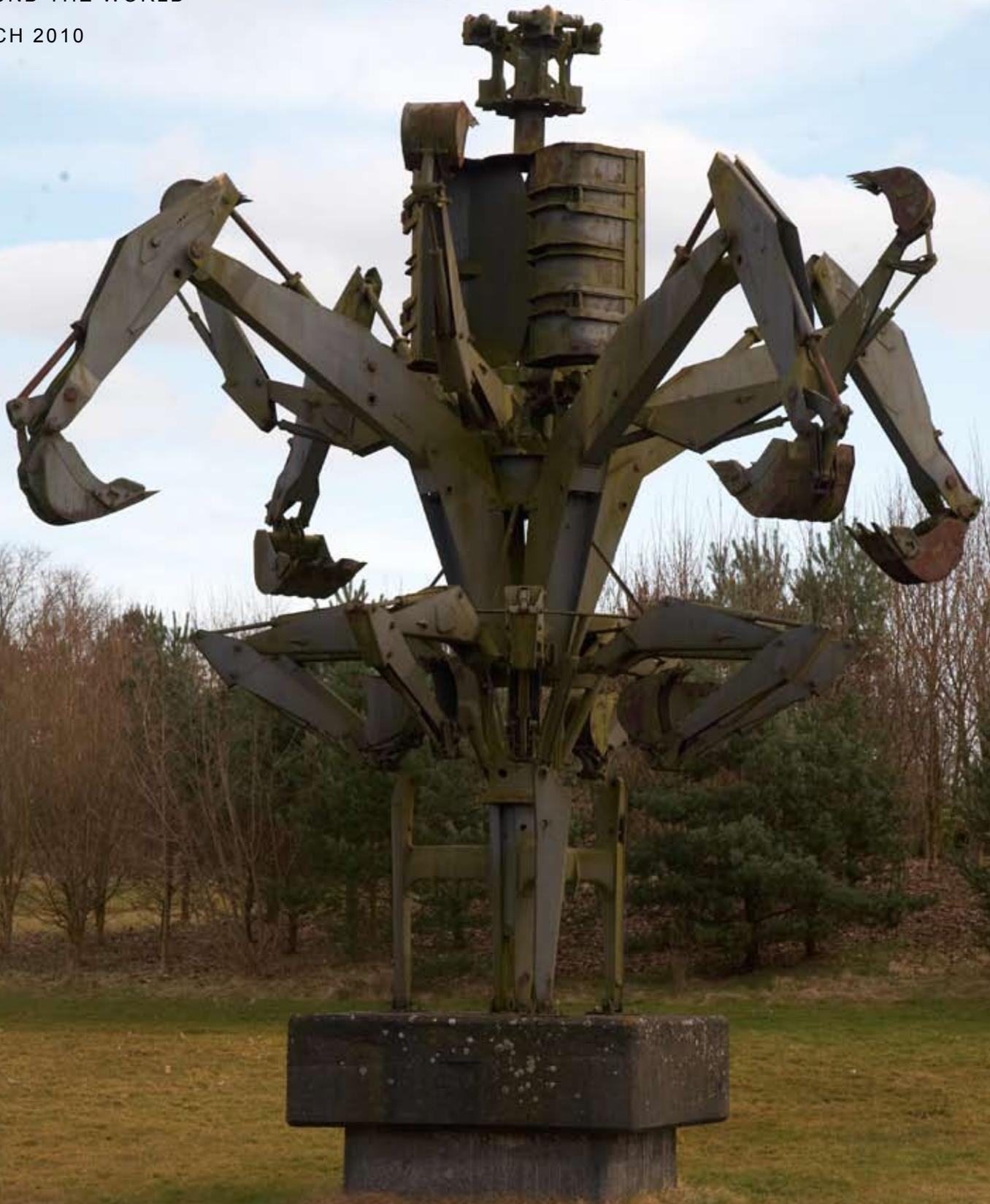


Northern

BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS
FROM OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
AROUND THE WORLD

