC is the City of London's regiment and the fact that the City of London has sponsored an academy in our area just ticks every box."

This new cadet unit has already proved to be a worthy concept as the MOD and the Department for Education announced in June that they would work together to create 100 new cadet units in state-funded secondary schools by 2015.

But for Islington, negotiations and preparations have been underway for the past year to create the new cadet unit and D-Day is fast approaching.

"September 17 is our first parade night which is when it all starts," explained Councillor Regan. "It'll literally be the first night where we issue uniforms and that kind of thing."

But before the celebrations can begin, there's lots more work to do and Councillor Regan has high expectations: "I want to get 120 pupils signed up by 2015, but we're going for 40 to start with and I think we'll get that. I hope by next year we'll be able to double that."

"I think that a cadet unit is the perfect way to give the kids pride, particularly those kids who want and need more discipline."

Major General Lalor explained that taking part in a cadet unit can have a hugely positive effect on a young person's life: "I've been to a lot of cadet units and seen a lot of individual evidence that the cadet experience does give those who

are less advantaged a sense of purpose and structure. It's that Armed Forces' positiveness and that 'can do' culture that the Armed Forces do so well."

"The youngsters can now look forward to the cadet unit being a central part of the academy's life and it will take a good four or five years for it to reach its optimum stage and I think it will create a lot of added value to the education."

"You can almost guarantee that the Islington Academy will have a real sense of purpose and some of them really will thrive and will become highly motivated by the cadet experience. It's rare that a cadet unit doesn't deliver that." **DF**



**Food for thought: cadet units teach life skills**

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## I PLAYED A TINY PART IN A GLOBAL SPORTS EVENT



A quarter-of-a-million people applied to join Britain's army of Games Makers so I was on cloud nine when I was invited to join the Games press team at Horse Guards, where the beach volleyball took place, says *Defence Focus* writer Lorraine McBride.

On day one I rose at the ungodly hour of 5.30 am and it was a thrill wearing my Games Maker kit even though the purple/poppy colour combo made me feel like a Sainsbury's shop assistant. But when I saw other Games Makers on the tube, we shared nods of recognition.

Every day 45,000 spectators poured through Horse Guards Parade. It was a buzz to see the world's press, up high in the media stand where I led the team of 'results runners' releasing match times, schedules and scores, but it was tough trying to keep up with so many results flowing in. We got to see loads of action but all volunteers were advised that we could be caught on camera which means we couldn't eat, yawn or – worryingly – sit down for our entire 10-hour shifts. I acquired a walkie-talkie but mastering it took me way out of my

# THE GREATEST 9

MOD CIVILIANS JESSICA MURPHY AND LORRAINE MCBRIDE JOINED THE ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS WORKING AT THE GAMES

## I LOOKED AFTER ROYALTY AT THE EXCEL CENTRE

Games Maker and MOD B2 Jessica Murphy was one of 70,000 volunteers helping to stage the Games. Jessica looked after VIPs in the Venue Protocol Team at London's ExCeL Centre, the Paralympic venue for wheelchair fencing and judo.

With the Olympics drawing in celebrities from all over the globe, VIPs became ten-a-penny for Jessica. She looked after Prince Edward, Lord Coe, coaches, athletes, Princess Infanta Elena of Spain, MPs and Ministers, Jeremy Hunt and Maria Miller.

"I think Seb Coe is brilliant," smiled Jessica. "He works so hard and was so

charming and passionate about the Olympics and Paralympics. On my first day Prince Edward was our first guest and he was lovely."

Jessica wrote briefs filled with judo stats but, despite knowing next-to-nothing prior to taking up her role, her enthusiasm meant she was soon bursting with sporty facts. She'd meet and greet VIPs from their courtesy cars, escort them to the Olympic family lounge and make sure they had everything they needed.

She also had a stewarding role to stop press, punters and athletes sneaking into the VIP section and joked: "We were seen by

some as evil empty seats' protectors!"

Jessica knows that she bagged one of the rare roles that allowed her to watch world-class sport every day, including many medal matches.

Jessica, who works in MOD's HR Transformation team, has a special memory of the GB crowd. She also relishes the eagle-eyed 'bum spotters' charged with sitting behind the judges watching the fencer's backsides to ensure that they didn't lift a cheek off the chair which is a foul; "the most random



comfort zone.

