

22 October 2009

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

HRH The Earl of Wessex 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.

[more](#)

The recipients were:

**Matthew Brookes, Programme Leader, Support to Operations**

Matthew Brookes, 40, based at Dstl's Fort Halstead site near Sevenoaks, Kent, spent four months deployed to Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan as a scientific advisor to Operation Herrick. During that time he provided front-line technical support to UK forces including a range of counter-IED (improvised explosive device) initiatives. From 1996 to 1998, Matthew, from Poole, Dorset, was a visiting fellow at the Steacie Institute of Molecular Sciences in Ottawa, part of the National Research Council of Canada. He joined Dstl in 1998 (formerly DERA) as an explosives detection specialist. He has led teams delivering explosives detectors for the military as well as civilian transport security industry.

**Jarrold Cornforth, Operational Analyst, Policy and Capability Studies**

**Department**

Jarrold Cornforth, 33, has completed three overseas tours with UK forces; two for Operation Telic in Iraq and most recently to Kandahar in Afghanistan where he was embedded with the Joint Force Support Headquarters.

Jarrold from Salisbury, who is based at Porton Down, has worked for the Ministry of Defence for 10 years, seven of them as a operational analyst in direct support of deployable and deployed military headquarters.

Jarrold first deployed in 2003 with the 1 (UK) Armoured Division to Kuwait and remained with the headquarters during its crossing the border in to Iraq.

He also deployed to Iraq in 2005 as operational analyst to support the peace process and has also been embedded with the 16 Air Assault Brigade in pre-deployment training.

**Robin Hiley, Chief Scientist, Security Sciences Department**

Robin, 58, based at Dstl's Fort Halstead site near Sevenoaks in Kent, has just returned from a four month deployment to Afghanistan. He previously also completed a three month deployment to Iraq in 2005.

In both cases Robin, who lives in Sevenoaks, was involved in providing scientific support around counter-IED (improvised explosive device) measures.

more

Robin has worked for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) since 1976, following early work on fuels and lubricants for the Royal Navy he moved to Dstl's Forensic Explosives Laboratory in 1989, leading research in to new techniques for explosives detection. In 1998 he became Deputy Chief Scientist for the counter-terrorism sector and from 2001-2004 was the MOD's Research Director covering counter-terrorism and Special Forces. In 2004 Robin became a Dstl Chief Scientist.

**Chris Morriss, Concepts Advisor, Information Management Department**

Chris Morriss, 34, from Southampton, has deployed four times to Iraq and Afghanistan, most recently as senior operational analyst, providing tactical analysis of significant red forces (the enemy) activities. On Chris's second deployment he unfortunately was struck down with appendicitis and was transported to the army field hospital in Shaibah, Iraq.

Chris started work for the MOD as a graduate engineer which led him to work in Australia with the Australian Submarine Corporate. In 2001 he joined the Advanced Short Range Air to Air Missile (ASRAAM) team within Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) in Bristol as deputy systems manager, before transferring to Dstl in 2004. He has been seconded to the army HQ Land Command (now HQ Land Forces) Scientific Advisor (SCIAD) branch in Wilton and the Land Warfare Centre in Warminster and is currently based at Porton Down.

Chris is getting married to Sarah Best on 30 October 2009 and lives in Shaftesbury in Dorset.

**Amy de Vries, Research Psychologist, Social and Behavioural Sciences IMD**

Amy, 26, deployed as an operational analyst to the Task Force Helmund headquarters in Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan, returning in September 2009 where she provided daily analysis to support decision making and operational planning. Her work included analytical support towards the planning and monitoring of Operation Panchai Palang (Panther's Claw) as well as analysis of IED statistics and patrol patterns.

more

Amy, from Northamptonshire who is based at Porton Down, has worked for Dstl for five years as a research psychologist across a range of studies around improving human responses as well as providing psychological insights on counter-terrorism. She has also worked on support to HUMINT (human intelligence) projects and the examination of social cultural factors which may impact upon operational performance.

ENDS

For more information contact the Dstl press office on 01980 658088, 07766 134768, [press@dstl.gov.uk](mailto:press@dstl.gov.uk).

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)