

A brief history of Operations TELIC and HERRICK

‘The first, supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish ... the kind of war on which we are embarking ... this is the first strategic question and the most comprehensive.’ Clausewitz.¹

‘The key lesson is that we ignore previous experiences of campaigns and those of our allies at our peril.’ 3 PARA, Afghanistan, 2007.²

Introduction

The momentous attacks of 11 September 2001 were the precipitating causes for both Operation TELIC and Operation HERRICK, British military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan respectively. This date (memorialised as 9/11) saw Osama bin Laden’s militant Islamist organisation, Al Qaeda, audaciously hijack four American airliners and callously transform them into the largest suicide bombs the world has ever known. Two of these were flown into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre, New York and a third was deliberately flown into the Pentagon in Washington DC. The last one crashed into a field in the State of Pennsylvania, after the brave attempts of its passengers to subdue their hijackers diverted them from their intended target, possibly the White House on Capitol Hill. These unprecedented attacks on mainland USA cost almost 3,000 lives and were as traumatising to the American psyche as the attack on Pearl Harbour, on that other ‘date which will live in infamy’, 7 December 1941.

¹ Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*, translated and edited by Professor Sir Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). Book One, Chapter One, section 27.

² 3 PARA Post-Operational Report, Operation HERRICK 4, 2007



Just as the Pearl Harbour attack precipitated American entry into the Second World War, the 9/11 attacks (albeit by a terrorist organisation rather than an enemy state) led directly to US military intervention in Afghanistan under Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. They would also precipitate the subsequent invasion of Iraq (Operation IRAQI FREEDOM) under the guise of what President George W Bush declared would be a global ‘War on Terror’. The latter campaign was a highly controversial ‘War of Choice’ against a country that had nothing to do with 9/11,³ and it ended up, predictably, serving ‘as a force multiplier for terrorists like Al Qaeda’.⁴ The United Kingdom’s invasion of Iraq in support of the US, under Operation TELIC, would arguably become ‘the most contentious war that the United Kingdom has ever fought’.⁵

The UK response to 9/11 Prime Minister Tony Blair’s New Labour Government had been elected in 1997 espousing a policy of liberal interventionism and was buoyed

³ Fairweather, Jack. *A War of Choice: Honour, Hubris and Sacrifice: The British in Iraq* (Jonathan Cape: 2011)

⁴ Edwards, Aaron. *Defending the Realm? The Politics of Britain’s Small Wars since 1945* (Manchester: 2012), p.238

⁵ Hoskins, A., Ford, M. Flawed, yet Authoritative? Organisational memory and the future of official military history after Chilcot *British Journal for Military History* Feb 2017; Vol 3 (2): 119-132

by recent military successes in Kosovo (Op AGRICOLA, 1999) and Sierra Leone (Op PALLISER, May – June 2000, and a hostage rescue mission, Op BARRAS, September 2000). It responded immediately in support of the USA after 9/11, wholeheartedly committing troops to strengthen the UK's 'special relationship' with the USA, this being very much its main policy objective, but never actually in sufficient numbers or with enough resources to accomplish the tasks the troops had been volunteered for. This would later be compounded by the severe economic recession of 2008 onwards which limited the capacity of both the US and UK to commit further resources, with increasing pressure in the UK especially to reduce military commitments in what had become two longer than envisaged campaigns. This failure to commit sufficient resources would ultimately end in strategic defeat in both Iraq and Afghanistan, seriously compromising that very same 'special relationship',⁶ though the bravery and dedication of British troops on the ground was never in question.

Afghanistan Once the Taliban regime in Afghanistan refused to surrender Osama bin Laden and his followers, British troops rapidly became engaged from 7 October 2001 onwards in a series of operations as part of the US-led coalition supporting the Northern Alliance against the Taliban (the Northern Alliance would duly morph into the Afghan Interim and then Transitional Administration). It had been over 80 years since British regular troops last set foot on the dusty plains and formidable

⁶ Newsinger, John. *British Counterinsurgency* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.3

mountains of Afghanistan, in the short-lived Third Afghan War of 1919. Their successors were about to learn some hard lessons.^{7,8}

Kabul (the capital) fell on 13 November and Kandahar (the Taliban's spiritual home) fell on 7 December 2001, with the remnants of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda retreating into the Pashtun heartlands in Waziristan, in northwest Pakistan. Hamid Karzai was then installed in Kabul as interim President and head of the Afghan Interim Administration, supported by the International Security Assistance Force [ISAF]. ISAF had just been created in accordance with the Bonn Conference of December 2001, under the authority of the UN Security Council.⁹

Each of the British operations in this 'Fourth Afghan War' would be allocated its own distinctive codename until late 2004 – VERITAS (the initial contribution of air crews and Special Forces), ORACLE (incorporated within VERITAS), FINGAL (the UK contribution to ISAF in Kabul from December 2001, including leadership of ISAF for the first six months of its existence) and TARROCK (the UK contribution to ISAF operations in Northern Afghanistan).

⁷ Yorke, Edmund. Chapter 8 (Chasing the Taliban: the Fourth Afghan War), in: *Playing the Great Game – Britain, War and Politics in Afghanistan since 1839*. (London: Robert Hale, 2012), pp. 359-425

⁸ Barry, Ben. *Harsh Lessons – Iraq, Afghanistan and the Changing Character of War* (Routledge, for International Institute for Strategic Studies: Abingdon, 2017)

⁹ NATO: ISAF Mandate <http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/mandate/> (all internet references in this chapter were still accessible as at 19 April 2017)



Afghanistan and surrounding countries

Shift of focus to Iraq With the Taliban apparently defeated and with US Special Forces continuing the hunt for Osama bin Laden, the US focus in its 'War on Terror' shifted in 2002 to Saddam Hussein's brutal regime in Iraq and 'unfinished business' from 1991, focussing on the ostensible threat of weapons of mass destruction as a reason to achieve regime change. Saddam had seized power in Iraq in 1979 and his forces had invaded Iran in September 1980 and Kuwait in August 1990. He had used chemical weapons in Iran and against his Kurdish subjects. After Kuwait had been liberated in the first Gulf War in 1991, no-fly zones were imposed in northern and southern Iraq (enforced by US and UK aircraft) and the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) was set up to monitor Iraq's military arsenals. Increasing obstruction by

the Iraqi authorities led to UN weapons inspectors being withdrawn in December 1998.¹⁰

George W Bush's election as US President in November 2000 and the 9/11 attacks in 2001 transformed the political scene. From the very first day after 9/11, Bush and his ambitious neo-conservative ideologues, particularly Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, determined to use 9/11 as the excuse for removing Saddam Hussein from power and re-asserting US power in the Middle East, disregarding the fact that Saddam had nothing to do with 9/11.¹¹ On 12 September 2002, one day after the first anniversary of 9/11, President Bush formally began arguing the case for a pre-emptive invasion of Iraq in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly, on the basis that Saddam Hussein's government was violating UN resolutions, primarily on weapons of mass destruction.¹² Just days later, on 24 September, Prime Minister Tony Blair presented his now-discredited 'September Dossier' outlining the apparent threat posed by Iraq through its weapons of mass destruction, for debate at the House of Commons.^{13,14}

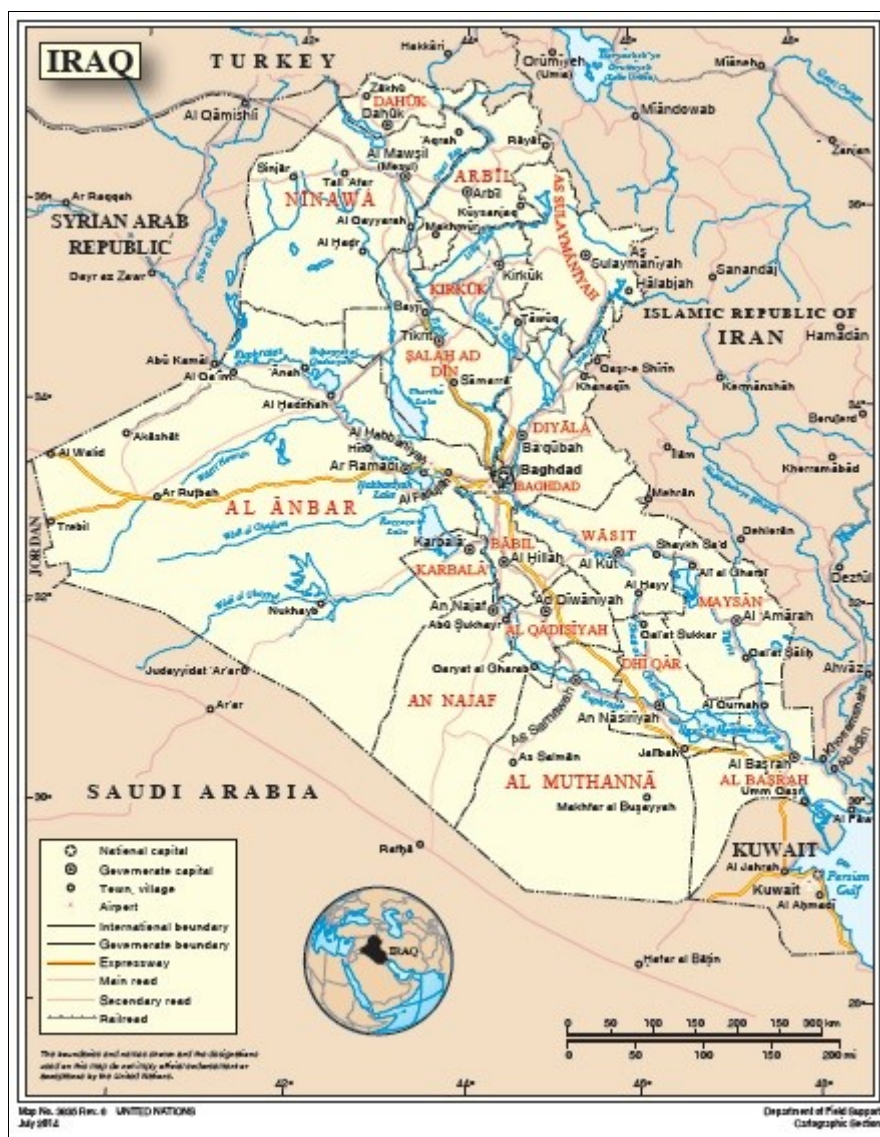
¹⁰ Introduction, pp. 3-4, in: *The Fight for Iraq, January – June 2003. The British Army's Role in Liberating a Nation – A Pictorial Account* (Ministry of Defence, 2004)

¹¹ Newsinger, John. Chapter 8 (America's Wars: Afghanistan and Iraq), in: *British Counterinsurgency (Op cit)*, pp. 201 – 206

¹² Statement by President Bush, United Nations General Assembly, 12 September 2002
<http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/57/statements/020912usaE.htm>

¹³ Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction - Debate in the House of Commons, 24 September 2002
<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2002-09-24.1.0> (and Hansard, 24 September 2002:
https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/vo020924/debtext/20924-01.htm#20924-01_spnew0

¹⁴ Sir John Chilcot: *Report of the Iraq Inquiry* (London, 16 July 2016). Executive Summary: Weapons of Mass Destruction, pp.69-77 http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/247921/the-report-of-the-iraq-inquiry_executive-summary.pdf



Iraq and its neighbours (source: United Nations)

Concerted US political and military pressure soon led to the UN declaring that it would no longer tolerate Iraq's defiance of international law. UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1441 was unanimously adopted on 8 November 2002, declaring Iraq in material breach of previous resolutions and setting out new procedures for inspections, giving Iraq a final opportunity to comply.¹⁵ Contingent military planning led to a massive build-up of US forces in the Gulf, strengthening

¹⁵ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002), dated 8 November 2002.
<http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/1441.pdf>

diplomatic pressure on Iraq, while building up the momentum for war. UN weapons inspectors were allowed back into Iraq by the end of November, but Iraqi obstruction continued. On 15 February 2003, massive ‘Stop the War’ protests occurred around the world, with over a million protesting in Britain alone. Regardless of these protests, on 24 February 2003 the UK, US and Spain tabled a draft resolution, declaring that Iraq had failed to comply with UNSCR 1441, but it became evident that the UN Security Council would not reach consensus on this, not least because the UN Charter and international humanitarian law prohibited pre-emptive military action against another sovereign country. Nonetheless, the US and UK decided to proceed with military action on their own, together with Australia. The world is still dealing with the political and social fallout of this arguably illegal invasion and occupation, and the precedent this ‘War of Choice’ set for other nations with an eye on the territory of their neighbours.¹⁶

UK Military Planning The UK’s Ministry of Defence had to balance the possibility of overt preparations prejudicing the diplomatic process against the need to be ready to take action if the diplomatic process failed. Consequently, enabling activities for a potential large-scale deployment to the Gulf region only commenced in early December 2002.¹⁷ The favoured option was to enter Iraq from the north through the Kurdish region of Turkey, with the UK contributing a Brigade worth of troops, but public pressure forced the moderate Islamic government of Turkey to withdraw its support in December and deny passage through its territory. Planning hurriedly switched to the southern option of invading Iraq through Kuwait and the Gulf,

¹⁶ Fairweather, Jack. *Op cit*

¹⁷ Ministry Of Defence: *Operation Telic - United Kingdom Military Operations In Iraq* (National Audit Office, 11 December 2003) <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2003/12/030460.pdf>

necessitating a significant increase in forces. UK Regular military forces received formal notification around Christmas Day 2002 to prepare for military action and began deploying on 16 January 2003. As for Reservists, the Secretary of State for Defence announced their first call-out on 7 January 2003, with a larger call-out of selected Reservists (mainly medical) on 30 January 2003. The majority of Reservists received their compulsory mobilisation orders with less than two weeks' notice, though most were given advance warning.¹⁸ Some Reservists were still flying into theatre as hostilities commenced. The coalition forces invaded Iraq on the night of 20 March 2003, achieving a degree of surprise through the near-simultaneous start of ground and air offensives.

Combat Operations in Iraq Almost a third of the British Army was to deploy to the Gulf within the first six months of Op TELIC. This included over 5,000 Territorial Army and Regular Reservists, the largest number called up since the Suez crisis in 1956.¹⁹

At the peak of major combat operations in spring 2003, the UK had a total of 46,000 military personnel deployed in Iraq, including 28,000 on land. Combat operations ceased in May.

The British Army had been configured since the 1998 Defence Review by the incoming Labour government to be capable of fielding either a divisional force in a full scale crisis, or running two concurrent brigade-sized operations (one warfighting

¹⁸ House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, Third Report (16 March 2004)
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmdfence/57/5709.htm>

¹⁹ General Sir Mike Jackson, Chief of the General Staff. Foreword, in: *The Fight for Iraq, January – June 2003. The British Army's Role in Liberating a Nation – A Pictorial Account* (Ministry of Defence, 2004)

for six months, and the other engaged in an enduring non-warfighting operation). Crucially, the two brigade operations could only overlap for six months.²⁰ These constraints, and the lack of strategic oversight, would bedevil the campaigns in both Iraq and Afghanistan,²¹ as force levels were imposed and then applied to the tactical problem, rather than the tactical problem defining the level of forces required.²² The stage was set for strategic failure in both campaigns from the beginning.

Whitehall thus initiated moves in May 2003 to rapidly reduce force levels in Iraq by two brigades, aiming to have only 8,600 troops in theatre in 2004. This constraint remained despite then having to cope with a Shiite insurgency throughout southern Iraq. Whitehall proceeded with progressive reductions, to 8,500 in May 2005 and to 7,200 in May 2006. Thereafter, between 2006 and 2009, following deployment into Helmand, the UK struggled to sustain two Brigade-size operations simultaneously in medium-intensity counterinsurgency campaigns in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Forces in Iraq were reduced to 5,500 in May 2007,²³ before the UK withdrew completely in 2009 under the pressure of trying to sustain the operation in Afghanistan.

Following 1st (UK) Armoured Division's deployment on TELIC 1, there would be a total of 12 Brigade-sized deployments to Iraq, each of six months' duration, until

²⁰ House of Commons. *The Strategic Defence Review White Paper* (published 15 October 1998), p.24 <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP98-91/RP98-91.pdf>

²¹ Chilcot Report (2016). The Impact of Afghanistan. In: Executive Summary, pp. 99-100, paras. 720-732

²² Julian Maciejewski, in: 'Best Effort': Operation Sinbad and the Iraq Campaign, in: Jonathan Bailey, Richard Iron & Hew Strachan (eds). *British Generals in Blair's Wars* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p.160

²³ House of Commons Defence Committee: Land operations in Iraq 2007 (House of Commons, 3 December 2007) <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/110/110.pdf>

TELIC 13 brought the operation to a close in May 2009. A total of 179 British Armed Forces personnel or MOD civilians would lose their lives during Op TELIC, 136 of them being killed through hostile action.²⁴ Importantly, ‘their lives were lost, not wasted – they answered the call of duty undaunted and achieved much against near impossible odds’.²⁵

Counterinsurgency in crisis Despite the fact that the British had greater and more recent experience than their American counterparts in fighting insurgencies, the Army’s organisational memory had faded quickly since the peace settlement of 1997 in Northern Ireland, with counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine no longer being taught in the British military. It had taken the permanent deployment of 13 infantry battalions to Northern Ireland to contain the insurgency there (and even then with the support of a trusted police force and a deep understanding of local culture), yet in Iraq the UK attempted to meet a much more violent insurgency in Basra (three times the size of Belfast) and elsewhere with only 3 battalions (and with no support from a corrupt police force or understanding of local tribal culture and language).²⁶ The military would have to relearn COIN the hard way in both Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁷

Meanwhile, back in Afghanistan... In January 2003, a resurgent Taliban commenced an insurgency in the country, infiltrating from Pakistan, the insurgency gathering momentum throughout the summer, and setting the pattern for future

²⁴ Operations in Iraq – British fatalities <https://www.gov.uk/government/fields-of-operation/iraq>

²⁵ Nicol, Mark. *Iraq – A Tribute to Britain’s Fallen Heroes* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2008), p.9

²⁶ Elliott, Christopher. *High Command – British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), p.21

²⁷ Ucko, David H., Egnell, Robert. *Counterinsurgency in Crisis – Britain and the Challenges of Modern Warfare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015)

years. In August 2003, at the request of the UN and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, NATO took on the leadership of ISAF, initially providing security around Kabul (the British continuing to contribute under Op FINGAL), then gradually expanding ISAF's presence by late 2006 to cover the whole country. At its height between February and July 2011 ISAF deployed more than 132,000 troops, with up to 51 NATO and partner nations contributing at various times.^{28,29,30}

In April 2004 the UK deployed a single light infantry battalion (the 1st Battalion The Green Howards), known in theatre as the Afghan Roulement Infantry Battalion, to provide security for ISAF in Kabul and in northern Afghanistan, under Ops FINGAL and TARROCK respectively. In late 2004 the UK Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), seeking to rationalise UK Operational activity in Afghanistan, consolidated the various codenames into one single codename covering all UK contributions within the Joint Area of Operations. This Area was defined as the territory and airspace of Afghanistan. This new operational codename, Op HERRICK, came into force on 1 October 2004.³¹

The codenames HERRICK 1-3 were assigned to the three Afghan Roulement Infantry Battalion deployments thereafter, namely those of the 1st Battalion The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters (1 October 2004 – 30 April 2005), the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles (29 March – 3 October 2005), and the 1st Battalion

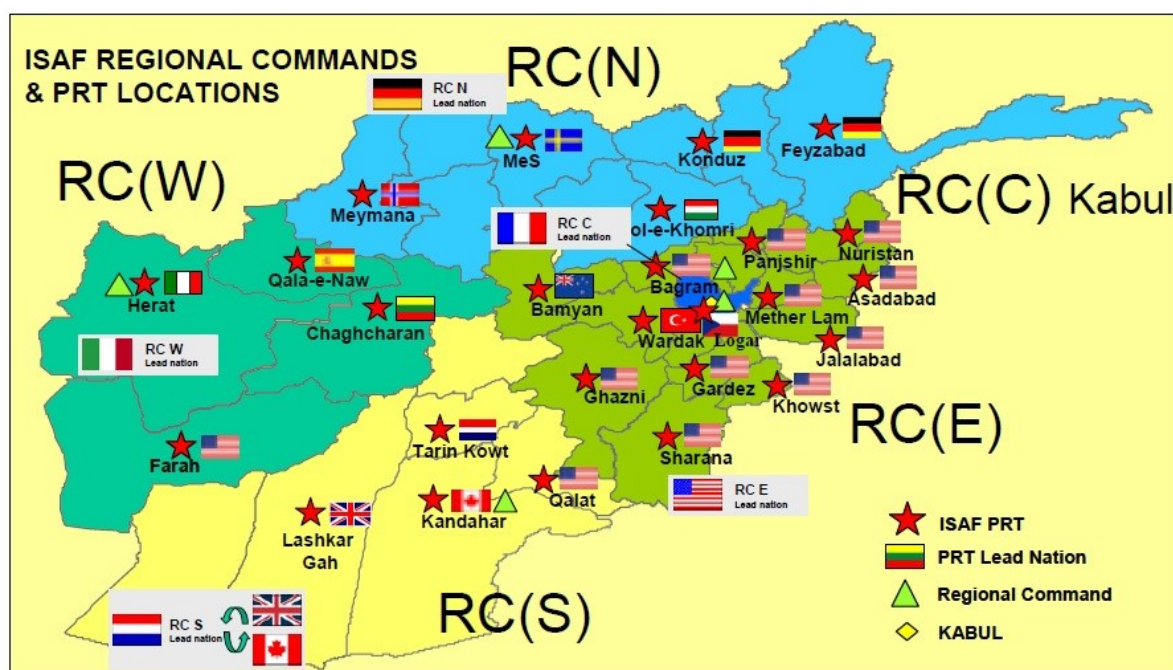
²⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO): ISAF's mission in Afghanistan (2001 – 2014) http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm

²⁹ NATO: ISAF Mandate <http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/mandate/>

³⁰ NATO: ISAF Placemats Archive, February 2011 – July 2011 <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/107995.htm>

³¹ UK operational codenames are randomly chosen by computer. Op HERRICK is named after the poet and song-writer Robert Herrick (1591-1634). <http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/herrick/herribio.htm>

The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry (3 October 2005 – 3 April 2006).



