

*Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Please accept my apologies for the tardiness of this letter – deadlines and deployments have prevented me from writing to offer my sincere thanks to you before now.

While Christmas is fast fading in the memory, the goodwill generated by Op Reindeer's Hoof 2 – the magazine's second Advent calendar competition – continues to be felt at *Soldier* HQ.

Following on from the success of its predecessor in 2009, the competition set out to bring some Christmas cheer to those serving in Afghanistan, as well as those having to celebrate the festive season without them. The thousands of entries and letters of thanks from Helmand province and Service homes in the UK, Germany, Northern Ireland and Cyprus suggest that the mission was an overwhelming success.

Thanks to your generosity, the magazine amassed more than 300 prizes – worth in excess of £12,000 – which found their way into the stockings of Service families.

Conscious that times are extremely tough economically, I am hugely appreciative that you not only responded to my call-to-arms, but did so generously and willingly. Working alongside members of the British Army on a daily basis, I know that such support is hugely valued and, on their behalf, you have my heartfelt thanks.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Simms