

# SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



JANUARY 2022

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**HOW TO  
HANDLE  
JANUARY'S  
FINANCIAL  
BLUES**

**SPINELINE  
COMPETITION**

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MORLEY, WILD

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# CONTENTS



Cover picture: Graeme Main

## FEATURES

- 28 Fast and furious**  
Deep fires system set to get more lethal
- 34 Talk from the top**  
Army Sergeant Major tells it like it is
- 40 Up close and personal**  
Course piles pressure on infanteers
- 44 Centre of the action**  
Hub plan heralds new dawn for Sennelager

COVER  
STORY

## REGULARS

- 7 The Informer**  
Top stories from across the Service
- 22 Need to Know**  
Essential tips for today's personnel
- 49 Talkback**  
Ruminations from the ranks
- 51 Bullet Points**  
Troops' intelligence assets
- 57 Reviews**  
Movies, games, books and podcasts to fill your downtime
- 74 Final Word**  
Cyber specialists mull trade's future

## SOLDIERSPORT

- 64 Judo**  
Hawkes hits Games qualifying mark
- 67 Archery**  
Hot shots seal Services double
- 68 Mountaineering**  
Climbers complete coaching course
- 71 Motorsport**  
Extreme E arrives at Bovington
- 72 Boxing**  
Brown delivers on national stage







66

More lethal and much better in every way

69

Fast & furious – page 28-33



72



71



68

## New year, new era



I REMEMBER once asking a paratrooper how many jumps he'd made, and he said, 'All of them'. I laughed (the old ones are the best) but it reminded me just

how important trusting kit and training is to personnel. That's why the Future Soldier plan (pages 7, 10 and 11) is so vital to the Service's future.

In a world where the conflicts to come are almost impossible to predict, soldiers need to know they are at the leading edge in terms of lethality, survivability and adaptability.

It's the rationale behind the upgrades to the Apache and Challenger and the introduction of Boxer and Ajax.

The crews at 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery, who operate the multiple launch rocket system, have certainly been buoyed by the major investment in their capability (page 28).

It's also the driver of making training better and more varied (page 40) and of the determination to raise standards in behaviour and professionalism, which the Army Sergeant Major talks to us about on page 34.

All in all, 2022 looks set to be the first year of an exciting new era and I hope you feel the contents of this issue reflect that.

Enjoy the read.

Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

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Picture: Graeme Main

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## Top brass explain the **Future Soldier** overhaul and what it means for personnel

A REVAMP of the British Army – described as one of the most significant in decades – has been announced and will prove to be a critical step in preparing troops for a new type of war, the chain of command have said.

Forces needed reconfiguring because of the changing nature of conflict, they added, and failing to act risked “letting down” the UK.

Senior officers were speaking as the overhaul, entitled Future Soldier, was confirmed by government ministers before Christmas. It will see new force structures and kit introduced (read more on **pages 10-11**).

But the initiative has so far received a mixed response, with some claiming it simply amounts to “window dressing”.

Chief of the Defence Staff, Adm Sir Tony Radakin, explained that the world was becoming more unpredictable with adversaries deploying subversion and cyber warfare.

“This is not about change for change’s sake,” he told delegates at the Royal United Services Institute.

“The demarcation of peace and war is less prevalent today – our forces need to be out in the world supporting British interests, deterring and shaping on a continuous basis.”

Announcing the intention for the changes last year, Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, said: “High intensity conflict will be fought at longer range, prosecuted by many fewer soldiers while using more unmanned

and autonomous platforms.

“It will take place on a battlefield that is more complex, with increasing precision and lethality of weapons as well as in partnership with a mix of allies.”

New platforms to come online as part of the changes will include the latest E variant of the Apache helicopter and the Challenger 3 main battle tank.

Troops will be well protected with the likes of the Boxer armoured vehicle while issues with the new Ajax platform are currently being addressed.

Ministers say all this will help the Army to operate on a continuous basis, provide greater flexibility and allow troops to serve overseas more.

But soldiers have voiced mixed views – especially around unit changes.

A member of the Royal Logistic Corps, who wished to remain anonymous, told *Soldier* he and his contemporaries were lukewarm about it and that it felt like “window dressing”.

