

## Sgt James Gillies 1914-2015

1452408

54th AA Regiment RA

WW2



Sgt James Gillies



The Battle of Monte Cassino



The Cordelia

On Thursday, 10 April 2014 James Gillies celebrated his 100th birthday in the company of family and friends. At the presentation of his birthday card by Her Majesty's representative he refused to accept it seated. Against protest he struggled from his wheelchair, stood to attention and accepted the white envelope with dignity.

No one present was surprised. This is Jimmy, independent and defiant. All his life he has been the 'defiant Jimmy Gillies'. His refusal to be beaten, manipulated, outmanoeuvred or suppressed, has been his hallmark.

In his prime, Sgt J Gillies 1452408 would have had a powerful presence. He would have been a man you could trust with your life. In March 1939, on the beaches of Dunkirk, six men did exactly that.

The journey to Dunkirk for artillery man Gillies and his comrades was fraught with event and danger. His relating of the slaughter of a pig and the repair of a truck overloaded with two French families, feeding, then sending them on with provisions says much of the man. The following day he passed the truck lying on its side in the ditch by the road, all on board had been killed.

All his life Jimmy has been a 'dealer'. He worked on farms, grew fruit, kept livestock, drove buses, tended horses, sold bread and a myriad of other things that reflect a man of talent and ability. On reaching Dunkirk, he used his skills in the trade of his Bren Gun for 6 ration packs to feed his men.

A gunner in the 54th AA Regiment RA, his squad had been called into action to help slow the enemies advance towards the beaches. Jimmy stood by the side of his commanding officer facing the troops. An incoming shell exploded behind them. He recalls the sound of a dull thud mixed with the blast and explosion. The officer fell, face first, arms by his side, a large shrapnel wound between his shoulder blades gushing blood. He died in Jimmy's arms as he tried to carry him to safety. His group was evacuated from Dunkirk 2 days later.

Jimmy battled across Europe. His most memorable battle, Monte Cassino.

*"Terrible, terrible, worst thing I've ever been involved in. The Americans came in with hundreds of bombers, the bombs fell everywhere, hundreds of our boys were killed."*

The look in his eyes and tone in his voice made it inappropriate to ask more.

On 15 February 1944, 227 American bombers dropped 1,400 tons of bombs on Monte Cassino. Many fell in the surrounding areas. When the battle finally ended, 114,979 had been killed.

Jimmy was demobbed on 16 November 1945, having reached the rank of Sergeant. His records show that his character was 'exemplary'. He received a Bronze Oak Leaf Emblem in December 1946 and a Mention in Despatch Certificate in September 1947, in recognition of this achievement.

Born in Dumbarton, 10 April 1914, a stoness throw from the River Leven, Jimmy has remained there all his life because this is where *"he belongs"*.

In the same river, at its junction with the Clyde, Jimmy recognised a partly submerged boat. He found the owners and bought her.

The boat was one of the 'little ships' of Dunkirk, the Cordelia. A 35 foot motor yacht of 11 tons built in Hull in 1934.

The Cordelia ferried 300 soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk to the safety of off-lying ships before one of her propellers seized, the other rendered useless by the flotsam of retreat. She had to be towed back to Dover after enduring 26 consecutive hours of service under fire.

Jimmy lovingly set about restoring her to her formal glory and made her seaworthy again. She is presently moored on the Thames at Winterhill.

# Sgt James Gould

24959483

7 Platoon 6 SCOTS

Royal Regiment of Scotland



James with his interpreter Afghanistan 2012

It is believed that we make some of the biggest and most important decisions in life through gut instinct. James Gould did just this when he decided to join the Territorial Army in 1996.

By chance he was driving by the Territorial Army Centre in Shawfield, Glasgow. He stopped the car, went into the building and joined up.

A life changing decision, made in the spur of the moment and for 18 years James has been a member of the British Army.

His first wish on joining was to belong to a Scottish Infantry Battalion and he was recruited to the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Highland Fusiliers.

James is proud that he is from a family with army ties. His Great Grandfather served in WWI, a member of the Royal Scots Greys. His Grandfather, Cpl Thomas Polson, served with 7/9 Royal Scots during WW2 and is part of the history of the Regiment.

James was close to his grandfather. He recalls with affection, childhood stories of his time as a soldier.

James' parents tell of his fascination and how his grandfather bought him as a very young child an army uniform with helmet, that he proudly wore at every opportunity.

Looking forward to the challenge of training, he met people in his first week who were to become lifelong friends.

He admits that the training, by regular infantry instructors, was hard. Indeed the hardest training he has ever endured, but he proudly admits that he loved it.

Further training continued with overseas exercises in Cyprus, Slovakia, Ukraine and Gibraltar.

In 2003, James was selected to deploy to Iraq on Operation Telic 2, where he served as a rifleman. His platoon spent the next five months in Al Amara and six weeks protecting the British Embassy in Baghdad.

Unfortunately two soldiers were killed on the tour. This for James was the lowest point of his Army career.

In 2010, he was selected to join the London Regiment (the London Jocks) on Operation Herrick 12, where he worked as part of small 4 man team around Afghanistan, training local Afghans to be soldiers.

The greatest challenge for all concerned was the language barrier.

Based in Shindand, located in the west of the country, they were responsible for training approximately 800 recruits and NCOs.

One of James' proudest moments was parading in front of the Queen, during the changing of the Colours for the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

James has never regretted the decision he made the day he joined up. He has experienced and seen things that have changed and modelled his life.

He says that he has values and perspectives that make his life seem meaningful and questions where he would be now if he had not made that impulsive decision.



Sgt James Gould

# Maj Peter Graham

564792

Royal Logistic Corps



An IEDD explodes in Afghanistan

Major Peter Graham joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in July 1986. Selected as an officer candidate he successfully completed his potential officer course and trained as an Ammunition Technician. Posted to Central Ammunition Depot, Kineton, he was promoted to Corporal.

Ammunition Technicians in the Royal Logistic Corps became highly experienced in bomb disposal, after many years of dealing with bombs planted by the Provisional Irish Republican Army.

The bombs employed by the PIRA ranged from simple pipe bombs to sophisticated victim-triggered devices and infra red switches.

During the 38 year campaign in Northern Ireland, 23 British bomb disposal specialists were killed in action.

In 1988, Peter completed a 6 month tour of Londonderry as part of Improved Explosive Device Disposal Team 2. He assisted in the disarming of the largest PIRA bomb discovered.