ISAF Regional Commands 2006 – 2010 (summer) (source: ISAF Placemats Archive)³²

The RC (South) Lead Nation rotated between UK, Canada and the Netherlands

The UK land commitment in Afghanistan changed significantly with HERRICK 4 (April to October 2006), with the deployment of 3,300 troops under the command of 16 Air Assault Brigade into Helmand Province as part of the overall ISAF expansion throughout Afghanistan. Thereafter, larger Brigade-strength roulements to Helmand occurred every six months until the end of 2014, with the maximum number of British troops in country reaching 9,500 throughout 2010 - 2012.³³ The last deployment was HERRICK 20, formally ending in November 2014, with a small number of troops remaining thereafter, mainly to provide training at the new ANA Officer Academy in

³² NATO: ISAF Placemats Archive, 12 January 2009 <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/107995.htm>

³³ NATO: ISAF Placemats Archive, February 2010 – December 2012 <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/107995.htm>

Kabul. A total of 453 British servicemen and women would lose their lives during Op HERRICK,³⁴ of whom 405 were directly attributable to hostile action.³⁵



Helmand Province, southwest Afghanistan

In summary, the British military commenced the first decade of the 21st century with unforeseen operations abroad, in Sierra Leone and then Afghanistan and Iraq. Many individuals and units deployed on multiple occasions to both Iraq and Afghanistan over some 13 years. The crucible of these years of intensive and symbiotic

³⁴ Op HERRICK casualty and fatality tables <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/op-herrick-casualty-and-fatality-tables-index>

³⁵ For comparison, 722 service personnel died due to hostile action in Northern Ireland between 14 August 1969 and 31 July 2007, while the operation with the largest number of deaths among UK Armed Forces personnel post World War II was Malaya, with 1,443 deaths between 16 June 1948 and 31 July 1960. Source: *UK Armed Forces Deaths: Operational deaths post World War II (3 September 1945 to 17 February 2016)* (MOD, 31 March 2016) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512070/20160331_UK_Armed_Forces_Operational_deaths_post_World_War_II.O.pdf

operations resulted in rapid accumulation of individual and collective combat experience and knowledge at all levels throughout the Forces, eventually leading to adaptation and transformation while in conflict as harsh lessons were learned.^{36,37}

The challenges from the casualty load across both theatres, which actively engaged the whole of the Defence Medical Services, would simultaneously catalyse a revolution in military medical care.

³⁶ Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013)

³⁷ Barry, Ben. *Harsh Lessons – Iraq, Afghanistan and the Changing Character of War* (Routledge, for International Institute for Strategic Studies: Abingdon, 2017)

Understanding Operations TELIC and HERRICK - Some Key Sources

Military sources

While no Official Military History has yet been commissioned for Operation TELIC or HERRICK (the last such being on the Falklands War, Operation CORPORATE), the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) has conducted several internal studies.

Op TELIC The background to the conflict, and the planning, deployment and combat phases of the operation, together with some early lessons identified, were first described in the MOD report *Operations in Iraq – First Reflections* in July 2003,³⁸ and then updated in *Operation Telic - United Kingdom Military Operations In Iraq* in December 2003.³⁹ The war-fighting operations (TELIC 1) were further analysed in *Operations in Iraq – An Analysis from a Land Perspective*, published in 2005.⁴⁰ The analysis of Op TELIC 2-5, published in 2006, is available on the internet,⁴¹ and Brigadier Barry's critical analysis of Op TELIC 5-13 was released publicly in September 2016.^{42,43} Various critical articles were published in the *British Army*

³⁸ Ministry of Defence: *Operations In Iraq - First Reflections* (MOD London: 7 July 2003); Introduction, p.3 http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/iraq2003operations_ukmod_july03.pdf

³⁹ Ministry of Defence: *Operation Telic - United Kingdom Military Operations In Iraq* (National Audit Office, 11 December 2003) <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2003/12/030460.pdf>

⁴⁰ Ministry of Defence: AC 71816: *Operations in Iraq – An Analysis from a Land Perspective* (MOD London: Feb 2005)

⁴¹ Ministry of Defence: AC 71844: *Stability Operations In Iraq (Op Telic 2-5) An Analysis From A Land Perspective* (MOD London: 2006) http://download.cabledrum.net/wikileaks_archive/file/uk-stbility-operations-in-iraq-2006.pdf

⁴² Ministry of Defence: AC 71937: *Operations in Iraq, January 2005 – May 2009 (Op TELIC 5-13) An Analysis from a Land Perspective* (MOD London: 29 November 2010), released to the public September 2016 <http://operationtelic.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Operations-in-Iraq-REDACTED.pdf>

⁴³ Barry, Ben. *The Bitter War To Stabilise Southern Iraq - British Army Report Declassified*. International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 10 October 2016 <https://www.iiiss.org/iiiss%20voices/blogsections/iiiss-voices-2016-9143/october-d6b6/the-bitter-war-to-stabilise-southern-iraq---british-army-report-declassified-953d>

Review (BAR, the Army's in-house journal), such as the one in 2009 by US Colonel Peter Mansoor, General Petraeus's former chief of staff, who controversially opined that British political and military leaders had abdicated responsibility for protecting the Iraqi people in Basra.^{44,45} Most of these BAR articles (but not Mansoor's) were collated in a single-volume Special Report.⁴⁶

Op HERRICK The main MOD report is the *Operation HERRICK Campaign Study*, published internally in 2015, with a redacted version now released publicly following a Freedom of Information request.⁴⁷ The Health Service Support organisational lessons identified by this Study, and the actions being taken to implement them, were further examined and published as a definitive record in the Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps.⁴⁸

Every military unit returning from Iraq or Afghanistan submitted a post-operational report, and each unit also documented its experiences in regimental or unit journals, sometimes on YouTube or regimental association websites, and occasionally in books about specific deployments. A few recently published regimental histories

⁴⁴ Mansoor, Peter. The British Army and the Lessons of the Iraq War *British Army Review*, Summer 2009

⁴⁵ Ledwidge, Frank. *Losing Small Wars. British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011; revised edition 2017), pp. 254-257 (This book is hereafter referred to as 'Ledwidge (2017)')

⁴⁶ British Army Review Special Report – Learning 2014, Volume 3: Learning from Conflict – Iraq (Crown copyright)

⁴⁷ Lessons Exploitation Centre. *Operation HERRICK Campaign Study* (British Army: Directorate Land Warfare, 2015). https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492757/20160107115638.pdf

⁴⁸ Bricknell MCM, Nadin M. Lessons from the organisation of the UK medical services deployed in support of Operation TELIC (Iraq) and Operation HERRICK (Afghanistan) *J R Army Med Corps* 2017 Aug; 163(4): 273–279

describe unit experiences during both campaigns. Select bibliographies relating to each campaign are appended to this chapter.

Other Key Sources

There have been numerous academic papers, not least by the Royal United Services Institute (the UK's pre-eminent military think tank), which published several papers analysing the UK's military decision making in Iraq and in Afghanistan.^{49,50,51} Several critical books have appeared since the end of Op TELIC, commencing with that by defence analyst Richard North in 2009 who laid the blame for Britain's failure in Iraq on the failure by Tony Blair's Government to provide the Army with the forces and equipment required.⁵² The testimonies of many of the UK's recently retired senior officers reflecting critically on their experience leading operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were published in 2013 as *British Generals in Blair's Wars*. This book gives a real sense of how the character of these wars changed even as they were being fought, as well as giving good accounts of operations such as Operation SINBAD and Operation CHARGE OF THE KNIGHTS.⁵³ Three autobiographies by recently retired British generals, who were successively Chief of the General Staff from 2003 - 2010, with General Sir David Richards also being promoted to Chief of the Defence Staff (the most senior serving military officer in the Armed Forces) 2010

⁴⁹ McNamee, Terence (ed). *War Without Consequences - Iraq's Insurgency and the Spectre of Strategic Defeat. RUSI Essays 2002–2008*. (London: RUSI Books, 2008)

⁵⁰ *The Afghan Papers: committing Britain to war in Helmand, 2005-06*. (Abingdon, on behalf of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies: Routledge Journals, 2011).

⁵¹ 'The Afghan Decisions': Four articles by Charles Styles, Josh Arnold-Foster, Matt Cavanagh and Mungo Melvin. *RUSI Journal*, April/May 2012, Vol 157 (2): 40-61

⁵² North, Richard. *Ministry of Defeat – The British War in Iraq 2003-2009* (London: Continuum, 2009)

⁵³ Jonathan Bailey, Richard Iron & Hew Strachan (eds). *British Generals in Blair's Wars* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

Colonel (retd) David Vassallo L/RAMC – A brief history of Operations TELIC and HERRICK

– 2013, shed further light on both campaigns.^{54,55,56} In addition, the *Sunday Times* Defence correspondent, Tim Ripley, published a comprehensive history of the Op TELIC campaign as an eBook (2014), revised in paperback (May 2016).⁵⁷ An anonymous US librarian has compiled a useful website listing most of the publications relating to US and UK operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁵⁸ In January 2017, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) published a strategic analysis of both campaigns focussing on the military issues of greatest relevance for the future.⁵⁹ In September 2017, Professor Theo Farrell, previously Head of the War Studies Department at King's College London, published an authoritative study of Britain's war in Afghanistan, concluding that despite British and American tactical successes, the war was strategically unwinnable after 2002 due to Afghan government corruption and Pakistani support for the Taliban.⁶⁰

The Chilcot Report On 6 July 2016, Sir John Chilcot published his long-awaited Report of the Iraq Inquiry, the key document for understanding Operation TELIC.⁶¹ Three books to date (November 2017), in addition to the IISS study, draw extensively on the Chilcot Report or the Inquiry's proceedings. Former military

⁵⁴ Jackson, General Sir Mike. *Soldier: the Autobiography* (London: Corgi, 2008)

⁵⁵ Dannatt, General Sir Richard. *Leading from the Front* (Bantam, 2010)

⁵⁶ Richards, General Sir David. *Taking Command* (London: Headline, 2014)

⁵⁷ Ripley, Tim. *Operation TELIC – The British Campaign in Iraq 2003 – 2009* (Telic-Herrick Publications, 2016) www.operationtelic.co.uk

⁵⁸ Books about the Gulf, Iraq, and Afghanistan Wars <http://nostalgia.esmartkid.com/gulfwarbooks.html>

⁵⁹ Barry, Ben. *Harsh Lessons – Iraq, Afghanistan and the Changing Character of War* (Routledge, for International Institute for Strategic Studies: Abingdon, 2017)

⁶⁰ Farrell, Theo. *Unwinnable – Britain's War in Afghanistan 2001 – 2014* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017)

⁶¹ Sir John Chilcot: *Report of the Iraq Inquiry* (London, 16 July 2016) <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/>, hereafter referred to as 'Chilcot Report'

intelligence officer Frank Ledwidge published a damning critique of the UK's political and military leadership in 2011 (revised in 2017 after the Chilcot Report lent further credence to his arguments).⁶² Major General Christopher Elliott, in his comprehensive study of senior British military leadership and decision making in this period, examined in detail how the mismatch of policy and resources (the ends and the means), and the surprising lack of strategic direction (the ways) connecting them, seriously affected the two campaigns. Major General Elliott drew extensively on personal interviews with key figures as well as on the Chilcot Inquiry proceedings to inform his analysis (2015).⁶³ Jeremy Greenstock (UK Ambassador to the UN before the invasion, and subsequently Special Envoy for Iraq) was uniquely placed to present the political perspective and describe how Britain's decision to go to war in Iraq fitted into the international context (2016, published after Chilcot).⁶⁴

A medical perspective An Army Reserves surgeon, Colonel David Rew, drew on open sources and personal contacts to publish an unofficial medical history, initially just of Op TELIC 1 on a CD-ROM, but then of the whole of Op TELIC as an eBook (2015).⁶⁵ The Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps and the Journal of the Royal Naval Medical Services, amongst others, documented many medical aspects and lessons from both campaigns.

⁶² Ledwidge (2017), *op cit*

⁶³ Elliott, Christopher. *High Command – British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015)

⁶⁴ Greenstock, Jeremy. *Iraq – The Cost of War* (London: William Heinemann, 2016)

⁶⁵ Rew, David. *Blood, Heat + Dust – Operation Telic and the British Medical Deployment to the Gulf 2003 - 2009* (E-Book; Association of Surgeons of Great Britain & Ireland, 2015)
http://www.publications.asgbi.org/bhd_donate/donation_page.html

Op TELIC (2003 – 2009) - a brief history

*‘You are not particularly welcome here. Remember what happened when you were here last time ...’*⁶⁶

TELIC 1 (1st (UK) Armoured Division, Feb – Jun 2003)⁶⁷

The Planning Phase

The UK, US and Australian Coalition was under the overall command of US General Tommy Franks, Commander in Chief US Central Command (CENTCOM). General Franks would later describe the US plan for the invasion of Iraq, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, in his memoir *American Soldier*.⁶⁸ In essence, US land forces would invade along two main avenues from the south. Army forces would advance west of the Euphrates River in a long arc that curved from their departure lines in Kuwait to reach Baghdad, while the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force would follow the road network along the Tigris River, further east. Britain would provide one of the five divisions participating in the invasion. The British ground force would pivot northeast out of Kuwait and isolate Basra, Iraq’s second city and the capital of the Shi’a south, forming a protective cordon around the southern oil fields where most of Iraq’s oil was produced. US, British and Australian Special Operations Forces would control

⁶⁶ Basrawi clerics to Lieutenant General Sir Peter Wall, summer 2003, reminding him of the Iraq insurgency of 1919-1923 when Britain’s attempts to impose an administration upon the tribal sheikhs after driving the Ottomans out of Iraq resulted in the tribes uniting against her (Evidence of Lieutenant General Sir Peter Wall to the Iraq Inquiry, 14 December 2009), quoted by Ledwidge (2017), p.17

⁶⁷ The dates for the various Op TELIC deployments up to Op TELIC 10 are as released by PJHQ on 24 October 2007 following a Freedom of Information request.
http://www.operationtelic.co.uk/documents/mod-telic_dates.pdf Dates thereafter relate to the Transfer of Authority between Brigades

⁶⁸ Franks T, McConnell M. *American Soldier*, HarperCollins, 2004.

Iraq's western desert, to prevent the launch of long range SCUD missiles against Jordan and Israel. General Franks' objective was to reach Baghdad as soon as possible, bypassing Iraqi forces if necessary, to secure the acquiescence of the Iraqi population and the early collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, preventing Saddam from using Weapons of Mass Destruction or creating major environmental damage as he had in the 1991 Gulf Conflict.

The Preparation Phase

Royal Navy The British maritime contribution to the Coalition was built on the standing Royal Navy presence in the Gulf. Naval Task Group 2003, led by HMS ARK ROYAL, was expanded to a much larger force totalling some 9,000 personnel. It included submarines armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles and a significant amphibious capability with the helicopter carrier HMS OCEAN, Headquarters 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines, 40 Commando and 42 Commando (some 4,000 personnel), and hospital facilities in RFA ARGUS. This was the largest amphibious force deployed since the Falklands campaign in 1982.⁶⁹

Land Forces The UK committed land forces in divisional strength: the 1st (UK) Armoured Division, which was specially reinforced for this operation. It finally deployed with three brigades executing a mix of light role and armoured tasks, and a logistics brigade: its own 7 Armoured Brigade (known as the Desert Rats), together with 16 Air Assault Brigade, 3 Commando Brigade, 102 Logistics Brigade, and the Joint Helicopter Force. 1st (UK) Armoured Division was under command of the US 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (1 MEF) which itself was subordinated to Combined

⁶⁹ Ministry of Defence, *Operations in Iraq – First Reflections*, July 2003

Force Land Component Command.⁷⁰ The UK land force deployment would eventually total some 28,000 personnel, the largest such deployment since the First Gulf War.

Air assets The Royal Air Force contributed some 8,100 personnel together with 113 fixed wing aircraft to Op TELIC; these assets were distributed across eight Deployed Operating Bases in seven countries. In addition, the Joint Helicopter Command deployed more than 100 helicopters from all three Services, including Puma and Chinook support helicopters.⁷¹

The Invasion Phase

Combat operations On 18 March 2003 the UK Parliament passed a vote by 412 votes to 149 authorising military action against Iraq, and within minutes Special Forces patrols crossed the border from Jordan into western Iraq on the hunt for Scud missile launchers.⁷² Op TELIC (the UK contribution to Operation Iraqi Freedom) officially began with the issuing of the Op TELIC Executive Order, directing military action to commence, on 19 March 2003 (at precisely 0651hrs Zulu), following the expiry of a US/UK ultimatum to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, at which stage diplomacy was deemed to have failed. UK Forces, in conjunction with US Forces, were directed to remove the Iraqi Regime. 19 March 2003 was designated D day.⁷³ A ‘shock and awe’ air offensive commenced immediately, and the invasion of Iraq

⁷⁰ Combined Force Land Component Command would be replaced by Combined Joint Task Force 7 on 14 June 2003 as the operational headquarters for all ground units in the CENTCOM theatre of operations.

⁷¹ Chilcot Report, Volume 7, Section 8 - The Invasion, pp.6-7 <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/the-report/>

⁷² Ripley, *op cit.*, p.77

⁷³ 16 Close Support Medical Regiment: Operation TELIC – Post Operational Report, dated 1 July 2003.

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commenced on the night of 20 March (designated as G Day), with one of the earliest actions being an airborne assault by Royal Marines to secure the oil terminals of the Al Faw peninsula and prevent their wanton destruction.



Chinooks approaching the Al Faw peninsula, 20 March 2003 (David Rowlands)⁷⁴



The Liberation of Basra (David Rowlands)

(Challenger 2 tanks of 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, and Warriors of 1st Battalion The Black Watch)

⁷⁴ Source: David Rowlands, Military Artist <http://www.davidrowlands.co.uk> All such images in this chapter are reproduced with the kind permission of David Rowlands. Prints can be purchased directly from the artist.