news

MARCH 2010



Editorial Ramblings



A Happy Easter! We hope you have had a lovely Easter holiday and remembered the true meaning of this special celebration. This month we thank God for the speedy healing of my Auntie Rita, who recently fell and broke her hip - and had a new one fitted very successfully. We also thank God for the return home of our friend Keith, who has been in hospital for three months after major surgery. I also thank God that I'm making some recovery from illness (yet again!) this month. Life in this country has been a great struggle for me, regarding my poor health, ever since we arrived here. Lack of sunshine and warmth must be a factor after all the years I lived overseas where I was always warm and in the sun! How I hate being here. During our travels this month, which have been very limited, we visited a number of cemeteries / memorials and, this being Easter, it seemed appropriate to include them in this edition. We also paid a brief visit to the same area of Dovedale that we visited last summer - the contrast in the scene was quite marked because of the lack of leaves on the trees. One piece of exciting news for the photographers / writers amongst us is the new version of Adobe Photoshop (and Adobe In-Design) being released as part of a Creative Suite of programs, during the middle of April. CS5 promises to be an exciting development and I'm looking forward to using it very soon. This month, Grace has been busy in the garden, planting bulbs and sowing seeds, as well as a few new rose bushes. We hope that summer comes soon and that it will be a hot sunny summer, just like we used to get when I was a boy - many years ago! As always, we would be delighted to hear from you and look forward to receiving your e-mails very soon.

Alan



Photograph above: Little Lad on a rock in Dovedale.

Cover photograph: Assembled from excavator parts, this sculpture is located opposite the JCB World HQ.





Return to Dovedale



You may remember the photographs we took in Dovedale last summer. This year we decided to pay a visit in early spring. It seemed quite strange seeing the trees still without their leaves after the winter.

The panorama across the top of this page and the next was taken shortly after we entered the southern end of the Peak District National Park. The photograph spans just over 180° and comprises 19 photographs 'stitched' together.

The other photographs were taken alongside the River Dove.



Crossing the River Dove using stepping stones. After a successful first crossing, Little Lad fell in from the last step of the return crossing! On our last visit, we climbed the hill that is partly shown in the top left of this photograph. We went an easier route this time.



Our young people are dying for this!



**Army launches investigation:
Corrupt Afghans stealing millions from aid funds
Money that is supposed to help impoverished civilians
and farmers is ending up in the hands of the Taliban,
drug lords and profiteers**

By Jonathan Owen
Sunday, 7 March 2010

Afghanistan is in desperate need of reconstruction but funds sometimes get diverted

A major investigation has been launched into contracts awarded by coalition forces in Afghanistan that are worth hundreds of millions of pounds. The probe into construction and logistics contracts of the International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) has been ordered by Major General Nick Carter, commander of Isaf forces in the south of the country.

It is prompted by mounting concerns that the very money supposed to win over the hearts and minds of Afghans is ending up in the hands of the Taliban, drug lords or profiteers.

The British commander's concern is part of a wider crackdown on corruption, with General Stanley McChrystal having declared war on those making millions out of what has become a billion-dollar black hole for aid funds, in an anti-corruption directive issued last month.

A third of the costs of supplying the armed forces in Afghanistan is spent on paying protection, bribery and safe passage fees, and everybody is complicit, claim Afghan experts, who spoke under condition of anonymity.

Trucks pay a "Taliban tax" of up to \$1,500 each time they venture out from Karachi to Camp Bastion. And millions are being made by a clique around Afghanistan's President, Hamid Karzai, many of whom have interests in transportation and private security.

Members of prominent Afghan families, including Hashmat and Ahmed Wali Karzai, brothers of President Karzai, and Hamed Wardak, the son of the Defence Minister, Rahim Wardak, are among those accused of controlling private security firms benefiting from lucrative security contracts by paying off the Taliban.

Up to \$600m of aid for reconstruction projects goes on security each year, according to Afghan government sources. The US Congress is investigating allegations of a massive protection racket in which private security companies paid to protect routes for coalition forces are involved in paying

off local warlords and the Taliban.

It is not just Afghan firms that are causing concern. The US Defence Secretary, Robert Gates, is to review allegations of misconduct in Afghanistan by the private security firm formerly known as Blackwater. The company is mired in allegations that it has previously misappropriated government weapons and hired people with violent backgrounds.

As little as a quarter of the aid money pumped into the country actually stays in Afghanistan, according to aid organisations in Afghanistan. Of the money that is spent on aid, about a third goes on bribes and protection money, claims Sayed Javed, president of the NGO Kabul Group Consulting.

Mohammad Hashim, from Integrity Watch Afghanistan, a Kabul-based NGO, claimed: "There is a huge corruption within Helmand province where the Afghan and international forces are fighting against Taliban. The reconstruction and most of the aid project has been conducted by the governor's own companies which are ultimately involved in corruption and futility. This governor is supported by central government."

