

Scratching's

from

The Pen.....



May/June 2012: A monthly memo and scribblings for, and from, members of the Pen & Sword Club

Club Seminar

WITHIN A FEW DAYS of officially opening the club's list for our seminar on the Development and Future of Military Media Operations some 20 plus seats of the 100 available had been allocated. There is too great interest in the annual dinner, which follows in the evening at The RAF Club.

The seminar will be fully participatory with Open Forums that will allow delegates to challenge the past, debate the present and develop the future of this important military skill.

The Reform Club is an ideal venue in that it is accustomed to hosting events when it is advisable and helpful to apply strict rules of disclosure. This encourages thus free debate, which is of great value to serving officers. The Reform Club states "when a meeting is held under the Reform Club Rule, participants, may not, outside the meeting, quote the speaker, or anyone else present, without their permission as to the quote to be used and its attribution. No recording or film is permitted unless agreed in advance.

The Club President, Hugh Colver and the National Chairman, Mike Peters have written to Regional Chairs, the Deputy Chairs and Commanding Officers of the three reserve units asking them to encourage attendance for both events on September 27.

In a conversation with Hugh Colver, the Chief of the defence Staff expressed interest in the club events and was hoping to attend the annual dinner in the RAF Club as our principal guest and speaker. Unfortunately his intention has been overtaken by events and he will now not be able to attend. The Club is greatly encouraged by his support. We will shortly announce the new principal speaker and our VVIP guests.

The list of speakers is being finalised and we anticipate a VVIP opening address. The programme will follow the theme of initially looking back – it is the 30th anniversary of the Falklands War where much of today's media operations lessons were learned – and then debating the future.

Falklands Task Force journalist Robert Fox, currently defence correspondent of the Evening Standard will join President Hugh Colver in setting the scene and leading the debate into the major conflicts of the last three decades. Hugh was part of the No.10 Downing Street press team in 1982.

The emphasis will then swing towards the Ministry of Defence and views of the professional heads of media and communications and then the views of senior officers who have commanded on major operations. We hope to include Afghanistan and Op Ellamy in this section.



Two notable contributors will be Captain Gerry Northwood, RN, pictured left, who commanded the anti-piracy operations in the Indian ocean and a thoughtful view of the effect of the media on the families of servicemen who have lost their lives in action by Wing Commander Michael Cairns, former CO of 7644 Squadron, RAFVR.

Michael recently acted as a private spokesperson to a family, which had lost a family member in Helmand. A well-known broadcaster in civilian life, Michael has firm views on the system. An Open Forum will follow each session.

Lunch will be an open buffet to allow delegates to circulate freely and mix with the VVIPs who are being invited to attend.

Mark Laity, Chief Strategic Communications at SHAPE/NATO and formerly Special Advisor to Lord Robertson, when he was Secretary General of NATO will open the afternoon session. Mark was defence correspondent of the BBC before moving into media operations.



The day closes with contributions from Caroline Wyatt, the BBC's defence editor, below left, who will outline how the media would like to see the military and media relationship develop and Simon Wren, until recently Director of Media & Communications at the Ministry of Defence, who will examine the future for military media operations.

The Club's annual dinner at the RAF Club in Piccadilly is open to members and their partners. Members may invite additional guests but are asked to contact the National Chairman with their requests.

Deputy Chair (RAF) Group Captain Al Lockwood will shortly announce details of the clubs annual dinner.

New Vice President

Rear Admiral (Retd) Anthony Rix has joined the Pen & Sword Club as an Honorary Vice President. Anthony was Director of Corporate Communications (Royal Navy) at the Ministry of Defence and is currently Director Maritime Security for Salamanca Risk Management.

During his naval career Anthony commanded a Type 42 destroyer, HMS Glasgow, on various missions worldwide and later was the Captain in charge of a Frigate Squadron. He commanded three Type 23 frigates including HMS Norfolk.

Before retiring in 2009 after nearly 35 years service he served as Chief of Staff at Allied Maritime Component Command in Naples.



Bob and Hugh join forces

Colonel Bob Purvis, Regional Chair for Wales & The Marches has announced that Hugh Colver, the Club President has been appointed Chairman of Robert Purvis Consultants Limited (RPC). Air Vice Marshal Michael Jackson, a former member of the Defence Intelligence Staff has been appointed Deputy Chairman.