In January 1990, he was posted to Botswana to train their defence force in Improved Explosive Device Disposal.

In 1991, he was promoted to Sergeant and served as a bomb disposal operator on the UK mainland.

In 1993, he qualified as an Advanced IEDD Operator and he was promoted to Staff Sergeant in 1995.

Following further service as a bomb disposal operator, he decided to change trade to Systems Analyst in 1999 and moved to Bicester.

Promoted to Warrant Officer 2 in 2000 and again to Warrant Officer 1 in 2001, he became Lead Systems Analyst for the Royal Logistic Corps.

Peter then completed tours of the Balkans (Kosovo and Bosnia) and took part in Operation Telic in Iraq in 2003 and 2004.

In 2006, Peter was commissioned, serving 2 years as the Unit Welfare Officer. In 2008, Major Graham moved the entire Regiment's families from Catterick to Munster.

Major Graham has been heavily involved in Charity events since serving as the Unit Welfare Officer.

In the summer of 2010, he organised a Land's End to John O'Groats cycle ride for an IEDD team injured in Afghanistan.

The team raised over £42,000 for the British Limbless Ex Serviceman's Association (BLESMA) and they were the recipients of the Fund Raising Endeavour Award at the Inaugural 'Soldiering On' Awards organised by BLESMA in March 2011.

Peter also received a Colonel in Chief Land Forces commendation and Director Royal Logistic Corps commendation, for his charity work and work as Casualty Visiting Officer for a number of injured soldiers returning from Afghanistan.



Maj Peter Graham

# Cpl David Timmins QGM

25180906

Explosive Ordnance Disposal

Royal Logistics Corps



Cpl David Timmins QGM



Corporal David Timmins in Afghanistan holds a 'cooking pot' bomb



David Timmins joined the army in 2003 as a Royal Logistics Corps Specialist Driver. In the advancement of his army career, he trained in bomb disposal.

Posted to Afghanistan he joined a top bomb disposal team under the command of Captain Wayne Owers, Explosive Device Disposal Team Five, known as the 'Famous Five'. As a team, they had defused a record 93 bombs.

During his second posting to Afghanistan, on 19 July 2009, he and four of his comrades were injured in Sangin in Helmand by a Taliban IED explosion. The bomb hidden in a wall detonated as his team were investigating another suspect device.

David took the full force of the blast on his right side. He sustained 22 injuries when he was smashed in a hail of shrapnel. He lost a piece of his skull, an eye, his hearing destroyed, suffered a broken nose, cheekbone and jaw. He sustained liver, kidney and spine damage, a collapsed lung, a dislocated shoulder and serious shrapnel wounds to his legs and body.

Declared dead at the scene. He owes his life to Captain Owers, who refused to give up on his resuscitation.

By the time David arrived at the field hospital at Camp Bastion, he had lost four pints of blood and was barely alive. His preliminary medical assessment gave him twelve hours to live.

David was eventually stabilised and transferred to Selly Oak hospital in Birmingham, where his family held a vigil at his bedside. He awoke from an induced coma twelve days later.

Ten days before this incident, David had charged to the aid of one of his comrades when a horrific explosion tore into their patrol. In the blast, Sapper Matthew Weston lost both legs and his right forearm. David tackled the appalling injuries and managed to stem the catastrophic bleeding

David was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for a culmination of events while serving in Afghanistan and for saving the life of Matthew.

Part of the official citation stated.

*"Corporal Timmins incredible commitment has been pivotal to the sustainment of the enduring fighting spirit of the Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group. His actions and selfless sacrifice are in the very finest traditions of the service".*

Captain Owers was also awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his services during this tour. He was consequently promoted to Major.

One year after the incident David, with severely bomb blasted comrades, Cpl Richard McKinnon, Cpl Jonny Wallace and LCpl James Marsh, set out on a 1000-mile charity cycle ride from John O'Groats to Land's End.

The soldiers raised the staggering amount of £42,000 for BLESMA the British Limbless Ex Service Men's Association.

Inspired by the dedication and treatment he received during his recovery, David enrolled at Reid Kerr College in Paisley. He gained an HNC in Nursing in August 2010, with the aim of specialising in the psychological treatment of wounded servicemen and women.

David is now a Regional Mentoring Co-ordinator for SSAFA helping with the transition of servicemen to civilian life, especially those who have lost limbs and sufferers of Post Traumatic Stress.

Corporal Timmins story is indeed many stories. Among them, the extraordinary skill and dedication of surgeons and nursing staff, the human ability to survive devastating injuries and a man's unwillingness to admit defeat.

David's route to recovery has been hard and it will continue to be so for many years to come.

There are few who can claim to have died, been resurrected and returned, focused and driven.

Corporal David Timmins QGM is testimony to the power of a human spirit, fighting the most appalling adversity and turning it to the betterment of others.

## Sgt Bert Stone 1921-2014

2582174

Signal Squadron

2nd Parachute Brigade WW2



Sgt Bert Stone 1921-2014



Bert, top row second from left, and his 'stick' prepare for Operation Dragoon



The ruins of Monte Cassino

Bert joined the Royal Signals in 1939. He took great pride in the fact that at 94 years of age he could tap 'Morse' with his own tell-tale signature and at the pace he learned as a young man.

On the 26 May 1940 Bert 'celebrated' his 19th birthday in a trench on the beach at Dunkirk. On the 29 May, weakened by lack of food and water, he was picked up from the 'Mole' by HMS Vimmy and returned to Britain.

On his promotion to Lance Corporal, Bert volunteered for Special Services. Posted to the 1st Airborne Division his section became the Signal Squadron for the Second Parachute Brigade.

An action filled journey through the Mediterranean brought Bert eventually to the beginning of the final battle for Monte Cassino. On 12 May 1944, one thousand guns and mortars bombarded Monte Cassino for two hours. The final assault was made by the Polish Army.

*"This was old time trench warfare. We were fully engaged in maintaining and repairing telephone lines. The intensity of the shelling cut lines. By day we worked under cover of smoke screens and at night under the glare of enemy flares and sniper fire, crawling and dragging cumbersome drums of cable through nightmare terrain"*

His unit took part in Operation Dragoon, the invasion of Southern France in August 1944. Their drop zone was targeted 15 miles inland of the beaches around St Raphael and Frejus to protect the landings of 95,000 US troops.