“We are also being told that we need to be ready to fight a near-peer enemy – but in my view this needs to be adjusted to be peer-plus,” he added.

He was also perplexed at the creation of The Ranger Regiment, which he believed could risk undervaluing the current line-up of British elite soldiers.

However, a member of The Parachute Regiment told this magazine he and fellow personnel remained broadly happy with being at the forefront of deployment for operations as part of 16 Air Assault Brigade. ■

“This is not about change for change’s sake”



What does *Future Soldier* mean in reality?  
>> pages 10-11



# GLOBAL SITREP



## 1. KENYA

### AFRICAN ADVENTURE

RESERVISTS from 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment have been carrying out force protection duties at British Army Training Unit Kenya (Batuk) over Christmas and the new year period.

Some 35 troops drawn from various sub-units across Yorkshire took over from personnel of The Royal Gurkha Rifles on December 21 and will remain in place until the middle of February.

"Kohima Platoon first formed in early autumn for two build-up weekends before mobilising at the end of November," Lt Oliver Sherwood (Yorks) told *Soldier*.

"That time together gave them a head start on things like weapons training which paid dividends when the platoon arrived at Basingbourn to begin pre-deployment drills."

The soldiers are now settled in at Nyati Barracks and looking forward

to seeing more of the country in their downtime.

"We don't often get to experience day-to-day life as a full-time soldier," Pte Andrew Wakelin (pictured above) said.

The Leeds University sports rehabilitation student is enjoying his first ever trip outside the UK and stressed he is intent on making the most of it.

"Opportunities like this give us great experience and the ability to slot in with Regular counterparts more easily," he added.

"I'm now getting to explore a part of the world I would never have had the chance to see – the Reserve has opened up so many good opportunities for me.

"The job we are doing out here allows us to have block time off every other week and we have planned a four-day trip to Mombasa that I'm really looking forward to."



## 2. CYPRUS

### SIGHTS SET ON FUTURE

**SOLDIERS** from 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment are getting back to kit experimentation after contributing to Op Pitting.

More than 90 personnel worked with 16 Air Assault Brigade to evacuate British and eligible Afghan nationals from Kabul.

Now the unit is turning its attention to assessing a smartphone-based dismounted situational awareness tool, a more accurate low-light sight for the assault rifle (left) and a robotic support vehicle.

The unit returns from Cyprus in the summer and will then take part in a series of complex

experimentation exercises.

They include working with the Future Commando Force and representing the British Army in the US on an exercise focused on networked capability.

"It's an exciting chapter for us as we become part of the newly established Experimentation and Trials Group," the battalion's commanding officer, Lt Col James Ashworth, told *Soldier*.

"We will be charged with driving experimental and innovative work to effect change across the Field Army and becoming a catalyst for realising the Future Soldier vision."



## 5. BELIZE



## ANTARCTICA

### PREET PLOUGHS ON

ARMY explorer Capt Preet Chandi has been making good progress on her 45-day trek to the bottom of the world.

Known as Polar Preet, the Royal Army Medical Corps officer was some three weeks into her 700-mile adventure as our January issue went to press.

She has been braving extreme temperatures on the solo trek – while pulling a sled with all her kit – having embarked from Union Glacier at the end of November.

In her personal blog at [polarpreet.com](http://polarpreet.com), she admitted some days had been tough – but said she had been lifted by the strong support of her loved ones.



## INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

### Brief the team now:



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4. UK

2. CYPRUS

3. MALI

1. KENYA



Picture: SAC Charlotte Hopkins, RAF

PLANS to beef up the Army's overseas footprint are continuing after it was confirmed that strategic locations will be used as a springboard for operations.

Troops will be seeing more of Oman, Germany (pages 44-47) and Kenya in future, with the creation of three regional hubs that will also be used for training.

Investment has already been pumped into Oman, with nearly £24 million pledged by the government in 2020 to beef up the port and triple the size of the UK base. In addition, hundreds of tanks and fighting vehicles are likely to be based in Germany and more troops will rotate through the country on exercises. See pages 10-11 for more on the Future Soldier plan.

3. MALI

### SOCK IT TO 'EM

MEMBERS of 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, who are now leading the third Long-Range Reconnaissance Task Group in Mali, have received some valuable tips from the outgoing contingent led by 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment.