The company has two subsidiary firms with specific interests in helping businesses and organisations involved in intelligence, security and defence to win contracts. Another subsidiary advises landowners and farmers on all forms of diversification including renewable energy.

Hard Work for the Queen's Jubilee

Congratulations to those club members who contributed towards the success of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Club Deputy Chair (Civilian) Susi Coulthard, pictured on The Mall, played a major role with the media throughout the last few months from her office in Horse Guards and has a very short respite before she moves onto a similar role with the London Olympics.



Head of Media & Communications Susi was up at 0500 every day for ten days during the celebrations and the rehearsals. She did not see her bed much before 0100 for five nights and told Facebook that she was 'feeling slightly broken but smiling all over.'

Colonel Alistair Bruce found himself the centre attention on Twitter on the final day of the Jubilee weekend as a multitude of Tweets commended him for his fact full commentary throughout the four days. Alistair won a well-deserved mention in the Daily Mail for his professional approach to the job in which his military background and public relations experience took him to a well-deserved top-of-the-tree rating of the weekend's commentators.

A former commanding Officer of MOG (V) Alistair is a descendant of Robert the Bruce and is the Royal, Religious and National event commentator for Sky News. He served with the Scots Guards in the Falklands in 1982 and with media ops on Op Telic.



Pictured left in his role as a herald – Fitzallan Pursuivant of Arms Extraordinary – an officer of Arms to The Queen, Alistair is also a Member of the Royal Company of Archers, the Queen's official bodyguard in Scotland.

Together with National Chairman Mike Peters, Alistair spoke at the Media Operations Group (V) guest night at Andover in May when the topic was the Falklands War.

Alistair related some of the drama of the conflict and the assault on Tumbledown in which he took part. Mike spent the war more comfortably leading the Army press office team in the Ministry of Defence and revealed the background of many of the sometimes-controversial media decisions at the Ministry. He later went south as the war ended with the Governor, Sir Rex Hunt.

Round the World – Backwards

Travel is something that all members of Pen & Sword take for granted. But for one of our members, Commander Mike Souter, his love of travel developed in the Navy has blossomed into a successful career as a travel writer and broadcaster and now lives in Spain.

“When the Navy sent me to Lord Howe Island, an isolated dot on the map between Australia and New Zealand, in 2002 to be their spokesperson when the destroyer HMS Nottingham hit a well charted rock, there came a realisation that writing about long haul travel could very much be a means to an end.

My career has always rather fallen into place, rather than being planned; but running through it has always been my first loves of writing, travel and photography.

“Since setting up SouterMedia.Com in 1989, travel has been very much part of the portfolio and, early on, I was lucky enough to be appointed to handle the PR for a company that was to grow to become one of Europe's biggest business travel consultancies.

Mike pictured right setting up the beers on a visit to Australia



“Advanced Travel Partners, ATP, gave me the opportunity to make contact at senior level with representatives of many of the major airlines, hotel groups and cruise lines, contacts that have stood me in good stead till today.

“The limiting factor was always one of time until, that is, I made the decision in 2008, at the age of 55, to get off the hamster wheel and travel for enjoyment rather than for commercial gain. But of course my many contacts in the industry saw this as an opportunity to offer me inducements to stay at their properties, travel on their airlines and experience their cruise lines.

“Nothing is ever for nothing, so the deal has become that I write for their magazines, contribute to their port guides and supply my photographs. As a result, I have managed to put together some really extensive two and three-month trips taking in places like Japan, China, Taiwan and Laos working for China Airlines and their partners, to annual round the world (RTW) trips with Star Alliance.

“Last year, I went RTW east-about and, despite my knowledge of navigation, still can't quite work out why I spent an entire Saturday in Christchurch and Auckland in New Zealand, flew overnight, to spend Saturday all over again in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

“This year, I headed ever westward, left San Francisco on a Friday, missed Saturday completely, and arrived in Auckland on Sunday. At least it has evened itself out.

