

# A Week in the life of...



**I'M HALFWAY** through my year at Sandhurst: I started in January after doing agribusiness at Newcastle and working in bloodstock near Lambourn. My family is into horses – we hunted with the Beaufort. My parents know the Tomlinsons and when I was 16 I worked two summers at Down Farm. There couldn't be a better person to learn from than Mrs T: she runs a tight ship and it was also great preparation for Sandhurst! I played a little at Cheltenham College and a summer in Pony Club, too.

**POLO WAS ONE** of my motivations for joining the army. Playing at Sandhurst has exceeded all my expectations. Polo manager Barbara "Barbie" Zingg is fantastic – it's hard keeping 30 cadets under control! We play or practise Wednesdays and Saturdays and we've had a few army matches. I'm the Academy's highest-handicapped player, so it was inevitable I'd play in the Heritage Cup.

**THAT WEEK** I was duty cadet for my platoon (16 platoon in Inkerman Company). On the Monday I was up at 5.45am. I checked everyone was signed back in from the night before, found out who was going on sick and had breakfast: a good fry-up, with hash browns and everything; it gets you off to a good start. We eat 5,000 calories a day. I then reported to the company Sergeant Major at 6.40 on the dot and then the academy Sergeant Major, who check the paperwork is in

## Doug White

The 25-year-old O-goaler, the only officer cadet on the HBL Heritage Cup-winning team, tells **Georgie May** about drill, fry-ups and swimming in full combat kit

order. At 7.30 we had a muster parade and inspection. The dreaded log race took place that morning: each platoon carries two logs from Old College around the campus perimeter. The rest of the day was spent preparing for the upcoming Passing Out Parade, so we had a lot of drill – basically, being shouted at. The day finishes at 6 or 7pm and we're allowed out in the evenings – though not in Camberley itself: we sometimes eat out or I'll visit my parents' house or my girlfriend, Alice.

**TUESDAY I HAD** lectures, such as war studies, then in the evening I had spare time so another cadet and I went stick-and-balling on the Staff College field – the main Round Ground is only used 20 times a year and reverts to a rugby

pitch in winter. Wednesday morning we learnt to use live grenades for the first time. Wednesday afternoons are for sports: in summer my obvious choice is polo. Normally 20 of us are there at once and the club has 10 ponies, so we take turns. We always tack up: Barbie is keen for us to learn that side, and a few players are new to riding, so it's important. The Golden Pot pub in Eversley is a favourite for many cadets for a drink and bite, and we headed there that evening.

**AFTER A TWO-HOUR MILITARY** written test on Thursday morning we had double PT [physical training]. Swimming was first, and a military and combat test: we learn to swim in full combat gear while carrying a rifle. One of the hardest tests is treading water for five minutes while holding our rifles in the air.

Our second session was on the assault course. The aim is to get your platoon around as fast as possible. I cleaned kit on Thursday evening ready for Friday's drill competition for which we've trained all term. It's a series of marches and inspections; 19th-century stuff, but it has to be done. We passed inspection but messed up the drill and our platoon came last – it was a relief when it was all over. Friday afternoon we had a two-hour defence and international affairs lecture. Lectures are always hard work, and people regularly drop off. You are made to stand if you are seen sleeping, but plenty of us have even fallen asleep standing up!

**SATURDAY MORNING WE** practised for the Passing Out Parade for those leaving Sandhurst the next week. The six-team Heritage Cup began after lunch. We [EFG International British Army Officers] beat Luxembourg Polo Team and made the final on goal difference. That evening there was a black-tie dinner, brilliantly organised by – Barbie, for teams, sponsors and guests. We had church parade on Sunday morning. Everyone is inspected beforehand.

Unfortunately I had an item that was incorrectly polished so I had to go on "show parade" for my Colour Sergeant at 9pm the next evening. After church, I watched the Heritage Cup play-off games before our final against 141 Dubai Falcons at 4pm, featuring Saeed Bin Draï and his cousin Omid Rajaei, which we won. They were higher rated, at eight-goals while we were seven, and Gaston [Devrient] had warned us that they were a good team. Our team had never practised or played together but Gaston, an AAP coach, told us what to do and we worked well together. After the presentation we had a photo shoot on the Old College steps before our team went to the Academy bar. I hope I'll continue polo: I'm joining the Queen's Royal Hussars, who are based in Germany and have a team. I'm also hoping to go point-to-pointing this winter – as an amateur. ✘

► Turn to p48 and 86 for more on Sandhurst.