From bases in Italy, under cover of darkness his formation flew across the Mediterranean towards the coast of France. The drop scheduled for 5am.

Bert in his Signals role would have been carrying a heavier burden than most. The addition of 30lb of radio equipment strapped to his leg would have added to his already bulky equipment. As a consequence, he was assigned No 2 in the 'stick' of twenty men. The second to jump, twenty men in twenty seconds, the heaviest burdens first.

As the aircraft approached the coast, the air filled with the concussion of bursting flack. The engines laboured as the pilot climbed, banked and twisted to evade the barrage.

The cargo of men clung to anything available and within minutes of desperate manoeuvres all bearings were lost. In the time that had passed they should have been directly over their drop zone.

Within the fuselage a red light illuminated, twenty men rose as one, faced a now open door and hooked the lines that would deploy their chutes.

Through a howling slipstream and two powering aircraft engines, Bert heard his Commanding Officer ask the Crew Chief, "Are we over land?" "I think so" the reply.

A green light illuminated. Bert fell through the blackness. Five seconds passed, the biting grip of a harness around his body, a thump as the air filled his silk canopy, he found himself hanging in a black void. Bert quickly released the tie to his radio equipment and lowered it.

On twenty feet of rope it hung below, a probe in the blackness, a splash certain death, a thump and slackening line a signal to curl and prepare for impact.

Searching below he could see a dim grey cloud, his landing hidden, shrouded in a low mist. The cloud enveloped him. Within seconds the crashing of his suspended equipment alerted him instantly that his 'stick' had been dropped into a forest.

Smashing through the canopy of branches there was little he could do but leave his fate to chance. A jarring halt left him suspended, his harness cut deep. His eyes searched the darkness for the forest floor.

Raising his knees to cushion his impact, Bert turned his harness release catch and fell. But not far, the rope tethering him to his equipment tangled higher in the tree brought him to a halt.

Drawing his knife, he severed the line and crashed awkwardly into the forest floor. Almost instantly a heavy blow to his head left him lying stunned. His radio cut from its tether had fallen through the tree and smashed onto his head. His death or severe injury certain had his helmet not lessened the impact of its 30lbs weight

It took the 'stick' about half an hour to re-group. By a miracle all had survived, battered but without serious injury. The radio now broken.

They had fallen far to the North of their drop zone and 25 miles behind enemy lines. Heading in the direction of the distant rumble of heavy guns they soon discovered they were not alone. Many other units had fallen far from their assigned drop zone, their numbers swelling as they approached the action.

Operation Dragoon lasted ten days and cost the allies 13,000 casualties. Two 'sticks' had dropped into the sea with no survivors.

Bert saw further heavy action in Greece, was posted to Palestine and in 1946 returned to Britain. He was discharged in August of that year, having served 7 action filled years.

# Pte Frank Hannaway

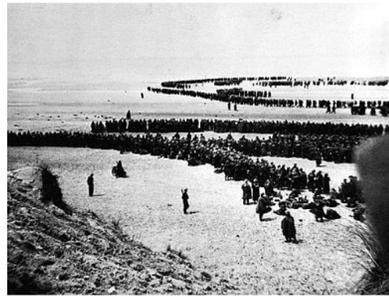
## Royal Artillery

### British Expeditionary Force 1940

#### WW2



Dunkirk May 1940



Troops wait for the 'small ships'



Dunkirk beach

Frank is a Dunkirk veteran. At 96 years of age he still carries vivid memories of his days on the Dunkirk beaches.

Aged 20 at the time, Frank and his unit had been marching in retreat for 3 days, sometimes up to 30 miles a day. His feet were in a dreadful condition and he just managed to keep pace with the flowing human mass.

Nearing Dunkirk, severely debilitated by lack of food and water, he paused to tend his feet on a doorstep of a bombed house. In the road in front of him lay an alarm clock, dented but still ticking.

With what seemed rational clarity, Frank thought that this would be a great present to take home to his mother. Tying the clock to his belt, he rallied and marched on.

On the last few miles to Dunkirk he hitched a lift on the mudguard of a passing ambulance. Arriving in the middle of a bombing raid, he rolled from the vehicle into the sand dunes and took refuge.

*"The Germans had got within shelling range, there was nothing we could do. The beaches were full of troops. We just had to lie there and take it."*

When the raid passed Frank looked over the dune to see 'his ambulance', now a bare chassis and a carnage filled beach.

On the evening of his second night, he was ordered to a column and waded to the assembling flotilla of 'small ships'.

*"There was no panic. We all took our turn, we joined the queues and waded out at night with the hope of getting rescued"*

Exhausted he joined the shuffling human mass into the sea. Glad that the water was not freezing.

With each passing hour the weight of his saturated clothing added to his exhaustion. When the sea reached the level of his waist he abandoned his coat, as did many others. All around floated abandoned bags, clothing, jackets and coats.

*"The deeper we waded the more we abandoned, pockets were emptied, possessions ditched"*

Frank is not a tall man and when others had height to spare, Frank was shoulder deep, the alarm clock still strapped to his waist... it would be delivered at all costs.

He arrived at an already overcrowded ship, soldiers jammed the decks. Those in front were dragged from the sea and at the moment of his near salvation, the captain declared enough and refused to take him or any others on board.

Without the strength to protest, he heard a voice shout his name. By some divine coincidence a school pal whom he had not seen for five years, on board, recognised him. Within grasping distance he caught and dragged Frank from the sea.

Frank was lifted, carried overhead and placed beside the funnel. He remembers nothing of his trip home after collapsing with exhaustion.

The sea and sand had taken a terrible toll on Frank's rescued alarm clock. As he disembarked at Dover, shuffling across the gangway to shore, he paused, untied his gift and with purpose, dropped it to the sea below, watching for a moment as it disappeared into the depths.

Between 26 May and 4 June, 338,000 troops were rescued from Dunkirk.

In 2005 Frank returned to the beaches and found with remarkable ease his safe place in the dunes.

While reflecting on his escape, a young French boy walked towards him and offered a gift in an outstretched hand, it was a button from the uniform of his artillery regiment.

Deeply touched by this gesture, Frank found out later from other veterans that this was not an uncommon event.

Below the sands of Dunkirk lies the debris of a retreating army. Veterans are easy to spot and small tokens of thanks or remembrance are deeply appreciated.