“People ask me what the biggest challenges are when planning long and complex trips. Packing, for one, especially when the itinerary includes both blisteringly hot and biting cold climates. Airlines have become much better in aligning their luggage allowances, but I still

regularly have to produce evidence of my round the world allowances at the point when some desk agent or another is determined to levy a hefty fee for what they see as excess to their normal levels.



One of Mike's photographs that was published following a trip.

"Of course, having lost many bags over the years, I always spread my kit between my two checked cases, as well as taking enough clothing in my on-board allowance for three days. An RTW ticket would normally give you three cases in the hold, but I find that I don't have enough hands to deal with that!

"Visas are increasingly a nightmare with rules changing all the time. No longer does 'Her Britannic Majesty's' name give you the key to enter. Not that, at the time of writing, I currently have a passport, which was removed in a bag containing my Ipad, wallet, cameras and much more at Geneva Station.

"Before you ask, a very clever distraction technique that, according to the local constabulary, is successfully used many times a day. Note to self, make sure I update the Lonely Planet and Rough Guide listing for Geneva. Gare Cornavin has a REALLY bad reputation locally. Luckily, I keep other credit cards elsewhere, so I wasn't completely destitute, but losing the keys to my friends' apartment while they were out of the country was a particular challenge that needed some considerable Royal Navy taught initiative to resolve!

"Again, before you ask, getting a British passport is not as easy as it once was. As I was due to go on a three-week InterRail trip less than a week after getting back to the UK, I could get in, but not out, so I have had to stay in Europe, where, in theory, I can travel to Schengen countries without the need to show travel documentation. By the time I am booked to travel back to the UK, my new passport will, in theory, have arrived.

"There are many things I love about travel. One, especially, is when one of my tagged photos (I upload my pictures every day and tag them in detail) appeals to an editor. As a result of careful tagging, my photos of an upright Costa Concordia were the first to be used when the ship foundered. The tablet edition of Metro has recently used pictures of mine from Sarawak and Melbourne and Orient Express is using a dawn picture of one of their infinity pools in Thailand in their brochure.

"The question I am almost always asked in broadcast interviews or when I give talks is which place do I like the most. South Island, New Zealand is very high on my list. But people who

know Christchurch well will tell you that it will be ten or 15 years before that lovely city recovers from the earthquakes.

“Laos is another country that is, as yet, unspoiled by mass tourism and comes highly recommended. But my absolute current top tip is Norfolk Island in the South Pacific. It was to there that the Bounty mutineers sailed when they realised that Pitcairn Island couldn't sustain their community. And it is to there that I plan to return in 2013 to celebrate my 60th birthday.”

You can read Mike's blog of his round the world trips and access his photos at: <http://mdsouter.blogspot.com>

A frenetic life in Mogadishu

By Richard Bailey

A strategic communications consultant with 17 years experience in national and international communications and media management roles, Richard Bailey, a former officer in The Highlanders tells *Scratchings* of a day working as Head of Press and Media to the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. Richard recently moved on to become Head of Communications at Bancroft Global Development in Mogadishu. He served as a British Army Press officer with 49 Brigade in Londonderry and in Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo.



It's Wednesday morning. Early. The radio bursts into life and the day turns upside down. Convoy timings have changed and I have precisely ten minutes to get to the convoy park to accompany President Jerry Rawlings, former President of Ghana and now the African Union Special Representative for Somalia, on a mission to Villa Somalia to resolve the Parliamentary crisis involving the Speaker.

Another breakfast bites the dust.

Life in Mogadishu is like rafting rapids. Fast moving, constantly changing, occasionally dangerous, and utterly chaotic. The only thing that works is to paddle furiously and try to stay in the centre of events. It's hot and you spend the day coated in a thin layer of sweat.

But for sheer exhilaration, challenge and satisfaction, there is nowhere I'd rather be.

The Rawlings mission stalls. President Sharif keeps him waiting for 20 minutes and the MP's he wants to see don't turn up. So after a brief and hurriedly organised doorstep statement with the media, we are back in AMISOM's armoured Casspirs and making our way to the airport base.

Eighteen months ago, when I first arrived, a journey through the city used to take ten minutes at break neck speed. That was when the frontline was the main road through the city.

