

21 October 2009

## **SCIENTISTS ON THE FRONTLINE AWARDED** **OPERATIONAL SERVICE MEDAL**

HRH The Princess Royal presented Operational Service Medals (OSM) for Afghanistan to five Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) staff, who have recently returned from providing scientific advice on the frontline.

The Dstl scientists and operational analysts give a range of scientific and technical advice to the General Officer Commanding (GOC) from analysing statistical data and giving expert scientific impartial advice, to delivering rapid technical solutions to issues as they arise depending on operational circumstances on the frontline.

The analysts can also 'reachback' to other Dstl scientists and experts any time, day or night, to get information or advice on a particular frontline scientific issue. They are often required to convey complex and unusual ideas, often under pressure, and work within a small team alongside military staff.

Dstl scientists have deployed to all major recent military operations including Operation Telic in Iraq and Operation Herrick in Afghanistan, as well as peacekeeping missions in Bosnia.

The OSM is awarded to personnel after 30 continuous days of service. The medal ribbon has three stripes, red, royal blue and light blue, to represent the three services with an outer stripe of light brown to reflect the landscape of Afghanistan.

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The medal recipients were:

**Charlie Corlett, Future Land Capabilities, Land Battlespace Systems**

Charlie Corlett, 25, based at Dstl's Fort Halstead site near Sevenoaks, Kent, returned from Afghanistan in the summer after being deployed as part of Operation Herrick to work from the Task Force Helmand Headquarters in Lashkar Gah as an analyst.

Charlie provided rapid technical and scientific support analysing current and historical events particularly around countering improvised explosive devices (IED) as well as convoy protection, such as planning the safest convoy routes.

He joined Dstl in 2006 as an operational analyst and has worked on providing security and counter terrorism support to the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Charlie studied for a masters degree in astrophysics at the University of Liverpool.

**Dan Edwards, Operational Analyst. Support to Operations**

Dan Edwards, 34, who is currently based at the Land Warfare Centre in Warminster, has recently returned from supporting UK forces based at the Joint Force Support HQ in Kandahar providing operational analysis of casualty figures and route security particularly around countering IEDs.

Dan, from Burton on Trent, studied military operational research at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham, and joined Dstl's predecessor DERA in 2000 modelling peace support operations.

He has worked with a range of Ministry of Defence teams as well as supporting other government departments.

Dan has previously deployed to Iraq in 2004 as part of Operation Telic and also worked in Bahrain.

**Kim Simpson, Senior Case Officer, Forensic Explosive Laboratory**

Kim Simpson, 50, based at Dstl's Fort Halstead site near Sevenoaks, Kent, has just returned from Afghanistan (September) where she provided scientific advice to the 19 Light Brigade at the Task Force Helmund headquarters in Lashkar Gah. Her scientific support was wide ranging from vehicle and body armour protection, counter-IED activities, even looking at seat belts.

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Kim, from Crowborough, East Sussex, has worked at Fort Halstead for 23 years, originally starting with the Royal Armaments Research and Development Establishment, and has been involved in a number of cases over the years including the Lockerbie bombing, Provisional IRA attacks in Brighton, London bombings in 2005, attempted diamond heist at the Millennium Dome. She also provided expert evidence at the Omagh bomber trial. She has also been deployed to Indonesia and Australia to assist investigation teams there and worked in Spain on the Madrid train bombings.

She is a member of the Institution of Engineering & Technology and chartered engineer, member of the International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators (IABTI). Kim studied electrical and electronic engineering degree at Greenwich University.

**Samantha Mitchell, Analyst, Support to Operations**

Samantha Mitchell, 29, newly based at Portsdown West, has undertaken operational tours to both Iraq and Afghanistan and will return to Afghanistan in January 2010. Most recently on the frontline she has been working on research around keeping coalition forces freely moving including analysis of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

While in Iraq, Samantha, from Portsmouth, worked largely with the intelligence community analysing patterns in insurgent activity and next year she will be working in the UK Joint Force Support Headquarters in Helmand, Afghanistan.

**Richard Leigh, Analyst, Air Weapon Systems Department**

Richard Leigh, 44, is newly based at Portsdown West. In 2006 Richard deployed to Iraq for three months supporting the multinational divisional headquarters in Basra. In 2008 he deployed to Lashkar Gar, in support of 3 Commando Brigade which included analysis of improvised explosive device (IED) incidents, and producing daily reports used by the Commander and Chief of Staff for tactical planning.

Richard has also spent time with the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall, analysing the helicopter and amphibious shipping programmes.

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**Christopher Briggs, Science Gateway for Dismounted Close Combat, Land Battlespace Systems Department**

Christopher Briggs, 25, returned from Afghanistan in the summer and was an operational analyst for the multinational Headquarters for the Southern Region of Afghanistan based at Kandahar Airfield. He worked on analysis of the Afghan government's progress at countering the insurgent threat and assessed resources against the needs of the local population. The analysis he conducted was essential for informing decisions made to senior military commanders regarding the campaign in Southern Afghanistan.

Christopher, from Sevenoaks in Kent, studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Nottingham before joining Dstl in 2005 and is currently studying for a Masters Degree in Systems Engineering at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. He is currently supporting the procurement of equipment of infantry equipment through the provision of science and technology advice to the MOD's procurement agency; Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S).

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

**Dstl**

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is a centre of scientific excellence for the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Its 3,500 strong workforce includes some of the nation's most talented and creative scientists with the brief to ensure that the UK Armed Forces and Government are supported in-house by the very best impartial scientific and technological advice. Dstl's position at the heart of the MOD means that its advice is trusted by governments, academia, industry and international partners. It offers timely and accurate advice at all levels of military planning and operations, both overseas and on the home front. For more information please visit [www.dstl.gov.uk](http://www.dstl.gov.uk)