Pte Frank Hannaway

# WO Terry Lowe

25050228

2nd Battalion

Royal Regiment of Scotland



WO Terry Lowe



Pvt. Lowe, age 18, receives his first medal



WO Terry Lowe in regimental dress uniform

Terry Lowe is a man with presence. He is a product of a city that knows no compromise, demands respect and in which survival depends on an intimate knowledge of unwritten rules. The story of the community that formed him and the things dearest to him are etched in ink on his body. He carries his history on his skin - a constant reminder of all that he is.

He joined the army at the age of 17, signing for a term of 25 years. He was the eldest of 4 children and 'joined up' to fulfil a childhood ambition. Much of the motive entailed respect, position and purpose.

To many in the region of Strathclyde an army career provides options for those who have none. He has followed a route chosen by many before. The regiments of Scotland have always had ranks filled with Clydeside boys.

Terry is a Warrant Officer Class 2 in the Second Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland. In the space of seventeen years he has risen from a private soldier through the ranks.

His service career is extensive and includes Ireland and Bosnia. He has completed four gruelling tours of Afghanistan and has been mentioned in despatches for his outstanding service. Terry, who was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, is the front of the forces campaign dealing with problems and issues of combat stress.

In his last Afghanistan tour he held the rank of Colour Sergeant. He took part in Operation Panchai Palang, or Panther's Claw. One of the biggest battles that has been fought by British forces since World War 2.

Panther's Claw started 19 June 2009. On July 4 - Terry and his troops were ambushed while on patrol. When the battle subsided and Terry moved in to investigate, he found two dead civilians and five wounded. The Taliban were using them as human shields.

The patrol moved on with Terry in advance. A short time later, beneath his boot, he heard an audible click. Almost

instantly a massive explosion erupted behind him. Terry had stood on the trigger of an Improvised Explosive Device.

Caught in the blast he was deafened, stunned and disorientated. He dropped his rifle and took off his helmet. He was enveloped in a massive cloud of dust and debris.

*"I remember looking and thinking - where the hell am I? I thought I was dead. I was looking for myself".*

His hearing slowly returned, incoming bullets screamed by. The dust cloud drifted and in a ditch not far away he caught sight of a raised hand. Numbed by the blast, injured by shrapnel and under fire he managed to reach his fallen comrade. The vision that greeted him is best left on the battlefield. All that could be provided was the comfort of companionship as a life passes.

*"He was in a very bad way. I just held his head in my arms and told him to let himself go ...The IED was big and was meant to take out a vehicle. There were two people dead. They were my mates"*

Terry stayed out on the ground and fought on with his men for fifteen more days before he was medically evacuated with a blood clot in his lung and a perforated eardrum.

The army is a structured organisation - the command lines clearly defined. Terry has his place in it and the rank he holds comes with obligations of obedience. Yet there are other qualities that are hard to define yet make leaders of men. To have the highest respect of those in your 'care' is something few achieve.

Unwavering in his values he speaks only in certainties. He commands men who in the field of conflict depend on him for their very existence. Hesitation and indecisiveness costs lives. He assumes that responsibility, that is his job, he is a professional British soldier and he is good at it. More importantly, you want Terry to be on your side. He is after all a member of a 'Warrior Class' as old as humanity, born into the discord of a modern world.

# Cpl Joe Parker

802583

## 602 City of Glasgow Squadron



Members of the 602 Squadron, including Joe Parker (front left). 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron Museum Association. Collection



A young Joe Parker

At 18 years of age Joe Parker joined the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. A member of 602 City of Glasgow Squadron, he served in the RAF from 1939 - 1947. Promoted to Corporal, he was responsible for the vital maintenance of Merlin engines in Spitfires

Less than a year had passed and Joe found himself at the centre of the Battle of Britain, working in over 16 airfields in Southern England.

Glasgow's 602 Squadron were to play a key role in the battle which raged from 10 July until 31 October, 1940. Joe witnessed spectacular action, working round the clock as a flight engineer, Joe and his colleagues toiled to keep his squadron's Spitfires in the air.

*"The work was hard, the hours long. A man's life depended on it. An oil drip on the floor of a hangar could turn into a haemorrhage at 30,000 feet. At dawn I would turn on the engines and check everything so we could be ready for take-off at any time."*

*"The bond between the pilots and their crews was special. Getting an aircraft ready and waiting for the signal to scramble kept us all close. A sortie would return and planes would be missing. Everyone thought they'd died. It was amazing the number of pilots who'd get shot down and then turn up. One pilot stepped off a local bus with his parachute under his arm. Sometimes they'd ditch into the Channel and get picked up by the Navy"*

*"Landings after combat were always tense. The worst landing I saw was when a shot up spitfire touched down. The undercarriage collapsed. The plane cart wheeled down the runway, pieces flying everywhere. When it finally came to a halt all that was left was the engine with the cockpit still attached. Miraculously the pilot walked away uninjured."*

*"A combat landing I will never forget was made by F/Lt Hector Maclean. He flew by slowly and on for half a mile, banked his spitfire in a long slow starboard turn, lined up his aircraft and in a graceful descent approached the runway. His wheels were up, his aircraft was badly shot up"*

*"His prop shredded the runway and twisted stalling the engine, he skidded by and came to a standstill. Perfect belly landing. The rescue crews were there in seconds. His left foot had been blown off by a cannon shell. This would be his last landing"*

Joe worked on every version of the Spitfire. He crossed Europe with his unit maintaining aircraft that were in the service of supporting front - line troops. He served in Normandy then North into Belgium and Holland, his squadron tackling Hitler's devastating V1 and V2 rockets.

The squadron went on the hunt of the 'Desert Fox', General Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, attacking his car. The consequent car crash fractured the German leader's skull, taking him out of the battle. A few months later, he was dead.

602 Squadron were engaged in one of the earliest actions which brought down a German aircraft over the UK and by the end of the war, the Squadron had destroyed 150 enemy planes. Sadly, 54 members had lost their lives.

Joe served for seven years including the entire duration of the war. He was awarded the Air Efficiency Award RAF medal for his work

*"The pilots couldn't have done it without the ground crew and the ground crew were prepared to work all sorts of hours to get a plane in the air"*

Before the Battle of Britain, Joe had been the personal flight engineer of Spitfire hero 25 year old Archie McKellar.