Now that AMISOM have cleared Al Shabaab out of Mogadishu, the city has burst back to life and the journey takes double that time as we negotiate traffic jams, building works, road repairs and stray animals. People are everywhere, trading, talking, and sitting peacefully under the trees.

The Makrama Road, Mogadishu's version of Oxford Street, was clearly once a very beautiful avenue lined with trees. Now some trees may have survived, but each building will in turn be pulled down and rebuilt. The city's Italian architecture has been hammered to a shell by 20 years of civil war and the last 18 months of AMISOM achieving what many others have failed to do over the years.



The London Conference is just weeks away and I am organising for dozens of media to come into Mogadishu to report on the situation and go live by satellite on the day. BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, ITN, Sky News, Sunday Times the Economist; the list goes on. The day is peppered with phone calls trying to get detail of when they are coming. A plan is taking shape, along with the simple logistic arrangements of accommodating them all. It's going to be tight, but it will certainly be great fun. Somalia doesn't get this sort of spotlight very often, so we enjoy it when it comes.

I manage to grab some soup for lunch.

The London Conference also comes with the need to help the Somali Government get its message across clearly. I spend time on the phone with the Prime Minister's spokesman, a vibrant Ealing Somali called Yarisow, trying to squeeze a couple of hours into the Prime Minister's diary this Sunday to talk through his communications plan.

The Deputy Head of AMISOM, a charismatic Kenyan MP called Wafula Wamunyinyi, is holding his monthly press conference with the Mogadishu media tomorrow. He has called a meeting for 6.30pm to rehearse and prepare. Wairimu and Fanah are busy calling the local media to make sure they know when to come and the security arrangements they will have to endure.

Everything has to be thought of, from the passes to the bed sheets needed to prevent the search dog's nose touching the cameras.

As we get ready to attend the meeting across camp, news comes through of another car bomb in town. AJ Shabaab terrorists have hit the Muna Hotel, popular with MP's - again. Many dead and wounded. I dispatch our Somali press officer, Fanah, to confirm details and draft AMISOM's condemnation. No matter how hard AMISOM soldiers work alongside the Somali National Army, suicide bombers will always get through if they want to but nobody wants this city to become another Baghdad.

We run through Wafula's speaking notes, agree the main headlines we want out of it, adjust some wording and anticipate the most likely questions. We'll be announcing \$500m spending on civil society projects. He is confident and happy.

Supper is welcome. Fish tonight

It's 14 hours since that radio message. But there is time for one last surprise! The admin team has been busy too. While I've been working, they have taken receipt of my brand new bed, put it together and sorted my room. I look forward to crawling into bed most nights but, 18 months in the waiting, tonight will be very special. All I need now is a bowling machine for my cricket net in the compound and my life will be complete.

Tomorrow is but the blink of an eye away, and it will be no less frenetic. Good night.

Flight of a lifetime: Spitfire magic

By Paul Beaver

The patchwork of fields in northern Jutland flash by the elliptical wing of the Spitfire in an almost mesmerising fashion. The incredible feeling of flying this iconic aeroplane sends a pilot into reverie. Flying one of Britain's classic fighter aeroplanes, in this case the Boulton Paul Flight Academy's two-seat Spitfire TR9, known as Gilda because of its call sign Golf India Lima Delta Alpha.

The radio cut into my thoughts. In the front, Matt Jones had been speaking to Aalborg Approach for a clearance to refuel in the northern Danish city airport.

'Golf Delta Alpha, please confirm that you are a Spitfire.... a real Spitfire...one of those old ones...?' said the controller. 'Then you are doubly welcome.' And that attitude and kindness summed up the ferry flight from Kjevik, the airport for Kristiansand to Gilda's new home at the almost as iconic grass airfield of Goodwood, that gem in the Sussex countryside.

Goodwood airfield started life as RAF Westhampnett, the home of Spitfire squadrons during the Second World War and the place from which the legendary Douglas Bader left on his fateful last operational flight in August 1941. It is fitting then to have a Spitfire there.

Gilda is an unusual Spitfire. She is a two-seat trainer, which although she didn't see war service in Europe, was used to train South African pilots going to fight in Korea in the early 1950s. Today, she is marked in honour of the South African Air Force pilots who flew with the Allies against the Axis Powers in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations and she carries her military serial number of SM520.