Isaf would not comment on details of the investigation but a spokesman said: "Isaf is aware of allegations that procurement funds may find their way into the hands of insurgent groups, but we do not directly support or condone this activity." He added that relationships between contractors and subcontractors "are not entirely transparent".

But it is not just military contracts that are affected. One of Britain's flagship projects to encourage Afghan farmers to switch from growing opium to wheat is in crisis. The £13m Helmand Alternative Livelihoods Programme, run by the British-led Provincial Reconstruction Team, was supposed to get better quality seed to farmers in time for the growing season. But there have been at 12 arrested in Afghanistan amid accusations of widespread corruption in recent months, including allegations of people pocketing cash by giving farmers cheap seeds. Some seed came in sacks containing rocks to falsify the weight.

It is just one example of the corruption that has dogged Afghanistan's repeated attempts to drag itself out war. A wave of aid into Afghanistan has fuelled corruption, according to Dr Stuart Gordon, senior research fellow at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. "There has been this tsunami wave of money flushing around the system without it being adequately targeted," he said. "The result has been that the opportunities for corruption have been significantly higher than they needed to have been and it has fuelled militia groups and individuals who are in government positions who are widely seen as corrupt."

Widespread corruption is undermining the confidence of the Afghan people in their government and boosting the insurgency, according to a recent report by the UN Office

on Drugs and Crime. It states that some £2.5bn was paid in bribes last year alone and, in a damning indictment of the corruption within the Afghan government, states: "As the de facto government in some areas, the Taliban's system of taxation and 'shadow' tribunals also provides the only form of criminal justice and security."

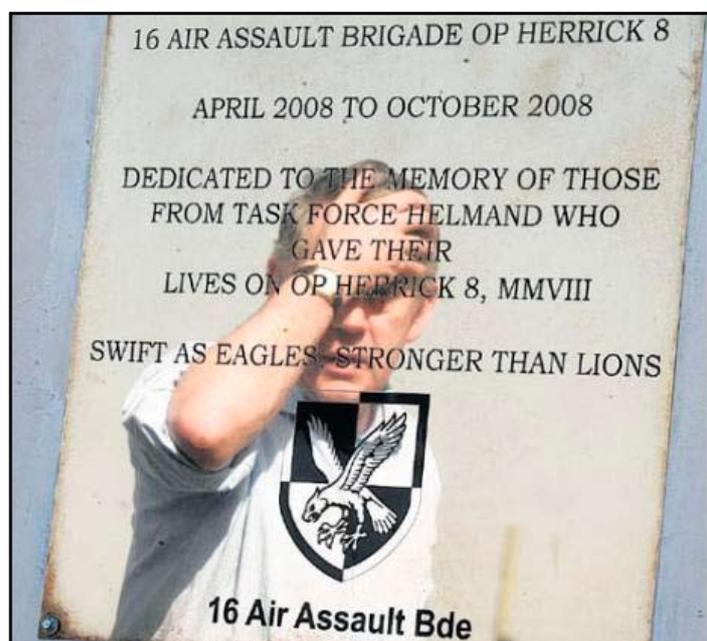
Despite billions spent on aid since 2001, Afghanistan remains one of the most corrupt and poorest countries in the world, with an economy underpinned by the illegal drugs trade.

It is suspected that much of the country's drug money is being sent to Dubai, a base for many wealthy Afghans. Last week it emerged that more than \$1bn a year in cash is being flown out to the Gulf state. Earlier this year, US officials witnessed an Afghan man en route to Dubai with three briefcases stuffed with \$5m. Days later, the same man made a repeat trip with a similar amount of cash.

The size of the problem first became apparent when the British company Global Strategies Group, which has an airport security contract, started filing reports on the money transfers at the request of Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security in 2009. But it is understood that complaints from the country's notoriously corrupt police force saw an end to this reporting last September.

The issue of corruption goes to the heart of the conflict, claims Matt Waldman of Harvard University's Center for Human Rights. He accused the Afghan government of playing a part in "perpetuating and exacerbating the conflict through exclusionary polices... through conduct which is actually predatory rather than serving the people".