Being an outdoors arena, whenever it rained, the fans unpacked brollies and pulled on ponchos, yet nothing dampened their spirits. Meanwhile we had to race around covering terminals under plastic wrappers. It was definitely one of the wettest venues and we couldn't use our Olympic umbrellas, as it would have blocked the views of the TV commentators.

Beach volleyball was the Games' most popular spectator sport but I never knew how highly watchable it is. Athletic, fast and technically-skilled, it's packed with fun, energy and excitement plus there was the opportunity to ogle the girls in bikinis or boys in Bermuda shorts.

There was a real passion for beach volleyball and the atmosphere was bonkers. To help the non-sporty, key match moments were flagged up in giant capitals on screens, 'MONSTER BLOCK!', 'SPIKE', 'BOOM' or 'CLAPPING'.

When athletes emerge, they jog through a guard of honour formed by the scantily-clad dance troupe, high-fiving all in sight. Right from the off, when the Mexican bugle sounded, the sell-out crowd shouted 'Ole!' and amused themselves with Mexican waves. At match point, the crowd rose to

sing a chorus of Queen's 'We Will Rock You', then the losers writhed in the sand to the strains of 'Another One Bites the Dust'.

The real unsung heroes were the 'Games Rakers' who swept the sand off the tramlines to a blast of Benny Hill's old theme tune. Whipping the crowd up, the announcer bellowed: "These Games Rakers have been training for years! They started off in sandpits at just three years old, then they graduated to the beaches. Now this is the pinnacle of their careers as they perform at the Olympics! Let's make some noise for the GAMES RAKERS!"

It was heartwarming how many friendly strangers sparked up a conversation with me on the tube and enquired what it was like to work at the Olympics. Feeling grouchy one morning I was cheered up when a guy shyly asked "so what are Britain's medal chances today then?" making me feel like Gary Lineker.

The competition hotted up as it entered the medals stages, and Horse Guards officially enjoyed the Games' biggest press profile across the world, partly thanks

to its iconic location. Under the dazzling floodlights looking out over the illuminated London Eye, under the shadow of Big Ben, it made a magical, romantic setting. No wonder that when hard-bitten hacks took in the sight, they simply said "wow!"

With Team GB crashing out, the crowd initially became honorary Brazilians and then honorary Yanks. By the men's final, things fell into place. I finally got to grips with my walkie-talkie and, like all my fellow volunteers, I felt fitter running up and down 90 steps all day.

On my last day, I was thrilled to receive a souvenir silver relay baton ('for teamwork') along with bronze, silver and gold pin badges.

It was truly rewarding to know that I played a tiny part at the heart of a global sports event. The hours were long and, at times, it was shattering. At the same time I met so many talented people who worked

tirelessly for nothing, yet felt privileged knowing they've been part of history.

The bonus is that I now know the rules of volleyball and made new friends. In fact, many volunteers plan to sign up for Rio in 2016, which gives me four years to learn Portuguese. **DF**



# SHOW ON EARTH



official's job!" giggled Jessica.

She added: "The atmosphere was electric and whenever the fencers scored a point they'd whip their helmets off and give the most almighty roar."

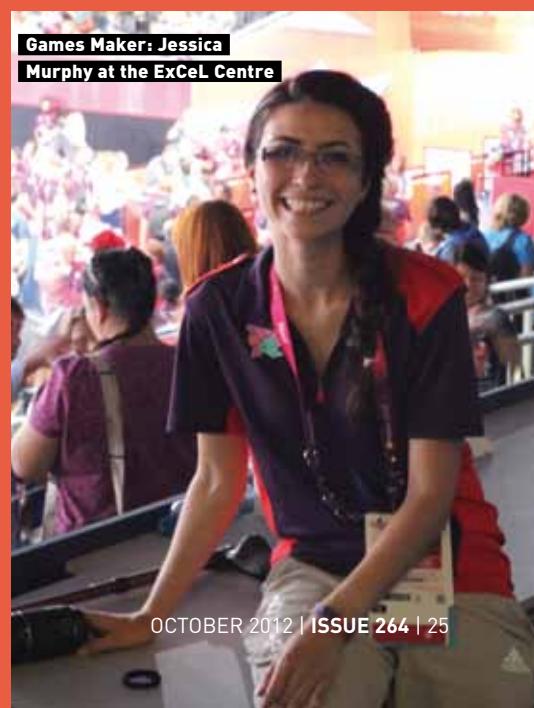
The agility and lightning movements of Paralympic fencers took Jessica by surprise. Ask her to single out her highlights and she cites witnessing Team GB judo players Sam Ingram and Ben Quilter winning silver and bronze and helping out at the victory ceremonies, particularly talking them through the strict protocols of the ceremony.