British forces took control of Basra city on 8 April, and US forces formally occupied Baghdad on 9 April. Saddam Hussein's regime had fallen by 14 April 2003 and most of Iraq was taken under coalition control within four weeks. On 1 May, just six weeks after launching the invasion, President Bush declared 'Mission Accomplished' and the end of major combat operations.⁷⁵ Later events would show how premature this was, as well as show up the lack of prior planning for the crucial post-invasion phase (known as Phase IV in military parlance).⁷⁶

As Jeremy Greenstock, former UK Ambassador to the UN, and UK Special Envoy for Iraq, said:

The fundamental error of the Coalition was to have lost control of security almost immediately after the invasion was over. President Bush in effect set the wrong mission for CENTCOM Commander General Tommy Franks: he needed to deliver not just an Iraq without Saddam, but a secure and functioning Iraq without Saddam.⁷⁷

The Post-Conflict Phase

Looting Even while Basra City was being liberated by 7 Armoured Brigade, the abrupt departure of Ba'athist government officials and security personnel was followed immediately (and to some extent unexpectedly) by widespread looting and general lawlessness, with crowds of Iraqi civilians systematically stripping bare

⁷⁵ Chilcot Report, Volume 7, Section 8 - The Invasion, p.8

⁷⁶ Phase I is the battle-planning phase, Phase II is the preparatory phase with build-up of materiel and personnel, Phase III is the actual battle (or invasion in this instance), and Phase IV the post-conflict phase, which requires prior planning to deal with conflict resolution, security, reconstruction and recovery. Phase IV is crucially dependent on the provision of sufficient numbers of trusted security personnel, particularly police, a factor completely missing in post-invasion Iraq.

⁷⁷ Greenstock, Jeremy. *Iraq – The Cost of War* (London: Heinemann, 2016), p. 418

recently vacated government buildings as well as police stations, army barracks, schools and commercial premises – and more ominously, abandoned Iraqi Army arms depots and ammunition dumps. This post-conflict political disintegration and violence was not completely unexpected, albeit unplanned for, with clear warnings by the Defence Intelligence Staff, for instance, having been ignored, as the Chilcot Report subsequently made clear.⁷⁸ Public utilities everywhere simply ground to a halt, with power and water supplies across Basra stopping altogether. Fortunately, British units had taken over the power station and sewage works before they could be attacked, but their personnel were too few in number to tackle the city-wide looting, and it would be painfully long before essential services to this city of a million people could be restored.

Most of 7 Armoured Brigade's troops would be occupied for weeks to come in mobile patrols and guarding essential services while trying to control this lawlessness. The city's three major hospitals: the Az-Zubayr Hospital, the General Hospital, and the Teaching Hospital, remained open and fully functional solely due to British protection. Many military personnel were re-roled into civil military co-operation (CIMIC) to help get basic infrastructure, water supplies, health services and local administration back up and running. Not surprisingly, given the lack of clean running water and basic hygiene facilities, and the onset of the debilitating summer heat, serious outbreaks of viral infective gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting) began taking a significant toll amongst the troops, with a major outbreak even hitting the main divisional medical facility, 34 Field Hospital.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ DIS. *Red Team Report on Retaining Support of the Iraq People*: see Chilcot Report, section 6.5, paras 570-609, and 855ff (discussed in Ledwidge (2017), pp.21-25)

⁷⁹ *Operations in Iraq – An Analysis from a Land Perspective* (MOD, 2003), pp.5-9

Immediately following the end of combat operations (and further highlighting the lack of planning for establishing security in the post-invasion phase), the MOD started to dramatically reduce the 46,000 strong British Force, bringing back 3 Commando Brigade and 16 Air Assault Brigade within weeks, leaving 7 Armoured Brigade to look after southern Iraq. The MOD secured approval from the Treasury to fund the deployment of around 8,000 troops to Iraq for a year, in the hope that other countries could be persuaded to send troops to bolster the residual British presence.

The Quinlivan studies Such politically constrained low troop levels (only a small proportion of which translates to 'boots on the ground' in the form of patrolling soldiers) took no account of the actual number of troops really required to ensure a secure post-conflict environment and meet the obligations of an occupying force under international law. James Quinlivan had calculated exactly these requirements for the influential RAND organisation, concluding that a figure of at least 20 security personnel (soldiers and police combined) per 1,000 civilians is required for success in a counterinsurgency environment – which was the ratio that Britain had deployed (troops and police) for the Malayan Emergency in 1952 as well as in Northern Ireland during the Troubles.⁸⁰ This ratio would translate to approximately 20,000 troops for Basra City's million-plus population alone, where there was no co-operation by the police. A tranquil environment would have required a tenth of that, still 2,000 personnel. It is not surprising that the relatively few British troops left in Basra and elsewhere in Iraq were overwhelmed by the task facing them. The British could never deploy more than a battle group (approximately 500 men) on the streets of

⁸⁰ Quinlivan, James T. 'Force requirements in stability operations' *Parameters*, Winter (1995), pp.59-69. <http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/Articles/1995/quinliv.htm> Updated, in: Quinlivan, James T. 'Burden of victory: the painful arithmetic of stability operations' *Rand Review*, Summer (2003) www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/summer2003/burden.html (Also discussed in Ledwidge, 2017, pp. 142-145)

Basra at any time. Clausewitz's dictum, quoted at the head of this chapter, applies just as much to the post-conflict phase as to combat operations.

Snatching defeat from the jaws of victory The decisive moment came in May 2003, when Paul Bremer, the newly arrived head of the temporary US-led Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, issued two highly contentious decrees (Coalition Provincial Authority Orders 1 and 2) that would profoundly impact subsequent events in Iraq. On 15 May he launched a de-Ba'athification policy banning former Ba'ath Party members from public sector employment (ignoring the political reality that every person so employed, including doctors, teachers and civil servants, had been compelled to enrol in the Ba'athist party). Nearly 80,000 people were immediately affected, and chaos ensued as hospitals and schools closed down. The security problem was gravely compounded a week later, on 23 May, when Bremer dissolved the Iraqi Armed Forces (comprising some 385,000 personnel who were sent home unpaid but retaining their weapons) and the Ministry of the Interior (which included the police and other security forces, over 280,000 personnel).⁸¹ This date was the day 'that we snatched defeat from the jaws of victory and created an insurgency' as the decrees made Iraq ungovernable.⁸² Bremer also insisted upon holding elections before handing over power to the Iraqis, a process which would delay the setting up of a new Iraqi government for almost two years, until 2005, over-ruling Jeremy Greenstock's vigorous insistence on a much more rapid transfer of power to the Iraqis in order to give them an early sense of ownership of their liberated country. Bremer's decrees triggered a paradigm shift in public perceptions, as Iraqis now

⁸¹ Newsinger, John. Chapter 8 (America's Wars: Afghanistan and Iraq), in: *British Counterinsurgency* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2nd edition, 2015), pp.216-217

⁸² Ricks, Thomas. *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (London: 2006), pp. 161-163

began to look upon Coalition forces no longer as welcome liberators but as occupiers, as well as providing the militias with many thousands of now unemployed but well-armed, experienced and disgruntled recruits to their ranks. Violence soon erupted in Baghdad and the north as the newly freed Shias settled scores with the minority Sunnis, with the Kurds attempting to break away in the north, and the US, in trying to quell the inter-ethnic violence, only succeeded in uniting the people against the 'invader'.

This paradigm shift in perceptions, and the start of the insurgency in the south, was heralded by the tragic events on 24 June 2003, when six members of the Royal Military Police who were training local police were killed in a riot in Majar al-Kabir in Maysan Province. This followed a search operation elsewhere in the town by members of the Parachute Regiment, in an operation interpreted as deeply provocative by the locals. Neither the RMPs nor the Paras knew the other was in town, so the RMP soldiers were left unsupported, in a failure of command and control, and of communications.⁸³

TELIC 2 (HQ 3rd (UK) Mechanised Division & 19 Mechanised Brigade, Jul – Oct 2003)

Multi-National Division (South-East) The Headquarters of 3rd (UK) Mechanised Division took over from its predecessor on 11 July, and in line with plans to internationalise the allied security forces and allow British troops to draw down in numbers, it was renamed Headquarters Multi-National Division (South-East) – HQ MND(SE) – the next day, taking on responsibility for the four south-eastern provinces

⁸³ Nicol, Mark. *Last Round* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005)

Colonel (retd) David Vassallo L/RAMC – A brief history of Operations TELIC and HERRICK of Iraq (Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Maysan and Basrah). The first allied contribution was a Danish Battle Group. The Division's composition would remain predominantly British for the whole of TELIC though it would eventually incorporate troops from Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal and Romania at various times. HQ MND(SE) was led by Major General Graeme Lamb as General Officer Commanding, GOC MND(SE), from July to December 2003.⁸⁴ He reported to the US General in charge of CJTF-7, Lieutenant General Sanchez (whose focus would remain on Baghdad), as well as to Lieutenant General John Reith at Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), the UK's strategic HQ overseeing overseas operations.

7 Armoured Brigade in Basra City handed over to 19 Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Bill Moore. The new Brigade, reinforced to six battalion-sized Battle Groups (BGs), was the mainstay of the Division, covering both Basrah and Maysan Provinces. Four of the six BGs acted as Framework BGs (also known as Ground Holding BGs, see Table One) responsible for distinct areas of operations, and were supported by two reconnaissance squadrons of the Light Dragoons and a Challenger 2 main battle tank squadron.

The now-9,500 strong British contingent commenced moves to further reduce in number by September 2003, with two of the six Battle Groups being short-toured, and 19 Brigade headquarters moving out from Basra Palace to Basra International Airport, as a preliminary to merging divisional and brigade headquarters.

⁸⁴ Chilcot Report. Section 9.2 (23 May – June 2004), p.240



MND(SE) and its area of responsibility – Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Maysan and Basrah Provinces



River Patrol, Op TELIC 2 (1st Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers) (David Rowlands)

However, no sooner had 19 Brigade arrived in theatre than the tempo of operations picked up considerably, with the security situation deteriorating rapidly as civilians became disenchanted with the slow pace of reconstruction and the lack of electricity and water supplies, especially in the searing summer heat. The rest of the summer saw multiple incidents ranging from intense fire fights to large scale riots.



*Sergeant Major Darren Leigh MC, 1st Battalion The Queen's Lancashire Regiment
(confronting rioters in Basra, 9 August 2003) (David Rowlands)*

Basra was officially recorded as the hottest place on earth one day that summer (*author -personal recollection*), when the temperature in the shade reached 57C. The newly arrived troops wilted in the heat, with many being admitted to hospital with heat exhaustion. At least two of the 179 British deaths for TELIC were related to heat stroke. Future troop rotations would occur in April and November specifically to avoid the problem with acclimatisation.

The Baha Mousa incident The defining event of TELIC 2 was the death of Baha Mousa, a local hotel receptionist, while in British custody. On 15 September 2003, soldiers from the Queen's Lancashire Regiment detained Baha Mousa and nine other civilians and took them to their base for interrogation. For 48 hours the handcuffed Iraqis were hooded with sandbags, forced into painful stress positions, and 'kicked and punched with sustained cruelty'.⁸⁵ Baha Mousa died of his injuries, and two others were hospitalised at BMH Shaibah. Baha Mousa's death set in train court martial proceedings against seven soldiers of the QLR, though the result was controversial, with only one soldier being found guilty and imprisoned.

The subsequent Gage Inquiry (2011) into Baha Mousa's death and the torture of the detainees noted that the British Army had been banned since 1972 from using five techniques (hooding, white noise, sleep deprivation, food deprivation and painful stress positions) on prisoners. Unfortunately, the lack of a system for sustaining organisational knowledge within the MOD resulted in such knowledge being lost, with 'no written policy or doctrine banning the practices' at the time of the Iraq War,⁸⁶ though this has now been rectified. In separate proceedings, the General Medical Council decided in December 2012 that the QLR's regimental medical officer, Dr Derek Keilloh, had failed in his duty of care towards Baha Mousa and the other detainees, and removed his name from the medical register.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Williams, A.T. *A Very British Killing – The Death of Baha Mousa* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2012)

⁸⁶ Sir William Gage. The Report of the Baha Mousa Inquiry, 2011
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/279190/1452_i.pdf
(accessed 23 March 2017)

⁸⁷ Baha Mousa doctor Derek Keilloh struck off after 'repeated dishonesty' *The Guardian*, 21 December 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/21/baha-mousa-doctor-struck-off> (accessed 2 April 2017)

Following the Gage Inquiry the Army systematically improved its approach to sustaining and retrieving organisational memory through its Historical Branch in Whitehall.⁸⁸ The data it gathered, for instance, helped the Al-Sweady Public Inquiry in 2014 dismiss malicious allegations by Phil Shiner's now-discredited Public Interest Lawyers that UK soldiers had mistreated other Iraqis in 2004 during TELIC 3 and 4.⁸⁹ Phil Shiner was 'struck off' the Solicitors' Register on the grounds of professional misconduct in February 2017. It was Phil Shiner who had reported Dr Derek Keilloh to the General Medical Council.⁹⁰

TELIC 3 (20 Armoured Brigade, Nov 2003 – Apr 2004)

20 Armoured Brigade took over responsibility for the Iraqi provinces of Basrah and Maysan from 6 November 2003 to 24 April 2004.

The Brigade's first two months on TELIC 3 were dominated by low level counter-terrorist battles against fanatical Fedayeen and foreign fighters infiltrating across the long and porous border with Iran and actively supported by Iranian Al Quds forces. Though post-operational reports also mention former Ba'athist Regime loyalists in this context,⁹¹ the latter had enough to contend with without choosing to fight the British. Almost unrecognised at this stage by the British in Basra, though again foretold by the Defence Intelligence Staff, the various Shi'a militias were terrorising and kidnapping local civilians and committing widespread reprisal killings. These

⁸⁸ Hoskins, A., Ford, M. Flawed, yet Authoritative? Organisational memory and the future of official military history after Chilcot *British Journal for Military History*, February 2017; 3 (2): 119-132

⁸⁹ Sir Thayne Forbes, The Report of Al Sweady Inquiry, December 2014.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388292/Volume_1_Al_Sweady_Inquiry.pdf

⁹⁰ Justice for Dr Derek Keilloh - What actually happened? <http://www.justice4drkeilloh.org.uk/>

⁹¹ 20 Armoured Brigade Post Operational Report - Operation Telic 3, dated 4 July 2004

Shi'a death gangs were commencing a wholesale programme of ethnic cleansing that would characterise the next two years, torturing and killing Basrawis not of their own persuasion (especially Sunnis, Christians, former Regime loyalists, academics and westernised Iraqis), setting the conditions for a fundamentalist Shi'a dominated south.⁹²

A UN Security Council Resolution, UNSCR 1511, signed just before the start of 20 Armoured Brigade's tour, had set the basis for rebuilding Iraq and establishing security.⁹³ The aim was to eventually transfer authority from the Coalition Provisional Authority to an Iraqi Transitional National Assembly. The middle two months of 20 Armoured Brigade's tour were dominated by security sector reform in order to achieve this aim: the building of capacity in the Iraqi Security Forces (especially the paramilitary Iraqi Civil Defence Corps and police) and civilian Iraqi institutions. Security sector reform would remain an objective, though sometimes only an aspiration, for the rest of Op TELIC.

Every British battlegroup from now on became heavily involved in running training programmes for Iraqi personnel, with police recruits being equipped and trained by British forces. However, in the haste to build up the Iraqi Police Service and reverse the disastrous results of Bremer's de-Ba'athification policy, British commanders inadvertently compounded the problem by prioritising quantity over quality. A decision to co-opt large numbers of militia members into the fledgling police force in a bid to win them over and give them a stake in the new government security

⁹² Ledwidge (2017), pp.28-32

⁹³ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1511, 16 October 2003. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/563/91/PDF/N0356391.pdf?OpenElement>

structure would backfire seriously, as criminal elements purposely infiltrated the police.

The result was that law and order was effectively handed over to the militias, with many of the most serious crimes and murders being committed by rogue police over the next two years. The worst of the rogue police teams was the ironically-named **Serious Crimes Unit**, based in the Jamiat police station in Basra, who became more involved in committing serious crimes than investigating them. The Serious Crime Unit's death gangs were not just a threat to Basrawis – they were often suspected of colluding in attacks against British troops, and in September 2005, during TELIC 6, they kidnapped two undercover members of the Special Air Service (see TELIC 6, Jamiat incident).

The final two months of TELIC 3 were dominated by high intensity operations against resurgent Shia Militias (notably the Jaish al-Mahdi) inflamed by events in Baghdad and Fallujah (see below).

Muqtada al Sadr and the Jaish al-Mahdi Militia (JAM, or Mahdi Army) Muqtada al Sadr was a very influential and fanatical 29 year-old Shia cleric based in the northern Holy City of Najaf. His father had been murdered by Saddam's military police and he had been under house arrest most of the 1990s, giving him immense credibility with the Shia underclass.⁹⁴ Once Saddam's regime fell, Sadr quickly built up a network of supporters in the Shi'ite city slums of Baghdad and across southern Iraq, particularly in Maysan province, vying for political control of local councils and security institutions, as well as setting up his own militia. These were known as the Mahdi Army or Jaish al-Mahdi (JAM), dressed in distinctive black pyjama uniforms.

⁹⁴ Ripley, *Op cit.*, pp. 190, 196-208

The first JAM units in Basra were established in October 2003, soon beginning low level attacks against British troops, and intimidating civilians working for the occupation forces. The fractious and notoriously unruly Maysan province, where the local population believed they had liberated themselves from Saddam and viewed the British troops as illegitimate occupiers, soon became the epicentre for this unrest. This was compounded by a very weak British presence, with only one battlegroup of 1,000 troops from the Light Infantry and Royal Regiment of Wales trying to control an area the size of Northern Ireland, without even the backing of a local police force – for comparison, Saddam had to garrison Maysan province with a whole Iraqi Army Corps to keep control.⁹⁵ Maysan's capital was Al Amarah, straddling the River Tigris and strategically located on the main highway (Route 6) between Basra and Baghdad. It was also relatively close to the Iranian border, so it was the first stop for insurgents infiltrating from Iran.



'A Friendly Power in Iraq' Troops of the Royal Regiment of Wales in Maysan province, Op TELIC 3 (David Rowlands)

⁹⁵ Deployment of pre-war Iraqi forces: GlobalSecurity.org. '1 Corps' <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/1corps.htm>

The Turning Point – The First Sadr Uprising The situation spiralled out of control almost overnight at the beginning of April 2004 following a controversial order by Bremer in Baghdad on 28 March to close down a Sadr controlled newspaper which he accused of fomenting the growing insurgency against US troops. The lynching of 4 US contractors in Fallujah 3 days later led to US Marines storming Fallujah and causing heavy civilian casualties amongst both Sunnis and Shias, with Sadr's top lieutenant being arrested. Within 24 hours, Baghdad's Sadr City and southern Iraq were ablaze as Iraq's Sunni and Shia communities united in outrage against the occupiers, in the 'First Sadr Uprising'.

The sudden escalation of attacks in early April by the Jaish al-Mahdi in Basra was later described by Major General Graeme Lamb to the Iraq Inquiry as 'like a switch had been flicked'.⁹⁶ The troops could no longer safely patrol in the lightly armoured Snatch Land Rovers with dismounted troops wearing berets.

In the south, the strategically located city of Al Amarah (the scene of a fierce battle against the British in June 1915) was the first to be engulfed in riots with the Light Infantry Battlegroup coming under heavy and sustained mortar, rocket and small arms attack. In Basra, the fledgling Iraqi government's council building fell to JAM fighters. Incensed by Al-Jazeera television reports, Bremer demanded that General Sanchez order the British Army to storm the building but Major General Stewart, in command of MND(SE), refused to risk turning Basra into another Fallujah without an attempt at negotiation. Fortunately, Brigadier Nick Carter managed to persuade the Sadr fighters to hand the building back peacefully to the Iraqi authorities, but General Stewart's refusal to follow Bremer's directive, coupled with serious political concerns

⁹⁶ Chilcot Report – Executive Summary, p.96

in the UK about intended US actions in Fallujah, caused a major rift in US – UK relations.⁹⁷

The Abu Ghraib scandal The Jaish al-Mahdi and other militias, and indeed the Iraqi population in general, were further incensed by the publication of photographs in April 2004 showing US soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib. The Abu Ghraib scandal caused support in the UK for British participation in the occupation to drop to a new low, at the same time that the volatility and high intensity of violence necessitated a return to a war-fighting posture by 20 Armoured Brigade.⁹⁸ Heavy attacks on British forces continued throughout April, a new feature being the use of multiple co-ordinated suicide car bomb attacks ('Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Devices', VB-IEDs) from 21 April, believed to be Iraqi Sunni in origin, targeting Iraqi police stations and co-located British bases and checkpoints.

