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Foreword by 212’s Commanding Officer

Col Owen Jones

It is a real privilege to produce the forward for this latest edition of the Pulse. At the time of writing I have been in command for four months but what I have seen so far has confirmed to me what privilege it is to command 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital. Firstly I have to thank all of you for your continued efforts, professionalism and enthusiasm. It is without doubt you continuing commitment which will allow us to build a better future for 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital.

Having taken over from Col Mark I soon realised that I would face many challenges; not least working with you to ensure we can deliver all aspects of healthcare in any environment and in any circumstances. The depth of your experience and in particular the experience you have gained on recent operations will help underpin preparing the unit for contingency operations.

The HERRICK cycle has meant that we have been part of a prescribed training cycle but we must now be imaginative and use all our skills to ensure we are a versatile, resilient and professional force. To achieve this I intend to ensure we get the basics of soldiering and medical care in the field right. We must be physically robust, clinically competent and able to operate in any environment.

The need to prepare for a future that that may involve operations other than war fighting and see us delivering healthcare in an austere environment after natural or man-made disasters provides us with a handrail on which to plan training and look at the skill sets that we require to successfully any future missions associated with humanitarian assistance. This must complement our traditional approach to training which is focused on our primary mission which includes the provision of first class military medical care on operations.

Given that the Reserves within the Military are facing considerable changes in the way that they will do business in the future it is only natural that you all want to know what the “new deal” for the Reserves will include. I anticipate that the White Paper and the revised basing for the Reserves will be announced in July. These will shape our future and provide a platform on which to build a truly professional and integrated force. In a time of uncertainty the Pulse provides me with a much better means of communicating all the good work that you have done than Part One Orders (not that you do not also study every aspect of P1O’s!!!!!!!).

I am sure you will all join me in wishing Col Mark all the very best on his retirement from the Army. I am know he will now be able to devote more time to his other passions of sailing and rugby. At the same time we have to welcome Major Tosh Carter as the Training Major, Captain Ian Wright as the RCMO and the return of Lt Col Rinky Inglis as the REGNO.

The Pulse provides me with an opportunity to share with you my vision for the future. So the key message from me is that; I have been impressed by the willingness to embrace change, get stuck in and face the challenges that will face us in returning to contingency and in recruiting the right people to help shape the provision of medical care by reserve forces in the future. We all have to rise to the challenge of recruiting new members to an organisation that has a great deal to offer. Be prepared to work hard and I will endeavour to get the balance right between physically and intellectually challenging training.

Whenever possible I will exploit the opportunities for you to experience new challenges. You will have all gathered by now that you will need to remember to bring your sports kit and be prepared for challenging training.

Col Owen Jones
Commanding Officer
212 Field Hospital

TM’s Write-Up

Maj J S Carter (Training Major)

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to write a small article of introduction for this issue of ‘The Pulse’. I was assigned to 212 Field Hospital (Volunteers) in mid January after completing a seven month deployment in Afghanistan. I was fortunate enough to have deployed as SO2 ANSF Medical Development with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, whereupon, I was one of a hundred and twelve Brits embedded within the US Marine Corps in Camp Leatherneck. Needless to say it was a fantastic experience; but saying that I am certainly glad to be back in the UK and in particular assigned to 212 Field Hospital (Volunteer) as your new Training Major.

I am no stranger to the reserve forces and this assignment will be my fourth tour with the Territorial Army. Prior to my deployment I was a desk officer at the Army Personal Centre where upon I career managed Combat Medical Technicians, so one could argue that I could have looked at other assignment options. Be assured though that I specifically selected this unit as I was aware of its excellent reputation and also I was keen to work again with the enthused soldiers and officers a reserve unit has to offer.

Albeit my tenure so far has been sporadic I have now completed all of my leave and I am now ready to take the unit forward from a training perspective. This however, is not my only remit and my other responsibilities pertain to the daily functionality of the unit on behalf of the Commanding Officer. I am looking forward with eager anticipation to what is to ensue. In the interim period I would be grateful for your feedback regarding training and ideas that you may want to share as after all it is you, the soldiers and officers of the unit that create its fabric.

Major J S Carter
212 Field Hospital
Training Major
RegNO’s Write-Up

What do they say about bad pennies..........?!

Since my return to 212 Field Hospital, it has confirmed to me that one of the great things about the Pulse magazine is that it really does reflect how we as a hospital have continued to contribute to the defence of the country and the care of patients under our protection. This started from before the days of Operation TELIC right through until the current drawdown of Coalition Forces in Afghanistan and now the move to Contingency Operations. All this has been undertaken both individually and as part of a formed body, most recently during Operation HERRICK-13.

212 Field Hospital RegNO
Lt Col R Inglis

Although not scheduled to redeploy as a hospital to Helmand, the Commanding Officer’s intent is to ensure that we remain in a position to enable and not constrain those of the Army Medical Services who are responsible to Force Generate clinical staff for tours of duty as Individual Augmentees. To that end, we must continue to train hard and further develop so we can react swiftly and with confidence that we are as organised as we can be to deploy in support of a rapidly and dynamically evolving contemporary operating environments.

These new environments will demand clinicians in uniform to be comfortable with uncertainty, confident in challenging and austere conditions, and to always remember that a sense of humour is as necessary as a well-packed Bergen, no matter whether you are on the way to a bothie in the Highlands of Scotland or mobilised at short notice and flying into a hastily conceived and austere forward position ready to deliver life saving care in some (not too distant) future contingency short term intervention operation.

So, having outlined the direction of travel and given you at least part of the intention, it is time to get into the detail and refine some of this direction. To get the very best out of 212 Field Hospital, I need you as members of the Unit to maintain communications with the unit.

We will always answer your questions and we will continue to support your clinical and military aspirations through development opportunities. Some of these, such as conferences and study days, will be organised directly from this office. Other activities and courses you should seek out through your unit administrative staff and OCs. Using the chain of command should not be an onerous task and if we are failing you let us know so we can improve things or at least manage your expectations honestly.

More generally, we need to stay up to date with regard to clinical competences and CVs. The Defence Operational Nurse Competencies (DONC) are also a mandatory requirement for all nurses & HCAs. I have emailed you the specific detail but if you have any queries, please get in touch - the only stupid question is the one that isn’t asked.

To summarise: while the Armed Forces as a whole is changing its character to match the challenges of contingency, the nature of what we do has not changed. We are professional officers and soldiers who are part of a very special and enduring DNA that is 212 Field Hospital. We all add tangible value to the Army Medical Services through our ability to enable and support our men and women on operations and we should do this with pride and courage. The uniform we wear, the level of care we capable of delivering and the courage through being honest about our own abilities and having the strength to do the right thing knowing that we will be supported by a philosophy of command that will develop you, nurture you and lead you to success.

For those whom I have not yet met, I look forward to doing so.

Lt Col Inglis
212 Field Hospital RegNO

212’s New Regimental Career Management Officer (RCMO)

212 Field Hospital, along with most other TA major units, have had a new Headquarters’ post established to assist with the transition towards FR20 and the hoped for ’bow wave’ of new recruits and transferring regular service leavers coming to join the Reserve. Along with handling this increase will come the harmonisation between the modus operandi of the Regular Army and the new Future Reserve in terms of career management, development and reporting. Timeliness, oversight and quality control of reporting in tandem with boarding for promotion and appointments will form a key element of this work in support of all unit members.