Colonel Paul Beaver is Chairman of the Army Flying Association at Middle Wallop. His flying background includes Tiger Moth, Harvard, helicopters and seaplanes. He is a former Jane's editor and is a member of the Boulton Paul Myanmar Spitfire Heritage Project. Matt Jones, the pilot-in-command, as Gilda, pictured below, leaves Bremerhaven, is Managing Director of the Boulton Paul Flight Academy at Goodwood where this summer there will be two Spitfires, two Harvards, a Chipmunk and Tiger Moth. The BFA is the world's only flight academy where a pilot can train to fly a Spitfire.

After Aalborg, we flew south across the open country of Denmark, skirting the major towns and being kept informed of glider and balloon activity by the ever-helpful Danish air traffic controllers.

Then after another hour in the sky, flew into German airspace and approached the port city of Bremerhaven for a suck of fuel. The Germans welcomed us with open arms and within minutes of our departure, photographs appeared on the airport's Facebook site. Gilda, pictured below, takes aviation gasoline at 100 octanes low lead and this is becoming a rare commodity across Europe. She carries 93 Imperial gallons of 'avgas' in five tanks in the wings and forward fuselage. She also has a capacious appetite for oil for her 27-litre V12 Rolls-Royce Merlin engine too.



From Bremerhaven, the flying becomes even more interesting. The route to the Dutch airfield at Texel took us down the Friesland islands. It was one of those rare days of blissful sunshine and soft winds and we made the most of the unrestricted flying: tourists walking their dogs on a beach may well have seen a 'victory roll'.

Texel is one of the gems of European aviation; a huge grass airfield which beckons private pilots from Denmark in the North to France in the south. It doesn't often get a Spitfire but the long runways made it perfect for another refuelling stop for Gilda and the crew – Dutch apple pie!

One of the pleasures of flying this iconic machine in the airspace of those liberated by its stable-mates seven decades ago is that everyone wants to see it. De Kooy naval air station was no exception: 'Spitfire, you are cleared to transit military airspace but a fly-by would also be appreciated,' said the controller who could hardly keep the glee out of his voice.

From Texel to the Belgian border, the ferry pilot has two choices to skirt the Amsterdam-Schiphol terminal manoeuvring area (known as the TMA) – go east across the polders and miss the spectacular golden beaches, or, yes, that's right, down the beaches, avoiding the TMA by flying under it. Late afternoon walkers on the beach waived and we waggled Gilda's wings. What a day to be flying and what a machine to be doing it in!

Belgium has a number of small airfields and a thriving aero club circuit. For the next refuelling stop, we had been recommended to Kortrijk. We found it easier to explain to air traffic that we wanted clearance to EBKT, as I am not sure our non-existent Flemish accents would get the inflection right!

Departing Kortrijk on the final leg to Goodwood, the control tower signed off with 'thank goodness that somebody invented the Spitfire – you are welcome back anytime.'

The final leg would take us through French airspace and the need to avoid the nuclear power station at Gravelines before turning north towards the White Cliffs. The crossing took just under a quarter of an hour and then it was left and down the coast.

Can there be anyway better to see the White Cliffs, the Seven Sisters including Beachy Head and the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust site at Capel le Ferne? A long circuit of the latter should be mandatory for any Spitfire flying over.

Finally, with just 25 miles to run, we climbed up into the evening sky and called Goodwood. The tower team had stayed to ensure we were welcomed in style – and in style we arrived.

With the sun low in the sky, a grass airfield and the thought of cool beer, Gilda arrived at her new home after nearly six hours of elapsed airtime with two tired but completely 'wired' pilots.

Thank you, Gilda for bringing us home safely – the big Merlin engine never missed a beat.

Geoff and The Last of the Few

Honorary club member Geoff Simpson, pictured right has edited his 12th annual edition of the magazine **1940**. A trustee of the battle of Britain Memorial Flight Trust, which maintains the National Memorial to "The Few" at Capel-le-Ferne, in Kent, Geoff produces the magazine for members of the Memorial's support organisation, The Friends of the Few.