"Some athletes were super-talented and chuffed, others had never won a medal and were overcome, so seeing them well up was very moving."

Nothing though prepared her for the thrill of meeting Eva Loeffler, Mayor of the Paralympic Village and the daughter of Sir Ludwig Guttmann, founder of the modern Paralympics. "Eva was a medal presenter and meeting her was a very special moment," said Jessica.

Three years ago, Jessica applied to volunteer because she'd "always loved the Olympics and Paralympics" since she was a girl and didn't care what role she was given.

"It completely took over my life but I knew that was going to happen and I loved every moment," she said. "I didn't know what to expect when I applied but it's definitely exceeded my expectations. What happened was a fantastic experience and I've got memories that will stay with me forever." **DF**



**Games Maker: Jessica Murphy at the ExCeL Centre**



## BOSNIA

I enlisted into the Army as a Royal Military Policeman in 1997. Almost a year later, after a short posting in Germany, I deployed to Bosnia as a general policing duties NCO. Although I was on operations, I was employed in a policing role not dissimilar to my conventional role back in Germany. Working with the international police was both exciting and interesting and the tour was my first real experience of Army life overseas.

I was 19 when I joined the Army, prior to which I had some life experience before stumbling upon the recruitment centre in Swansea. For nine months I studied English language, literature and American history at Swansea University.

As my parents are staunch working-class people, I was encouraged to earn rather than learn, but despite taking on a number of bar jobs I couldn't afford my library fines let alone my university fees. At the recruitment centre, I was reassured that I could continue with my degree in the Army while receiving a salary. It didn't exactly work that way immediately, though it was an excellent recruitment spiel at the time.

Fifteen years later, I'm now in my final year of an honours degree in Business and Management through Bournemouth University.

When I first joined the Army, I think it's fair to say that it took me longer than most to embrace the military style of life. That said, meeting new people and learning new skills took my mind off what I was leaving behind.



# MY MEDALS

Staff Sergeant Barry John Key, 35, joined the Royal Military Police in 1997. He has been awarded eight medals and looks back over his 15-year career. Interview by Lorraine McBride

My most vivid memory was travelling in convoy from Greece for a painstaking 16 hours, and seeing what I can only describe as a smoldering city that was Pristina.

I was attached to an infantry regiment as a continuity NCO, living in a platoon house, responsible for speaking to village elders and reassuring them that the purpose of our presence was an attempt to bring peace to their villages and to prevent any unnecessary dispute between the Albanians and Serbs.

During my tour, I was unfortunate enough to witness some awful atrocities including an assassination just moments after it had happened, but I came away hoping that we played a small

part in making a difference to the lives of the people we were there to support.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

In 2000 'The Troubles' were petering out. I was based in Londonderry employed within a unit investigation element responsible for investigating soldier crime.

My job was policing from start to finish, which is why I joined my cap badge, but I was very conscious of the politics involving the military, so my social life was pretty non-existent. Looking back though, I am glad to have been posted there, as it consolidated my policing skills learned in Germany.

## KOSOVO

When I deployed to Kosovo as part of KFOR in 1999, it was at a time of terrible atrocities.



## IRAQ

My six-month tour during Op Telic 4 in 2004 was by no means straightforward, as I am sure all those deployed at that time would agree.

I was initially employed as a second-in-command of a rover group, responsible for ensuring our OC was able to visit locations across the country. During my deployment, my team and I were involved in two separate IED strikes.

Iraq was definitely the most challenging tour at that point. During the latter stages, I was drafted in to bolster the brigade commander's close Protection tour.