The drastically worsening security situation in April, exacerbated by the response to the Abu Ghraib scandal, led many of the Iraq Inquiry's witnesses to conclude that the spring of 2004 was the turning point of the campaign.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Ripley, *Op cit.*, pp. 200-203 (including referenced interviews with General Stewart)

⁹⁸ 20 Armoured Brigade – Post Operational Report – Operation TELIC 3, dated 4 July 2004

⁹⁹ Chilcot Report – Executive Summary. The Turning Point, p.96, para 701



'Fighting Logistics through' (water convoy under attack in Basra, 8 May 2004) (David Rowlands)

TELIC 4 (1 Mechanised Brigade, May – Oct 2004)

Faced with continued heavy fighting throughout southern Iraq, the incoming 1 Mechanised Brigade had to take over bases and responsibilities under fire. Though troop numbers were relatively unchanged, it effectively doubled the number of armoured infantry companies, replacing the vulnerable Snatch Land Rovers by Warriors, and an infantry battalion by an armoured infantry battalion, as well as deploying Challenger 2 battle tanks from their storage depot at Shaibah Logistics Base. The Brigade's tour would be highly kinetic.

The 1st Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (1 PWRR, known as 'The Tigers'), who took over responsibility for Maysan Province on 18 April, saw intense

fighting immediately and almost every day for six months.¹⁰⁰ The two main periods of activity were in April/May during the First Sadr Uprising, and the second from 2 - 26 August during a second Uprising. During this tour the battalion's main operations were given codenames from the London Underground map, starting with Operation PIMLICO on 1 May, Operation KNIGHTSBRIDGE on 3 May, and Operation WATERLOO on 8 May (undertaken to reassert control over Al Amarah).¹⁰¹

The **Battle for Danny Boy** (named after a permanent vehicle checkpoint 6 km south of Al Amarah) occurred on 14 May, when a patrol from the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders was ambushed there by over 200 heavily armed insurgents and had to be rescued by a Warrior group.¹⁰² Over 70 insurgents were killed during the fighting, and several captured. The bodies of some 20 of the dead were taken back to the nearby British base in Abu Naji for identification purposes. The bodies were returned to senior local officials and relatives the next day by which time malicious rumours were circulating amongst the Iraqis that the dead had been captured alive and then executed (as had often happened at Abu Naji under Saddam's regime). The bodies were later videotaped at the local hospital morgue and the CD was then circulated in the souks, with uncorroborated accusations of torture and mutilation appearing in the local and international press (already inflamed by revelations of torture at Abu Ghraib). This media backlash against troops who had observed their rules of engagement and responded to a murderous ambush 'with exemplary courage,

¹⁰⁰ Mills, Dan. *Sniper One* (London: Michael Joseph, 2007) (an account of the 1 PWRR Battlegroup under siege for six months at CIMIC House, Al Amarah)

¹⁰¹ Holmes, Richard. The first uprising: from Pimlico to Whitechapel, in: *Dusty Warriors* (London: Harper Perennial, 2007), Chapter 5, Round One, pp. 185-226

¹⁰² Holmes, Richard. The battle for Danny Boy, in: *Dusty Warriors* (London: Harper Perennial, 2007), Chapter 5, Round One, pp. 226-246

resolution and professionalism' was deeply wounding,¹⁰³ yet taught the British valuable lessons on the management of dead insurgents, whose bodies would subsequently be carefully photographed and left at the scene. The troops involved would eventually be completely exonerated by the Al-Sweady Inquiry in 2014 which 'established beyond doubt that all the most serious allegations, made against the British soldiers involved in the Battle of Danny Boy and its aftermath ... have been found to be wholly without foundation and entirely the product of deliberate lies, reckless speculation and ingrained hostility.'¹⁰⁴

Private Johnson Beharry During Telic 4 the besieged CIMIC House in Al Amarah could only be resupplied by heavily escorted convoys (under Operation WHITECHAPEL). Following one of these Private Johnson Beharry from 1 PWRR would be awarded the Victoria Cross for driving his damaged Warrior out of an ambush and saving his comrades' lives, and repeating this a month later, on 12 June 2004, despite sustaining life-threatening head injuries from a RPG explosion. The seriously injured Private Beharry was evacuated by IRT Chinook (attended by Lt Col Peter Mahoney) to a civilian hospital in Kuwait for CT scans and initial surgery, before being transferred to the Queen Elizabeth Neuroscience Centre at the University Hospital in Birmingham for definitive surgery and rehabilitation.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Al-Sweady inquiry report, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/al-sweady-inquiry-report> Conclusion, para 5.202

¹⁰⁴ Al-Sweady inquiry report, *Op cit*, Conclusion, para 5.201

¹⁰⁵ Beharry, Johnson. *Barefoot Soldier – A Story of Extreme Valour* (London: Sphere, 2006)



The Defence of CIMIC House, Al Amarah, August 2004 (David Rowlands)

(This defence is eloquently described by Richard Holmes and Sgt Dan Mills, see bibliography)



Private Johnson Beharry VC, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (David Rowlands)

Following the Second Sadr Uprising (2-26 August), the violence in Iraq suddenly subsided, after the Mahdi Army miscalculated and was defeated in a pitched battle

against US and Iraqi coalition forces in Najaf. The Shia spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, called for a truce, which was agreed, so relative peace returned for a while.

In the north, the US had commenced planning for an offensive by 10,000 troops against a pocket of 3,000 fanatical Sunni insurgents holding the town of Fallujah. Unless the insurgency there could be quelled, it would threaten the Iraqi elections scheduled for 30 January 2005 in accordance with the newly ratified UNSCR 1546.

¹⁰⁶ General Casey called for British help, and it was decided that the Black Watch (the theatre reinforcement battlegroup) would defer their roulement home (scheduled for October) and move north in order to join the cordon south of Fallujah thereby releasing US troops for the planned assault (named Operation PHANTOM FURY by the US) in the second week of November.

TELIC 5 (4 Armoured Brigade, Nov 2004 – Apr 2005)

Operation BRACKEN The Black Watch mission to Fallujah, codenamed Operation BRACKEN, commenced on 28 October. An advance party flew to Baghdad and an enormous road convoy left Shaibah Logistic Base for the move to Camp Dogwood, on the banks of the Euphrates, in the midst of a hostile Sunni population, prior to their taking over their area of operation. They faced multiple IEDs and rocket attacks, and on 4 November the first British fatalities, and the first to suicide bombing in Iraq, were sustained when a suicide bomber killed 3 Black Watch soldiers and an interpreter at a checkpoint, also injuring 8 others, and prompting intense political debate back in the UK.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Security Council, Press Release 8 June 2004
<https://www.un.org/press/en/2004/sc8117.doc.htm>

During their month long operation the Black Watch effectively blocked and seriously disrupted insurgent activity, culminating in Operation TOBRUK on 25 November, a battlegroup-sized mission involving 650 troops in 116 tracked vehicles in the final operation conducted by the Black Watch before its impending potential amalgamation. This all came at a cost – during Operation BRACKEN the battlegroup endured 3 suicide attacks, 25 large IED explosions, and daily indirect fire, totalling 120 serious incidents. Five Black Watch soldiers and one interpreter were killed and 17 wounded. Four Warriors and one Scimitar light tank were irreparably damaged, and two helicopters damaged by ground fire. The Black Watch returned to Scotland in mid-December, in time to hear the defence secretary announce plans to disband one Scottish battalion and amalgamate the other five into a new ‘super regiment’.¹⁰⁷

MND(SE) As the UK Brigade within MND(SE) on Op TELIC 5, 4 Armoured Brigade (normally based in Germany, and distinguished by the ‘Black Rat’ (Jerboa) emblem) took over responsibility for Basrah and Maysan Provinces from 1 November 2004 to 1 May 2005.¹⁰⁸ It arrived in Iraq after the peak of the fighting during the Second Sadr Uprising and never faced the levels of violence experienced in Op TELIC 4. Nonetheless, the frequency of serious incidents highlighted the potential for a return to major conflict at any time.

The unifying purpose behind the Brigade’s activities was to realise the political process defined in UNSCR 1546, which had set the scene for democratic elections on 30 January 2005. The first half of the Brigade’s tour was therefore dominated by the preparations necessary to ensure the success of these elections. Thereafter the

¹⁰⁷ Ripley, Tim. *Operation TELIC – The British Campaign in Iraq 2003 – 2009* (Telic-Herrick Publications, 2016), pp.231-238

¹⁰⁸ 4 Armoured Brigade would become 4 Mechanised Brigade in 2007 on leaving 1 (UK) Armoured Division in Germany and being assigned to 3 (UK) Mechanised Division in the UK.

Brigade's main activities focussed on security sector reform (training and mentoring Iraqi Security Forces) and operating with the Iraqi Security Forces in COIN missions (Joint Security Operations), together with aiding Reconstruction.¹⁰⁹



'The Royal Dragoon Guards, Iraq 2004-2005' (Providing security for elections) (David Rowlands)

The January 2005 election, while a success for the democratic process, resulted in the election of politicians and parties implacably opposed to the continued British presence in Iraq, setting in train events that would lead to British withdrawals from Maysan and then Basra that would look like retreats under fire.¹¹⁰ The new governor in Maysan was Adel al Maliki, a former JAM militia commander, and the new Basra governor was Mohammed al-Waili, a leading member of the Fadhilla party, the mouthpiece for Sadr's movement.

¹⁰⁹ 4 Armoured Brigade Post Operational Report – Operation TELIC 5, dated 29 July 2005

¹¹⁰ Ripley, *Op cit.*, p. 259

TELIC 6 (12 Mechanised Brigade, May – Oct 2005)

Basra had been relatively quiet after the collapse of the Second Sadr Uprising in August 2004 and the elections in January 2005. That changed in summer 2005 when the Iranians decided to escalate the conflict by using their militia proxies (both the JAM and more extremist militias, who the British dubbed ‘Special Groups’) to attack the British and force their withdrawal from Iraq. The Al-Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard provided training in Iran for sniper and rocket teams and began equipping the militias with large numbers of Explosively Formed Projectile (EFP) IEDs which would prove deadly against the British vehicles. The first confirmed use of Iranian-provided EFP-equipped IEDs was on 29 May, when Lance Corporal Alan Brackenbury of the King’s Royal Hussars was killed in an IED attack on a Land Rover patrol in Maysan Province.¹¹¹ Three more soldiers were killed on patrol in Al Amarah on 16 July, in the first Snatch Land Rover to be penetrated by this new weapon, necessitating all patrols thereafter to be undertaken in Warriors.¹¹²

The Jamiat incident The fragility of the UK’s control over Basra in the face of the Iranian-backed militia offensive became evident on 19-20 September 2005 when British troops had to storm the Jamiat Police Station to rescue two British undercover members of the Special Air Service who had been kidnapped and held captive by rogue policemen of the Serious Crimes Unit. This rescue operation sparked off a major confrontation with rioters and gunmen, during which a Staffords’ Warrior was firebombed and set alight.¹¹³ The images of the escaping crew made worldwide

¹¹¹ Nicol, Mark. *Iraq – A Tribute to Britain’s Fallen Heroes* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2008), pp.150-151

¹¹² Ripley (2016), p. 263-265

¹¹³ Ripley (2016), pp. 267-268

headlines. Fortunately all five crew members survived, with only one sustaining serious burns, and he made a remarkable recovery.¹¹⁴



Sergeant George Long escaping from burning Warrior, 19 September 2005 – the iconic image of the TELIC campaign (Google Images)

TELIC 7 (7 Armoured Brigade, Nov 2005 – Apr 2006)

7 Armoured Brigade arrived in Iraq just weeks after the 'Jamiat incident'. Trust had been eroded, relations with Iraqi civilians and institutions were very strained, and practically no security sector reform was happening in the three Provinces of Basra, Maysan and Al Muthanna that came within its remit. Reviving security sector reform and preparations to hand over control of Maysan and Al Muthanna to Provincial Iraqi Control became the focus of initial Brigade activities.

¹¹⁴ Soldier who faced death in burning tank in Iraq set to run 52 marathons to repay medics who rebuilt him. Daily Mail Online, 27 December 2010 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1341804/Marathon-Man-The-ordeal-troops-blazing-tank-defining-image-Iraq-Now-running-52-marathons-repay-medic-rebuilt-him.html#ixzz4dHHX0qy8>

The situation in southern Iraq deteriorated significantly following the terrorist bombing on 22 February 2006 of the Golden Mosque in Samarra (one of the holiest Shiite Moslem shrines, 65 km north of Baghdad) in a calculated attempt to ignite a major Sunni-Shiite civil war. This was compounded by the escalating anti-Western reaction to the September 2005 publication of the 'Danish cartoons', and revelations in February 2006 in the News of The World of a video showing British soldiers beating Iraqis in Al Amarah in 2003.

Shi'ite Militants, particularly in the Jaish al Mahdi, openly supported by Iranian al-Quds fighters, increased their activities throughout Iraq, especially in Baghdad and Basra where they were steadily penetrating the police forces, leading to a surge in sectarian killings. The Jamiat police station in Basra became a de facto JAM interrogation and torture centre, under the control of the thuggish police officer, Captain Jaffah.

The Multinational Forces were now facing a determined and increasingly sophisticated IED and Indirect Fire (IDF) campaign which significantly curtailed conventional operations, though the IED campaign was matched by equally determined counter-IED operations. Captain Kevin Ivison, the Ammunition Technical Officer supporting the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards in Al Amarah, would be awarded the George Medal (only one level below the Victoria Cross) for defusing a secondary device on 28 February 2006 while under sniper fire in the open, though his experiences left him suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Ivison, Kevin. *Red One – A Bomb Disposal Expert on the Front Line* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2010)

In April a co-ordinated rocket attack against Basra Palace during the Queen's Birthday Party organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) led to a withdrawal of FCO and DfID staff. IDF attacks against Multinational Forces had now reached their highest level since March 2003.¹¹⁶

TELIC 8 (20 Armoured Brigade, May – Oct 2006)

Private Michelle Norris On 11 June 2006, 19 year old Private Michelle Norris, combat medical technician, was attached to C Company 1 PWRR, in Al Amarah. Whilst engaged in a night-time search operation, the Company became embroiled in a heavy fire fight with over 200 insurgents. The Warrior that Private Norris was in came under accurate fire and the vehicle commander, Colour Sergeant Page, was shot in the face and very seriously wounded. Private Norris dismounted and climbed onto the top of the vehicle to apply life-saving first aid, disregarding continued sniper fire aimed at her. The gunner then dragged her back into the vehicle turret to remove her from the line of fire, and the Warrior returned to camp to evacuate the casualty. Private Norris was awarded the Military Cross for her actions, the first female to receive this award.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ 7 Armoured Brigade Op TELIC 7 Post Operational Report, dated 8 May 2006

¹¹⁷ Collins, Dan. *In Foreign Fields – Heroes of Iraq and Afghanistan in their own words*. (Reading: Monday Books, 2007), pp. 286-297



'Private Michelle Norris MC' (Stuart Brown, military artist)¹¹⁸

Operation SINBAD

By 2006, the Iraqi police forces had become heavily infiltrated by members of the Iranian-backed Jaish al-Mahdi Army as well as by organised criminals, resulting in the British effectively having ceded control of Basra to the militias.

Major General Richard Shirreff, as the charismatic and energetic new commander of MND(SE), July – Dec 2006, arrived in theatre determined on a plan, Operation SALAMANCA, to restore security and clean up the police, coupled with intensive reconstruction efforts, aiming to take back Basra City, district by district, with British troops alongside the Iraqi Army, thereby regaining the initiative and taking the offensive against the Iranian-backed militias. This would allow an acceptable political solution to emerge and also prevent a humiliating strategic defeat for the British. Operation SALAMANCA was rejected by the Iraqi authorities so it was revised as the

¹¹⁸ Stuart Brown, military artist. Print available from Skipper Press, <https://skipperpress.com/portfolio/gallery-prints/private-michelle-norris-mc/>

less ambitious Operation SINBAD. Coalition commanders in Baghdad supported Sherriff with corps assets (such as surveillance drones) and funds for reconstruction, though an offer to detach a US battalion to Basra was rejected in London.

Withdrawal from Camp Abu Naji A pre-requisite for Major General Shirreff's plans was the withdrawal of troops from Camp Abu Naji outside Al-Amarah (where they were under incessant heavy indirect fire and regularly sustaining multiple casualties) in order to free them up for Operation SINBAD. Shirreff also wanted to avoid the situation that had arisen after the Queen's Dragoon Guards had handed over Muthanna Province in July – their base had been looted by civilians four days later. Unfortunately the withdrawal from Abu Naji did not go smoothly. Intense fighting in the final days also resulted in a Challenger 2 main battle tank being penetrated by a RPG equipped with a tandem charge, this being the first recorded incident of a Challenger 2 being penetrated in this way, and raising the spectre that the militia might now be able to defeat every type of British vehicle. On 24 August British troops evacuated Camp Abu Naji, leaving it in the hands of Iraqi troops; a few hours later the guards opened the gates to hundreds of rioters, resulting in the base being looted – while being filmed and broadcast live on Arab television channels.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Ripley, Tim. *Operation TELIC – The British Campaign in Iraq 2003 – 2009* (Telic-Herrick Publications, 2016), pp. 324-326



‘The Poachers strike’ (2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment [the ‘Poachers’] conducting strike operations during Operation SINBAD, 2006) (David Rowlands)

Shirreff launched Operation SINBAD between 20 September 2006 and 14 January 2007, in which 1,000 British and 2,300 Iraqi troops raided Basra police stations in sequence and arrested suspected insurgents and gangsters.¹²⁰ The militias responded by using rockets and multiple IEDs, with the UK base at Basra Palace becoming the most rocketed location in the whole of Iraq as the British simply did not have enough assets to suppress all possible firing points. The British troops outfought the Shia militias in many pitched battles as the campaign progressed, leading one local newspaper to describe the British as the ‘Lions of Basra’.¹²¹ However, initial successes could not be consolidated as the lack of sufficient resources from London, together with constraints imposed by Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki (who was then reliant on JAM support to keep his weak coalition government

¹²⁰ The Effects of Op SINBAD 20 September 2006 – 14 January 2007 (MOD, letter to Secretary of State, dated 16 February 2007, declassified) <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/243581/2007-02-16-minute-beadle-to-banner-the-effect-of-op-sinbad-20-september-2006-to-14-january-2007.pdf>

¹²¹ Quoted in: Elliott, Christopher. *High Command – British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), pp.117-118

in power),¹²² and the lack of sufficiently trained local Iraqi battalions allowed the militias to regroup.

TELIC 8 coincided with the deployment of British troops into Helmand Province, and the shift of focus of British political and military effort from their ignominious situation in Iraq to Afghanistan.

TELIC 9 (19 Light Brigade, Nov 2006 – Apr 2007)

The first three months of TELIC 9 were occupied with the ongoing Operation SINBAD, though political and military attention in the UK was distracted by the escalating violence in Helmand where a full-blown war was now underway.