Your new Regimental Career Management Officer (RCMO) is Captain Ian Wright who arrived in April. He has had a regular army career as a ‘loggy’ starting in 1978 and more recently 10 years on FTRS, working as a selection office at the Army Development and Selection Centre in Lichfield.

He looks forwards to meeting you all in due course.

Capt S Garratty
HQ Detachment

212 Field Hospital RCMO
Capt Ian Wright
For thirteen weeks I worked in the Role 3 Hospital situated at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan. This was a rare opportunity for a doctor, rarer still when you consider I was not surgical trainee, not an ED specialist, not even a medical registrar. I am a paediatrics trainee, a baby doctor.

Experience from previous deployments ensured 212 felt there was sufficient work for a paediatrician to justify my seat on the plane. I found the pre deployment clinical training informative, I was already an ATLS and APLS instructor and enjoyed my BATLS course, but found all the chest compressions of my ALS course quite tiring - it is so much less strenuous when you are using only one hand or two fingers! The simulation work at Strensall seemed extreme, the scenarios pure fiction, but in fact I return with knowledge of cases that I can hardly believe occurred and yet I saw them with my own eyes. The fitness training was a challenge for me, and balancing courses, fitness, TA weekends and a full 48 hour/week rota on a critical care unit as well as spending quality time with my family was tough - but this stressful time management training also turned out to be good preparation for my deployment.

I started out as a doctor without portfolio, but as we had no GDMO I was mainly assisting on the wards. The unique environment and work ethic of Bastion allowed me to work in all areas: ED, ICU, OR. I was dealing with all patients, paediatric and adult. The physiology of the military population is not greatly different from that of my more familiar adolescent population and the consultant led and delivered standard of care at Bastion provided excellent support.

The opinions surrounding my usefulness to the unit had widely varied prior to my arrival in Bastion. Some saying there were very few children and some saying I would be seeing a lot of children. Despite all the preparation I still started with a shock. Whilst queuing for pillows in the Bastion shop, filling the three hours till my hospital induction I was literally grabbed. “6 x Cat A paediatrics 5 minutes out, ED want you.” I thought they were kidding. They weren’t.

Over the weeks we saw a variety of paediatric cases, trauma and medical, related to conflict and not, from six weeks of age to adolescence. They came in ones or twos, or groups, sometimes we had half a dozen children on the ward at a time. I learnt that Disney’s Fantasia is a great DVD with very little spoken language so can be watched and enjoyed by children with no understanding of English, also that Afghan children don’t complain of pain so PRN analgesia is a waste of time, they feel pain, and were suffering some really painful conditions, so instead bump up the regular medications.

Within my area of expertise (the little people), I was able to provide experience, skills and support. I have always thought Paediatrics was not rocket science, but was surprised how little experience of children some clinicians have, and pretty shocked by reluctance to look up doses in the BNFc. Offering advice gained through my seven years’ experience of paediatrics, from my rank of captain up to the lofty heights of colonel was an unexpected challenge, and an improvement in my diplomacy skills was an unexpected bonus to my portfolio.

I returned from my deployment 10 months ago and although the fitness regime has faded, the lessons I learnt I have not. I am grateful for the opportunity I received, and would recommend it to anyone. I have already seen the effect deployment has had on my CV, when my recent job interview opener was “Tell us about something you have done of which you are proud.” Needless to say, I got the job!

Capt Abi Hoyle
HQ Detachment

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Exercise Whitney Serpent was an arduous walking/camping expedition to North America. A group of 12 individuals TA and Regular, myself included, were to go trekking around Northern California and Nevada. The group was made up of an equal number of males and females and ranged from Major to corporal. We all met up at a travel lodge in Gatwick, and the following day flew from there to Las Vegas. After spending the night in Las Vegas, the following day was taken up preparing our kit and gathering supplies for our move to the Grand Canyon, via the Hoover Dam. The Dam is amazing, it is regarded as one of the engineering marvels of the 20th Century. It also marks the state boundary of Nevada and Arizona.

We then commenced the 4 hour drive to the Grand Canyon, passing through the Mojave Desert. I was amazed to find people can buy vast areas of land here, very cheap. There is no water, electricity or much growing here, but the land can be yours. We arrived at the Grand Canyon late afternoon so spent the time, pitching our tents, it wasn’t all hotels. We cooked our evening meal, had a beer then settled down for the night as we had an early start the next morning.

Our first experience of walking with loaded packs at altitude, the rim of the Grand Canyon is 4000 feet above sea level, was spectacular. We walked around 10 miles along the south rim of the canyon, and the views were stunning. The walk finished at a place called Hermits Rest, were the transport picked us up and brought us back to the camp site. The following day was the first of the 2 main events. We were going to walk all the way down to the bottom of the canyon, then back out the following day. We had a 4am start, as it is not advised to walk in the heat of the day and we would be walking for around 8 hours. Sunrise over the canyon is breath taking. We spent the night at the side of the Colorado River, and in it to cool off. The next day was also an early start for the same reason. The only draw back was that it is dark till around 6 am so you miss some of the scenery as you ascend the canyon. This is one of the most demanding things I have done, you are constantly walking up hill and it is stiflingly hot. After a few hours you get tired of drinking warm water, but you need to keep drinking. According to the Park Rangers around 40 people a year have to be rescued due to dehydration. The only way in or out is on foot or pony. The walk out took around 10 hours, but the feeling of achievement when you reach the top is amazing.

The next day we drove back to Las Vegas to resupply for the next phase. The 5 day Exped culminating in the ascent of Mount Whitney. To assist in acclimatising to the altitude, Whitney is nearly 15,000 feet above sea level, the highest point in the continental US. We went via Death Valley, which has the lowest point in the US, Bad Water Basin, 282 feet below sea level. We were to use the town of Lone Pine as our base. We prepared our kit and spent our last night, for a week, in a comfy bed in the hostel. The following morning we made our way to the start point. To start the acclimatisation process we would slowly make our way up into the mountain region then on the second day ascend to 11,000 feet. The scenery was spectacular, ranging from lush valleys to barren rock. The next 3 days we made our way towards Mount Whitney ascending and descending to help prevent AMS (Acute Mountain sickness). On the next to last day we passed through Forrester Pass, 13,200 feet above sea level, with Mount Whitney now in our sights. The weather had been glorious the whole time but that night it hail stoned. The last day was an early start with the plan of getting near to the top of Mount Whitney for sunrise. So we set off at 2am. A head torch is essential. We reached the Pass were everyone drops their kit and makes the short 2 mile walk to the summit, just as the sun was coming up. After spending around an hour at the summit, we made our way back, picked up our kit and then started the 12 mile walk back to Lone Pine. Where a nice hot shower, hot food and a cold beer awaited. We spent the next day in Lone Pine and took in the Manzanar Internment Camp. This is where US citizens of Japanese descent were kept during the second world war, after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. The next day we made our way back to Las Vegas for a couple of days of R&R and to sample some of the sights and sounds of the city.

This expedition was hard, challenging at times and required a good level of fitness and commitment, but was well worth all the effort put in by not only those who participated but those who also organised the whole thing.

Capt Adrian Hoyle
HQ Detachment

Death Valley National Park

The Group take a rest and shelter from the searing heat in Death Valley
A Personal Reflection of ‘Soldier School’ by Pte Nicole Weijers

The preparation for attending my first weekend had started months in advance; with a large majority of it being advice from other members of my unit on additional items to pack and what to expect through my training. Despite this, I did feel anxious about beginning this arduous journey of self discovery, as I knew I would be continuously pushed outside of my comfort zone with the amount of physical training, knowledge I would have to retain and the length that my day would now be stretched to.

Having arrived at the RTC on my own I was keen to get to know the people around me, in order to begin to establish the team’s dynamics, as this would be key to successfully completing the course. Everyone began to form a role within the group; obviously some more positive than others. With the addition of nicknames that the Directing Staff had ‘affectionately’ given us; such as ‘Father Time’, ‘Joker’, ‘Bambi’ and ‘Dutchy’, the 50 or so shiny new recruits had formed Corunna Platoon. After completing the first weekend, the vast majority began the next stage in attending the 9 day consolidated course. As a result of the intensity of the course, we did not have the time to think and each day we had the pressure to have significantly improved on the last. A noticeable emphasis was put upon the Skill At Arms training for the test on the Thursday along with the dreaded loaded marches. There was several Drill lessons on the parade square, which caused some of the Drill instructors to lose their voices as dealing with some dozy recruits tested everyone’s patience, although I soon became strangely fond of drill, as it was something I seemed to be able to get right quite quickly.

One of the best experiences of the course had to be Exercise First Night. Although technically our second night under the stars, this time it would be taken seriously, rather than a camping trip. This was also the first night we fired our rifles; albeit blanks, it felt real and we all suddenly realised our responsibilities and the immense importance of making sure our drills were perfect. However, if we didn’t there was always a helpful member of the DS who would donate their time to a one-to-one PT session to encourage us to never forget.

The training overall was the most polarising experience of my life so far and has given me greater direction and motivation to do what I set out to accomplish. I know I will carry the memories of my experience of ‘soldier school’ throughout my military career and will keep in contact with the people who played such a massive part in its development; namely the DS and my fellow recruits.

Pte Nicole Weijers
HQ Detachment

15 (NE) Bde Phase 1 Training
Back Row: Pte Nicole Weijers, Pte Liz Brown, Pte Izzy Johnson, Pte Holly Ashton, Pte Carly Bell - Middle Row: Pte Nataleigh Bialek, Pte Tracy Cottaris, Pte Katie Allen, - Front Centre: Cpl Haley Just

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Reflections of my Deployment to Afghanistan by Cpl Suzanne Gray

I am woken by the sound of rain on the pod canvas. It’s been a while since we last had rain here, and reminds me of when we were issued with warnings to get our kit off the floor in our pods as there was a high risk of flooding. Hopefully it won’t come to that this time. The pitter patter of the rain keeps me awake, and I wonder if the bleep will go off and call me into theatre. I have been incredibly lucky so far – only had one really bad on call shift, when I didn’t get to bed until 0700hrs, from going on duty at 1800hrs the previous day. Counting the on calls left to do now, before we are relieved by 22 Field Hospital, who are due here soon.

How the time has flown since we first got here ourselves back in January, and how far I have come since that phone call that turned my day to day life upside down. I clearly remember the phone call back in August asking me if I was still available to deploy on Herrick 15b, with 201 Field Hospital, and the somersault my stomach did. Once it had settled, I excitedly replied “Yes, of course”, and then turned to a colleague and said “they want me to go in January!” At that stage it still didn’t feel real, despite friends and family constantly asking me when I was going to be going to Afghanistan.

The first part of my pre-deployment training was when I went off to do OPTAG, down in Lydd in October. Everyone had warned me that no matter what time of year one went there, it would be cold and wet - they weren’t wrong! Looking around the big auditorium at all the young lads I did wonder if I would see any of them passing through theatre when I went out in January, and hoping and praying that I wouldn’t. It was also then that I remember feeling very proud to be part of something really big, and this proved to be a recurring feeling throughout the whole experience.

Due to my late call up for duty, my pre-deployment training was out of sync with the field hospital I was going with. I hadn’t met any of the theatre team, and wouldn’t get that opportunity until Hospex in January. In the meantime I had two weeks training to get through at Chilwell. The thought of two weeks of MATTs did make me feel quite anxious, but looking back at it now, it wasn’t half as bad as I thought it was going to be. The training team were excellent, and I look back with gratitude about how they got me through it, although thoughts of the CFT still give me nightmares!

Christmas was a blur and before I knew it January 2012 had arrived and I was being driven up to Strensall for Hospex, our final exercise before leaving for Afghanistan. I was excited but also nervous. It was the first opportunity to meet the team I would be working with, and hoped I would get on with them, and they me. I need not have worried. They made me feel welcome straight away, and we settled into the Hospex with ease. I think that shows what true professionals you are working with, when one can just fit in and get on with the job without any drama.

On the Sunday we were due to leave, we had a church service. It was a bright, frosty morning, when we marched over to the garrison church, and I have never felt so proud. Here we all were, quietly contemplating what the next few months were going to be like, and hoping we were going to be up to the mark. Not wanting to let our lads down, when it really counted.

I am not sure when the reality of what I was about to embark on really hit home with me, certainly not on the journey out to Afghanistan. Travelling as one unit, I still felt safe and untroubled, as though I was on my annual camp! By arriving in Camp Bastion at night, it was difficult to get any bearings, and one just had to go along with being shepherded on and off buses and shifting luggage from one pile to another. It was with great relief when we finally were able to lie down and get some sleep, after such a long journey.

After two nights in transit accommodation, we moved into what was going to be our “home” for the duration, on Brydon Lines. Life now was going to start be a little more uncomfortable, (having to go outside to the ablutions, sometimes no hot water, or electricity), and so I decided to treat it like a long camping expedition! And I reminded myself that it was nowhere near as bad as the conditions the boys had to live in outside the safety of Camp Bastion. It’s amazing how easily one can personalise ones bed space!

I remember clearly we all wanted to start working in the hospital, after what had been for most, two years
Reflections of my Deployment to Afghanistan by Cpl Suzanne Gray

training. I just hoped I wouldn’t let anyone down, that my responses would be quick enough, and that I wouldn’t panic. I suspect we all had doubts of one sort or another, and I took comfort from colleagues who had been here before me, who had told me that would I be absolutely fine. And I was. It’s true what they say - your training does kick in and the adrenaline rush when a major trauma comes through from ED into theatres keeps you alert and focused.

Life settled quickly into a routine of work, gym, eat and sleep, although not necessarily in that order! Trying out various exercise classes proved entertaining, and I certainly admired those that manage to stay the course with the Insanity class! Op Minimize, became something one got used to and I never tell my family definite times when I would phone home, as it can never be guaranteed. The afternoon post collection is always something to look forward to, and the sharing out food of parcels helps boost morale, especially when it is a particularly gruelling shift.

One adapts very quickly to the constant noise about the place, and the sound of helicopters flying around soon fades into the background. It doesn’t take too long to recognise when it is the MERT landing on “Nightingale”. When you hear the MERT, you know it will be followed shortly by the ambulance siren, transporting the casualty to the hospital. Those of us in the OR are often quite envious of staff working shifts with days off. In the OR we have two teams working a two shift system. One shift works 0745-1215, having the afternoon off and then going back into work at 1800 until 2000 or until the OR is clear of patients. We are then “on call” until 0745 the next day for any emergencies that need to come to theatre overnight. It doesn’t take long to acquire the skills of dressing quickly!

The other shift comes on duty at 1215 and works until 1800. The mornings are usually busy dealing with “take backs” - these are patients requiring either further surgery, or delayed primary closure of wounds. And of course whilst we are doing this there is always the potential for any number of trauma patients to come in at any time.

We have had a heightened state of alert for much of this tour, which has presented its challenges, but everyone has just accepted it, and carried on doing the job they have been sent here to do. We are moving into “Resilience”, in the next couple of days, which means we are a step closer to Cyprus and coming home. I am going to be sad to leave this place. I have learnt such a lot in the short space of time that I have been here, and been exposed to so many different experiences. I will be sad to be leaving the people I have been working with, who have been amazing. Everyone has been friendly, helpful and supportive, and the general atmosphere has been upbeat. That is not to say there haven’t been challenging times. Dealing with a conflict in emotions has been hard for me. Wanting to be respectful towards a dying soldier, whilst at the same time knowing you need to help his colleague who is just being wheeled into theatre, required time and space to come to terms with. And that time and space is a difficult commodity out here. However, walking down the corridor of the hospital where everyone knows one another, and asks if you are alright, it makes you feel part of a big family, where you are all looking out for each other.

Enough now, I need to try and get some sleep, and pray we are not called into work before the next shift starts. I just hope the 22 Field Hospital have as good a tour as I have.

Cpl Suzanne Gray
B Detachment
Training in Nepal

Last August I went to Nepal to provide medical training support to the Gurkhas. The training included a refresher in Adult intermediate life support, basic Paediatric life support and choking. The target audience was the medical staff at British Gurkhas Pokhara and British Gurkhas Katmandu. The medical staff provide care to British Gurkhas and their families and help with medicals during the very busy recruiting season.

I taught 15 staff in the two medical centres they were mainly Nepalese but with good levels of English. I also had the chance to deliver training to some of the families of Gurkha soldiers. The visit programme lasted over 7 days including travel. I did get some time to see some of the beautiful scenery in Nepal including the capital city of Katmandu. The Gurkha museum at Pokhara was especially inspiring. All in all the training was very successful and the medical staff showed themselves to be keen to learn and very kind and welcoming.

Maj Edward Chapman
B Detachment (Lincoln)

Phase 1 Training by Pte M Neild

Joining the army is one of the best decisions I have ever made. It is a life changing experience, before joining the Army I was overweight stuck doing a dead end job, learning no new skills and no chance of a progressing career. I thought about joining for about a year after seeing a couple of Recruitment Officers at my college seeing the things I could gain by joining I went for it.

Recruit Selection Weekend (RSW) recruit selection weekend was the first taste of the army I got. I complete shock to the system but I thoroughly enjoyed it its held over a weekend in York, after passing that I went onto the next stage.

Phase 1 A
10 days consolidated training again all held in York, One alpha looking back at it now it is funny turning up with no idea how to wear my uniform correctly but we quickly learned the rudiments of Military Life the physical training I received is a lot more than I expected I did find myself struggling a bit but after the first week you can feel and see yourself getting much fitter one of the high lights of basic training was the very first drill lesson we received, they’re we were taught drill by the drill instructor from “bad lads army” it was an experience never to be missed, after passing one alpha you move onto one bravo.

Phase 1 B
2 weeks consolidated held at the Army Training Regiment (ATR) in Pirbright Surrey, One bravo, without a doubt was one of the hardest things I have ever experienced it was very intense trying to cram a 14 week course into 2 weeks but it kept us extremely busy the skills I learnt throughout the course will unboundedly make you a better person inside and outside the army, the final day of one alpha was the best day I have had to date, getting to take part in a Full Military Pass out parade it was fantastic to see your family and friends all cheering you on and the feeling that you have just made it into the British army is a marvellous feeling.

If you’re thinking about joining the British army then don’t delay, its an experience you will never forget.

Pte M Neild
HQ Detachment
Through a quirk of military geography B detachment belongs to the Yorkshire Field Hospital, however both Nottingham and Lincoln are in themselves county towns residing within the East Midlands. One of the perks of this little geographical misplacement is that every now and again B Detachment gets the opportunity to do something different, one such chance came about on the 15th April 2013. Each branch of the RFCA has a SaBRE director, this has nothing to do with fencing but seeks to reward supportive employers of reservists. This year East Midlands RFCA organised a Heritage Day, this provided a chance to see some aspects of our country’s heritage with a visit to our capital city, Lynn and I were asked to support the day as chaperones.

The consisted of a guided tour of the Palace of Westminster, lunch at the RAF Club, a tour of the Battle of Britain bunker at RAF Uxbridge, and saving the best until last we were the guests of the Yeoman Warders (Beefeaters) of the tower of London for a private tour, dinner and most importantly invited to watch the Ceremony of the Keys.

The Palace of Westminster really is a remarkable place full of its own quirks, not least that the House of Commons only has enough seats for around two thirds of our MPs! The House of Lords as you might expect is somewhat grander then the Commons but still pales in comparison to the room where the Queen prepares for the state opening of parliament. Tours are open to the general public and can be booked through your local MP, Lynn and I would recommend a visit to anyone.

For me the highlight was our private tour of the Tower of London, having visited as a child I was particularly excited and had often hoped to one day watch the Ceremony of the keys. We were met by Colin, our personal Yeoman Warder guide for the evening, who gave us a fascinating tour with a few extra stories that are held back from the general public. It was strange to think that the site consists of several acres and a community of over one hundred people still living inside its walls, even stranger to thinks that two Queens of England are buried there (reunited with their heads) and that comparatively recently Rudolf Hess and the Kray twins were held there, not just a monument after all then!

The Ceremony of the keys takes place every evening at 2153hrs, and has done since the 14th Century, it is essentially, the Tower of London being locked up for the night, quite important as the Crown Jewels are kept there, The Tower has plenty of its own peculiarities, there must always be six ravens (currently they have two spare), none of which can fly. There are also statues of a polar bear and an elephant! Lynn and I were hosted in the Yeoman Warders’ bar and have been asked to provide a 212 Field Hospital Plaque for the wall, be sure to look out for it if you are ever lucky to be invited in.

Capt R J Harris
PSAO B Detachment

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Corporal Pete Wedgwood went to work in his Army uniform on Wednesday 26th June. Corporal Wedgwood is the Deputy Production Manager (Pharmacy Technician) at the Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust Pharmacy Manufacturing Unit in Leeds. Corporal Wedgwood helps to manage the facility which operates a sterile, licensed medication unit for the production of Intravenous infusions, tablets and medications, in addition to pre-packing and over-labelling tablets and medications prescribed throughout the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and several other service providers in the region.

The facility is very high tech and boasts a Hydrogen Peroxide Isolator Unit for the safe production and packaging of medications within a sterile environment. Corporal Wedgwood, who is married with two children, joined 212 Field Hospital in 2000 and has completed tours of duty in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Aside from his work, Army career and his family, Corporal Wedgwood enjoys Mountain Biking, Football and Cricket to name just a few of his many interests!

Meanwhile... Lieutenant Aimee Charnell received a warm welcome and many positive comments when she went to work at Airdale Hospital wearing her Army uniform as part of the Uniform to Work Day. 27 year old Aimee had the full support of her employers (The Airedale NHS Foundation Trust) who were more than pleased for Aimee to go about her usual day-to-day duties as a Junior Doctor wearing the Uniform. Lieutenant Aimee Charnell started her Army career with the Wolverhampton Army Cadet Force before joining 212 Field Hospital nearly three years ago. Aimee has now completed her Military Training and said that she is looking forward to being deployed.

Aimee has recently been teaching suturing and The Law and Ethics of Armed Combat within her role with 212 Field Hospital and enjoys hiking, climbing, cooking and keeping fit as part of her many other varied interests!

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Capt S Garratty
HQ Detachment
Armed Forces Day 2013

Nottingham was the city chosen to host Armed Forces Day for 2013 and what a day it turned out to be!

The event held on Saturday 29th July 2013 had representatives and stands from many Service Units past and present and was attended by over 100,000 people.

Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester represented the The Queen and Royal Family, as a parade of more than 600 Service personnel, veterans and cadets marched through the city streets from Nottingham Castle to the Old Market Square.

Also in attendance was the Secretary of State for Defence Philip Hammond, the Lord Mayor of Nottingham Councillor Merlita Bryan, and the new Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach.

As the parade reached The Duke, the world famous Red Arrows roared over the square in salute.

A Drumhead Service followed, concluding with a flypast of Typhoon aircraft over the Council House as the parade marched off.

Afternoon celebrations continued at the city’s Victoria Embankment, and visitors saw a variety of aircraft in the skies, including the famous Lancaster, Spitfire, Hurricane and Dakota of the Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, a Sea Fury and a Royal Navy Lynx helicopter, all contributing to a spectacular air show for Nottingham.

In addition, members of the RAF Falcons Parachute Display Team parachute into Victoria Embankment, mounting a colourful aerial display, whilst the Royal Marines performed a Dynamic Display on the River Trent.

Closing the celebrations was The King’s Troop Royal Horse Artillery, on a special visit to Nottingham from their home at the Royal Artillery Barracks in London, performing their celebrated Musical Drive.

Capt S Garratty
HQ Detachment
Armed Forces Day 2013 (Continued)

Crowds enjoy the sunshine whilst watching the Military Wives Choir perform on the centre stage

The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight

Several of the many displays and stands that were at the event for people to see

A young pilot taking his first flying lesson!

Closing the celebrations was The King’s Troop Royal Horse Artillery, on a special visit to Nottingham from their home at the Royal Artillery Barracks in London, performing their celebrated Musical Drive.

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On 22nd June 2013, Colonel Mark Pemberton was ‘Dined Out’ by the 212 Field Hospital (V) Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess. Col Pemberton was Commanding Officer of 212 Field Hospital from 15 January 2010 to 03 April 2013. The Unit was well represented with over 50 members and their guests attending the Dinner evening. Following a Meal and speeches, Col Pemberton was presented with a unique framed momento of his time with 212 Field Hospital and his wife Lesley was presented with a large bouquet of flowers.

Colonel Mark Pemberton was born in Stone but spent his formative years in Chester, Fiji and Swansea. He joined the Army at the age of 16, training firstly as a Medical Assistant, and then as a Radiographer, and was a Sergeant when he was accepted for officer training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

After Commissioning he served at Regemental Duty in Armoured and Airmobile Field Ambulances, at 201 (Northern) Field Hospital (Volunteers) and in now defunct British Military Hospitals. He completed staff appointments at 19 Infantry Brigade (during which he was deployed to the Middle East on Operation Granby) and the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps. Later, he was appointed Second in Command of the Army Training Regiment at Lichfield and moved from there to command 4 Field Ambulance. During this tour he commanded the UK Medical Group in Former Yugoslavia, and later absorbed two reserve Field Ambulances into the newly created 4 General Support Medical Regiment.

He moved from command to become SO1 Medical Operations and Plans at HQ Land Command for the period which included the mounting of forces to Afghanistan and on Operation TELIC. He was promoted on completion of this tour and as a Colonel he has been Deputy Commander of 2nd Medical Brigade and Commandant of the Defence Medical Services Training Centre. He assumed the appointment as Chief of...
2012 for me was a busy year. I graduated medical school, passed out of Sandhurst as a Commissioned Officer and started working as a doctor.

Presented here is a brief account of my path to becoming an Officer in the Territorial Army, in order to demonstrate just how much it is possible to achieve when you put your mind to it - and have a supportive Unit backing you all the way.

My inspiration to join the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) Reserve Forces came from my time with the London Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS), with whom I spent my fourth year emergency medicine elective in July 2011. I worked alongside regular military doctors, whose professionalism and clinical judgment in difficult situations was exemplary. On my return from the elective in August 2011, I approached my local Unit 212 Field Hospital in Sheffield. I was warmly welcomed and had my many questions answered. My first taster of what it might involve was on the first selection weekend which took place at Strensall, just outside of York. Any doubts I had about not fitting in and not being physically fit enough were soon put to rest. I had a brilliant time with lots of banter, exercise and three square meals a day. From just those two days I knew I was going to continue with my application, and have a good time on the way.

With medical finals fast approaching I was forced to delay attending the first weekend away, but the Unit were very understanding so this was not a problem. I managed to fit it in between medical finals part one and foundation programme interviews in January. This meant I was now able to attend Phase 1a training.

**Phase 1a - February 2012**

Phase 1a training can be done either by going on six separate weekends away, or attending a consolidated two week residential course. Due to time constraints with placements and finals part two, I found the consolidated course at Ripon/York the best way to go ahead.

I was one of just two females in a platoon of sixty men. There were people from all walks of life, of varying ages and we were all heading down different Army career paths. As the only person already earmarked to be heading to Sandhurst, I was the target for the majority of the banter but I soon learnt to give as good as I got! The two weeks were demanding in several ways. Firstly, it was physically demanding - not only because of the regular fitness tests and marching, but just the shear adjustment from civilian to barrack life. It was a steep learning curve in terms of knowledge too. Having no previous military background at all, I found a lot of the information new whereas some guys had spent time in the cadets and were consolidating previous knowledge. We spent a lot of time getting to know the weapon system used, and in particular cleaning it! This was actually a really sociable time as you all sat and did it together. No one left until everyone was done. Such teamwork and selfless commitment is unfortunately rarely seen in civilian life, and this is part of the attraction of the Armed Forces for me.

**Army Officer Selection Board - May 2012**

Having passed the Phase 1a training I was put forward for the Army Officer Selection Board, which took place on familiar ground for me back at Strensall in York. It was a weekend of assessment where there was a noticeable shift in focus from being a soldier to an Officer. Whilst I thoroughly enjoyed getting wet and muddy in the soldier training, I felt a lot more comfortable with my role over this weekend. The group was much smaller and this time we all had a common background of medicine and a common future of wanting to get selected to go to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. The command tasks during this weekend were a test of leadership, decision making and accountability. We were not pushed to near breaking point through physical exertion, but tested on our mental resolve and ability to command a group of strangers. The final interview was formal, with questions probing our character. The assessors did not give anything away during the interview, and so it was whilst I was waiting for an answer that I realised how much I wanted it. I had spent the last several months learning a whole new way of life, reading about military doctrine, the ethics of law, setting up a patrol harbour in hostile environments and spent a considerable amount of time polishing! And to think that after all that, I might not make the final hurdle, was a difficult prospect to swallow.

Thankfully, I was informed that it was a unanimous decision to send me to Sandhurst for my next stage of training. I was absolutely delighted.

**Phase 1b - July 2012, Sandhurst Royal Military Academy**

Driving into the grounds of Sandhurst made the little hairs on my neck stand up. I will never forget it. I was nervous and excited in equal measure. I soon met other people on the course as they arrived, and we all chatted nervously whilst we unpacked our heavily-laden cars (ironing-boards and all!).

In true military fashion, there was no hanging around. The first morning included introductions from relevant
staff, an orientation exercise around the grounds and lectures on command, leadership and management and the combat estimate. The majority of the first few days were laying the foundations for the five day field exercise we were going out on later in the course. Whilst some of the content was new to me, likewise some of it was thankfully familiar. There was considerable variation in knowledge amongst the group, as we had come from many different Units throughout the country, so the staff adopted the start from scratch policy which served us all well.

The five day field exercise was one of the highlights for me. We had the chance to put into practice all of the theory we had been learning about in the classrooms. I enjoyed seeing the transformation of individuals into teams and people helping each other out. It was physically and mentally demanding, designed to push you to your limit (where ever that may be). After all, it is in extremis that we really find out what we are really made of. Sleep deprivation seemed to be a common theme! We lived in a harbour area and given the hostility the harbour had to be protected around the clock. Good self-administration in a tactical setting is exhausting in itself. These five days gave us a little taste for what it may be like in such an environment, and as such a greater appreciation of just what we are asking of our men placed in that position. On the final night in the field we advanced to a forward operating base and came under contact with the enemy. This tested each and every member of the group. We were all physically and mentally spent but pulled together to defend our position and evacuate casualties.

The other highlight was the final pass out parade. It was such an honour and privilege to march on the square and up the steps of Old College with the guys whose pockets you have lived in for the last two weeks. Such a strong and unique bond has been formed between all of us on that course and I firmly believe that contact with many of them and hope to be deployed with some of them in the not too distant future.

Lt Nadine Keefe
HQ Detachment

Moonwalk 2013

Back in May 2003, Lt Col Kate Spillane and myself participated in our first Moonwalk in the desert somewhere between Iraq and Kuwait - we were on Op TELIC 1! We remember that there were lots of men from Seven Transport Regiment, in bras, that took part - any excuse to wear a bra and bondage gear for some men. We didn’t individually do 26.2 miles, but rather as a relay, with our respirators tied around our waists, just in case! We both declared that we would like to do the London Moonwalk when we returned and despite applying on a number of occasions, our luck finally came around in 2013.

We eventually found 144 Para Field Ambulance TAC at Hornsey and were met by SSGT Sara Halford, who generously gave up her time to open the gates and show us around the TAC - very much appreciated. We decided to go for a ‘last supper’ so strolled (actually it was a 2 mile uphill yomp!!) and feasted in Pizza Express. We proudly wore our Moonwalk T shirts - a glittery pink bra emblazoned on a white T shirt, which prompted an elderly lady to thrust £20 in our white T shirt, which prompted an elderly lady to thrust £20 in our direction, in memory of her mom - Many thanks to the anonymous lady, Pizza Express, Hornsey.

Soon it was time to get to the big pink marquee at Battersea Power Station to register, eat pasta, dance to warm up and generally follow that old Army dictum, ‘Hurry up and wait!!’ It soon got to 9pm’s time for departure. 2345 hours, we were paraded outside, in our variously decorated bras, sporting our NASA special plastic bags, designed to keep you warm in all weathers and of course dry, because tonight Mathew, we’ve ordered snow and hail to fall. Oh my goodness it was cold, so the theme of rockets was well sponsored and there was no need for added decoration on some bras! Our plan was to attack the 26.2 miles as an AFT (sadly it would not qualify for an AFT, even though our split time certainly saw us achieve that pace). Unfortunately, we were unable to form a squad and march at pace in our pink flamingo combats as we only had the uneven and cobbled stoned pavements to march on, together with the other 4,000 bodies in our start group! However, we did have some remnants of AFT stylee - remember how we shout from front to back of the squad if there is an obstacle that is likely to cause injury (usually cattle grid), well on the streets of London, the obstacle was BOLLARDS. We were yelling BOLLARDS all night, particularly at the 15 mile point when the blisters started to burst and burn! This shout of BOLLARDS was indeed noted by the Moonwalk organisers and we received a special mention in their post race bulletin.

We did manage to form a squad going through Green Park as we charged down the deserted road, tree lined and shady, but not dark enough to prevent us seeing people sneaking off into the bushes who could not wait in
the long queues for the portaloos! Shouts of ‘We know where you’re going’ echoed from our squad of pink ladies! Our squad brought jubilation from the Marshalls of ‘Go Girls Go!!’ and we were spurred on and hoping to continue as a squad through the streets of London - sadly this was not to be.

I lived and worked in London back in the 90’s and was overjoyed when we walked past my old hospital, The Royal Brompton, happy memories from a bygone youth. I remembered the pubs that I used to frequent and the site and sounds I used to visit, but the fabulously dashing thing about the Moonwalk you see parts of London, by night, in the calm and quiet, that you have never seen before. Of course, there are the usual sights, even Queen Elizabeth came to the window of Buckingham Palace to give us a wave as some of her loyal soldiers walked by! The London Eye by night stood in stark contrast to the Houses of Parliament and the Embankment was eerily calm.

We were going at a fair old pace - more than 4 miles per hour until we had to make a pit stop at the Portaloos - the queues were tedious and it took more than thirty minutes before we could relieve our bladders. Bladders are just like a tube of Pringles don’t you think, once you pop, you just can’t stop, so thereafter, when the portaloos came into sight (roughly every 6 miles), one or more of us would need to stop to ease the pressure. One team member, who will rename nameless, had clearly not kept her pelvic floor exercises up to scratch in the intervening years since childbirth - she almost keeled over with pain, waiting to get into the portaloo. Of course, medics being medics, we took the opportunity to antagonise the situation, much to the disdain of others in the toilet crowd - ‘I thought they were supposed to be her mates’, we heard more than one person say!! Soon, day light started to crack through the blackness of night and the sun rose beautiful across the silent landscape of London. We could see Battersea Power Station rising from the homeward leg. Not before we stopped off at the Tower of London – home of Barney the Beafeater! We were on a mission to present a 212 Plaque following B Dets visit to the Tower earlier in the year. Barney thought that all his Christmas’ had come at once when he was confronted by 10 birds in their bras and flamingo pink combats. He was eager to line up by 10 birds in their bras and flamingo pink combats. He was eager to line up

In total, our team of ten raised more than a staggering £3,000.00. Thank you to all those who so generously donated to such a fantastic cause. Thanks to Cpl John Ashworth for volunteering to drive us to our destination and thanks also to the team of ten who turned up to take part and make a difference to those who suffer with Breast Cancer - see you all at the start line next year - I will wave you off!

Lt Col Jackson
212 Regimental 2 i/c
Ex Northern Serpent (Mountaineering in SW America)

It was a challenge for many to get up and over the Donoghue pass, 11,052ft after which we dropped into a scenic valley and camped on some high, dry ground. We skirted the stunning Thousand Island lake, where our navigation was put to test and where a black bear had been sighted 2 hours prior to our arrival. Narrowly avoiding a large thunderstorm, we arrived at Red Meadows camp site, where we had used our radios to pre-order burgers and ‘chips’ that turned out to be burgers with crisps! This was a treat, especially after a failed attempt to barter porridge oats for smoked trout caught by a rod-bearing walker! The natural hot spring showers were a welcome surprise and we recovered at the end of a challenging 19 kilometre day.

On arrival at the foothills of the Sierras we found that the heavy spring snow had yet to melt and much of the trail was still covered in knee deep snow. This would slow us down considerably, making it impossible to complete the trail in the allocated time. Mr Steve Ashcroft, exped IC, had the unenviable task of formulating a new itinerary at very short notice. Luckily, his impeccable local knowledge was put to good use and he planned a few shorter hikes across three American states. Walking in three groups of six people, we began with the first five days of the John Muir Trail in the High Sierras. We each carried a bear barrel—a smooth, cylindrical container for food and toiletries that allegedly, cannot be opened by bears. We stored these at a distance from our tents overnight such that if a bear did arrive, the scent of food would lead it away from us. They made excellent stools at meal times but, rather annoyingly, occupied half our bergen space! We were able to filter water from glacial streams and all parties, after a dunking or two, mastered the art of safe river crossing under the instruction of our ‘sun kissed’ leader, Kelda. Daily washes were taken by most.

Items of underclothing lost to high velocity steam=1. Bears encountered=0.

We had a day to recuperate at Diaz Lake camp site near Lone Pine, a charming town which, we discovered, had no shortage of pancakes. The atmosphere was buzzing in the lead up to the Independence Day celebrations and the American flag was hoisted above most buildings.

Eventually, we arrived at the Grand Canyon and all expectations were exceeded by just how large and imposing it actually is. We took a day to drop down into the floor of the canyon near the Colorado river. This turned out to be the hottest day of the year- the temperature in the shade was 64 degrees centigrade! The climb out was difficult in the heat and in the shade was 64 degrees centigrade! The climb out was difficult in the heat and the highest peak in continental USA at 14,496 feet. This was exhilarating!

R and R in Las Vegas followed this leg and we had beds and flush toilets for the first time in three weeks. We spent most of
Ex Northern Serpent (Mountaineering in SW America - Contd)

The John Muir Trail
Mount Whitney
Thousand Island Lake

looking slightly more bronze than we did on arrival. Many thanks to the group leaders, our faithful support team, Billy and Shiltsey from AMSTC and above all, Steve Ashcroft for organising and re-organising a most memorable trip!

Capt Nabeela Malik
B Detachment

TA - PQO Course 121 Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

On my drive down towards Sandhurst, there were many thoughts running through my mind – mainly because of the “myths and legends of Sandhurst” that I was told by those who have already completed the course. Nevertheless I was very much looking forward to the next two weeks at the same time, after all passing out from Royal Military Academy Sandhurst represents the rite of passage to become a British Army Officer.

The course started off fairly steady, the first day only involved a PFA and numerous introductory lectures so that everyone knows who is who in the academy and expectations were laid down fairly clear to us. The pace did step up after day 1 and time only passed us by faster every day we spent in the academy.

It was a surprise to me that they weren’t very heavy on the assessment but on education instead, which I found extremely interesting. The truth is, aside the basic physical and mental requirement, there were a lot of teaching materials to be covered. Having said that, so long as you can sit through occasional lecture bombardments and walk a short distance with a light Bergen on your back then there shouldn’t be any major concerns. However keeping on top of your own administration and be ready at all times is critical,
especially having spare uniform pressed and boots polished, as you’ll never know when you will be told to make friends with the college lake! I have definitely acquired the skill of quick changing over the 2 weeks I have been there.

The instructors and their inspiring teaching style were the best I have ever experienced. As recalled by my colleague, Captain Jeremy Rushbrook RAMC who was also on the same course, said “The instruction is quite exceptional. Whatever your background you will learn a great deal, the instructors are the best the British Army has to offer. You start with a few days in camp, and then go on exercise. There is no messing around; everything is done for a purpose.” The 5 days exercise was the meat of the course, and there you’ll bond quickly and go through challenges after challenges with each other.

In summary I have made a lot of friends whilst in Sandhurst and also bumped into a lot of familiar faces whom I met in the UOTC, TA or even schoolmate! The military can be a small world sometimes. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time there and everyone that I have spoken to agreed. Preparation for the course is the key though if you could get all the correct kit and fitted in good time, you will promised a good start at Sandhurst!

Lt Abilius Wong
A Detachment

Father Bill Bergin

On Easter Sunday last year, Lt Col Angie Knock, Maj Clare Wray and myself returned to Padre Bill Bergin’s Church (St Joseph’s in Retford) to celebrate Easter with him and his very welcoming congregation. There wasn’t even standing room only, such is the popularity of Bill’s church, but in good soldier fashion we arrived in plenty of time and manage to worm our way into a pew near the back of the church. The last time I went to Mass at Bill’s church was December 2010, prior to deploying on Op Herrick 13b and during that service Bill took the time to bring me out in the front of his congregation to anoint me in order to keep me safe whilst away. On my return to his flock this Easter, he reminded his congregation that I had attended back in December and that I had safely returned – his memory for time, place and person remains truly amazing.

As ever Bill was warm and welcoming and as soon as he spotted us he introduced us to the entire congregation and made many references to the wonderful work the British Army has undertaken in Iraq and continues to perform in Afghanistan. Bill remains a staunch supporter of military personnel and a keen historian and enjoys immersing himself in the detail of Ops, particularly in relation to the people element - welfare of the soldiers and those that attend to their injuries. Bill remains as enthusiastic and energetic as ever and maintains his fitness with huge bike rides - 100+ miles per day, with his nephew and other younger men, that clearly Bill (like lots of Senior Male Officers in 212) likes to compete against.