I met my wife-to-be Kate on R&R and we communicated mainly by bluey and email as we only met twice during R&R.

When I returned to theatre we spent the next three months learning a lot about each other through handwritten letters like an old-fashioned courtship.



## AFGHANISTAN

On my first deployment, I flew in and out on a short close protection task, where I was a team leader responsible for the protection of General Sir David Richards.

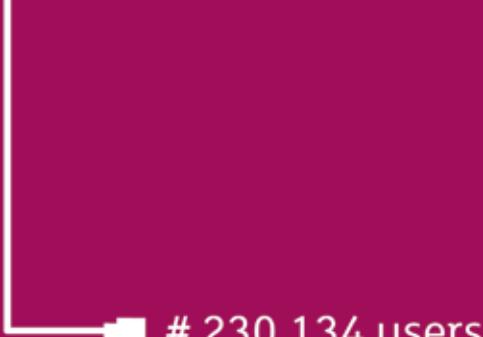
Some 18 months later, I returned to Afghanistan again in the role of team leader, this time providing close protection to General Sir Nick Parker at ISAF HQ, who was the most senior British commander at the time.

Close protection provides members of the service police with an opportunity to specialise in an area of their corps that offers excellent training and chances to meet influential people, and travel to countries that you wouldn't ordinarily visit in the Army.



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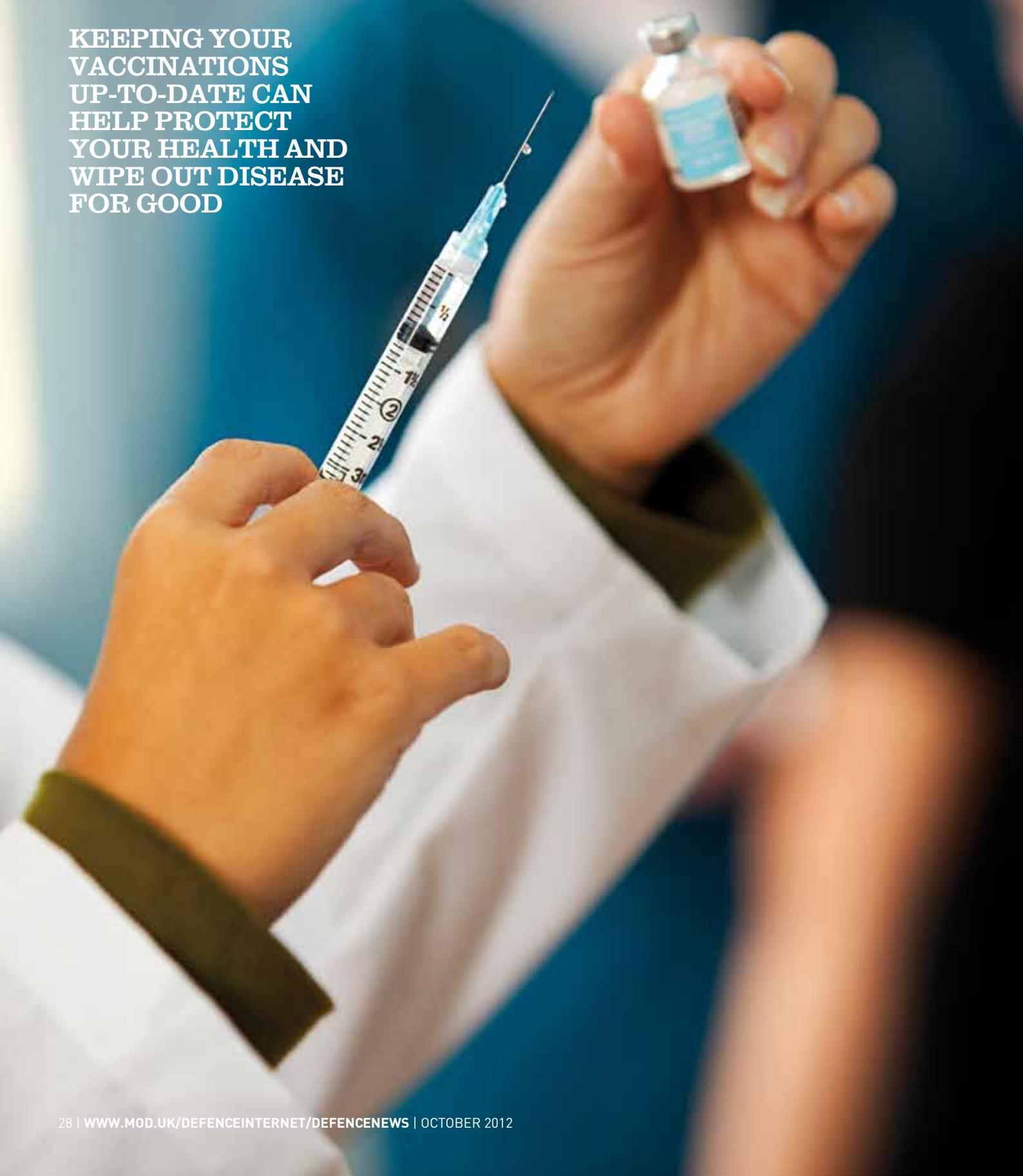
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# JAB TALKING

KEEPING YOUR  
VACCINATIONS  
UP-TO-DATE CAN  
HELP PROTECT  
YOUR HEALTH AND  
WIPE OUT DISEASE  
FOR GOOD





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

Hello from Whale Island in Portsmouth. Each time a ship deploys, we have a big push on vaccinations, making sure everyone is up-to-date and protected against disease regardless of where they will serve. It's vital to remember how important these jabs are. Although we don't see diseases like polio and diphtheria very often, we still remain susceptible to them should we visit a part of the world where they're commonplace. Whether you're Service or civilian, make sure your inoculations are current.

Take tetanus as an example. Tiny tetanus spores are present in the soil and can enter the body through a puncture wound from a gardening fork, for example. These spores are tough and

difficult to destroy with disinfectants. However, you don't have to sustain a major injury, the spores can enter through a burn or a very small wound. The condition is not spread from person to person – you can't pass on the tetanus spores.

So, just what are the symptoms of tetanus? It's an unpleasant condition in which a person develops rigid muscles and 'lockjaw'. It takes between one and three weeks from the original injury to the symptoms starting. The elderly are the group of people most at risk. Painful muscular spasms occur which spread to the neck and chest. A fever and breathing difficulties can develop and it can be fatal. Intensive care treatment in hospital is often needed. Death from tetanus is rare in the UK but unfortunately still common in developing countries.

Effective immunisation against tetanus was introduced nationally from 1961. If you were born before this, you will not have had routine immunisation as a child. If you're not sure whether

you have been immunised or wonder whether you're in-date, you should visit your sick bay or medical centre. Three initial injections of the tetanus toxoid are given at monthly intervals, followed by two booster doses 10 years apart. It's believed that five doses give lifelong protection against the illness. However, extra booster doses can be given if a patient has had an injury and is not sure about their immunisations or if they are travelling to a remote place and have not had a booster for 10 years.

If you have actually suffered from tetanus itself, you are not immune and still need a course of immunisations. Take 10 minutes this month to check with your medical centre that you're up to date with vaccinations. After all, you never know where in the world you might be working or visiting next.

Stay healthy and I'll see you next month.

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



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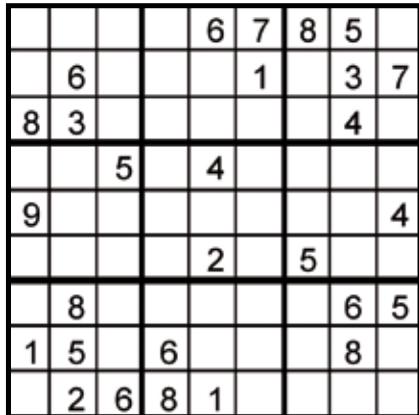
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# SUDOKU



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



Solution to the August 2012 puzzle

# CHESS



Compiled by:  
Carl Portman

My grade has gone down by one point to 168. What's one point you might ask? Well it's one point in the wrong direction, that's what. Chess is supposed to be a young person's game and I should weaken as I age but I have tried really hard this year. How can I address this situation? Should I play more, study more, or both? I will do what I have always done; shrug my shoulders and get on and enjoy my chess regardless of grade. It's the pieces at the board that really matter, the sheer joy of playing, of creating my own picture on the 64 squares. Grades are what juniors worry about, grades are what the world's top 50 worry about. Grades can create a psychological barrier to your game. I guess I am only 18 points off 150 but then I am only 12 points off 180 and that's what I shall strive for – even though I am an 'old man'. You see age does not have to mean that your skill set diminishes in whatever you do, so bring it on. Set up the pieces, press the clock and make your move buddy...