This year **1940** includes features on three Battle of Britain Hurricane pilots as well as a brief account of the history of No.1 Squadron, including its service with Harriers in the Falkands conflict; the deaths of the last Polish and French veterans of the battle of Britain are also recorded. Wing Commander Tadeusz Sawicz received a State funeral in Warsaw, while Colonel Henry Lafont was given a National funeral and was buried in Les Invalides in Paris.

There is also news of planning consent for "The Wing" – the new visitor centre at Capel-le-Ferne – in the shape of a Spitfire wing, which it is hoped will open in 2014 in time for the 75th anniversary commemorations of the battle the following year.

Geoff was also much involved in **Last of the Few**, a supplement to the April issue of **Britain at War** magazine. For the supplement, Geoff interviewed three survivors of the fighting in 1940 – Wing Commander Bob Foster, Squadron Leader Nigel Rose, and Fight Lieutenant Owen Burns - and wrote an article on the history of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association. Only airmen who qualified for the "immediate" award of the 1939-1945 Star with the Battle of Britain clasp may be full members of the association.

About 2940 Allied airmen took part in the battle between July 10 and October 31 of 1940, of whom just over 60 were still alive in April 2012.

Further details of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust can be found at www.battleofbritainmeorial.org.

COMMUNICATING THE ARMED DETERRENT

By Paul Gibbins



Former Royal Marine Captain Paul Gibbins is a freelance maritime communications consultant and was formerly the Director of Communications for a leading UK maritime security company.

He has worked on various public relations projects on behalf of the United Nations, and the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom in high-risk environments including Sierra Leone, Lebanon, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo

In the fight against piracy, it is widely accepted that private armed guards – 'the armed deterrent' - is making an impact, but at a price.

With the recent publication by the One Earth Foundation concluding that private maritime security is estimated to have cost just over a half a billion dollars last year, the spotlight is

shining upon the private maritime security sector like never before, particularly given the current period of austerity!

And yet, for all its merits, it has taken some time for this method of deterrence against piracy to gain acceptance in the shipping community. Opinion remains divided, where concerns remain not only of whether to 'go armed', but more importantly whom to trust with the provision of such a service? Where reputations are at stake, private maritime security companies (PMSC's) are under significant pressure to provide a high quality service.

The inherent risks are well known and whilst many are working extremely hard to deliver their product, exactly what armed guards do and how they do it is still misunderstood. It would appear that the 'armed debate' continues, confusingly, often without maritime security companies' contribution.



It is acknowledged that with the comparative surge in attacks, a frustrated shipping industry has been forced to adopt much more robust measures to deter hijackers. Whilst 'Best Management Practice' has been incorporated as an industry standard in transiting high-risk waters, the private security sector has also contributed in the form of armed guards.

Supply of the armed deterrent has certainly kept pace with demand and with the inevitable proliferation of maritime security has come significant choice; 'armed' providers have appeared literally out of nowhere. So much so, that some traditional 'land based' security providers have identified the opportunities at sea and added 'maritime security' to their list of services. After all, how hard could it be? Very, if one considers the challenges of moving security teams and their equipment, to the right place at the right time, with all necessary insurance, permissions, visas and licences in place, in accordance with the clients' wishes; it is not to be underestimated.

Throughout the growth of PMSC's in an immature and unregulated sector, there has been a varying standard of service, which has not helped the sector with its credibility. Opinion remains divided as to the legal and moral justification of armed guards on board commercial vessels.

The armed deterrent challenges long ago established international law, and exist in a seemingly grey miasma of legal interpretation to operate.

However, despite the early stories of security teams smuggling weapons on board and employing vague rules for the use of force, maritime security providers have now become highly adept at delivering their product. The overall service is now far more transparent and compliant with codes of conduct and a cogent respect for local and international laws. Many reputable PMSC's retain a maritime lawyer of some kind, safeguarding their actions throughout. Undeniably, PMSC's have delivered a much-needed antidote to modern piracy,

focusing upon the business of delivery and unless challenged, steering well away from the 'armed deterrent' debate.

So why bother engaging in the armed debate? After all, maritime security providers are doing a thriving business servicing the shipping community. As readers to *'Scratchings'* well know, shaping the environment is as a familiar term in the military battle space as it is in industry. To be able to exert some 'influence' within the counter piracy narrative offers significant commercial advantages over competitors; after all, not everyone 'gets it'!

Alternatively, consider the debate without the PMSC's input, a narrative of half-truths and hypothesis, without informed opinion from the very people delivering this difficult task - the maritime security provider. How many times have maritime security providers had to explain the difference between a rule of engagement and a rule for the use of force? How often has the escalation of violence theory been wheeled out to dismiss the armed deterrent outright? How frequent has the jurisdiction and ultimate use of armed guards in territorial waters been discussed?

All these issues inform the narrative and quite simply, if you're not in the conversation, then you have no influence over it and skewed definitions and conclusions will pervade, potentially inhibiting business development.

Notably, in 2011, when MP's of the UK Parliamentary Select Committee asked for subject matter expert witnesses to answer questions on Somali Piracy, various representatives from the shipping community appeared including EUNAVFOR and a maritime lawyer, but only one private maritime security company chose to participate and even then declined to appear in person and submit written evidence instead.

But credit where it's due, a minority of PMSC's are just beginning to observe the benefit of public relations engagement. There is a growing appetite for traditional and digital communications, participating in debate, offering opinion and most importantly of all shaping the environment in order to function as legitimate and successful businesses in their own right. Communications and Marketing practitioners are supporting these initiatives, keen to service a fledgling sector of industry that is growing rapidly.

Without doubt, all Private Maritime Security providers operate under intense scrutiny at sea, in commerce, and in complex legal and moral frameworks, where credibility and reputation are intrinsic to the business of delivery. Placing individuals in high-risk environments is not undertaken lightly and many operators deliver a very high quality service in exceptionally challenging circumstances. However, in the interests of sustaining the business model, they just might benefit from talking about it a little more.

Terrorism and Media

By Lt Colonel Mark Wenham

Just returned from a fascinating trip to Turkey where he spoke at the Defence Against Terrorism Centre of Excellence in Ankara, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wenham, Chief Instructor at the Defence Media Operations Centre, pictured right, told the Terrorism and Media Course he would specifically address considerations for release of information on military operations and the issues associated with embedded journalism

He was also able to attend several other presentations that examined the issues of perceptions and the problems associated with censorship of the media in terrorist situations. The audience was mostly but not exclusively



military and made up of some 17 countries that ensured lively debate and an excellent exchange of views and experiences.

“The course examined the issues in some detail through lectures and study groups and visited the debates both from the perspectives of the terrorist and their use of the media - propaganda by the deed and of the deed - as well as the policies and practices of governments and the military to counter the terrorist. This also explored the paradox of the media's freedom to inform as well as the need to protect.

“This was covered in some detail by a presentation given by the celebrated author, Dr. Brigitte Nacos, on censorship considerations in this context. A number of graphic case studies were used to assess the requirement for censorship in such circumstances and concluded that while censorship may not be appropriate in liberal democracies that there were occasions when it does need to be considered - but only in certain circumstances.

“This compliments the essay by Randall G Bowdish in *Cry Terror and Let Slip the Media Dogs* in which he concluded that the media can maintain free speech while preventing harm from terrorism by following some simple guidelines. He advocates going beyond the extant principles and includes simple measure to avoid promoting terrorist's objectives.

“A delicate balance for the media but one that must constantly be kept in mind (through self regulation) as journalists hasten to file their copy - there surely always remains the need, as declared by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to 'starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend ' a sentiment that comes to mind in the light of the Anders Breivik trial.



“The course took account of the complex information environment in which the on-going battle for the narrative continues and how much new technology has caused approaches from both sides to change and adapt. Much of this linked neatly back to the work being undertaken by Albany Associates and other strategic communications conferences.

“There is an ongoing dialogue continuing on the issues surrounding strategic communications - specifically for NATO - that can be found in comments by Stephen H Gorman. The speed at which information is now able to move has globalised information - and arguably globalized terrorism - potentially providing more oxygen to continue the Thatcher analogy.

“New media - or rather 'now media' as Matt Armstrong refers to it - has introduced more Complexity. Twitter in particular typifies the rise of the 'citizen journalist' and the inherent lack of control that comes with it. This in itself impacts on those concerned with strategic communications particularly when considering audiences and their ability to shape the environment. The key, of course, is to embrace the new/now technologies, while being aware of the associated risks and utilise them for counter terrorist effects - and there has been some evidence of this starting to be apparent.

