

Point Man: The Most Dangerous Job in the World – but the Hardest  
Part is Coming Home by Mark Townsend.  
faber and faber 2012.

A considerable number of books have now been published on the engagement by British Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; many are compelling but those which deal with the impact of events on specific named individuals undoubtedly have the greatest impact.

Point Man comes in the latter category, and is about the exploits of a young soldier, Kenny Meighan, scion of an army family, and the impact on his life and health of his military exploits, notably in Afghanistan. As the point man, Kenny Meighan was the lead soldier for his platoon going into combat, requiring him to show not only extraordinary courage but also to develop his senses to a very high degree.

Divided into fifteen powerful chapters, Point Man tells the story of a very brave man of action, and also of the fearful effect his service had on him psychologically and practically. When Kenny Meighan left the army in 2009 he only knew one thing, and selling himself to other people, most of who had no sense whatsoever of the life he had lived, was a huge task. In addition he had the breakdown of his father John to contend with, a breakdown resulting from PTSD following his own service in Northern Ireland.

Point Man ends however on an uplifting and hopeful note with Kenny a settled family man, with work and a future. This book is a strong reminder of the cost of their duty by young soldiers who, even now, are risking everything in Afghanistan for Queen and country.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh