

I was shotgunned out there to be fair. The battalion did a, mm, when I look back and the battalion did a brilliant run up and good work up to the tour. It wasn't 'quick let's pack our bags, let's go', the battalion spent twelve months training the men up, mm, take them away, exercise, build them up. Starting from fighting level, build them all up again. Take them into FOBs, retrain them on the new tactics, mm, Valloning. Doing new basic skills that some lads hadn't learnt from fucking depot - sorry for swearing - and, mm, stuff like that where I'd been at depot and I got told 'right off to Afghanistan'. I went down to Lydd and only did the basic package that everyone does.

*Right.*

It's seven days. You go out there and you learn a few skills. Mm, I learned some new skills and I found the safety drills that we learned about how to get across from A to B without getting blown up very useful and the medical side very useful. And I think most of it, that week was more orientated to the non-infantry who go out on the ground.

*Right.*

Because the fighting is not just done by the infantry, that, them days have gone. Every platoon, every section that went out there had somebody from the Artillery with them. So the Artillery, everyone always knocks the Artillery but out there they were a Godsend. And even the RMPs at some point, dare I

say, even the RMPs at some point were on patrol with the lads. And there's one RMP in particular who and will remain nameless was probably just as bad as a rifleman for wanting to get stuck into a fire fight, which was good to see. Of the training I got I did the week down at Lydd. Then I jumped on straight, literally jumped on the coach, jumped on the aeroplane, got to Afghanistan, went 'hi ya lads I'm back'. And then I got eight days, which turned into four days in Bastion getting shown the tricks that were being done there and then on the ground. And then I went off to Nalay. Dropped off there and then the sergeant major at the time made sure that every man went back through everything again before they deployed. It's hindsight looking back now I think that was a very good decision. And they kept on top of it. Every couple of weeks they knocked up some lanes to fake IEDs, somebody would go out there the night before, dig it in, blow it over and go away and then 'right lads, let's go'. And then tell them to go and find it. They kept the training going. Training was not just before, it was before, during and in some cases we're still training now afterwards just in case. Practicing keeping them skills alive.