The excellent chess problem this month is taken from the game Anon-



Sonnenschein in Berlin 1937. White's queen is pinned so he resigned. However, there was a spectacular alternative at his disposal but can you find the full sequence?

Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please. A recent copy of CHESS magazine awaits the winner.

The answer to August's problem was a study in itself: 1...Kd5! 2.b4 f5 3.b5 f4 4.b6 Kc6! (forces the white king to a6 so black can queen the pawn with check) 5.Ka6 f3 6.b7 f2 7.b8=Q f1=Q check 8.Ka5 Qa1+ 9.Kb4 Qb1+ winning the queen. Winner to be announced. July's winner was Jerry Hendy.

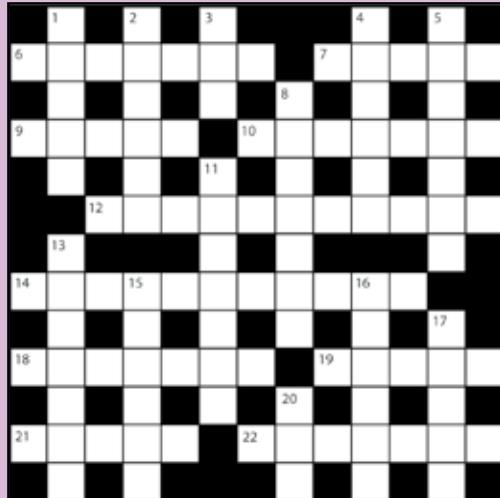
# TOPICAL CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

6. Ferguson, the singer with a hit album called 'Heaven' (7)
7. Athletics team race at the 2012 Olympic Games (5)
9. Top room in a house (5)
10. Father of Princes William and Harry (7)
12. Barcelona and Argentina's top footballer (6,5)
14. UK's representative at the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest (11)
18. Implement for practical use (7)
19. Drummer with The Beatles (5)
21. See 8 Down
22. See 4 Down

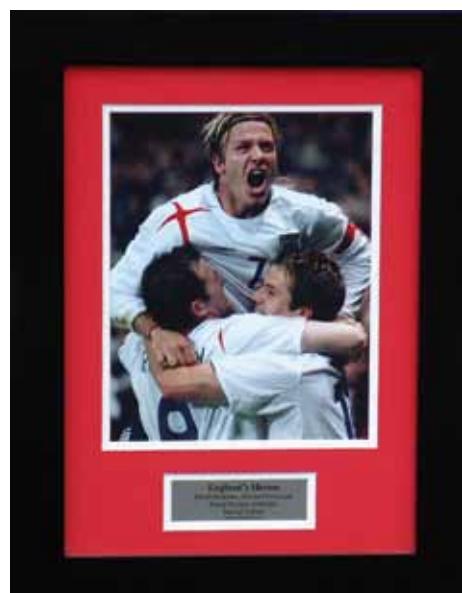
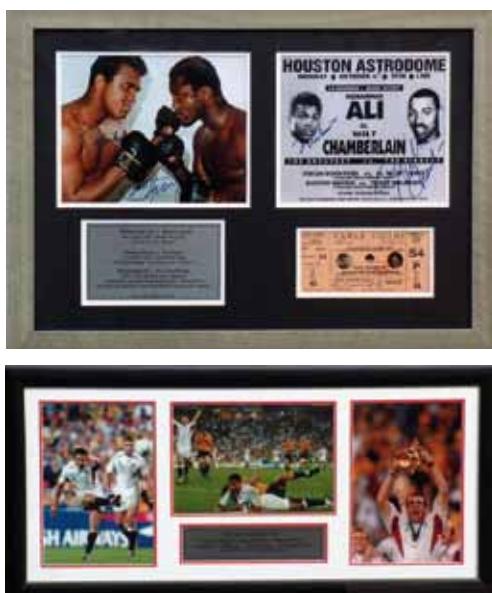
## DOWN