On 28 October 1939 the airmen of 602 Squadron fought a battle with the Luftwaffe over the fields of East Lothian. Flight Lieutenant McKellar seriously damaged a Heinkel 111. Spitfires from 603 Squadron joined the battle. This was the first enemy aircraft shot down over Britain during the Second World War.

Joe now stays in McKellar House, a part of Erskine named after the legendary pilot.



Cpl Joe Parker

# Cpl James F Smith

25088634

6th Scots

Royal Regiment of Scotland



The remains of Corporal Smith's vehicle after the explosion



James in 2003, Iraq Operation Telec 2

James joined the Territorial Army at the age of seventeen, attracted by the excitement it offered a young man with energy, seeking direction and purpose. As an army cadet, he would have known what joining up involved and he was enthusiastic in making this choice.

James loved driving, soon gaining a driving licence, he moved on to gain his HGV. This, he says, "was one of my proudest achievements".

Fit and energetic he gained a qualification as a PE instructor, taking great pride in his physical fitness, he enjoyed training younger soldiers.

James had completed 2 tours in Iraq and was on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2011

"I was really proud to do another tour in Afghanistan, it was something I felt I needed to do".

James and his unit had been out on a two day patrol in Helmand Province. They had been working hard, making contacts and engaging in skirmishes with the Taliban. Orders were issued to return to base on the Tuesday 26 July 2011.

The convoy moved onto the road, Corporal Smith was in command of the vehicle second in convoy.

He remembers well the vehicle in front, clouded by grey dust rising in its tracks as it made steady progress along the rough track.

They had hardly travelled a mile when a massive explosion erupted beneath his vehicle lifting it high in the air.

His body thrashed uncontrollably, the strain of his harness bit deep, his ears deafened by the blast. Pain shot through his body as huge forces distorted muscle and bone. The vehicle crashed to earth.

An Improvised Explosive Device had detonated directly under his seat. The wheels and armoured door beside him were sheared and blasted 20 feet into the air. Immediately, the convoy came under attack.

As his hearing returned, he was aware of the scream of incoming fire and his own seemingly disembodied voice issuing returning fire orders. In shock, his mind, as trained, struggled to assess what had happened. Then full awareness began to return.

"I knew I had lost my legs, but I didn't know how much had gone".

Amid the chaos of battle James was dragged out of the vehicle. A medic was able to get to him and provide assistance and morphine.

"I remember lying there helpless, gazing at the sky, the smell of engine oil and the blazing heat of the sun. My shirt was ripped open, and what looked like a can bristling with needles in a clenched fist stabbed into my chest. It was really frightening to see that coming towards you".

Corporal Smith does not remember much more of the incident. He was brought out of sedation on 30 July 2011 at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham. He had sustained fractures to his pelvis and lower back and a compound fracture to the elbow. He lost his legs below the knee. The other three soldiers in the vehicle were injured, thankfully their injuries were not life threatening.

When James was fit enough to return home, ironically the first letter he picked up from behind the door was a letter from the department of transport informing him that because of his new disability, his driving licence had been revoked.

When this portrait was painted, it was the first time James had worn his uniform since his injuries and the last time he wore it before it was returned to the army.

James is immensely proud to have served in the British Army for fifteen years. And with new found determination, he has regained his HGV licence.

In 2011, when there were 75 similar amputations conducted on British Soldiers.



Cpl James F Smith

# Col Robert Steele TD DL JP

480406

Regimental Secretary

Royal Highland Fusiliers



The British Army has a world reputation for its professionalism and ability to operate in any theatre. This is only possible because at its heart it has a dedicated and highly experienced core of individuals. One such individual is Colonel Bobby Steele.

His experience as a soldier is extensive. Yet his quick wit and sense of humour disguises a disciplined man, highly respected and admired by all, in and out of service.

Bob was born in Ayrshire in 1946, the younger of identical twins. Both joined the Army. In 1963 he enlisted in the Parachute Regiment as an Officer Cadet and attended the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

Two exercises in Libya followed and he accepted a commission to join the Cameronians. The 1966 defence reforms were responsible for the amalgamation of a number of regiments. The Cameronians chose to disband rather than amalgamate. The 1st Battalion was disbanded on 14 May 1968. Bob was then commissioned into The Royal Corps of Transport.

During a tour of Aden in 1966-67, prior to independence, there was an armed police mutiny. Twenty two British soldiers were killed in one day. A dark day in Bob's career.

*"Sadly, 8 of them came from my Squadron and sadly among them, Troop Staff Sergeant Eddie Butler, who was my great mentor and friend"*

Posted to Libya in 1968, Bob spent 6 months in the desert. At Tobruk, he met a young Captain 'Gaddafi'. It was pointed out to Bob that 'he was a man to watch'.

In 1973 Bob joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

*"I petitioned the Queen to leave the Royal Corps of Transport and join The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. I arrived just in time for an emergency tour of Belfast, Northern Ireland. It was quite an eventful time with lots of rioting, bombings, shootings. Our reputation such that we did not sustain any casualties"*

He was posted as Adjutant to 1/51 Highland Volunteers in Perth. His Parish stretched from London to Liverpool and on home ground covered Dumbarton, Stirling, Perth, Dundee and Kirkcaldy. He recalls one of his first tasks as Adjutant.

*"I organised the parade to open the new Queen's Barracks in Perth and inadvertently made HM The Queen Mother cry by showing her a picture of her brother, who had been killed early in the Great War. This caused the ire of the Commanding Officer who had told me to point this out to her in the first place"*

A further 4 month tour in Belfast was undertaken before moving on to Gibraltar, then back to Northern Ireland as Company Commander in 1980-82.

*"This was during the hunger strikes, which made life interesting. I also acted as a prison deputy governor during the prison strike at Magilligan Prison"*

Bob's Company was sent to Cyprus in 1982. The posting did not start without incident.

*"The ship, the Craiganlet, sank off Portpatrick; having been commissioned by MOD to take all our kit to Cyprus...The situation was made worse as the ship was also carrying a quantity of toxic waste thereby ensuring nothing could be recovered"*

After meeting the PLO in Larnaca he returned to Perth, leaving the Regular Army in 1984 and transferring to the Territorials.

*"On my transfer to the Territorial Army I was given the honour of commanding D Company (Dumbarton), 3rd Highland Volunteers"*

He was subsequently made the Honorary Colonel of his Battalion.

He became Deputy Assistant Commandant at Erskine Hospital for Disabled ex-Servicemen & Women and recalls one of the most enjoyable highlights of that time.