There was one visible outcome from Operation SINBAD of great symbolic value – Shirreff was finally given permission to blow up the notorious Jamiat Police Station, which the Royal Engineers did in spectacular fashion on Christmas morning, after British troops released 127 captives many of whom showed signs of torture and were expecting to be executed.¹²³ However, the Serious Crimes Unit became fully functional again within months.¹²⁴ Basra would remain in the hands of the JAM and its death squads, with Iraqi security forces unable to impose, let alone maintain, the rule of law. This contributed to the conditions which would lead Shirreff's successor into negotiations with JAM during TELIC 9.¹²⁵

¹²² Richard Iron. Chapter 16. Basra 2008: Operation Charge of the Knights, in: Jonathan Bailey, Richard Iron & Hew Strachan (eds). *British Generals in Blair's Wars* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 188

¹²³ Duncan Gardham. Soldiers destroy Basra's 'rogue' police HQ. *The Telegraph*, 26 December 2006 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1537861/Soldiers-destroy-Basras-rogue-police-HQ.html>

¹²⁴ Hughes, Geraint. Iraqnophobia – The Dangers of forgetting Operation TELIC. *The RUSI Journal*, December 2013; 157(6): 54-60

¹²⁵ Chilcot Report (2016). Executive Summary, p.106, para 768

In December 2006 PJHQ in London issued the formal order to begin withdrawing UK troops from Basra city (Operation Zenith). On the day that Operation SINBAD officially ended, 18 February 2007, Prime Minister Tony Blair announced that 3,000 of the 7,000 British troops then in Iraq would be withdrawn over the coming months in order to bolster operations in Afghanistan. To quote Ledwidge: 'If any moment can be described as the moment of defeat, this was it.' ¹²⁶

This was in sharp contrast to the political will in America, where on 23 January 2007 President Bush had announced that an extra five brigades (about 20,000 men) would be deployed to central and northern Iraq in a Surge to stabilise the country, where the charismatic General David Petraeus had just taken over as Commander Multi-National Forces Iraq. Petraeus had a catalytic role in transforming the US Army's approach to counterinsurgency and turning their campaign round from slow failure by attrition into manoeuvrist success.^{127,128} As Lieutenant General Robin Fry put it, 'The Americans decided they were going to win; the British decided they were going to leave.'¹²⁹

The political decision to withdraw British troops, and the end of the hamstrung Operation SINBAD, coincided with the arrival of Major General Jonathan Shaw (in January 2007) as the new commander of MND(SE). His approach was the opposite of Shirreff's: rather than aiming to achieve security as the essential prerequisite for a political solution, he proposed that security could only be achieved after a political

¹²⁶ Ledwidge (2017), p. 44

¹²⁷ Ricks, Thomas. *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008*. (Penguin, 2009)

¹²⁸ MacKinlay, John. A Petraeus Doctrine for Whitehall – Review Essay *The RUSI Journal*, June 2009; 154(3): 26-29

¹²⁹ General Sir Robin Fry, interviewed on BBC TV's *Secret Iraq*, October 2010 (quoted by Ledwidge (2017), p.44)

solution had been reached by the Iraqis themselves, and he therefore sought to hand over responsibility as much as possible to the Iraqi security forces. As a first step, he initiated plans to redeploy British troops from their bases in Basra (such as Basra Palace, where they were under daily rocket and mortar attack and resupply was extremely hazardous) to the more easily defensible airport ten miles away, under Operation ZENITH. Recognising the reality on the ground of JAM's control over Basra, and assessing that a continued weak British military presence in Basra was counter-productive (attracting over 90 per cent of attacks on security forces), General Shaw negotiated a deal with JAM's Basra commander, Ahmed al-Fartusi, then held captive by the British. Al-Fartusi agreed to renounce violence and allow British troops to withdraw unmolested, in return for a release of JAM prisoners, the last one being al-Fartusi himself. This withdrawal would happen once the British deemed that the local Iraqi 14th Army Division was sufficiently trained to take over the bases – even though the Iraqi government would still not be strong enough to take over effective control of the city until well into 2008.

TELIC 10 (1 Mechanised Brigade, May – Oct 2007)

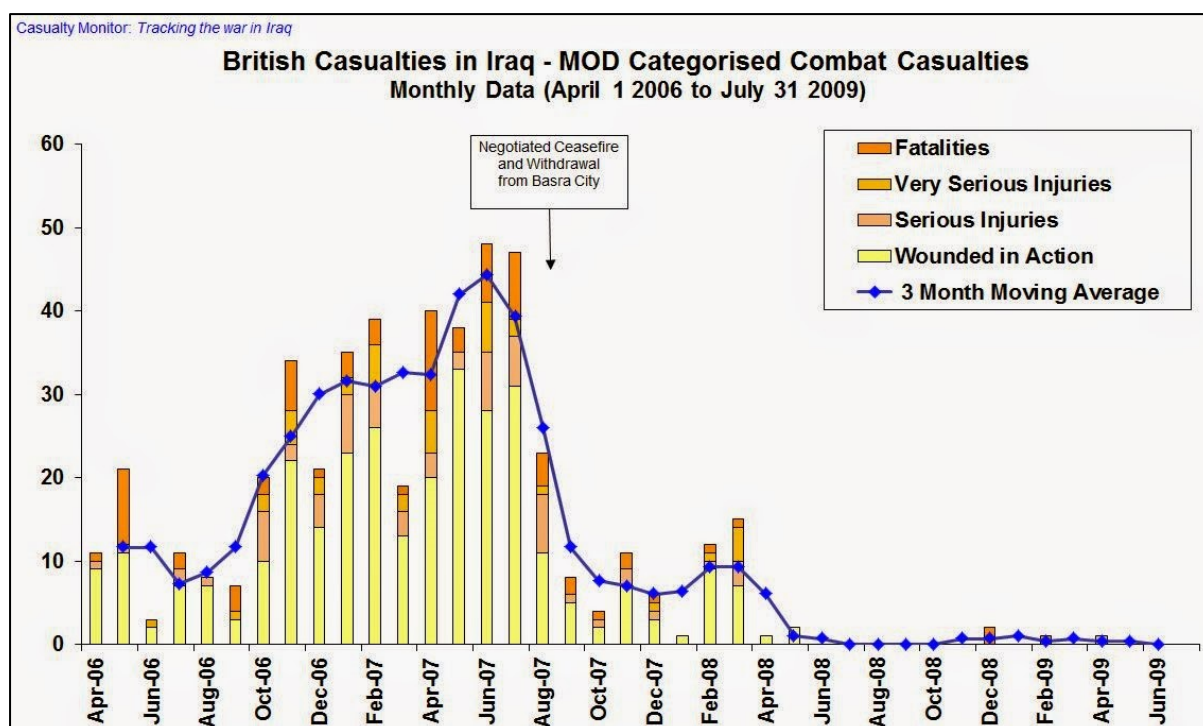
Following a temporary ceasefire in July, where al-Fartusi demonstrated his control over JAM by halting all attacks on coalition forces for three days, the final stage of Operation ZENITH and the withdrawal from Basra went ahead on 4 September 2007, when the 4th Battalion, The Rifles, handed over Basra Palace to the Iraqi Army and drove unmolested to Basra Air Station, their route cynically safeguarded by JAM militiamen. The next three months passed peacefully, at least for the British, whose casualty figures dropped significantly, but the weakness of the Iraqi Army meant that JAM-led intimidation and terrorisation of the civilian population became rife. As

Fairweather said, in his book *War of Choice*, the '[British] Faustian bargain undermined the very institutions that the British had gone to Iraq to create ... the city was nothing like the peaceful oasis British defence chiefs were trying to portray to the media.'¹³⁰



The UK Logistic Battalion, Op TELIC 10 (the hazardous daily resupply from Kuwait) (David Rowlands)

¹³⁰ Fairweather, Jack. *A War of Choice: Honour, Hubris and Sacrifice: The British in Iraq* (Jonathan Cape: 2011), p.328



British Combat Casualties in Iraq, 2006 – 2009 (Source: Casualty Monitor)¹³¹

TELIC 11 (4 Mechanised Brigade, Nov 2007 – May 2008)

Al-Fartusi was released on 31 December 2007, and the last JAM prisoners were released on 2 January 2008. Unsurprisingly, the JAM reneged on their deal. On 6 January the airport base was subjected to the heaviest rocket assault of the war so far, and by 31 January rocket and mortar attacks on the British were relentless and at their 'pre-accommodation' level.¹³²

In February, two convoys, cleared in advance by the British with the JAM, were attacked and a charity worker killed, and journalist Richard Butler was kidnapped by the Serious Crimes Unit – he would only be released in April during the Iraqi-led Operation CHARGE OF THE KNIGHTS.

¹³¹ Casualty Monitor: British Casualties: Iraq <http://www.casualty-monitor.org/p/iraq.html>

¹³² Ledwidge (2017), p.52

Operation CHARGE OF THE KNIGHTS

For Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki in Baghdad, the continued control by JAM of Iraq's second largest city and its revenues from oil and shipping was an existential threat to his government, not least because the ongoing civil war in Baghdad was being fuelled and financed by the Shi'ite militias in Basra. With his Army now reasonably strong and his political position more assured, and with trust in the British having been eroded by their withdrawal from Basra, Maliki planned his own solution. Maliki ordered two additional Iraqi infantry battalions to Basra, then flew to Basra on 24 March and gave his orders to Lieutenant General Mohan, heading the Iraqi 14th Division, who used a plan to retake Basra that had been devised with British Colonels Andy Bristow and his successor Richard Iron.¹³³

The Iraqi Army began operations against the Mahdi Army almost immediately, on 25 March 2008 – Operation CHARGE OF THE KNIGHTS, the defining battle for Basra, had begun, using a British-authored plan, but initially not with sufficient resources, and without prior consultation with US or UK forces. JAM counterattacked in strength on 27 March with some 28 simultaneous dawn attacks against army posts across the city, and the newly formed Iraqi 3rd Brigade effectively collapsed. Faced with the prospect of defeat, the Iraqi Army redeployed its theatre reserve, the 1st Iraqi Divisional HQ and the highly experienced 1st Iraqi Brigade, together with embedded US Marine Corps mentors and trainers, the so-called Military Transition Teams (MiTTs), to Basra. Simultaneously, the Coalition despatched its forward Corps HQ and supporting Corps assets, including armed Predator drones and attack helicopters, switching its main effort from Mosul to Basra, in a joint US-UK effort to

¹³³ Richard Iron. Chapter 16: *Basra 2008: Operation Charge of the Knights*. In: Jonathan Bailey, Richard Iron & Hew Strachan (eds). *British Generals in Blair's Wars* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 187-199

support the Iraqis, with the British also providing drone surveillance and medical support. Thus enabled, the Iraqi Security Forces launched their decisive attack on 2 April, capturing all their objectives and dramatically regaining the initiative, such that Prime Minister Maliki could order a temporary ceasefire to give a chance for the militias to withdraw peacefully.

Impressed by the professionalism in the US-mentored and trained Iraqi 1st Division compared to the UK-trained but not mentored 14th Division, Lieutenant General Mohan asked the British to embed trainers within the 14th Division, and ‘within 36 hours British forces were back all over Basra, fully embedded into the Iraqi Army’ as platoon-sized MiTTs.¹³⁴ The offensive phase of CHARGE OF THE KNIGHTS ended on 6 May with JAM having been cleared out of Basra by the Iraqi Security Forces, though further operations against JAM in the provinces would continue for several more months.



‘Operation CHARGE OF THE KNIGHTS’ (Scots Guards battlegroup in support of Iraqi special forces, 4 April 2008) (David Rowlands)

¹³⁴ Richard Iron. *Op cit.*, pp. 187-199

Overall the decisive victory over JAM was very much an Iraqi victory – and though the Coalition had intervened to help the Iraqis, the circumstances which prompted Operation CHARGE OF THE KNIGHTS still represented a strategic failure for the British in Iraq. As Sir John Chilcot later said, ‘It was humiliating that the UK reached a position in which an agreement with a militia group which had been actively targeting UK forces was considered the best option available.’¹³⁵

TELIC 12 (7 Armoured Brigade, May – Nov 2008)

The British military effort during their remaining year in Basra concentrated on providing embedded training and operational support to the Iraqi 14th Division in its attempts to provide security for the civilian population. By the end of TELIC 12, Brigadier Storrie was able to report that the 14th Division was almost fully trained, that the public mood in Basra, in the absence of militia intimidation, was ‘upbeat and forward leaning’, and that public consent was solid when the British were seen to be operating in support of the Iraqi Security Forces.¹³⁶

No UK fatalities occurred during TELIC 12, the first time during the whole TELIC campaign.

TELIC 13 (20 Armoured Brigade, 30 Nov 2008 – May 2009)

20 Armoured Brigade returned for its third tour of Iraq to carry out the phased drawdown of UK military capability under Operation BROCKDALE while carrying on with support to the Iraqis under Op TELIC. The Divisional Headquarters of MND (South East) and MND (Central) merged into MND (South) under the command of

¹³⁵ Sir John Chilcot’s public statement, 6 July 2016

¹³⁶ OP TELIC 12: HQ 7th Armoured Brigade Post Operational Report, 15 December 2008

the US 10th Mountain Division on 31 March 2009 as US forces replaced the British across Basra Province. Simultaneously, the Contingency Operating Base at Basra airport was formally handed over to the 10th Mountain Division, with 20 Armoured Brigade handing over authority to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the US 4th Infantry Division (2/4 ID) three weeks later, on 20 April.¹³⁷ A few British naval assets remained in training roles with the Iraqi navy at Umm Qasr for a little longer, but effectively Op TELIC came to an end in May 2009. The Iraqi parliament did not renew the mandate in July 2009 for these British naval forces to remain in theatre.

The logistic effort involved in withdrawing UK troops and their equipment after 6 years in Iraq was a massive undertaking. The infrastructure was spread across southeast Iraq and included a Bulk Fuel Installation, a Reverse Osmosis plant, an Ammunition Storage Point, 4 purpose built Protective Structures and 11 military camps on the Contingency Operating Base, 18 outstations, a Divisional Headquarters, rotary and fixed wing handling and maintenance facilities, and a Rendezvous Processing Point that dealt with hundreds of tons weekly. At the start of TELIC 13 there were almost 4,000 Iso-Containers (ISOs) on the COB alone, over 1,000 vehicles and their equipment, 538 tonnes of ammunition, and 368 Grey and White Fleet vehicles. It took 6 Military vessels to remove this Equipment Capability from Iraq.¹³⁸ Operation BROCKDALE and the redeployment of all British troops and equipment via Kuwait would be complete by 31 October 2009.

¹³⁷ 20th Armoured Brigade Op Telic 13 Post Operational Report, 6 July 2009

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

Table 1:

Main Combat Forces deployed on Operation TELIC ¹³⁹	
TELIC 1 (Feb – Jun 2003): 1 ST (UK) Armoured Division (Commander: Major General Robin Brims (Jan – May 2003), Major General Peter Wall (May – July 2003))	• 7 Armoured Brigade (commanded by Brigadier Graham Binns). 4 Battlegroups: ○ <i>Royal Scots Dragoon Guards;</i> ○ <i>2nd Royal Tank Regiment;</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers;</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Black Watch</i> Also: <i>3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery</i> • 16 Air Assault Brigade (Brigadier Jacko Page). 4 Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Parachute Regiment (1 PARA);</i> ○ <i>3rd Battalion, Parachute Regiment (3 PARA);</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment (1 R IRISH);</i> ○ <i>3rd Regiment Army Air Corps</i> • 3 Commando Brigade RM (Brigadier Jim Dutton RM). 3 Battlegroups: ○ <i>40 Commando RM;</i> ○ <i>42 Commando RM;</i> ○ <i>15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (US Marine Corps)</i> • 102 Logistics Brigade (Brigadier Shaun Cowan) • Other Divisional assets: ○ <i>1st Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG)</i> ○ <i>Other units as listed in the MOD's 'The Fight for Iraq', (see Bibliography), p.152</i>
TELIC 2 (Jul – Oct 2003): Headquarters Multi-National	• Ground Holding (Framework) Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borders</i>

¹³⁹ Adapted from: Ripley, Tim *Operation TELIC – The British Campaign in Iraq 2003 – 2009* (Telic-Herrick Publications, 2016) www.operationtelic.co.uk. This list is not exhaustive and is kept brief for clarity. Some units changed their role during a tour, or straddled two TELIC deployments. For instance, QRH commenced TELIC 3 as a Ground Holding battlegroup but were later shifted to a Security Sector Reform role; the 1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were in theatre during both TELIC 3 and 4.

Division (South East) (Commanded by Maj Gen Graeme Lamb) 19 Mechanised Brigade (Commander: Brigadier Bill Moore) National Support Component HQ (triservice HQ providing logistic support from July 2003 – May 2009, based at Shaibah Logistic Base/Umm Qasr/Basra Airport)	<i>Regiment (1 KOSB) (Task Force Maysan)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion , King's Regiment (1 KINGS)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Queen's Lancashire Regiment (1 QLR)</i> ○ <i>40 Regiment Royal Artillery</i> • Surge/Reinforcement Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Green Jackets (1 RGJ)(Divisional asset)</i> ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Light Infantry (2 LI)</i>
TELIC 3 (Nov 2003 – Apr 2004): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Andrew Stewart) 20 Armoured Brigade (Commanders: Brigadiers David Rutherford-Jones / Nick Carter)	• Ground Holding Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Light Infantry (1 LI) (TF Maysan)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Regiment of Wales (1 RRW)</i> ○ <i>Queen's Royal Hussars</i> ○ <i>26 Regiment Royal Artillery</i> • Surge/Reinforcement Battlegroups: ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment (2 PARA)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders</i>
TELIC 4 (May – Oct 2004): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen William Rollo) 1 Mechanised Brigade (Brig Andrew Kennett)	• Ground Holding Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (1 PWRR) (TF Maysan)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Cheshire Regiment (1 Cheshire)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers (1 RWF)</i> ○ <i>1st Royal Horse Artillery</i> • Surge/Reinforcement Battlegroups: ○ <i>40 Commando RM/1st Battalion, Royal Highland Fusiliers (1 RHF)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Black Watch (1 BW)</i>
TELIC 5 (Nov 2004 – Apr 2005):	• Ground Holding Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Welsh Guards (1 WG) (TF</i>

HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Jonathan Riley) 4 Armoured Brigade (Brigadiers Paul Gibson/Chris Deverell)	<i>Maysan)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (1 DWR)</i> ○ <i>Royal Dragoon Guards</i> ○ <i>4 Regiment Royal Artillery</i> • Surge/Reinforcement Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, The Scots Guards</i> ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (2 PWRR)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Highland Fusiliers (1 RHF)</i> ○ <i>1st Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG)</i>
TELIC 6 (May – Oct 2005): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Jim Dutton RM) 12 Mechanised Brigade (Brigadiers Chris Hughes/John Lorimer)	• Ground Holding Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment (1 R IRISH)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Staffordshire Regiment (1 STAFFS) (TF Maysan)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards</i> ○ <i>19 Regiment Royal Artillery</i> • Surge/Reinforcement/Reserve/Rear Ops Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Regiment of Wales (1 RRW)</i> ○ <i>Light Dragoons (LD)</i> ○ <i>King's Royal Hussars (KRH)</i>
TELIC 7 (Nov 2005 – Apr 2006): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen John Cooper) 7 Armoured Brigade (Brig Patrick Marriott)	• Ground Holding Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Highlanders (1 Highlanders)</i> ○ <i>Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Scots DGs) (TF Maysan)</i> ○ <i>3rd Royal Horse Artillery</i> • Reserve/Rear Ops Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, King's Own Royal Border Regiment (1 KORBR)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (1 RRF)</i> ○ <i>9/12th Royal Lancers</i> ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment (2 PARA)</i>
TELIC 8 (May – Oct 2006):	• Ground Holding Battlegroups:

HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Richard Shirreff) 20 Armoured Brigade (Brig James Everard)	○ <i>1st Battalion, Light Infantry (1 LI)</i> ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment (2 R ANGLIAN)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry (1 DDLI)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (1 PWRR)</i> ○ <i>Queen's Royal Hussars (QRH) (TF Maysan)</i> • Surge/Reinforcement/Reserve/Rear Ops Battlegroups: ○ <i>12 Regiment Royal Artillery</i> ○ <i>1st Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG)</i> ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (2 RRF)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards</i>
TELIC 9 (Nov 2006 – Apr 2007): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Jonathan Shaw) 19 Light Brigade (Brig Tim Evans)	• Ground Holding Battlegroups: ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (2 LANCS)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Green Jackets (1 RGJ)/2nd Battalion, The Rifles (2 Rifles)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment (1 YORKS)</i> • Reserve/Rear Ops Battlegroups: ○ <i>Queen's Royal Lancers (QRL) (TF Maysan)</i> ○ <i>40 Regiment Royal Artillery</i>
TELIC 10 (May – Oct 2007): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Graham Binns) 1 Mechanised Brigade (Brig James Bashall)	• Ground Holding Battlegroups: ○ <i>4th Battalion, The Rifles (4 RIFLES)</i> • Reserve/Rear Ops Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Irish Guards</i> ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Royal Welch Regiment (2 RWR)</i> ○ <i>1st Royal Horse Artillery</i> ○ <i>King's Royal Hussars (KRH) (TF Maysan)</i>
TELIC 11 (Nov 2007 – May 2008): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Barney White-	• Strike/Manoeuvre Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, The Scots Guards (1 SG)</i> ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (2 LANCS)</i>

Spinner) 4 Mechanised Brigade (Brig Julian Free)	• Reserve/Rear Ops Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland (1 SCOTS)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment (1 Mercian)</i>
TELIC 12 (May – Nov 2008): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Andy Salmon) 7 Armoured Brigade (Brig Sandy Storrie)	• Battlegroups: ○ <i>2nd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment (2 R ANGLIAN)</i> ○ <i>4th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland (4 SCOTS)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (1 RRF)</i> ○ <i>3rd Royal Horse Artillery</i>
TELIC 13 (Nov 2008 – May 2009): HQ MND(SE) (Maj Gen Andy Salmon) 20 Armoured Brigade (Brig Tom Beckett)	• Battlegroups: ○ <i>1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment (1 YORKS)</i> ○ <i>1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (1 PWRR)</i> ○ <i>5th Battalion, The Rifles (5 RIFLES)</i> ○ <i>26 Regiment Royal Artillery</i>

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Operations in Afghanistan (2001 – 2014) – a brief history

2001: Entry into Afghanistan

Operation VERITAS (UK) / Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (US)

Following 9/11, once the Taliban regime refused to surrender Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda supporters, the US launched Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, supporting the Northern Alliance in their bid to topple the Taliban regime and hunt down Al-Qaeda. The UK contributed forces under Operation VERITAS, initially deploying to Bagram airfield in northern Afghanistan before the fall of Kabul and the installation of Hamid Karzai's Interim Afghan Administration.

