

Yes, some of the kit was quite good. Mm, the Osprey body armour, mm, was, the plates itself were superb. When the Yorkshire Regiment lads joined us and took over one of the PBs one of the lads actually got shot in the back. I actually watched it. I was, mm, you see when I came back in off my patrols I popped in the Ops Room and they had it on video on one of the cameras just, the camera just happened to be on the lad, and you just seen the round strike his plate and you see him go back over and he sat back up again, you know, as if to say 'what the hell's just happened there'? We've had a, we had a few lads who got strikes on the chest.

What, I think, this is a personal comment but I think quite a few people will agree with me the Mark Seven helmet I do not rate. There's a lot of lads who got shot in the head wearing a Mark Seven. It didn't work where I feel that the Mark Six Alpha... Because I've seen the Mark Six, the Mark Six Alpha repel bullets round the helmet. You can go down to the museum down in Winchester, you'll see a Mark Six where it's been shot in Northern Ireland and you can see the round's gone round. Mm, lads have, have had unfortunate position to be in there where they have been hit and unfortunately we've had lads who when the Mark Seven came out. It's a nice design, it allows us to see better by the specific cut that's in the front of the helmet but I don't think it's as strong as a Six Alpha. I mean as a platoon sergeant I didn't like my men going out with the Mark Sevens because I was always worried about are they going to get it in the head. Where with a Mark Six Alpha it's heavier, it's bulkier. I would have

liked to have gone out on the ground with my Mark Six Alpha because I have my extra kit but the order came from the QMs that the lads had to wear Mark Seven. So I wore my Mark Seven because I couldn't wear my Mark Six Alpha among the Mark Seven because I would be setting a different standard. It terrified me going out with them helmets on especially after knowing that certain lads just up the road from us were getting killed and they were being shot through the helmet. But the body armour itself I think that, mm, with the new cover that came on, they just need to re-adjust the plate to fit that cover and it's a fantastic body armour. They just need now to, the Taliban know to hit our sides and that's where they've now got the slits now for the small slices of armour so if they start getting more of them in, mm, it will be better. The only down side to this it's because it's good armour it's bulky, it's heavy.

And putting that kit on. You've got your body armour, your helmet, you've got whatever weapons system you're carrying. You're carrying all your ammunition. You've got your radios, you've got your electronic countermeasure equipment in and it all weighs you down. The ANA would go out with very little apart from a helmet which was like World War Two and I used to look at them go, 'you're brave men'. And they used to call us 'the Turtles' because we'd just be a big bulbous of kit. Because all our kit is bulky. It would be nice if maybe we'd get something to downsize it and make it a bit lighter and still do the same job.

*That's it isn't it?*

Yes.

*You've got to have faith in it.*

But everything, everything costs money and where does the money come from? It comes from the Government. Where do the government get their money from? Tax. You cannot keep putting up tax. It's a, it's a six and two threes. It's a dog eat dog world when it comes to things like kit. Kit costs money and does the money, and money comes, has to come from somewhere.