On July 11th 2012 Bill celebrated his Silver Anniversary (25 years) as an ordained Priest - as Bill always reminded his congregation out on Op Telic 1 - ‘Remember ladies and gentlemen, I haven’t always been a Roman Catholic Priest, I did lead a full life before I joined the ministry!!’ Bill remains a true friend and supporter of 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital (V) and although he remains exceptionally busy at St Joseph’s and Ranby Prison, he will always make time for his old friends here at the Unit.

Lt Col Jackson
212 Regimental 2 i/c
Do you want to **BE THE BEST** Trauma Surgeon, Physician, Nurse, ODP or HCA etc that you can be ... ... and still have a full NHS career?

The Territorial Army Medical Services is made up of people who are not much different from you. Like you they have a full NHS career, they are well qualified clinicians and they often have busy professional and family lives. Working in partnership with their NHS employers, we provide personal and professional development for these paid volunteers, so that every few years they can work in one of the most challenging and rewarding clinical environments on the planet. I hope that it will inspire you to join and if not, that you will better understand the vital contribution that many of your colleagues make to saving the lives and easing the suffering of those who are victims of war...

**THE OPPORTUNITIES** From basic soldiering to the principles of leadership, the Territorial Army equips you with the skills that you need and gives you the opportunity to develop new ones skills for your career in the NHS and skills for life.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE** You will be involved in situations, every day, when you will save lives. You will make a difference... You will deal with more serious trauma on an average Operational tour of duty than you will ever have the opportunity to deal with during an average civilian career.

**FITNESS AND HEALTH** Work out with a team and you’re far more likely to achieve your fitness goals. When the going gets tough you’ll be there to motivate each other... When the going is good you can share in each others’ success! A great incentive to achieving that goal is the tax-free cash bounty, worth up to £1,500, that they’ll get when they do. Now that’s got to be better than paying £40 a month for a gym that you never use!

**NHS EMPLOYERS** (Will your NHS employer support your decision to join the Territorial Army Medical Services?) Any employer who is committed to delivering high standards through the personal and professional development of its employees will actively encourage you to join the Territorial Army Medical Services.

**WORK - LIFE - BALANCE** Reserve Service has been designed to complement a healthy work-life-balance. All of our clinicians lead busy professional lives and many have partners and young children.

**TEAMWORK** A strong team with a common sense of purpose and direction doesn’t happen by accident. Military training instils the values and standards that our people live by. By joining the Territorial Army Medical Services you will become part of a team who you can rely on no matter how tough things get!

**ADVENTURE** Life in the Territorial Army is about challenging yourself. From serving on operations to being a better leader, you’ll get the support you need to succeed. Adventure training & sport is encouraged both in the TA and the Regular Army. The need for physical fitness encourages self reliance, builds team spirit and the qualities of leadership.

**212 FIELD HOSPITAL (V) IS NOW RECRUITING**

For further information contact Captain Mike Rutkowski on: 01904 668228 Mobile: 07771 958311 Email: 212hosp-roso@mod.uk

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Text JOBS to 6110
This was my first starlight and was a little apprehensive about it but at the same time looking forward to trying out my new mountain bike. We set off from Leeds at 22:00 hrs. on the Friday night and reached Ballater Scotland around 05:30 hrs. Saturday morning. The journey was how can I put it Brass Monkey! Stuck on a coach for nearly 6 hrs. with no heating so sleep was very minimal unless you had your sleeping bag with you and managed to get comfy.

The first day of adventurous training started on the Sunday as Saturday was used for admin and prepping for the week. We loaded up the Half & half with our bikes and off we went to Aviemore to start a 2 days of biking. The last time I was on a bike I was 17 and a BMX so gears took a bit of getting used to. We cycled round Aviemore lake with breath taking scenery and the group decided to be adventurous and do a bit of rough path biking which was fantastic except I fell of twice but that was just the start of the bruises to come. That evening we had a PJ’s party and as the group was 95% female a stop at Tesco provided us with a chick flick (that’s all they really had honest) but a good laugh by all.

The second day we moved up to Wolf Tracks which is a purpose made biking area for various levels of skill. Again off we set up the biggest hill I have ever tried to tackle on a bike and still a bit achy from the day before all that kept me going was the “this is going to be so much fun on the way down” and I was not wrong. We decided to start on a red route which if for semi-skilled bikers I would think and this is where I found out I spent more on my time off my bike then on it lol! Further down the track we approached a route which took me back to being 17 again lots of speed bumps and corners I would say a BMX heaven you could hear me whooping all the way to the bottom, only down side when we reached the bottom no time for a re-run but I ended the day on a very big high.

The next 2 days were walking/orienteering the route was very scenic with again breath taking country side this was the first time I had been to Scotland and was not disappointed. We finished the walk and was taken back to Ballater but as I had now fallen in love with my new bike I didn’t stop there 3 hrs before tea plenty of time for a bike ride! Sgt Spence was tabbing along a route called Teeside way which was a walk/bike route with perfect timing out and back in time for tea so that was it for the following 3 nights pushing it out a little further each time. Next orienteering this was something I had not really done before but with a slight detour through a very wet and muddy marsh area I managed to get more check points than I thought I would get this ended with a nice cup of coffee in a very nice hotel in Braemar result.

Next Day I then did indoor rock climbing now this was something I was not looking forward to as I do not like rock climbing or heights but what the hell I’ll give it a crack, again this was back to Aviemore, I had a good go at it and climbed up the wall a couple of time before the weeks training took its toll my legs refused to play and fingers aching but again I had got over my fear of rock climbing which I was chuffed about.

Friday was the last day I was officially broken with the biggest blisters I have ever had from walking legs of lead from biking and climbing but still I smiled as I loved every minute and I felt it was worth it, so I gave in and took the day helping to clear up and get things packed ready for de-camping. The evening took me into Ballater for a few drinks and a bit of Karaoke and that was it a perfect week with a perfect night to end it on.

So that was it couple of first for me, Never done starlight or been to Scotland, not done mountain biking like that before and got over a fear of rock climbing so all in all a fantastic time and cannot wait for the next one! If you have not been on starlight I would say it’s a must it is a full week and so worth it you will be hooked.

Sgt Ruth Liversidge
C Detachment
**Competition**

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A) Nottingham  B) Sheffield  C) Leeds

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Lt Col Andy Bruce returned back from his 3rd tour of duty in Afghanistan after being deployed on Op Herrick 15. Following the deployment, Lt Col Bruce travelled to RTMC Chilwell where he was debriefed prior to a well-earned period of R & R (Rest and Recuperation) prior to returning home to his loving wife and children, and his role as a Consultant Surgeon in Civvie Street.

Reflecting on his third tour of duty to Afghanistan, Lt Col Bruce said that the facilities had very much improved since his first tour there. He said that the food was excellent and that the accommodation was vastly improved. Although there had been a very demanding period in the Camp Bastion Field Hospital and Medical Treatment Facility (MTF), Lt Col Bruce said that the Surgical and Theatre teams had been fantastic in both their performance and commitment throughout the period. Lt Col Bruce also praised 212’s Cpl Suzanne Gray for her outstanding performance during her first deployment to Afghanistan after joining 212 only the year before!

Capt S Garratty
HQ Detachment

Lt Col Andy Bruce