2002 – 2014: Establishing security

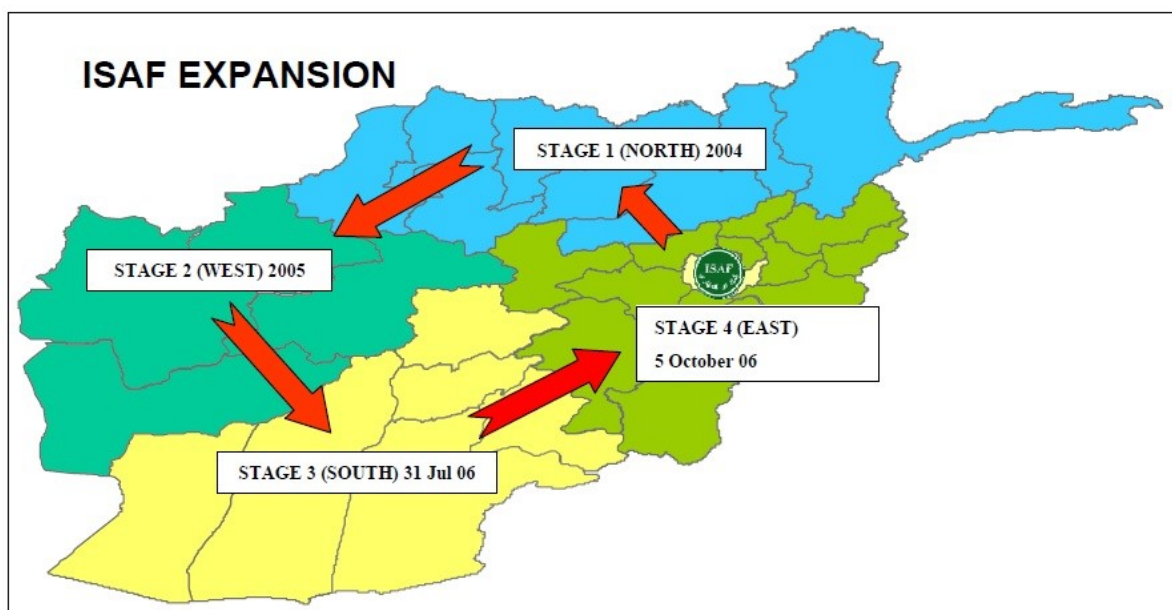
The ISAF Four-Stage Plan

The United Nations established an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to support Karzai's fragile government, aiming to prevent Afghanistan again becoming a terrorist haven. The UK took on leadership of ISAF for its first six months (December 2001 – June 2002), committing its troops under Operation FINGAL, while the US shifted its focus to Iraq.



Highland Infantry Territorials on patrol in Kabul during Op FINGAL, Feb 2003 (David Rowlands)

NATO took on leadership of ISAF in August 2003, and in October 2003 the UN Security Council authorized the expansion of the NATO mission beyond Kabul. NATO and the UN developed a four-stage plan for the country. Under this plan, ISAF would initially provide security in the north, enabling deployment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to develop local infrastructure, then expand security and PRTs to the west, later to the south and east, and eventually transition all security to Afghan forces. ISAF gradually expanded its remit throughout Afghanistan by late 2006 as up to 51 NATO and partner nations contributed their troops and resources.



ISAF Four-Stage Plan for Provision of Security in Afghanistan (Source: ISAF Placemats)¹⁴⁰

2003 - 2006: Return of the Taliban

The Taliban may have lost the opening stages of the war – but they had not accepted defeat, disappearing into the countryside and retreating into the Pashtun heartlands in the Federally Administered Tribal Area of northwest Pakistan to regroup. Time was on their side, as it had been on the side of their Mujahideen predecessors against the Soviets. By January 2003 they had begun to infiltrate back into Afghanistan, commencing an insurgency that would sorely challenge ISAF and the fledgling Afghan security forces over the years as each side strove to achieve dominance throughout the country. Their maintenance of secure bases in the Pashtun heartlands, largely untouchable by either NATO or the Pakistani military, enabled the insurgency to grow steadily, posing a potentially fatal threat to Afghan

¹⁴⁰ NATO: ISAF Placemats, 12 January 2009 http://www.nato.int/isaf/placemats_archive/2009-01-12-ISAF-Placemat.pdf

security. Initially, the Taliban focussed on Kandahar Province, their spiritual home and geographically closest to their strongholds around Quetta in Pakistan, but the arrival of the British in Helmand in 2006 and their actions there generated opportunities for the Taliban which they exploited – the British had effectively created and then vigorously stirred up a hornets' nest.¹⁴¹

2006: Entry into Helmand

The choice of troops for Britain's initial deployment is best described by Theo Farrell, Professor of War Studies at King's College London:

This new campaign was a stretch for a small army which had 8,500 troops deployed in Iraq in 2005 – 2006. The British Army then stood at 101,000, with seven deployable brigades. In addition, the Royal Marines also had a deployable brigade: 3 Commando Brigade. The heavy and medium brigades were all committed to the Iraq campaign. Accordingly the Army's elite light brigade, 16 Air Assault Brigade, was selected to provide the first British task force for Helmand, with 3 Commando Brigade to follow in the second tour. However, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) decided to cap the UK task force at 3,150 troops; in other words, only a half brigade in strength. Its primary job was to protect the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and to create

¹⁴¹ Elliott, Christopher. *High Command – British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), p.158

security in the key ground between and surrounding the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah and the main economic town of Gereshk.¹⁴²

The first two HERRICK tours ended up being primarily kinetic in nature, as the British fought to establish themselves in Helmand. Counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrine had been neglected and its hard-learned lessons had been forgotten by the British Army, no longer forming part of the UK's institutionalised approach.¹⁴³ The British Army would have to re-learn COIN the hard way.

HERRICK 4 (16 Air Assault Brigade, Apr – Oct 2006)¹⁴⁴

With ISAF expanding its security remit southwards throughout Afghanistan (ISAF Stage 3), the UK committed its troops to Helmand Province in the southwest. Under the original 'Helmand Plan', outlined above, the troops would concentrate on protecting the Provincial Reconstruction Team, and establish a 'security triangle' around the population centres of Lashkar Gah (the provincial capital) and Gereshk (the economic centre), enabling good governance and a development programme to be initiated, with the British mainly operating out of the specially constructed Camp Bastion.

Under-resourced from the outset due to political constraints, the UK's 3 PARA Battle Group, commanded by Brigadier Ed Butler, deployed in April 2006, only 3,150

¹⁴² Farrell Theo Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009 *The Journal of Strategic Studies* August 2010, Vol. 33, No. 4, 567–594

¹⁴³ Alderson A. Counter-Insurgency: Learn and Adapt? Can We Do Better? *The British Army Review*, 2007 (summer):16-21

¹⁴⁴ Different sources, even official ones, give slightly different dates for each HERRICK deployment. The convention used in post-operational reports is to link the start and end of each HERRICK deployment to the date of Transfer of Authority (TOA) between Brigades, usually on the 10th April and 10th October. By contrast, the HERRICK Campaign Study lists such deployments as May – October or November – April. Moreover, units staggered their arrival and departure dates and some handovers were necessarily prolonged as battlegroups took over large areas of responsibility. The dates given here generally indicate the TOA month.

personnel strong, largely drawn from 16 Air Assault Brigade. The Battle Group essentially consisted of a single light infantry battalion (3rd Battalion, Parachute Regiment, known as 3 PARA, with attached platoons from the Gurkhas and Royal Irish Regiment, less than 600 fighting soldiers in all) with supporting light armour (Household Cavalry Regiment with its CVRTs and Scimitars) and a battery of artillery (7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery with 105mm guns), together with helicopter air support (Apaches, Lynx and RAF Chinooks), and combat service support, including medical. The British were ably supported from the start by two attached units of Danes and Estonians (whose vehicles were better suited to the terrain), two nations who would stand squarely beside the British throughout the Helmand campaign.¹⁴⁵



Operation ILIOS (Special Boat Service in action near Sangin, 27 June 2006) (David Rowlands)

¹⁴⁵ Jakobsen P V, Thruelsen P D. Clear, Hold, Train: Denmark's Military Operations in Helmand 2006-2010. Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook, 2011, pp.78-105

The deployment was beset by trouble, compounded by the early enforced removal of the then Governor of Helmand, Sher Mohammed Akhundzade, a notoriously corrupt warlord heavily involved in the opium trade – in retaliation he reportedly told his disgruntled 3,000-strong militia to join the Taliban against the British. Newly-appointed Governor Daoud and President Karzai then applied intense diplomatic pressure upon Brigadier Butler to also support the Government District Centres in Musa Qala, Now Zad and Sangin. The result was the discarding of the ‘Helmand Plan’ and serious over-stretch as British platoons established themselves in the District Centres from June onwards, dispersed and vulnerable across a 600 square mile area. The Helmand commitment never really recovered from this fateful decision.¹⁴⁶

The British platoons inevitably became fixed in place with serious restriction of their freedom of manoeuvre. Their putative ‘inkblot’ COIN strategy withered on the vine as the Taliban massed to the attack, rapidly besieging the isolated defenders and engaging the Platoon Houses in prolonged and intense combat. Helicopter resupply and medevac became increasingly dangerous, and artillery, Apache gunships and Harrier jets had to be called in to break up the Taliban attacks, laying waste to the town centres and the very areas that the British had been called in to protect. 35 British soldiers would lose their lives during HERRICK 4, in a total of 537 contacts (‘Troops in Contact’, TICs) with the Taliban, most of them being killed by small-arms fire, Rocket-propelled Grenades, and mortars.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Newsinger, John. Chapter 8 (America’s Wars: Afghanistan and Iraq), in: *British Counterinsurgency* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2nd edition, 2015), pp. 231-232

¹⁴⁷ Neville, Leigh. *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006 – 14. Task Force Helmand* (Osprey Publishing, 2015), pp.9-24

Nonetheless, despite the vulnerability of the Platoon Houses, the Taliban never succeeded in overrunning any outpost and suffered very heavy casualties in the process. Their losses would soon force them to change their tactics - by the end of the next HERRICK deployment they had switched to besieging the outposts by surrounding them with IEDs, thereby minimising their own losses while significantly increasing those suffered by the British.



'Fighting the Taliban at Musa Qal'eh', 2006 (David Rowlands)

HERRICK 5 (3 Commando Brigade, Oct 2006 – Apr 2007)

Learning from the experience of their predecessors, 3 Commando Brigade, primarily comprising 42 and 45 Commandos Royal Marines, with elements from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and others, was reinforced from the outset, deploying with extra assets and manoeuvre capability, including combat ISTAR assets to increase situational awareness, and particularly benefitting from their Viking armoured and tracked personnel carriers. They discarded the Platoon House strategy in favour of

mounting a series of large-scale offensive operations, to seize back the initiative from the Taliban, largely through use of Mobile Operation Group patrols which would ‘advance to ambush’ and then suppress the Taliban through superior firepower. By the end of their tour, the Royal Marines had largely cleared the Sangin Valley of insurgents and had recorded over 800 TICs, suffering 12 deaths in the process. Most deaths and other casualties had been caused by small-arms and RPGs, but IEDs were increasingly taking their toll as the Taliban began to switch tactics.

It was during this tour that Apache pilot Captain Tom O’Malley would be awarded the prestigious Distinguished Flying Cross after flying his helicopter into a Taliban compound (Jugroom Fort, near Garmsir) with two Royal Marines strapped to the side to try and save a fatally wounded comrade on 15 January 2007. The pilot of a second Apache, which carried two more Marines, also received the DFC, and the Marines involved were awarded the Military Cross.¹⁴⁸⁻¹⁴⁹ No British serviceman would ever be captured by the Taliban during HERRICK, nor would any dead soldier be left behind on the battlefield.

¹⁴⁸ Marines in rescue bid for comrade. The Independent, 17 January 2007

¹⁴⁹ Miranda Pryne. Hero Apache pilot awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross to sell gallantry medals. The Daily Telegraph, 1 July 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/10938151/Hero-Apache-pilot-awarded-the-Distinguished-Flying-Cross-to-sell-gallantry-medals.html>



'Soldiers first' (The recovery of L/Cpl Mathew Ford RM at Jugroom Fort, Garmsir, 15 January 2007) (David Rowlands)



The Defence of Sangin District Centre, March 2007 (David Rowlands)

Sangin – the town that cost 100 British lives. If there is one name that epitomises the trials and tribulations of the British deployment into Helmand, and the bravery and fortitude of the individual British soldier when facing almost impossible challenges, it is Sangin. This small farming town in the upper Helmand river valley, a cluster of high walled compounds on the edge of a network of opium fields, was typical of many other villages and towns in Helmand. It had no strategic importance per se, except that it housed a government building symbolising the distant rule of Kabul. British troops first deployed there in summer 2006 at the request of Governor Daoud and President Karzai, to defend the District Centre. 3 PARA's Platoon House endured a bitter siege, with casualty evacuation and resupply by helicopter, supported by air strikes and artillery, which ironically destroyed the town centre and the livelihoods of the people they had been sent to protect. Corporal Bryan Budd would be awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for his bravery in action during a Taliban ambush there on 20 August 2006. The town was dubbed 'Sanginrad' by the troops during their four years supporting the Afghan National Army there, for the ferocity of the fighting and the casualty rates, especially from the networks of IEDs laid in the alleys and fields once the Taliban changed tactics. The US Marine Corps took over the district from the Royal Marines on HERRICK 12, in 2010, to face similar problems. Over 100 British troops died in Sangin, a quarter of the British deaths in Afghanistan, with the ANA sustaining many more fatalities. The Taliban re-entered the district in force and besieged the town once NATO troops withdrew in 2014, and though Afghan forces were supported by US Special Forces and air strikes, the government buildings and town eventually fell to a renewed Taliban onslaught on 22 March 2017.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Tomlinson, Hugh & Yaqubi, Aimal. 'Taliban capture town that cost 100 British lives.' *The Times*,

2007-2009: The Guerrilla War

In the face of increasing Taliban influence, each of the next four HERRICK brigades would concentrate in their own way on applying core Counter-Insurgency concepts in attempting to bring security to Helmand, trying to win over the local population and contest Taliban authority. Training back in the UK became much more systematic and COIN-centred, as COIN began to be injected ‘back into the lifeblood of the British Army’.¹⁵¹

HERRICK 6 (12 Mechanised Brigade, Apr – Oct 2007)

Responsibility for the newly-designated Task Force Helmand now fell to 12 Mechanised Brigade, deploying with two battle groups based on an infantry core (the Grenadier Guards, Royal Anglians, and Mercians, later reinforced by the 1st Battalion, Royal Welsh Regiment, effectively creating four battalion-size manoeuvre elements) supported by light armour (Light Dragoons) and artillery (39 Regiment Royal Artillery). The Royal Tank Regiment deployed with their new six-wheeled, armoured Mastiff vehicles (‘the Mastiff Group’), thereby providing protected mobility for the infantry and filling a critical capability gap, being much less vulnerable to IEDs.

The brigade chose to contest the Taliban in the Green Zone around the Helmand River, particularly between Gereshk and Sangin. A ‘clear and hold’ policy was initiated in the latter part of HERRICK 6 whereby patrols would turn captured compounds into strongpoints and semi-permanent Patrol Bases, restricting Taliban

Friday 24 March 2017, p. 17

¹⁵¹ Alderson A. Too Busy to Learn: Personal Observations on British Campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Chapter 24 in: *British Generals in Blair’s Wars*, eds Jonathan Bailey, Richard Irons, Hew Strachan. (Ashgate: 2013), pp. 281-296

freedom of movement and exerting 'persistent presence' in contested areas. This marked a shift from the previous *modus operandi* of repeated clearances of the Upper Gereshk and Upper Sangin Valleys (described by Brigadier Lorimer as 'mowing the lawn' as the Taliban would invariably return after each clearance).



'Helmand Vikings', summer 2007 (1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment)(David Rowlands)

Political concerns regarding collateral damage and civilian deaths led to more restrictive rules of engagement in July 2007, with Guidance Card Alpha limiting the use of deadly force and setting the tone for future deployments, though exemptions could be granted for specific offensive operations. The brigade ended its tour with Operation 'PALK WAHEL' ('Hammer Blow'), deploying Warrior infantry fighting vehicles ('the Warrior Group') for the first time, and pushing the Taliban out of Kajaki and the Upper Gereshk Valley back towards Musa Qala, the only town in Helmand still controlled by the Taliban.



The storming of Objective FAN (Zumbelay) during Operation 'PALK WAHEL', 19 Sep 2007

(David Rowlands)

HERRICK 7 (52 Infantry Brigade, Oct 2007 – Apr 2008)

The new brigade for Task Force Helmand again had four manoeuvre elements, comprising 40 Commando RM, Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards), Coldstream Guards and Royal Gurkha Rifles, supported by light armour (Household Cavalry) and the Mastiff and Warrior Groups (King's Royal Hussars and Scots Guards).



The retaking of Musa Qal'eh, December 2007 (David Rowlands)

52 Infantry Brigade expanded its predecessor's 'clear and hold' policy to one of 'clear, hold and build', actively including reconstruction and development in its plans. Its main offensive success was the recapture of Musa Qala after 3 days' intensive fighting in early December 2007, during Operation 'MAR KARADAD' ('Snakebite'), a joint operation involving Afghan, UK, US and Danish troops.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Grey, Stephen. *Operation Snakebite: The Explosive True Story of an Afghan Desert Siege* (London: Penguin Books, 2010)



Sergeant Tony Bolton, Coldstream Guards, in action near Gereshk, 26 Mar 2008 (David Rowlands)

HERRICK 7 saw a massive surge in the Taliban's use of IEDs as the most effective weapon against ISAF. All the British deaths on this tour were due to IEDs or accidents.

HERRICK 8 (16 Air Assault Brigade, Apr – Oct 2008)

16 Air Assault Brigade arrived for their second tour in a much stronger configuration, based on five infantry battalions (3 Para, 1 Royal Irish, 2 Para, Royal Highland Fusiliers (2 Scots) and Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (5 Scots)), with a theatre reserve from 2nd Bn, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR), and supported by light armour (Household Cavalry), the Warrior Group (the Highlanders (4 Scots)) and the Viking Group (Queen's Royal Lancers).



'Clear the Way!' Imjin Company on patrol from FOB Keenan, summer 2008 (David Rowlands)

Each battlegroup from this tour onwards would either have a geographical area of responsibility (generally Battle Group North around Sangin, North-West around Musa Qala, Central around Gereshk, and South around Garmsir), a mentoring (OMLT) role with the Afghans, or a theatre reserve role.

Notwithstanding this, Task Force Helmand still lacked resources to clear the southern town of Garmsir, so the US 24th Marine Expeditionary Corps deployed to Helmand for this tour, clearing the town and establishing safe patrol bases before handing responsibility for the area to the British. The tour was also notable for the safe delivery of a new hydroelectric turbine to Kajaki Dam, supported by a successful deception operation by Danes and Special Forces.