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/army-launches-investigation-corrupt-afghans-stealing-millions-from-aid-funds-1917436.html>



above: Gordon Brown yesterday reflected in a plaque commemorating UK deaths in Helmand

Brown finally axes Snatch Land Rovers linked to 36 Army deaths

As the Prime Minister makes a surprise visit to Afghanistan, news comes of more British casualties

By Brian Brady, Whitehall Editor in Camp Bastion
Sunday, 7 March 2010

Hundreds of soft-skinned "snatch" Land Rovers of the type implicated in the deaths of at least 36 British troops over the past decade are finally to be phased out after a bitter five-year campaign.

Ministers have agreed to spend more than £100m on a new design of vehicle that will offer British servicemen and women greater protection against the scourge of roadside bombs in Afghanistan. The first of 200 British-built "light protected patrol vehicles" (LPPV) are expected to begin replacing the snatch models by the end of next year.

The LPPV, unlike the snatch, is fitted with armour that can absorb the blast of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which are responsible for four out of five British deaths in Helmand province.

News of the "imminent announcement" came as Gordon Brown paid a surprise visit to Afghanistan to view progress made by Operation Moshtarak – the latest military "surge" against the Taliban – and efforts to improve the capacity of local police to keep order in their own country.

Mr Brown's visit was overshadowed by the death of two British soldiers from 3rd Battalion the Rifles in Sangin yesterday. One died in an explosion, the second was shot during a firefight. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) said the soldiers' next of kin had been informed.

A day after Mr Brown finally appeared before the Chilcot inquiry amid allegations he had failed to provide the cash to fund vital equipment for British forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Prime Minister also pledged millions extra to help to improve protection against the roadside bombs that have taken an increasing toll on British forces – accounting for almost half of the British fatalities last year.

But he came under attack yesterday from Lord Guthrie, a former chief of the defence staff, who said the MoD received the "bare minimum from the Chancellor" at the time of the last strategic defence review in 1998, when Gordon Brown had "wanted to give the military as little as he could get away with". He added: "To say Gordon Brown has given the military all they asked for is simply not true."

The Ministry of Defence will spend £18m on further work

to counter IEDs, including providing 2,000 hand-held metal detectors to troops on patrol in some of the most treacherous areas of Afghanistan.

Britain will also provide an extra 150 expert police training staff towards the target of increasing the number of trained Afghan police officers from 98,000 to 134,000 by the end of next year. Establishing an efficient police force has been identified as crucial if Afghanistan is to assume control of its own security. But the campaign to “Afghanise” the police and military has been held back by the poor quality of recruits, corruption and, in some cases, drug abuse.

But Mr Brown’s trip sparked a furious political row back home, as the Tories complained that he was using the armed forces as political “props”. The Prime Minister has also faced accusations that his forces-friendly announcements were engineered to counter criticisms arising from his appearance before the Iraq inquiry on Friday.

The Tories responded to the latest prime ministerial visit by producing a “charge sheet” which they claimed undermined his attempts to suggest he had consistently backed British forces. The dossier declared that Mr Brown should apologise for a series of actions, including “using the armed forces as political props when politically convenient”, “failing to provide the resources and equipment for our troops invading Iraq” and “delaying the delivery of key equipment for our forces in Helmand province”.

However, Mr Brown has faced a string of accusations through the Chilcot inquiry that budget cuts he drove through at the Treasury in 2003 cost lives on the front line. The inquiry heard at the time the helicopter capacity was 38 per cent below what was required by the military. The Tory dossier claimed Mr Brown’s cuts to the helicopter budget amounted to £1.4bn.

Downing Street furiously rejected the claims, insisting instead that Mr Brown had been planning the trip for a long time, and that he had visited Afghanistan in December 2007, April, August and December 2008, and April, August and December of last year.

A spokesman for the Prime Minister said the Tory attack was “a desperate attempt to divert attention from the mess over Lord Ashcroft’s assurances”. He added: “This spurious nonsense demeans the Conservative Party. Would the Tories prefer the Prime Minister didn’t thank our armed forces for their efforts in Operation Moshtarak?”

Mr Brown praised the bravery of the 4,000 UK troops involved in the 21-day Operation Moshtarak, which aimed to repel the Taliban. On arriving at the huge international base at Camp Bastion, the Prime Minister said: “My visit is to say thank you to the thousands of British, Afghan and international troops involved. Their bravery and professionalism are an example of how the international community can and should intervene to make us all safer.”