1. See 5 Down
2. Sign of the zodiac associated with twins (6)



- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Across</b>                    | <b>Down</b>                      |
| 6. Rebecca 7. Relay 9. Attic     | 22. Osbourne                     |
| 10. Charles 12. Lionel Messi     | 19. Starr 21. Logan              |
| 14. Humpertinck 18. Utensil      | 10. Charles 12. Lionel Messi     |
| 16. Cotton 17. Brand 20. USA     | 14. Humpertinck 18. Utensil      |
| 13. Auction 15. Pen Pal          | 16. Cotton 17. Brand 20. USA     |
| 8. Phyllis 11. George 5. Vanessa | 13. Auction 15. Pen Pal          |
| 3. Ace 4. Gemini                 | 8. Phyllis 11. George 5. Vanessa |
| 1. Feliz 2. Gemini               | 3. Ace 4. Gemini                 |

## SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)



## WIN LEGENDS LIMITED EDITIONS

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## WIN TICKETS TO YES, PRIME MINISTER

The award-winning TV comedy is back on stage and *Defence Focus* has one pair of tickets up for grabs.

Following two smash-hit West End runs, the award-winning Yes, Prime Minister has been updated and voted back into London and has proved a monster hit.

This hilarious comedy by original BBC writers Antony Jay and Jonathan Lynn thrusts the much-loved characters Sir Humphrey Appleby and Jim Hacker into the chaos of 21st century coalition politics. With the threat of financial meltdown just hours away, and the only hope of rescue resting on a morally-dubious deal with the Foreign Minister

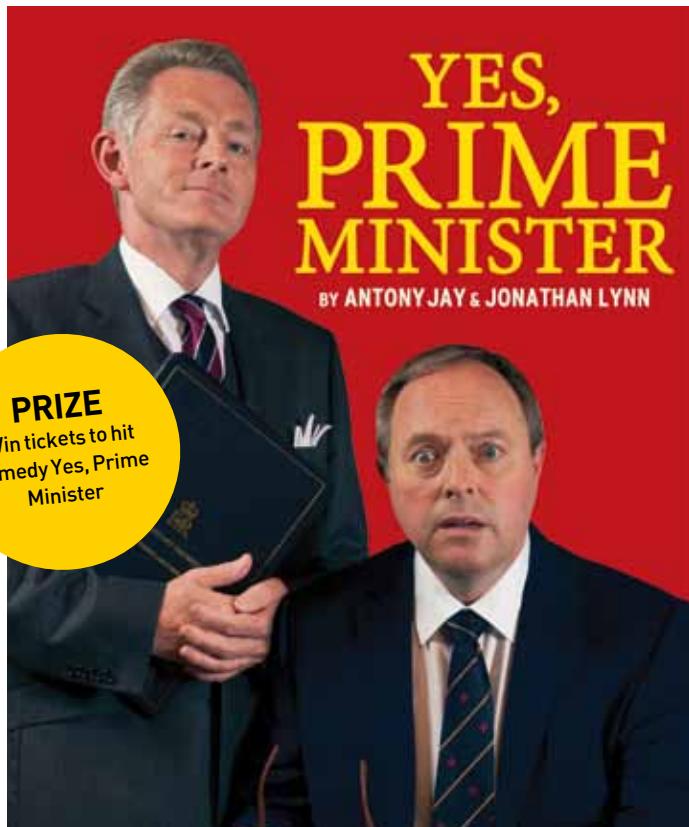
of Kumranistan, the stage is set for a riotous comedy of sex, scandal and scheming.

Yes, Prime Minister is now on at the Trafalgar Studios theatre on Whitehall.

For more information go to [www.yesprimeminister.co.uk](http://www.yesprimeminister.co.uk)

**Terms and Conditions**  
Tickets valid until 1 December 2012 for Monday to Friday performances. Subject to availability.

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Just email your name, address and phone number to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk) by 24 October 2012. Include the phrase 'Yes, Prime Minister' in the subject line.



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