'Daring, Dangerous, Delivered' (FOB Zeebrugge, Kajaki, 1 Sep 2008) (David Rowlands)

HERRICK 9 (3 Commando Brigade, Oct 2008 – Apr 2009)

This was primarily a Navy deployment, under 3 Commando Brigade on their second tour, led by Brigadier Gordon K. Messenger RM as Commander Task Force Helmand. British forces in Helmand were divided into five battlegroups, similar to the five of HERRICK 8, with Task Force Lashkar Gah being re-designated as Battle Group Central-South.¹⁵³ During this tour the United Kingdom National Support Element (Afghanistan) – UK NSE(A) – was renamed Joint Force Support (Afghanistan) (JFSp (A)).

¹⁵³ The five Battle Groups were: **Battle Group (North West)** covering Musa Qala, Forward Operating Base [FOB] Edinburgh, and Now Zad; **Battle Group (North)**, led by 45 Commando RM, covering Kajaki, Sangin, FOB Zeebrugger, FOB Inkerman, FOB Robinson, FOB Gibraltar, Patrol Base (PB) Wishtan, PB Emerald, and PB Tangiers; **Battle Group (Centre)**, led by the Danish Battle Group, covering FOB Sandford, FOB Keenan, FOB Price, FOB Armadillo, and Gereshk; **Battle Group (South)**, covering FOB Dwyer, FOB Dehli, Garmsir District Centre, Nawa District Centre, PB Jugroom, PB Hassan Abad, PB Massood, and PB Shamshad; and **Battle Group (Central-South)**, which initially covered PB Argyll, Minerva Lines and Lashkar Gah, but expanded in November to include Juno, Shorabak and Bastion.

The battlegroups were configured around 42 and 45 Commandos, The Rifles, Royal Gurkha Rifles and Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, with a Warrior Group and Viking Group in support. The Danes brought mechanised infantry and Leopard 2 tanks, becoming Battle Group Centre around Gereshk. This tour saw the addition of the Jackal Mobility vehicle to the equipment scale, much more suitable to the Helmand terrain.

Task Force Helmand was now expanding its influence, launching Operation 'SOND CHARA' ('Red Dagger') in December to clear Taliban strongholds in Nad Ali and Marjah, as well as to prepare the ground for forthcoming operations into their safe havens in and around the central town of Babaji on HERRICK 10.

The TALIBAN responded with a dramatic IED offensive in defence of their strongholds – IED finds rose to 40 a week during HERRICK 9, and most of the 42 British deaths on this tour were due to these weapons.



Lance Bombardier Gary Prout CGC goes to the aid of his fallen comrade (victim of an IED),

14 Mar 2009 (David Rowlands)

2009-2011: Counter-Insurgency

A dramatic change in strategy came in May 2009 with the arrival of the new ISAF commander, US General Stanley McChrystal, fresh from leading special operations against the insurgency in Iraq, where the US had undergone a COIN renaissance, which included deployment of 20,000 extra troops in their 2007 Surge. McChrystal's strategic review of the Afghan war persuaded the recently elected US President Barack Obama to deploy a further 35,000 troops to Afghanistan in another Surge to overcome the Taliban in key areas and enable the rule of law to prevail.

ISAF and the UK (no longer committed on Op TELIC) committed extra troops too, with British personnel in Helmand reaching 9,500 by the end of 2009 – three times the number with which they had entered the province – and remaining at this peak for two years. The UK Armed Forces formally moved onto a campaign footing with the initiation of Op ENTIRETY in 2009, resulting in Op HERRICK becoming the institutional main effort.¹⁵⁴ The publication of the new British Army manual 'Countering Insurgency' in October 2009 introduced ten new COIN principles into doctrine, training and common use.¹⁵⁵ The British military was successfully transforming in contact.¹⁵⁶

General McChrystal introduced the policy of 'Courageous Restraint', prohibiting ISAF forces from using air or artillery support against compounds

¹⁵⁴ Lessons Exploitation Centre. *Operation HERRICK Campaign Study* (British Army: Directorate Land Warfare, 2015), p.iii

¹⁵⁵ British Army Field Manual, Vol 1, Part 10, Countering Insurgency (HMSO, October 2009)

¹⁵⁶ Farrell Theo Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009 *The Journal of Strategic Studies* August 2010, Vol. 33, No. 4, 567–594

or other civilian structures except in the most extreme circumstances, as well as calling for more targeted operations and ramping up missions by Special Forces. His aim in doing so was to cut civilian casualties to an absolute minimum and thereby undermine Taliban propaganda and recruiting.

HERRICK 10 (19 Light Brigade, Apr - Oct 2009)

19 Light Brigade (nicknamed 'The Black Panthers') took on responsibility for Task Force Helmand on HERRICK 10, its four battlegroups being drawn from the Welsh Guards, Black Watch (3 Scots), Mercians and 2 Rifles. The 2nd Battalion, Welsh Guards manned the Warrior Group, and the Royal Tank Regiment the Vikings, with light armour supplied by the Light Dragoons. The Royal Logistics Corps manned the upgraded Mastiff 2s.

The tour would be remembered for the casualties sustained during Operation PANTHER'S CLAW (PANCHAI PALANG in Pashtu) from 19 June – 27 July. Some 3,000 British, Danish and Estonian troops and 600 Afghan National Security Forces were engaged in this five-week operation, launched to retake the town of Babaji and drive the Taliban out of the crucial area between Lashkar Gah and Gereshk before the forthcoming Afghan elections. It resulted in the heaviest fighting in Helmand since British troops first deployed there in 2006. The Taliban had also buried hundreds of IEDs in the area in advance of this operation. 10 British soldiers lost their lives as a result, including Lt Col Rupert Thorneloe, Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, and the first British Commanding Officer to die in battle since the Falklands War. The bloodiest day, and the busiest in the whole campaign for Camp Bastion Hospital, was Friday 10 July, when eight British soldiers were

killed and at least 30 British soldiers injured, 15 seriously,¹⁵⁷⁻¹⁵⁸ with a similar number of casualties among Allied troops.

This tour resulted in 35 British deaths, 46 seriously wounded and 85 other wounded, with IEDs being the principal killer.



Operation PANTHER'S CLAW – Insertion (David Pentland, artist)

HERRICK 11 (11 Light Brigade, Oct 2009 – Apr 2010)

The McChrystal effect

With over 9,000 British troops now committed to Theatre, 11 Light Brigade's deployment was the largest to date, with six infantry battalions (Grenadier Guards,

¹⁵⁷ 'UK hospital in Afghanistan copes with bloodiest day.' *Reuters*, 12 July 2009

¹⁵⁸ 'Camp Bastion's advanced field hospital has experienced its bloodiest week for British troops since operations began in Helmand with wards nearly at full capacity.' *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 July 2009.

Coldstream Guards, Rifles, Yorks, Royal Anglians and Royal Welsh) and reinforcements from others (particularly 1 Scots Guards, 1 Scots (Royal Scots Borderers) and Duke of Lancaster's Regiment).

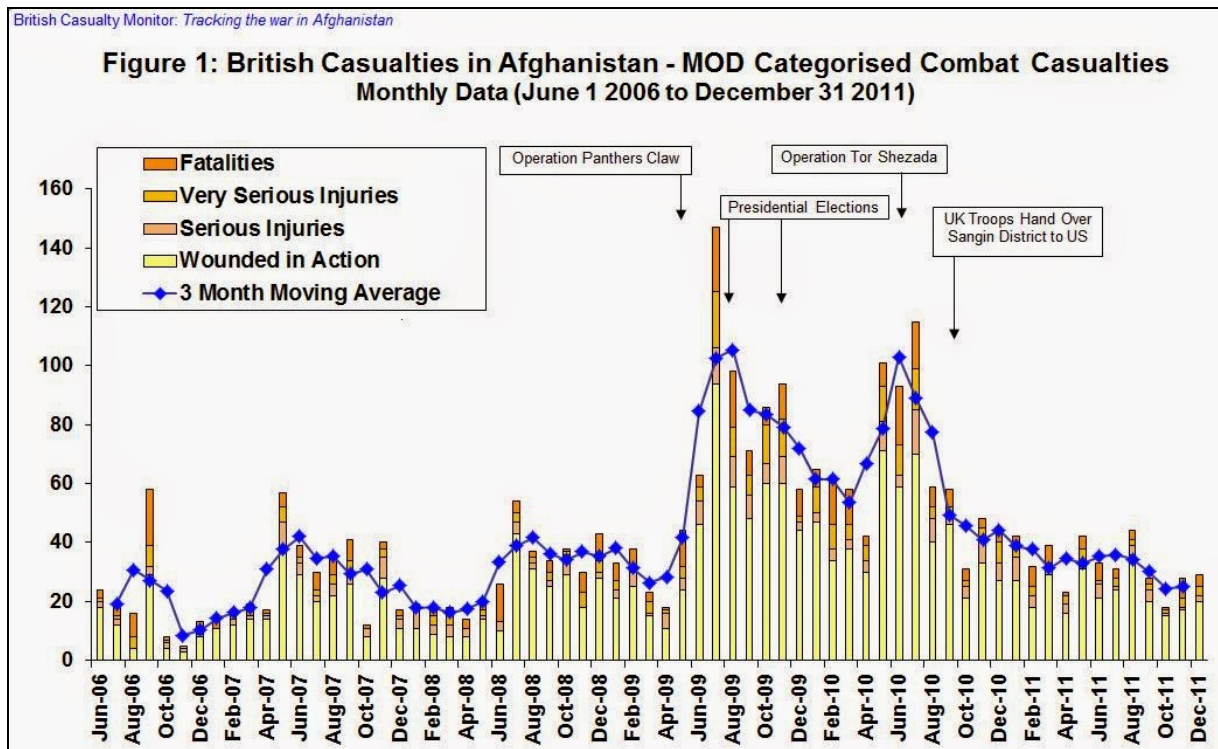
With thousands of General McChrystal's surge troops beginning to arrive in theatre, this tour saw the largest joint offensive in the whole of the Helmand campaign, involving 15,000 British, US, Canadian, Danish and Afghan troops, on the months' long Operation MOSHTARAK ('Together'). This succeeded in pushing the Taliban from their strongholds in central Helmand (Nad Ali and Lashkar Gah districts and the stronghold of Marjah). For the first time, the Afghan National Army took a lead on much of the operation.

Almost inevitably, the two Operations PANTHER'S CLAW and MOSHTARAK also resulted in 2009 seeing casualty figures peak for Op HERRICK, with 108 British deaths amongst the 9000 troops in theatre, though 2010 would be almost as bloody, with 103 deaths amongst 9500 troops.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Afghanistan Casualty And Fatality Tables (Number of Afghanistan UK Military and Civilian casualties

7 October 2001 to 31 December 2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/394808/20150114_EN_CLOSURE1_British_casualties_in_Afghanistan_7_Oct_01_to_31_Dec_14.pdf



British casualties in Afghanistan, 2006 – 2011 (Source: Casualty Monitor)¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Casualty Monitor: British Casualties: Afghanistan <http://www.casualty-monitor.org/p/british-casualties-in-afghanistan.html>

HERRICK 12 (4 Mechanised Brigade, Apr – Oct 2010)

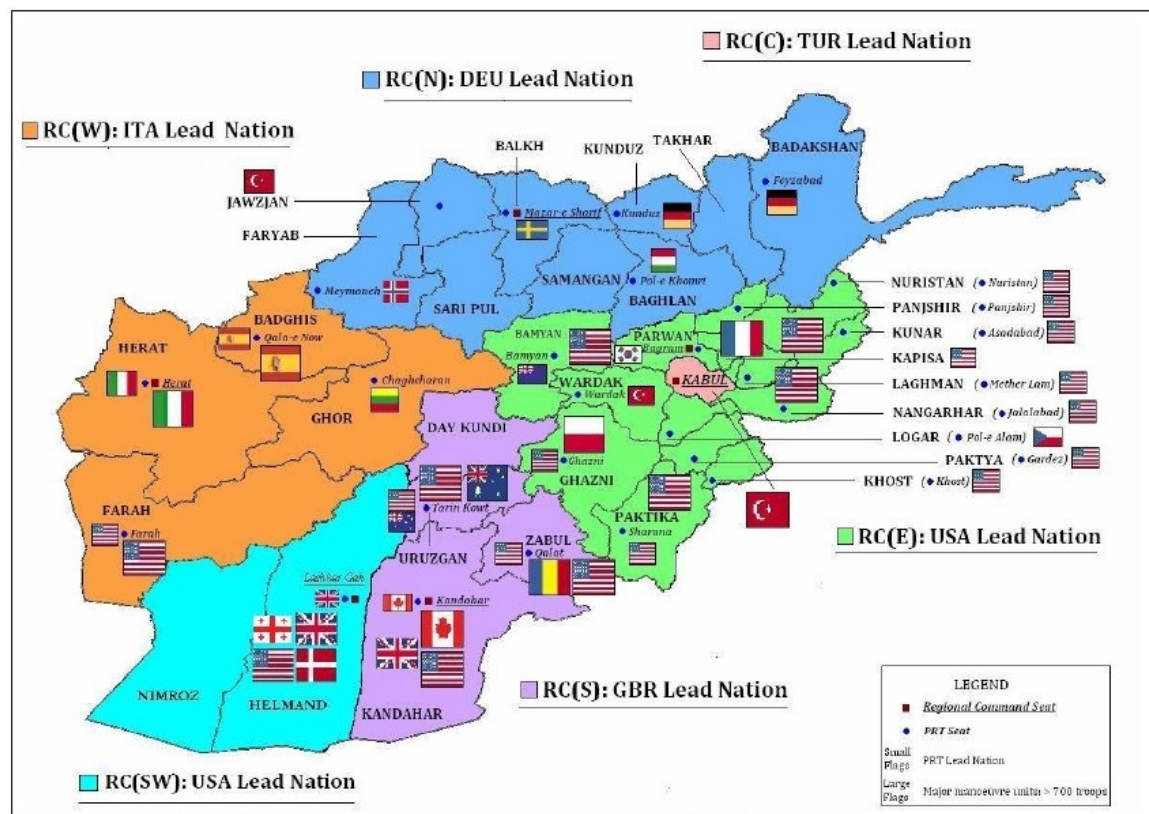
4 Mechanised Brigade took over Task Force Helmand for HERRICK 12 with battle groups built around Scots Guards, 1 Scots, Mercians, Duke of Lancaster's, 40 Commando Royal Marines, Royal Gurkha Rifles and Royal Dragoon Guards.



'Difficulties be damned' (Duke of Lancaster's, Troops in Contact at Nad-e-Ali, 2010) (David Rowlands)

The brigade's priority was to consolidate the gains from Operation MOSHTARAK in accordance with General McChrystal's vision for secure government. To facilitate this, the US Marine Corps surged into Musa Qala, Sangin, Now Zad and Kajaki, formally taking over control of these areas (and northern and southern Helmand), enabling the British to concentrate on central Helmand.

The large Regional Command (South) was subdivided in July 2010 into RC (South West), which included Helmand Province, under US command, and a smaller RC (South), with the UK as lead nation. Sangin was formally handed over to American control in September 2010.



ISAF Regional Commands July 2010 – 2014 (source: ISAF Placemats Archive)¹⁶¹

HERRICK 13 (16 Air Assault Brigade, Oct 2010 – Apr 2011)

16 Air Assault Brigade was the first brigade to return to Afghanistan a third time, in October 2010, its main battle groups being drawn from 2 and 3 Para, 1 Royal Irish, Duke of Lancaster's, Royal Highland Fusiliers (2 Scots), Argyll & Sutherland

¹⁶¹ NATO: ISAF Placemats Archive, 6 August 2010 <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/107995.htm>

Highlanders (5 Scots), and the Irish Guards, supported by the Household Cavalry and 2nd Royal Tank Regiment.

Strategically, the tour coincided with the NATO summit in Lisbon, on 19-20 November, where the member nations met with President Karzai and agreed to gradually withdraw from Afghanistan by 2014, launching a process by which the Afghan government would take leadership for security throughout the country, district by district.¹⁶²

As a result, 16 Air Assault Brigade's focus was on mentoring and developing the Afghan National Security forces (ANSF), comprising both Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), in preparation for ISAF Stage 4, with all operations being partnered with the ANA, who would increasingly take the lead on operations in central Helmand.



Operation TORA ZHEMAY, 27 February 2011 (combined ops with the ANA) (David Rowlands)

¹⁶² NATO – Lisbon Summit Declaration http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_68828.htm

IEDs still presented the largest threat. However, with more interaction between ISAF mentors and ANA troops, so-called 'Green-on-Blue' or 'Insider' shootings began to occur, with disgruntled Afghan security forces occasionally firing on ISAF troops, jeopardising the trust built up generally between the ANA and their ISAF mentors.

2011-2013: Transition to Afghan National Security Forces

With NATO now firmly committed to withdrawing from Afghanistan in 2014, the stage was set for ISAF Stage 4, transition of responsibility for security in Helmand to the Afghan National Security Forces.

HERRICK 14 (3 Commando Brigade, Apr – Oct 2011)

3 Commando Brigade took over Task Force Helmand with 42 and 45 Commandos Royal Marine, 1 Rifles, 4 Scots (The Highlanders), Mercians and Gurkhas, supported by Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and Royal Lancers. The brigade commenced the formal process of transition initiated by the NATO summit, carrying out offensive operations planned and led by the ANA. The focus of most of these operations was on targeting the IED-makers. In July 2011 responsibility for Lashkar Gah was handed over to Afghan security forces.

UK forces in theatre had now fallen to 6,500.¹⁶³ British deaths from IEDs simultaneously began to fall dramatically, effectively halving over a year (28 deaths in 2011, compared to 55 in 2010), due to improved counter-IED measures and a reduction in UK operations, and setting the trend for the remaining years.

¹⁶³ 3 Commando Brigade take command of Task Force Helmand. MOD Announcement, 11 April 2011 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/3-commando-brigade-take-command-of-task-force-helmand>



Royal Marines Fire Support Group, HERRICK 14 (David Rowlands)

HERRICK 15 (20 Armoured Brigade, Oct 2011 – May 2012)

20 Armoured Brigade deployed with units from the Black Watch, 1 Yorks, 2 Rifles, 5 Rifles, 2 Mercians and 1 PWRR, supported by 3 Yorks, Queen's Royal Hussars and Queen's Dragoon Guards. The focus remained on developing the effectiveness of the Afghan security forces and maintaining stability in the province. Responsibility for Nad Ali was handed over in November.¹⁶⁴

The main British loss occurred in March 2012, when a massive IED destroyed a Warrior, killing six soldiers.



Chinook at Sangin (Aviation Painting of the Year, 2012) (David Rowlands)

¹⁶⁴ Neville, Leigh. *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006 – 14. Task Force Helmand* (Osprey Publishing, 2015), p.46



Combat Logistic Patrol, HERRICK 15 (David Rowlands)

HERRICK 16 (12 Mechanised Brigade, May – Oct 2012)

12 Mechanised Brigade deployed with battalions from the Grenadier Guards, Welsh Guards, 1 Royal Anglians, 3 Rifles, Gurkhas, Yorks and Royal Welch Fusiliers, supported by the Royal Tank Regiment, Light Dragoons and King's Royal Hussars.¹⁶⁵ It continued the transition process of developing the ANSF, using manoeuvre forces in depth to contest a resurgent threat as ISAF force levels began to drop, and setting the conditions for the campaign's final stages. US 'surge' forces throughout Afghanistan were rapidly increasing the rate and scale of their withdrawal and had largely left Helmand by October.¹⁶⁶ Preparations for redeployment of British troops and equipment back to UK were gathering momentum.¹⁶⁷ IED casualty rates continued to halve.