Later, on a visit to the Helmand police training centre, he underlined the importance of encouraging the Afghans to take control of their own security. Mr Brown added: “The Afghan army is already rapidly expanding, but we

also need a strong Afghan police force to create enduring security. Training the Afghan forces to secure their country for themselves is the right approach. It will provide the conditions where the Afghans are able to maintain their own security and our troops can come home.”

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/brown-finally-axes-snatch-land-rovers-linked-to-36-army-deaths-1917573.html>

The Observer

A happy ending for the Gurkhas? Think again

Veterans, ill-served by middle men, arrive in debt to find their life here is far from good

Nick Cohen

The Observer, Sunday 7 March 2010

A culture that prefers fast food to home-cooked meals and Twenty20 cricket to five-day Tests cannot endure the long haul of political struggle. Boredom sets in. Fickle eyes flick away. “Been there, done that,” we say, a crass cliché at the best of times that turns delusional when we apply it to a political world in which very few causes are done within a decade, let alone a news cycle.

For those who like their gratification instant, no story appeared more satisfying than the campaign to give Gurkha soldiers the right to settle in Britain. The plot was so pat Richard Curtis could have directed it. A legal action, initiated by London solicitors Howe & Co, to compel the government to grant residency rights to some of the 36,000 soldiers who had retired before 1997 provided the backstory. The audience joined the action in April last year, when Nick Clegg demanded that Parliament do what the judges could not. He thundered at Gordon Brown: “If someone is prepared to die for this country, surely they deserve to live in this country?” David Cameron said the same, but Brown failed to listen or understand the public mood.

Even voters who denounced immigration were on the Gurkhas’ side, reasoning that if Britain let in people who hated it, the government should not bar those who had fought for it. In Joanna Lumley, the Gurkhas had a formidable champion. The daughter of Major James Lumley of the 6th Gurkha Rifles served her family’s regiment well by confronting Phil Woolas, Labour’s immigration minister, at the BBC. She was glamorous and filled with righteous anger. She looked down on Woolas, a careworn and equivocating politician in an ill-fitting suit, and wiped the floor with him.

Her commanding performance was too much. Labour, whose back-benchers had already mutinied, gave in. It decided to do the decent thing and open a Gurkha settlement office in Nepal. Its staff provide advice to often elderly men on managing the move to Britain, give them National

Insurance numbers so that they can find work or claim benefits and help them fill visa application forms . All free of charge.

In the final scene, the victorious Lumley flew to Kathmandu where members of the Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organisation (Gaeso) cheered her until they were hoarse.

As far as the media and the public were concerned, the movie ended there. For Dr Hugh Milroy from the London-based charity Veterans' Aid, the drama is just beginning. He is a battle-hardened officer, but nothing he has seen has prepared him for the homeless men who are arriving at his door. One Gurkha, just off the plane, was mentally ill and could not speak English. His possessions consisted of two flea-ridden blankets and an equally lousy jacket with pockets stuffed with dog ends. He didn't know where he was or what to do; in the end, Milroy and his colleagues had to find the money to send him home.

Milroy fears he will soon be overwhelmed by old soldiers. They have not gone to the resettlement centre for free advice. Instead, they have listened to middlemen, who are anxious to fill their pockets with a currency more valuable than dog ends. "I am deeply concerned," he told me. "It is clear to us that if people who have never opened a bank account or dealt with our welfare bureaucracy do not go through the MoD resettlement service they will not be prepared for life in a strange land. It is utterly immoral. I've nothing against Joanna, but we're seeing unintended consequences and exploitation."

In Nepal, rival veterans' groups are accusing Gaeso of doing the exploiting. No one disputes that it asks each veteran to give £500 for help the British government is offering for nothing, before sending him to see advisers from the UK law firms who have come to Nepal, including advisers from Howe & Co. Its lawyers told me they did not take money from Gurkhas, but claimed the fees for the 1,500 people they have advised to date from the British taxpayer. Gaeso insists that the payments it asks for before the men talk to Howe & Co are "voluntary, not compulsory".

£500 may not seem an inflated sum to readers from a rich country. But Nepal is poverty-stricken and still recovering from a civil war between monarchists and Maoists. When Gurkhas add the cost of the "voluntary contribution" to the £500 they must pay for a British settlement visa and £400 for the airfare, many find they must sell their homes and land.

