

Jobless young Joe joins our ludicrously ill-equipped army: on the assault course obstacles collapse and the tanks don't even have working engines so Joe and his fellow recruits have to push one even though they're actually training for a serious invasion of ToughLuckistan.

There, in the hill town of Maiwand the Taliban leader Sorab sings with a pumped-up Pashtun crowd how in 1890, inspired by a heroine called Malala, they crushed a British invasion force. He says Kipling told British soldiers "When you're wounded and left on ToughLuckistan's plains, and the women come out to cut up what remains, just roll on your rifle and blow out your brains, and go to your god like a soldier."

Before Joe and his teenage mates are drafted there he asks his girl, Jacey, to marry him. She batters his chest, how can I fk'n marry you when you might never come back, aye?

On patrol in the Toughluck village of Dammit, Joe is led by Sergeant Welshman. Local women dance, galumphing in burqas. One runs to the soldiers. A suicide bomber? No, turns out this is Farah who Welshman's unwisely fallen in love with. They sing of forbidden love. Among the onlookers Sorab doesn't fail to notice.

Before Joe even gets to fire a round in anger, far away in Washington PM Tony Scare, on his knees and hobbling along behind George Bushfire, sings that, shoulder to shoulder they're gonna invade Ifark. So Joe and Welshman get new orders. But on the way to Ifark they get a week at home and Joe tries again with Jacey. She won't marry, but she will be engaged, orright? She gets an internship at the local paper.

In Ifark, hearing that we're coming to 'help' him an American general sings about the useless big-mouthed Brits who walk so fck'n tall. The enemy is an Imam whose followers believe he's God. He's certainly too much for our army and soon Joe's leaders, Major Blunder and General Chaos, are begging permission to retreat with their banners flying instead of under a white flag. Absurdly up themselves, they sing the failing army's mantra 'crack on.' The American general says there'll be a stink about this that'll hang around the British military.

Now it's out of Ifark and back to ToughLuckistan in Hellhole Province while wild-eyed Tony Scare declares 'we will never desert the Toughluck people.' In Hellhole Major Blunder blindly backs a puffed up local police chief whose men do lots of raping and stealing. Oh not all of it, he blithely sings, only 85%.

A cringing General Chaos gets demolished by a UN Israeli officer: our victorious armed forces are the same size as yours and we have forty-nine senior officers. And you Brits? Five hundred! Delighted British generals dance and sing that, with such top-heavy top-brass, when the shit hits the fan you can just turn around and blame - somebody else.

Tracey is sent out as an 'embedded' reporter. She clings to a bed shouldered by Joe's platoon and tilted to see only what Major Blunder wants as he sings spin spin spin! Keen to be a good reporter, she dons a burqa with Joe and they sneak into Maiwand. They see Sorab wave a captured army watch and sing we've been here a thousand years, you have the watches, but we have the time! That night he leads an attack on their base.

Back home in Wootton Bassett, with coffins passing, they sing that it's time we stopped trying to be 'great' and invading other people's countries. One of the ridiculous engine-less tanks arrives. Joe bursts out of it and leads the audience: Great great we think we're so great . . . *Crack on!* romps through a decade of tragi-comic follies by our politicians and generals. We have a libretto, a CD with 25 songs, and film of a workshop. © Jack Pizzey