*"I collaborated in making promotional film with the great Jimmy Logan - a trip around the barras with him was an education on how to charm an audience. We produced a variety show at Paisley Town Hall with an amazing cast including Johnnie Beattie, Jack Milroy, Jimmy Logan, Andy Cameron and many of the Doon the Watter crowd"*

Bob was instrumental in moving the new Erskine Hospital to its new site.

He is currently Regimental Secretary of The Royal Highland Fusiliers in Glasgow, Deputy Lieutenant for Dunbartonshire, and is a Justice of the Peace.

A dynamic and driven individual, Bob is heavily involved with many local and service charities, including-

- Chairman, Loch Lomond Rescue Boat
- President, Dumbarton SSAFA
- President, Central Scotland Branch of The Parachute Regimental Association
- Chairman, Scottish Veterans Garden City, Dumbarton Branch
- Erskine General Council
- Fundraising Committee, Combat Stress
- Fundraising Committee, Army Benevolent Fund
- Chairman, 51st Highland Officers Dinner Club



Col Robert Steele TD DL JP

# RSM (Retd) Donald G Campbell

24707355

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders



A war weary RSM Donald Campbell rests after a battle in Afghanistan.

Donald Campbell was born and grew up in the Clydeside town of Greenock. As a child growing up in a shipbuilding town he was aware of the culture and the uncertainties that plagued the shipbuilding industry.

Reluctant to follow his father's career as a shipbuilder, Donald decided the only viable career choice was to join the British Army.

*"I wanted to see the world and decided to join up, especially the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders"*

Donald joined at the age of 16. He was trained at the Scottish Junior Infantry depot in Aberdeen.

The regime was rigorous. After a year of junior soldier training only 23 out of 57 in his platoon made the grade and were passed out to Scottish regiments. Seven Scottish regiments were in existence at that time.

*"With over 26 years in service, I have spent a lot of my time on operations throughout the world. I served periodically in Northern Ireland for approximately 7 years during the Troubles"*

*"I was posted to Bosnia in 1993 when the conflict first started and then again in 2005"*

*"I served in Iraq and lastly Afghanistan twice, once as a Company Sergeant Major and the second time as the Regimental Sergeant Major. I also completed two full tours of the Falkland Islands"*

*"It was a privilege to visit many countries on exercise, like Canada, Belize and Kenya. I probably would not have had the chance to visit these places had I not been a soldier"*

*"From starting as a private soldier to finishing my career 26 years later as the Regimental Sergeant Major, at the age of 42, it was time to hang my webbing and boots up and push on into 'Civvy Street'."*

*"I honestly believe my time in the Argyll's made me the person I am today"*

*"It has been fulfilling meeting and making close friends and comrades, usually forged in trying and harsh circumstances. In military service you end up belonging to a 'Band of Brothers'. This stays with you for the rest of your life"*

After leaving the Army Donald dedicated himself to the welfare and recovery of soldiers who are scarred by the psychological impact of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.



RSM (Retd) Donald G Campbell

# Maj (Retd) Robert Elliot BEM

41299

## Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders



Maj (Retd) Robert Elliot BEM



Bob Elliot is extraordinarily proud of his career in the British Army. An expert in the history of his regiment, his sense of belonging and pride extends back in time to his regiment's beginnings.

Major Elliot is the material of a professional British soldier. He the sort of man you feel it would be unwise to cross... but could trust with your life.



Riots Northern Ireland

Tough and uncompromising, because the job demands it, he is meticulously fair in all his dealings and has a reputation for it. Yet, laced into the fabric of this disciplined man is a vibrant and ever present sense of humour.

Bob enlisted over 41 years ago as a private soldier in the Argyll and Southern Highlanders. In that time, through sheer hard work and determination, he has risen through the ranks to Major.

As a British Soldier, he has served in Singapore, Malaysia, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Falkland Islands, Kenya and Germany.

A disruptive and unsettling early working career and his family's military ties to Scottish regiments, led him to enlist in his home town of Paisley in February 1971.

In February 1972, the regiment quickly commenced training in preparation for Northern Ireland. This was to be his first deployment.

*“Northern Ireland was my first operation deployment. Four months was a very long time to patrol the borders and streets in South Armagh”.*

*“The tour was demanding and very scary for an eighteen year old inexperienced soldier. Sadly we as a Battalion took more than our share of casualties, eight of our number lost their lives”.*

Bob was deployed back into Northern Ireland again in 1973, 1974 and 1976.

Bob received his first promotion in 1973. His career as an officer covered many duties, including Transport Officer, Quartermaster, Company Second in Command, Company Commander, Recruiting Officer and many other roles essential to the success of a Battalion.

When asked to reflect upon his life as a soldier and his intention to retire from 41 years of full time service.

*“The responsibilities that came with promotion were extreme and demanding, yet, the camaraderie of being a soldier is the most gratifying experience a man can have”.*

*The training and lifestyle was tough, but it is all essential in making a good leader and a good soldier.*

*I have no wish to discuss any details of my involvement in operational matters. There is no glory in being explicit about putting body parts into bags or having someone in your sights, these issues are personal and for me best forgotten.*

*On retiring, my heart and my thoughts are with young soldiers of today, they have so much to contend with”.*

Currently Bob is the Regimental Secretary for The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He works towards the betterment in all areas of his Regiment.

# Lt Col (Retd) Peter Shields MBE QGM

533840

Royal Corps of Transport



Lt Col (Retd) Peter Shields MBE QGM



Ammunition stockpile explosion

The following is an extract from The London Gazette, 24 December 1991 describing Lt Col Shields action, which led to the award of the Queens Gallantry Medal.

## Kuwait - Camp Doha

On Thursday, 11 July 1991, a United States Army artillery ammunition carrier, parked amongst scores of other combat vehicles, all fully loaded with war stocks of combat supplies, including ammunition, caught fire 100 metres away from the Headquarters British Forces Kuwait.

By 1100 hours the fire was out of control, and the Americans warned everybody to leave the area as soon as possible. Shortly afterwards, the ammunition carrier exploded with a massive blast. Those inside immediately rushed outside to seek cover.

Acting Captain Shields marshalled them to the nearest vehicle and pointed out the safest escape route.

Lance Corporal Plant assisted in the evacuation and then along with a doctor and other medical staff, helped establish a reception area by a military ambulance immediately outside the camp perimeter.