¹⁶⁵ 12th Mechanised Brigade to replace 20th Armoured Brigade in Helmand. MOD Announcement, 9 February 2012 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/12th-mechanized-brigade-to-replace-20th-armoured-brigade-in-helmand>

¹⁶⁶ NATO: ISAF Placemats Archive, 8 October 2012 http://www.nato.int/isaf/placemats_archive/2012-10-08-ISAF-Placemat.pdf

¹⁶⁷ Joint Force Support (Afghanistan) (JFSP(A)) 13: Post Operational Report, dated 15 July 2012

One notable event in this tour was the courageous action of L/Cpl James Ashworth, 1 Grenadier Guards, who died on 13 June undertaking a grenade attack on a Taliban position, leading to his being awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.¹⁶⁸ This was the second of the three Victoria Crosses to be awarded during the HERRICK campaign.¹⁶⁹

The most significant event though was the Taliban raid on Camp Bastion on the night of 14 September 2012. Fifteen heavily armed Taliban fighters dressed in US Army uniforms penetrated the base perimeter and launched a co-ordinated attack on the airfield. They killed 2 US Marines, wounded 17 other personnel, destroyed 6 US Marine Corps Harrier fighters, and severely damaged other aircraft and base infrastructure before 14 of them were killed and the last one captured after a four-hour battle. The loss of the 6 Harriers represented the largest loss sustained by a US air unit since the Vietnam War. Subsequent investigations revealed that on the night concerned, 12 out of 24 watchtowers had been left unmanned. Two US Marine Corps Major Generals were held accountable and had to resign their commissions,¹⁷⁰ while the inquiry by the House of Commons Defence Select Committee concluded that complacency on the part of the British also played a role in the security lapses.^{171,172}

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/bbashwor.htm>

¹⁶⁹ The other two Victoria Crosses were awarded to Corporal Bryan Budd (posthumously) in 2006 and to Corporal Joshua Leakey in 2013, both soldiers belonging to the Parachute Regiment.

¹⁷⁰ Ledwidge (2017), pp.128-129

¹⁷¹ House of Commons Defence Committee: Afghanistan – Camp Bastion Attack (House of Commons, 16 April 2014)
<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmdfence/830/830.pdf>

¹⁷² House of Commons Defence Committee: Afghanistan – Camp Bastion Attack: Government Response

HERRICK 17 (4 Mechanised Brigade, Oct 2012 – Apr 2013)

4 Mechanised Brigade deployed with the Scots Guards, 40 Commando Royal Marines, 1 Scots (Royal Scots Borderers), Duke of Lancaster's, 1 Yorks, Gurkhas and the Mercians, supported by Queen's Royal Lancers and Royal Dragoon Guards.

This tour saw progressive base closures and continuing transition work with Nad Ali district increasingly handed over to ANSF, and offensive operations successfully conducted by the ANA. Unfortunately, six soldiers were killed in 'Green-on-Blue' incidents, and with IED rates continuing to drop due to better counter-IED measures, British fatalities from small-arms fire overtook those from IEDs in 2012 for the first time since 2007.¹⁷³ A similar trend was developing across Afghanistan, with significantly more NATO/ISAF fatalities from non-IED causes (180) than from IEDs (132) in 2012.¹⁷⁴

HERRICK 18 (1 Mechanised Brigade, Apr – Oct 2013)

Task Force Helmand under 1 Mechanised Brigade primarily consisted of the Irish Guards, 2 Scots (Royal Highland Fusiliers), Duke of Lancaster's, Royal Fusiliers, and 4 Rifles, as well as the Royal Tank Regiment and the Household Cavalry. The Brigade had benefitted from the now very sophisticated pre-deployment Mission Specific Training (MST) programme, and a culture of campaign continuity, not least

to the Committee's Thirteenth Report of Session 2013–14 (House of Commons, 7 July 2014)
<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmdfence/526/526.pdf>

¹⁷³ Neville, Leigh. *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006 – 14. Task Force Helmand* (Osprey Publishing, 2015), p.48

¹⁷⁴ Afghanistan War NATO/ISAF Coalition Military Deaths caused by IEDs - Status as of end of 2014
http://stats.areppim.com/stats/stats_afghanwar_ied.htm

because it was the third consecutive Brigade to deploy from the 3rd (UK) Division.¹⁷⁵

Transition work to the ANSF continued apace, with the 37 British patrol bases across central Helmand in April dropping to 12 by October.¹⁷⁶ Task Force Helmand HQ also moved to Camp Bastion after 7 years in Lashkar Gah, signalling an important Transition statement. The Taliban continued to refine their tactics in the face of the better counter-IED measures, seeking new ways to attack ISAF and undermine the ANSF as ISAF's profile reduced. Specifically, 2013 saw the use of several large Suicide Vehicle-Borne IEDs targeting bases and mobile patrols.¹⁷⁷

2014: Withdrawal from Theatre

HERRICK 19 (7 Armoured Brigade, Oct 2013 – Jun 2014)

7 Armoured Brigade deployed primarily with units drawn from the Coldstream Guards, 4 Scots (Highlanders), Royal Anglians, Mercians, Royal Welsh, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, Queen's Royal Lancers and Queen's Own Yeomanry.¹⁷⁸ Operations were conducted by a Manoeuvre Battlegroup, a new construct for HERRICK which was firmly multinational in nature, on this tour comprising a UK Battlegroup Headquarters (4 Scots) and sub-units from another battalion (3 Mercian) together with Estonian and Danish Teams, supporting the ANA. The valuable experiences gained by the Manoeuvre Battlegroup of working tactically alongside

¹⁷⁵ Task Force Helmand Op HERRICK 18 Post-Operational Report

¹⁷⁶ Neville, Leigh. *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006 – 14. Task Force Helmand* (Osprey Publishing, 2015), p.48

¹⁷⁷ Task Force Helmand Op HERRICK 18 Post-Operational Report, 2013

¹⁷⁸ Neville, Leigh. *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006 – 14. Task Force Helmand* (Osprey Publishing, 2015), p.49-50

allies in coalition operations are pertinent to future coalition operations.¹⁷⁹ The conclusion of the base closure programme saw Task Force Helmand disband on 1 April 2014 and the remaining UK forces being placed under command of the US - led HQ Regional Command (South West), formed around the US Marine Expeditionary Brigade from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.¹⁸⁰ Units on HERRICK 19 undertook an eight-month tour.



'In the wheel' Lynx in the ISTAR role (Aviation Painting of the Year, 2014) (David Rowlands)

HERRICK 20 (20 Armoured Brigade, Jun 2014 – Nov 2014)

The final HERRICK deployment included elements of 1 Armoured Division, 1 PWRR, three battalions of The Rifles, the Queen's Dragoon Guards and the Queen's Royal Hussars, operating predominantly from a thinned-out Camp Bastion. The emphasis was on assisting with Afghan election security and on the massive task of redeploying all British equipment back to the UK. The re-invigorated Taliban

¹⁷⁹ Sandford R. Coalition Operations: The Manoeuvre Battlegroup Op HERRICK 19. *BAR Special Report – Learning from Afghanistan* 2016, Volume 4.2.

¹⁸⁰ Operation HERRICK 19: Task Force Helmand Post Operation Report, dated 12 June 2014

exploited the drawdown of UK and US troops by launching a series of concerted large-scale operations in a summer offensive against the ANSF in Sangin, Musa Qala, Now Zad and Kajaki, though the Afghan forces, with some ISAF support, managed to blunt the attacks.¹⁸¹

Camp Bastion was officially handed over to the Afghan National Army on 27 October 2014, after 8 years at the heart of the British military effort in Afghanistan, with the final British troops in Bastion being airlifted to Kandahar in a carefully orchestrated operation.¹⁸² Operation HERRICK formally ended on 30 November 2014.



*Lowering the last Union Flag at Camp Bastion (Source: Daily Mail)*¹⁸³

NATO formally stood down ISAF and ended combat operations on 28 December 2014. 500 British troops remained in Kabul in a training or force protection role at the

¹⁸¹ Neville, Leigh. *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006 – 14. Task Force Helmand* (Osprey Publishing, 2015), p.50

¹⁸² Last British soldiers leave Camp Bastion as war in Afghanistan ends. *The Telegraph*, 27 October 2014 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/11189479/Last-British-soldiers-leave-Camp-Bastion-as-war-in-Afghanistan-ends.html>

¹⁸³ Britain's war in Afghanistan comes to an end after 13 years as flag is lowered over Camp Bastion. *Daily Mail*, 26 October 2014 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2808240/Britain-s-war-Afghanistan-comes-end-13-years-flag-lowered-Camp-Bastion.html>

Colonel (retd) David Vassallo L/RAMC – A brief history of Operations TELIC and HERRICK

newly built ANA Officer Academy (informally known as ‘Sandhurst in the Sand’) under Op TORAL,¹⁸⁴ as part of the new NATO-led Resolute Support Mission launched on 1 January 2015 to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions.¹⁸⁵ Conflict is still ongoing in Afghanistan.

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¹⁸⁴ Op TORAL: Sandhurst in the Sands. *YouTube video*, 18 June 2015
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bhAv136mI0>

¹⁸⁵ NATO: RSM Placemats Archive, May 2015
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- Mayhew, Emily. *A Heavy Reckoning* (London: Profile Books, in association with Wellcome Collection, 2017)
- Neville, Leigh. *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006 – 14. Task Force Helmand* (Osprey Publishing, 2015) (an excellent overview of the Afghanistan conflict)
- Newsinger, John. *British Counterinsurgency* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2nd edition, 2015)
- Parker, Harry. *Anatomy of a Soldier* (London: Faber & Faber, 2016) (an autobiographical novel with a unique perspective, told by 45 instruments including a bomb, from a 4 Rifles captain blown up by an IED on 18 July 2009)
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- Richards, David. *Taking Command* (London: Headline Publishing Group, 2014) (Autobiography by General Sir David Richards, who commanded NATO and ISAF in Afghanistan in 2006, and eventually became Chief of the Defence Staff, professional head of the British Armed Forces, from 2010 – 2013, overseeing the war in Afghanistan).
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- Yorke, Edmund. *Chasing the Taliban: the Fourth Afghan War*. Chapter 8, in: *Playing the Great Game – Britain, War and Politics in Afghanistan since 1839*. (London: Robert Hale, 2012), pp. 359-425

Operation HERRICK – SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY: INDIVIDUAL TOURS OR UNIT DEPLOYMENTS (Regimental journal accounts not included)	
Herrick 1 – 3 (Oct 2004 – Apr 2006)	
Herrick 4 (Apr – Oct 2006) (16 Air Assault Bde: 3 Para, 1 st Bn Royal Irish Regt, Royal Gurkha Rifles)	• Beattie, Doug. <i>An ordinary soldier: Afghanistan – a ferocious enemy, a bloody conflict, one man's impossible mission</i>. (London: Pocket, 2009) (an account of the 1st Bn Royal Irish Regiment's attempt to retake Garmsir from the Taliban in September 2006, a mission that resulted in Capt Doug Beattie being decorated with the Military Cross) • Bishop, Patrick. <i>3 Para</i> (London: Harper Perennial, 2007) • Coult, Trevor. <i>First into Sangin</i> (XLibris, 2015) • Fergusson, James. <i>A million bullets: the real story of the British Army in Afghanistan</i> (London: Bantam, 2008) • <i>Kajaki – The True Story</i> (Kajaki Films Ltd, 2014) (a film based on the ordeal of soldiers trapped in a minefield) • Reynolds, DJ. <i>The Battle for Helmand: The Paras in Southern Afghanistan</i> (Plymouth: DRA Publishing, 2007) • Scott, Jake. <i>Blood Clot: In Combat with the Patrols Platoon, 3 Para, Afghanistan 2006</i> (Solihull: Helion, 2008) • Tootal, Stuart. <i>Danger Close: Commanding 3 PARA in Afghanistan</i> (London: John Murray, 2009)
Herrick 5 (Oct 2006 – Apr 2007) (3 Cdo Bde: 42 and 45 Cdos Royal Marines)	• Southeby-Tailyour, Ewen. <i>3 Commando Brigade</i> (London: Ebury, 2008)
Herrick 6 (Apr – Oct 2007) (12 Mech Bde: Grenadier	• Bowns, Steven. <i>Aden to Afghanistan – Fifty Years of The Royal Anglian Regiment 1964 – 2014</i> (Regimental History, contains detailed accounts of The Royal

Guards, Royal Anglians, Mercians and 1st Bn, Royal Welsh Regt; Light Dragoons, Royal Tank Regt)	Anglians' tours on Herrick 6, 11 and 16) • Cartwright, James. <i>Sniper in Helmand</i> (Pen & Sword, 2011) (personal account by a sniper who served with the Royal Anglians) • Dorney, Richard. <i>The Killing Zone</i> (London: Ebury, 2012). (The CO's account of the Grenadier Guards' 2007 tour) • Hennessy, Patrick. <i>The Junior Officers' Reading Club</i> (Allen Lane, 2009; Penguin, 2010)(personal account of HERRICK 6 by a Grenadier Guards officer) • Hennessy, Patrick. <i>Kandak: Fighting with Afghans</i> (London: Allen Lane, 2012)(account by Grenadier Guards officer who served in a mentoring role with an Afghan National Army battalion, a 'kandak', in 2007. Provides valuable insights) • Kemp, Richard & Hughes, Chris. <i>Attack State Red</i> (London: Michael Joseph, 2009) (Semi-official account of the Royal Anglians' tour, with extensive on-line information at http://attackstatered.com/)
Herrick 7 (Oct 2007 – Apr 2008) (52 Inf Bde: 40 Cdo RM, Yorkshire Regt (Green Howards), Coldstream Guards, Royal Gurkha Rifles; King's Royal Hussars, Scots Guards)	• Grey, Stephen. <i>Operation Snakebite: The Explosive True Story of an Afghan Desert Siege</i> (London: Penguin Books, 2010) (an account by a journalist embedded with 2 Yorks of the re-taking of Musa Qala) • Ormrod, Mark. <i>Man Down</i> (London: Bantam Press, 2009) (Personal account of a 40 Cdo Royal Marine who survived a triple amputation as a result of an IED strike)
Herrick 8 (Apr – Oct 2008) (16 Air Assault Bde: 5 Battalions, comprised of 3 Para, 1 Royal Irish, 2 Para, Royal Highland Fusiliers (2 Scots) and Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (5 Scots); also 2 companies from 2nd Bn, Princess of Wales's Royal Regt (PWRR);	• Allen, Craig. <i>With the Paras in Helmand – A Photographic Diary</i> (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2010) • Bishop, Patrick. <i>Ground Truth</i> (London: Harper Perennial, 2009) (a follow-up account of 3 Para on their second tour) • Bury, Patrick. <i>Callsign Hades</i> (London: Simon & Schuster, 2010) (a Royal Irish platoon-commander's memoirs from Sangin) • Doherty, Richard. <i>Helmand Mission – With the Royal Irish Battlegroup in Afghanistan 2008</i> (Pen & Sword,

1 Sqn, Household Cavalry Regt, the Highlanders (4 Scots), and Queen's Royal Lancers)	2009) • Kiley, Sam. <i>Desperate glory: at war in Helmand with Britain's Air Assault Brigade</i> (London: Bloomsbury, 2009) • Lewis, Russell. <i>Company Commander</i> (London: Virgin, 2012) (Account of 2 Para's tour) • Monty B. <i>A Sniper's Conflict</i> (Pen & Sword, 2014)
Herrick 9 (Oct 2008 – Apr 2009) (3 Cdo Bde: 42 and 45 Cdos RM; battalions from: The Rifles, Royal Gurkha Rifles and Princess of Wales's Royal Regt (PWRR))	• Southeby-Tailyour, Ewen. <i>3 Commando Brigade: Helmand Assault</i> (London: Ebury, 2010)
Herrick 10 (Apr - Oct 2009) (19 Lt Bde: Welsh Guards, Black Watch (3 Scots), Mercians and 2 Rifles; also Royal Tank Regt, Light Dragoons)	• 2 Rifles. <i>2 Rifles – Helmand Diary 2009</i>. (special edition of regimental journal, <i>The Bugle</i>) • Black Watch. <i>Aviation Assault Battle Group</i> (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2011) (comprehensive account by The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland Battle Group) • Harnden, Toby. <i>Dead Men Risen: the Welsh Guards and the Real Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan</i> (London: Quercus, 2011) (Comprehensive account; includes best bibliography of Afghan conflict to date of publication). • Parker, Harry. <i>Anatomy of a Soldier</i> (London: Faber & Faber, 2016) (a novel with a unique perspective, told by 45 instruments including a bomb, from a 4 Rifles captain blown up by an IED at Nad Ali on 18 July 2009) • Streatfeild, Richard. <i>Honourable Warriors – Fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan</i> (Pen & Sword, 2015) (a company commander's account of The Rifles' six months tour)
Herrick 11 (Oct 2009 – Apr 2010) (11 Lt Bde: 6 Battalions drawn from: Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, Rifles,	• Bowns, Steven. <i>Aden to Afghanistan – Fifty Years of The Royal Anglian Regiment 1964 – 2014</i> (see above) • Lothian, Graham. <i>An Artist in Afghanistan</i> (Helensburgh: Cranston Fine Arts, 2015) (superb collection of paintings by a war artist on HERRICK 11,15,17 and 18, including an unprecedented collection depicting Camp Bastion

Yorks, Royal Anglians and Royal Welsh), reinforced by 1 Scots, Duke of Lancaster' Regiment and 1 Scots Guards)	Hospital during 33 Field Hospital's HERRICK 11 tour)
Herrick 12 (Apr – Oct 2010) (4 Mech Bde: Scots Guards, 1 Scots, Mercians, Duke of Lancaster's, 40 Cdo RM, Royal Gurkha Rifles and Royal Dragoon Guards)	Benitz, Max. <i>Six Months without Sundays: The Scots Guards in Afghanistan</i> (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011)
Herrick 13 (Oct 2010 – Apr 2011) (16 Air Assault Bde: 2 & 3 Para, 1 Royal Irish, Duke of Lancaster's, Royal Highland Fusiliers (2 Scots), Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (5 Scots), and Irish Guards; Household Cavalry Regiment and 2 Royal Tank Regiment)	Irish Guards. <i>Up the Micks! An Illustrated History of the Irish Guards</i> (Pen & Sword, 2016) (regimental history, covering its Afghanistan tours on HERRICK 13 and 18)
Herrick 14 (Apr – Oct 2011) (3 Cdo Bde: drawn from 42 & 45 Cdos RM, 1 Rifles, 4 Scots (The Highlanders), Mercians, and Gurkhas; Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and Royal Lancers)	Schulze, Carl. <i>Task Force Helmand: Vehicles of the British ISAF Forces in Afghanistan 2011</i> (Erlangen: Tankograd, 2011)
Herrick 15 (Oct 2011 – May 2012) (20 Armd Bde, drawn from Black Watch, 1 Yorks, 2 Rifles, 5 Rifles, 2 Mercians and 1 PWRR, with elements from 3 Yorks,	Lothian, Graham. <i>An Artist in Afghanistan</i> (Helensburgh: Cranston Fine Arts, 2015) (see above)

Queen's Royal Hussars and Queen's Dragoon Guards)	
Herrick 16 (May – Oct 2012) (12 Mech Bde, drawn from: Grenadier Guards, Welsh Guards, 1 Royal Anglians, 3 Rifles, Gurkhas, Yorks and Royal Welsh Fusiliers, with elements from RTR, Light Dragoons and King's Royal Hussars)	• Bowns, Steven. <i>Aden to Afghanistan – Fifty Years of The Royal Anglian Regiment 1964 – 2014</i> (see above)
Herrick 17 (Oct 2012 – Apr 2013) (4 Mech Bde, drawn from 40 Cdo RM, with elements from Scots Guards, 1 Scots (Royal Scots Borderers), Duke of Lancaster's, 1 Yorks, Gurkhas, Mercians; Queen's Royal Lancers and Royal Dragoon Guards)	• Lothian, Graham. <i>An Artist in Afghanistan</i> (Helensburgh: Cranston Fine Arts, 2015) (see above)
Herrick 18 (Apr – Oct 2013) (1 Mech Bde, drawn from Irish Guards, 2 Scots (Royal Highland Fusiliers), Duke of Lancaster's, Royal Fusiliers, 4 Rifles; RTR and Household Cavalry Regiment)	• Irish Guards. <i>Up the Micks! An Illustrated History of the Irish Guards</i> (Pen & Sword, 2016) (see above) • Lothian, Graham. <i>An Artist in Afghanistan</i> (Helensburgh: Cranston Fine Arts, 2015) (see above)
Herrick 19 (Oct 2013 – Jun 2014) (7 Armd Bde, drawn from Coldstream Guards, 4 Scots (Highlanders), Royal Anglians, Mercians, Royal	

Welsh; Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, Queen's Royal Lancers and Queen's Own Yeomanry)	
Herrick 20 (Jun – Nov 2014) (20 Armd Bde, drawn from elements from 1 Armd Div, 1 PWRR, 3 battalions of The Rifles; Queen's Dragoon Guards and Queen's Royal Hussars.	