On Tuesday, the Commons home affairs committee will hear from Tim Heaver, a solicitor, who married the widow of a Gurkha soldier and has seen middlemen take the money of his wife's family. "Guys are putting themselves in debt who are little old men," he said. "They give up everything to get here because they are told they will have the good life and find no work and long delays for benefits."

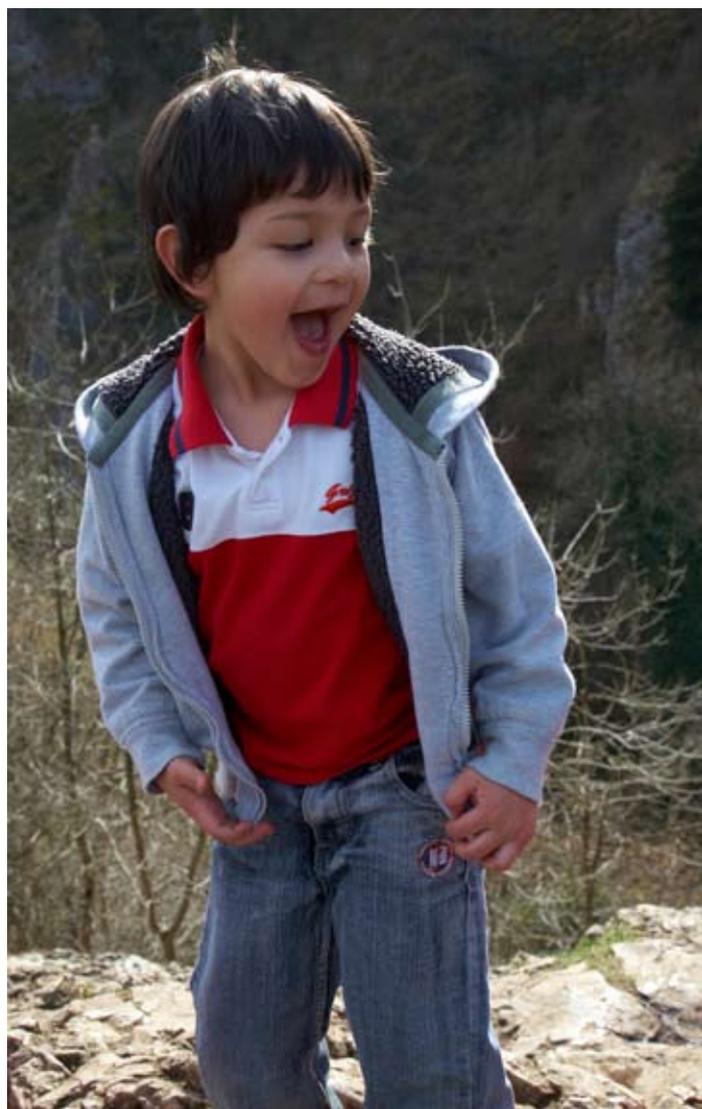
A media and public that claimed to care so much about Gurkhas in 2009 ought to be asking how they are managing in 2010. Relevant questions should include whether the Foreign Office should investigate if smart operators are

relieving Gurkhas of their money, whether charities such as Veterans' Aid deserve public support and whether we should insist that only ex-servicemen who have received free and frank advice from British officials should come here. (The answer to all of them is "yes", by the way.)

But the circus has moved on. With the exception of Sue Reid of the Mail, no journalist has shown the smallest interest in what happened to the Gurkhas next, while Clegg and Cameron have found new distractions to stop the fickle viewers reaching for the remote control. The task of preventing a small outbreak of suffering on British streets has been left to Labour MPs. Backbenchers such as Martin Salter, who led the revolt against the government and is organising the home affairs committee hearings, are co-operating with Woolas and Kevan Jones, the defence minister, who wanted to maintain the status quo. Although they were once on different sides, they can sense trouble coming and believe they have a duty to alleviate it.

We will miss these unfashionable men in ill-fitting suits when we throw them out in May. Assuming we do throw them out, that is.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/mar/07/nick-cohen-gurkhas-resettlement>





German War Dead on Cannock Chase

On 16 October 1959, an agreement was concluded by the governments of the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the future care of the graves of German nationals who lost their lives in the United Kingdom during the two World Wars. The agreement provided for the transfer to a central cemetery in the United Kingdom of all graves which were not situated in cemeteries and plots of Commonwealth war graves maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in situ. Following this agreement, the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgraberfursorge) made arrangements to transfer the graves of German servicemen and civilian internees of both wars from scattered burial grounds to the new cemetery established at Cannock Chase. The inauguration and dedication of this cemetery, which contains almost 5,000 German and Austrian graves, took place in the presence of Dr. Trepte, the President of Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgraberfursorge, on the 10th June 1967. In the centre of the Hall of Honour, resting on a large block of stone, is a bronze sculpture of a fallen warrior, the work of the eminent German sculptor, Professor Hans Wimmer.