The explosion had ignited other ammunition vehicles, and a chain reaction of enormous explosions then started at random intervals. There were no means of forecasting when the next blast would occur and it was extremely dangerous to move anywhere in the camp.

Undaunted, Acting Captain Shields proceeded on foot towards the corner of a warehouse where other soldiers were gathering. He led the men to the perimeter wall of the camp and assisted them to scale its 3 metre height before climbing it himself and dropping to relative safety on the other side.

There were a few injured British and American soldiers whom he ensured received medical treatment from the ambulance nearby.

Acting Captain Shields was concerned that there might still be men trapped inside the camp, fatally close to the continuing explosions. He asked for a volunteer to accompany him to check the area. With the willing assistance of Lance Corporal Plant he took a stretcher and a first aid kit and ran back inside St. George's Lines.

Massive explosions continued and lethal debris fell around them; there was no safe cover. Quite apart from shrapnel, unexploded shells, bomblets and mines, the hangar doors to the warehouse accommodation were being blown out of their frames, large pieces of vehicles were being propelled at great speed through the air, and skylights in the hangars were showering glass everywhere. The force of the blasts was terrifying.

With total disregard for their own safety and at very considerable risk to their lives they systematically checked all the buildings and areas where soldiers might be lying injured or trapped. They confirmed that no men remained in the camp before returning over the perimeter wall and reporting that the area was clear.

Acting Captain Shields' and Lance Corporal Plant's selfless actions cannot be praised enough; in great danger they risked their lives to ensure that other soldiers were safe. They displayed outstanding leadership and courage in the highest traditions of the Service and their actions merit public recognition.

Peter Shields MBE, QGM was born in Maryhill, Glasgow, in 1950. He enlisted into the Territorial Army in 1968.

He enlisted into the Regular Army in 1971 and joined the Royal Corps of Transport. He was consequently appointed Regimental Sergeant Major of 7th Tank Transporter Regiment and rose through the ranks to Lieutenant Colonel.

He is at present Area Support Officer for North East England and Scotland for the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association.

# Sgt Craig Sharp MC

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Black Watch

3 Scots Royal Regiment of Scotland



Sgt Craig Sharp, back row third from left, Afghanistan 2012, with his platoon.



Craig on patrol Afghanistan

Craig Sharp was born and grew up in the town of Mauchline in Ayrshire. His earliest memories recall that he always wanted to be a soldier. Nothing would make him deviate from this chosen path and when he reached 16 years of age he joined without hesitation.

For a young soldier his experience is extensive and include, Platoon Sgt. on the HM Queen, Royal Guard Platoon. Multiple Commander 3 SCOTS Section, Commander Specialist Role sharpshooter Reconnaissance Section, and Commander Close Observation Platoon.

As a Corporal, aged 24, Craig was with The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

The battalion were heavily engaged in Operation Panther's Claw, the campaign which cleared the way for free elections in Afghanistan. This was his first tour in Afghanistan.

Craig led a team of just 7 men who stormed a Taliban run village in Babaji in Helmand province. As Sharp's unit began climbing over compound walls into the main street of the village, the enemy opened fire with machine guns. In a close contact battle, which lasted 12 hours, they exchanged fire with Taliban soldiers armed with rocket propelled grenades from a distance of only 7 metres.

The nature of the terrain was such that the rest of the brigade were unable to provide much fire support, which resulted in Craig having to lead his section through what became a desperate struggle for the village. He called for a mortar mission less than 80 metres from his position, successfully destroying several enemy positions.

His commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Cartwright - stated

*"Sharp was incredible. He displayed such tenacity and aggression that the enemy actually reported being frightened over their radios."*

*"He would not let them breathe, advancing forwards constantly. Sharp's contribution to the success of this mission, by personal bravery and action, cannot be understated. None of the soldiers Sharp led was injured"*

For his actions he was awarded the Military Cross. The citation for his bravery award reads:

*"Corporal Sharp was the lead section commander, responsible for providing flank protection for the IED disposal team who were clearing a route for the Jackal reconnaissance vehicles.*

*As Sharp's team began climbing over compound walls into the main street of the village, the enemy opened fire with machine guns and Rocket Propelled Grenades .*

*The nature of the terrain was such that the rest of the BRF were unable to provide much fire support, which resulted in Sharp having to lead his section through what became a desperate 12 hour struggle for the village.*

*Outnumbered, his section was surrounded a number of times, requiring several gun runs from close air support to push the enemy back, allowing him to advance. Sharp, cajoling and encouraging his section, personally moving back and forth to carry out ammunition re-supplies and water replenishments.*

*He called for a mortar mission less than 80 metres from his position, successfully destroying several enemies and marking the end of the struggle for the Luy Mandeh Village . "*

The Black Watch held the village for a week, pushing deep into Babaji before handing over to the Welsh Guards.



Sgt Craig Sharp MC

# Sgt Jeff Seery

24912024

## The Royal Highland Fusiliers



Jeff Seery in Iraq

Jeff Seery's great grandfather served in the 2nd Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers during World War 1. He was wounded in the battle of Nuevo Chappell in 1915 where the British suffered 7,000 casualties.

Jeff has always felt a great affinity with the man and joined the Royal Highland Fusiliers, his local regiment, straight from school, aged 16.

In 1992, Jeff's Battalion took up the role of spearhead Battalion for an emergency tour of Northern Ireland. He served in Belfast and Dunganon, one corner of the infamous murder triangle during the Troubles. Land mine attacks, booby trap bombings, Republican and Protestant tit for tat killings were commonplace.

After tours in Belize and Falingbostel Germany, the Battalion served as peace keepers during the war in Bosnia. Jeff travelled throughout the country and experienced a number of unsavoury incidents.

In 2003, his battalion was selected to be augmented to the Kings Own Scottish Borderers for Operation Telic 2 in Iraq.

Some 9,500 of the British servicemen and women who deployed on Operation Telic, for the invasion and its aftermath, were reservists. The vast majority of them were from the Territorial Army. During this period he served in AL Amara and Basrah

In 2004 he left his job, took a leave of absence from the Territorial Army. He returned to Iraq as a Close Protection Officer and Security consultant working closely with United States and United Kingdom embassy officials and Army Corps of Engineers, who were engaged in the reconstruction of Iraq.

Jeff was commander of a multinational security team of 12 men. They were tasked with providing security from terrorist activities and kidnap attempts. Escort duties to and from reconstruction projects around the Baghdad area featured much.