“Finally, during my short time in Ankara, I was able to visit the famous Mausoleum of

Ataturk and the museum - and despite the weather being abnormally stormy it was a fascinating visit which I would recommend as essential viewing for those visiting Ankara.

“Ataturk - there was a man that understood strategic communications!”

5000 Cadets who can say anything they want.....

New member Zena Wynn-Jones explains how a volcanic eruption gave her a start in public relations that led to her joining the Pen & Sword Club and the task of monitoring 5000 cadets who can say anything they like on Facebook or Twitter. Zena leads communications for the Yorkshire & Humberside Reserve Forces & Cadets Association.

After 18 years of various jobs in the Royal Navy I now find myself in Yorkshire and really enjoying every aspect of it.

I was particularly fortunate in the RN, having a good balance of sea and shore jobs. My first introduction to PR was on-board HMS LIVERPOOL when the volcano on Montserrat erupted, whereupon I was catapulted onto the island to escort various radio and television personalities (notably a very young James Mates) and marvel at the press minders who accompanied them.

After that I was always more involved with the event management side of exercises, called upon occasionally to be the ship borne PRO but mainly to watch the MoD experts at their job.

I note that many of them are also members of the Pen & Sword Club and therefore blame them for my interest in media relations!

I became heavily involved in the reserves and cadets whilst in my last job in London and it was through my connection there that I applied for the post of Head of Communications for the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Yorkshire and The Humber.

The media element is very new and, therefore, very exciting here as we work closely with chains of command but also are able to have a little more freedom in the events we plan and personalities we invite, which can help build the ideal media story we want to get across.

We use a lot of social media as well which is excellent for getting messages out quickly but also has to be carefully monitored (anyone with teenagers will know what I'm talking about and in effect I have over 5000 cadets who can say what they like on Facebook and Twitter!).

So, after many years of merely dipping my toe in the water of media relations I suppose I can now say that I'm fully ensconced in it and looking forward to what the future brings, especially with the impending announcements for Future Reserves 2020 (FR20).



New Members

The following new members have been confirmed:

NATO Associate

Lt Col Ulrich Jannsen, Bundeswehr. Currently Course Director and Instructor at the NATO School in Oberammergau

Royal Navy

Lt Zena Wynn-Jones, RN. Currently Head of Communications at Yorkshire and Humberside Reserve Forces & Cadets association. Previously Public Relations Royal Navy.

Lt Simon Bellamy RNR. Media Operations Specialisation. A solicitor in civilian life.

Royal Marines

Lt Col Sean Brady. Currently Projects Officer for Commandant General Royal Marines responsible for delivering strategic messaging.

Lt Col Paul Kearney. Currently Digital Services Director at the Inspired Thinking Group. Formerly Media Operations Royal Marines

Lt Nick West. Currently Communications Director at Raytheon UK. Previously Director of Communications at Boeing UK and similar posts at Thales and Racal Electronics.

Army

Lt Col Charlie Mayo. Currently Director, Olympic Communications at MoD. Previously has worked in Iraq and Afghanistan and advised on NATO operations in Libya.

Major Matthew Allen. Currently SO2 Media Training at the Defence Media Operations Centre. Previously SO2 Media at 16 Air Assault Brigade. Combat Camera Team leader in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Royal Air Force

Flight Lieutenant Amanda Castle, RAF. Currently Senior Manager Public Relations at HIS Jane's. Previously public relations at The Royal British Legion.

Pilot Officer Meg Fairhurst, 7644 Squadron RAuxAF. Served during Op Ellamy and in support of the Diamond Jubilee. Broadcaster and development producer at Pulse8.

Ministry of Defence

Ms Clare Parker. Currently Assistant Head Training Development at Defence Media Operations Centre. Previously Global Media Analyst and Policy Press Officer at MoD.

Won anything, done anything, travelled far. Got a new job. Let your fellow members know. Please contact the Editor, Mike Peters on 01483 281822 or email: michaelpcoms@btinternet.com