Courtesy of URL: http://www.cwgc.org/search/cemetery_details.aspx?cemetery=4007266&mode=1

This cemetery also contains the bodies of many other nationalities who died during both World War I and II. There are a number of British, New Zealand, Canadian, Australian and South African military personnel who gave their lives for my country.



*So many young
people murdered by
war.....
a poor reflection on our
civilisation*



Royal Marine Awarded Military Cross for Afghanistan Bravery

A Royal Marine who saved lives under fire has been awarded the Military Cross, one of the highest awards for gallantry for his actions during combat operations in Afghanistan.

Warrant Officer 1 Matthew Tomlinson has been recognised for his bravery while under heavy concentrated fire by the Taliban while patrolling in a five-strong armoured Viking vehicle convoy near Bashran, Helmand Province, during Operation Herrick in May last year.

Matthew, 43, of Street, Somerset, was patrolling with the Armoured Support Group, part of 3 Commando Brigade, when the lead Viking was partly blown up by a mine (an improvised explosive device).

The convoy halted and then came under sustained heavy rocket propelled grenade fire from one side from the hidden enemy.

Oblivious to his safety, Matthew left his Viking and ran 50 metres to the stricken vehicle which was on fire and helped rescue the troops in the back. Not only did the troops have to avoid the fire and the possibility of the 4,000 rounds of ammunition exploding on the damaged

Viking, but they had to dodge the enemy fire while aware of the ever present danger of a second mine.

Amid this intense battle Matthew also directed return fire on to the Taliban and attended to the seriously injured driver of the damaged Viking with the help of soldiers of the Queen's Royal Hussars the Vikings were escorting. While the car fire was spreading and ammunition was exploding they continued to administer medical care to the driver utilising the cover of the Viking. Matthew then further risked his life by searching for a Royal Marine who had been manning the gun turret on top of the damaged Viking. He found the turret had been blown some distance away with the Marine still inside, but already dead. Running back to the Viking, he again directed return fire from supporting Welsh Guards onto the enemy. Then with help, he recovered both the driver and the turret gunner on stretchers to relative safety. The patrol then withdrew and the casualties were flown out. In the meantime the enemy fire had been suppressed.

Matthew said:

"I am very proud and feel highly honoured to be recognised with the Military Cross. However, I must say that these were tragic circumstances. Also I could not have acted with the confidence I did without the assurance that I had a top team behind me. I know that if my Viking had been hit, then I know the lads would have acted in exactly the same way."

"They were effectively a band of brothers because they worked so well together. I was in charge of their welfare, morale and fighting effectiveness for seven months and I am still very proud to have served with them. The ranks of the Armoured Support Group are the real heroes."

The Viking units, whose primary role is protected mobility, act as independent patrols in their own right or escort other forces on patrol and deliver stores such as equipment, ammunition and water. They also carry out emergency medical evacuation of casualties.

Matthew now serves with 1 Assault Group Royal Marines in HM Naval Base, Devonport, Plymouth, as a landing craft advisor to 300 Marines. He has already served in Afghanistan and Iraq and been awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for the latter. He has also served in N Ireland, Sierra Leone, Congo, Hong Kong, USA, Zaire and French Guyana. Matthew, who joined the Marines in 1989 is married to Sharon, has three children - daughter Ellis, 13, Harvey, six, and Daniel, four. His mother Wendy lives in Street, Somerset and father Richard lives in Yeovil, Somerset. He will receive his award at a later date.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/royalmarines/units-and-deployments/3-commando-brigade/brigade-information/news/royal-marine-awarded-military-cross-for-afghanistan-bravery>

Death in Katyn Forest



Not far from our home, on Cannock Chase, is this memorial to 14 000 Polish people murdered in Katyn Forest.

Doing Justice to the Dead

In recent years the unspoken knowledge of the suffering and slaughter under Soviet power has become a more open subject in the USSR. The peoples under Soviet power have had to deal with knowledge of purges, GULAGs, the informers, the secret police by its many names, and the mass graves at Kuropaty, Poltava, Kolyma, Leningrad, etc, etc. With this glasnost, or openness, comes the burden of adjudication and the problems of assimilating the knowledge into everyday life in such a way as to do justice to both the living and the dead. The Katyn massacre is different. Katyn involved the coldly calculated killing of prisoners from another country, taken in a brutal demonstration of power and disregard for treaties. Katyn was designed to ensure the smooth transition to Soviet power in Poland.

The Second World War was devastating for both Poland and the Soviet Union. Before the conflict was over vast areas of both countries had been decimated and many people had paid for the accident of their place of birth with their lives.

From September 17, 1939 tens of thousands of Polish people were deported into the Soviet Union. Many of them disappeared in the turmoil of war and its aftermath. Most of them now lie in Soviet soil unknown and unpitied, lost

to an unbridled force which exploited the opportunity to eradicate them.

The fate of some is known. For example, 3,000 died at the Chukotsk lead mines in August 1940. Some 4,500 are buried at Katyn, and another 10,000 are reported as buried at Kalinin [Tver] and Kharkov.

Of the original eight mass graves reported at Katyn in 1943, seven were exhumed and the bodies reburied in smaller graves after identification [where possible], and a religious service.

I think it is wrong that these foreign victims of the Stalinist actions remain buried in Soviet soil. The error is magnified when one considers the dead lie inside a KGB enclosure. The families of the Poles in Katyn Woods should be able to mark their loss with a tangible memorial in Polish soil which contains as many of the Polish dead as practical.

With recent changes in the relationship between the Polish and Soviet governments it is now possible to consider the return of the Polish dead at Katyn to their homeland.

Repatriation of the "eighth grave" could be done simply at little cost. Some one hundred twenty people lie in a small

grave about five metres long and two metres wide, which has not been previously exhumed. It was opened in June 1943, some thirteen Polish bodies in summer clothing were identified and the grave was closed again. If this repatriation was successful, consideration could be given to the return of the other Poles lost in the same period.

I acknowledge the turbulent history between the Poles and the Russians [Tsarist or Soviet]. I hear the voices which say the Poles are only a few of the many of all races which suffered in the process of war, conquest and despotism. I am aware of the losses of the peoples of the Soviet Union in the Second World War. I remember the Russians killed in dubious circumstances at Courtine in France.

I also recall the figure of 220 per thousand [22%] of Polish population killed or murdered by invaders from East and West during the Second World War.

Repatriation of the Poles from Katyn would be a small way to show compassion and understanding at a personal level.

Katyn is an example of the hypocrisy, duplicity and machinations of international politics. A textbook case of the cynical manipulation and destruction of truth, morality and people, aimed at retaining absolute power for a despot. A shameful illustration of the overt and covert support from other nations which colluded in the cover-up for a wide variety of reasons.

One can argue that politics is about reality, not morality. The disbelieving response of the Allies to the German announcements in 1943, accusing the Soviets of the Katyn massacre, was very understandable. The continued efforts to ensure no real progress was ever made to resolve the issue make a more interesting and complex study. The exigencies of the political realities of any given period tend to override factors which, in other circumstances, would clearly require a different response. The Allies' behaviour over the Katyn tragedy until Nuremberg could be defended. At Nuremberg and beyond, especially during the "cold war" collusion by the Allies in the continuing cover-up only served to prolong Soviet power and its consequent misery.

As more information becomes available It is going to be fascinating to discover the hidden agendas and loyalties of the people who influenced events in the struggle between Soviet power and the West.

If the continued pursuit and punishment of people for the crimes of the Nazi Germany is acceptable, and indeed seen as necessary to help prevent the rise of another such regime, how can we avoid the conclusion that those responsible for Katyn and other associated sites should not also be pursued?

David Paterson Mirams, PO Box 17-141, Karori, Wellington, New Zealand asserts the moral right to be recognised as the author of this work. [1991].

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.katyn.org.au/dead.html>



In Loving Memory Of My Beloved Husband

*Since the day you passed away
All the joy in life has gone.
For you were the very rock
that my life was built upon.*

*You were my knight in shining armour
My friend in time of need.
And truly were a gentleman
In every word and deed.*

*We'll meet again one day
When I'll hold you close to me.
And there will be such happiness
Just like there used to be.*