*"My role in Iraq was both operations staff and security team leader. Iraq is an unpredictable, hostile and dangerous place. The work was tough and you had to be alert at all times.*

*Our team focused mainly on hospitals, water treatment plants, power plants and sub stations.*

*Intelligence and security was vital and we worked in close partnership with multinational departments and organisations."*

In 2011 Jeff moved into Maritime security providing armed security on merchant vessels vulnerable to pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. The area affected is vast, approximately 2.5 million square miles. Despite a large naval presence security is still a serious problem.

Jeff could be described as a new category of soldier. A 'Private Military Contractor' providing VIP protection in dangerous environments. He earns his living by undertaking risky tasks, confident in his view that he is equipped to do so because he has had 'the best military training in the world'.



Sgt Jeff Seery

# Maj Gen J M Cowan CBE DSO

## Commander

### 3rd United Kingdom Division



Maj Gen J M Cowan CBE DSO



Maj Gen Cowan speaks to troops in Afghanistan

The British Army is over three centuries old, unbroken in its continuity. Continuity is vital if knowledge, traditions and sense of belonging are to persist.

Important also is history and family. Unsurprisingly Major General James Cowan has the British Army in his blood. He comes from a 'Service family' on both his mother's and father's sides.

James was educated at Wellington College and joined the Army in 1982 as a private soldier. He served for a year in Northern Ireland in the Ulster Defence Regiment.

He read Modern History at Pembroke College Oxford before commissioning into The Black Watch, after Sandhurst in 1987.

Initially posted to Berlin as a platoon commander, his first job was to guard Rudolf Hess; he died shortly afterwards, 'for hopefully unrelated reasons' he says.

James served next in Northern Ireland for two years. He later served in Zimbabwe in 1991-92, where he trained Mozambiquan FRELIMO troops.

He moved on to serve with The Black Watch in Hong Kong from 1992-94. He returned to Africa in 1995, to Lesotho to prevent further military coups.

Another coup did occur shortly after he left, but he says "it was slightly better organised".

In 1995 he completed an MPhil at Christ's, Cambridge.

After Staff College, he was posted to the Directorate of Military Operations with responsibility for the Balkans during the Kosovo conflict, before becoming a company commander in The Black Watch in Scotland and Germany.

In 2001 he became Military Assistant to the Chief of the General Staff, working for both Generals Walker and Jackson during the Afghan and Iraq crises.

Taking command of The Black Watch in July 2003, the regiment went to Iraq in June 2004, fighting in Basrah and Al Amarah during the Sh'ia uprising.

The Black Watch went on to support the Americans for the Battle of Fallujah. The story of this operation was turned into a critically acclaimed National Theatre for Scotland play - Black Watch.

From 2006 until 2007 James was Chief of Staff of the 3rd United Kingdom Division. In that time, he was again in Iraq during a period of intense fighting in Basrah.

He commanded 11 Brigade from 2007-2010; leading his brigade in Afghanistan for Operation MOSHTARAK, the clearance of the Taleban from Central Helmand. Sadly 64 men were killed and several hundred wounded, but the operation led to a significant improvement in security in Helmand.

He was Head of Counter Terrorism and UK Operations in 2010-12, during which he had planning responsibility for the Olympic security operation. Shortly before the Olympics began, major flaws in the civilian security operation emerged which required the Army to contribute 18,000 soldiers to ensure a safe and secure Games.

He was a Defence Fellow at Oxford in early 2013, before assuming command of the 3rd United Kingdom Division - the "Iron" Division - consisting of three Armoured Infantry brigades and a Logistic brigade - around 20,000 soldiers. He is also Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and of the Oxford University Officer Training Corps.

He is portrayed in the uniform of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. Every item of this uniform relates to three centuries of military history and his personal story.

James Cowan has the unenviable task of providing a 21st century strategic vision. Decisions, upon which thousands of lives and the security of a nation depend.

His job requires a thorough analysis of all things, much of it classified and undisclosed. But he thinks it important to maintain perspective, humility, a sense of humour and importantly a love of the job and the people he works with.

While we may speculate, the truth is, we know very little and can only imagine what command entails at the level of Major General in a modern world.

# Lt Col (Retd) Simon Higgins MBE

539576

Corps of Royal Engineers



Lt Col (Retd) Simon Higgins MBE



The Corps of Royal Engineers is unique, being made up from multi skilled soldiers, combat engineers and tradesmen who work in all parts of the army. Everything from bomb disposal to the building of bridges is part of their remit.

Lt Col Simon Higgins has been a Royal Engineer and proudly a “Sapper” for 29 years. He has travelled throughout the world in operations including Northern Ireland, Belize, Kenya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Congo and Angola.



Until recently Lt Col Higgins was the commanding officer at Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities Officers’ Training Corps, where students from Glasgow, Strathclyde and Caledonian Universities as well as students from the University of the West of Scotland can complete up to four years of leadership training.

Lt Col Higgins is originally from Luton but he loves being in Glasgow where he now works for a large engineering company.



For Lt Col the army offered no end of opportunities. He joined aged 16 years old and has risen through the ranks, being awarded the Sword of Honour for being the best officer cadet in his intake at Sandhurst.

A skilled communicator, crafted in diplomacy and resource management, he knows how to get the best out of people.



In 2005, Simon was completing his time commanding an engineering squadron in Germany. He was hastily tasked to fly to the Congo to support the French Army who were based at an airfield in Bunia delivering humanitarian aid for the United Nations.

The problem that confronted him was a very old airfield in need of constant repair and a complete lack of cargo handling facilities.

Off loading the humanitarian aid was slow, difficult and almost unmanageable, hindering the ability to deliver the vital stores.

Simon quickly surveyed the area and drew up a plan and schedule to repair the runway and extend the parking apron. Two weeks later he was joined by the rest of his squadron. Repair to the runway began immediately.

*“Even though we only increased it by twice its size we were able to increase throughput by 300% due to the way that we managed the aircraft on and off the apron. In a very short period of time we made a significant impact on the lives of up to 100,000 Congolese refugees who were in the humanitarian camp”.*

Simon was awarded the MBE for his work in the Congo.

*“I am very proud and it’s humbling when people remind me I do have my MBE. As much as it’s for me personally, if it wasn’t for the 100 men and women who were under my command and who did the work, then I wouldn’t have received it.”*