"They warned us about the sandstorms but one great piece of advice they passed on is to wrap our water bottles in wet socks to help keep them cool," explained Capt Joe Kite (QDG).

"The guys are consuming around ten litres of water a day to stay hydrated so anything that makes the water more pleasant to drink is important to them."

Around 130 troops from the QDG, along with 80 from 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, make up the bulk of the 250 personnel who will be serving in Mali until early June.

"We are excited to go on the first patrol as we've spent a long time preparing and training for this operation," added the officer.



Picture: QDG



Picture: Cpl Danielle Dawson, RLC

5. BELIZE

### GOING BY THE JUNGLE BOOK

AROUND 470 personnel have been honing their tactics on Exercise Mayan Tactics.

Led by the Scots Guards, they included The Royal Lancers and 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

"The jungle environment calls for real focus to deliver high-level skills and drills," said Maj Huw Semken (RL).

"This exercise is valuable because troops must understand and plan their actions and also be in a physical and mental condition to overcome an enemy."

4. UK

### FIGHTING THE STORM

TROOPS have yet again responded to requests for help from civil authorities.

Around 80 personnel from 4th Regiment, Royal Artillery deployed to Northumberland while a similar number of Royal Lancers travelled to County Durham to deal with the aftermath of Storm Arwen.

Units based in Scotland – including 39 Engineer Regiment and 3rd and 7th Battalions, The Royal Regiment of Scotland – went to the Grampian region.

Personnel visited more than 4,000 homes in total, providing humanitarian and welfare support where needed.

"It was pretty cold, with snow



Picture: Sgt Ben Maher, RLC

on the ground so it must have been tough for people, but we received a really warm welcome," Maj David Hicketts (RE), told *Soldier*.

As this issue went to press, around 850 Servicemen and women were also supporting the vaccine programme across Scotland and England, including around 50 planners providing support to NHS England and 41 to NHS regions.



Ranger troops test out dismounted situational awareness kit last year



Picture: Cpl Adam Wakefield, RLC

## ENTER THE RANGER REGIMENT

■ THE creation of a new Ranger Regiment was at the forefront of several headline changes confirmed by defence chiefs under the Future Soldier plan.

Already proving to be a talking point among personnel, the outfit – which will have three of its four battalions based in Aldershot and the other in Belfast – was due to reach initial operating capability as this issue went to press.

With a similar brief to the now-defunct Specialised Infantry, from which its troops were initially drawn, the regiment will train and mentor soldiers from partner nations.

Soldiers, who will fall under the new Special Operations Brigade, will also work alongside their counterparts on deployment if needed.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said personnel would “have to be a more select cadre of people” given the nature of their work.

He told MPs: “The reasons that they are partly special is that they will often have to deploy without the huge amount of logistical support a conventional unit gets.

“We envisage that a large proportion of their time will not necessarily be spent with Nato allies – they may be in Africa, the Middle East or further afield.”

While the Rangers’ newly unveiled badge (below) has been making headlines, the history of the name can be traced back to the 18th century and America. Then the unit was an unconventional band of British troops who used irregular tactics to disrupt enemy activity.

The heritage is shared with the US 75th Ranger Regiment, which has its roots in the Second World War.



Cyber, data, drones, networks – these words are likely to become far more familiar to soldiers as they train to fight

Pictures: Graeme Main



## FUTURE SOLDIER

### what’s the shake-up all about?

ANNOUNCED before Christmas (page 7), Future Soldier is claiming to be the Service’s most radical overhaul in 20 years.

It is all about reshaping the Army so that it is fit to face future battles.

This will mean changes to unit and brigade structures, the technology that soldiers deploy and the methods they use to fight and disrupt the enemy.

Service chiefs are also looking at reforming the culture of the Army – which includes things such as changes in leadership style, tackling bad behaviours more effectively and doing more to encourage diversity in the ranks.

This work is designed to ensure the force is in shape to face up to an array of emerging threats across the globe –

cyber warfare, battles fought at longer range and climate change, to name just three.

The recently published *Future Soldier Guide* summed up what the Army will be confronting by stating: “We can no longer guarantee technical superiority on the battlefield.

“In the future it will become increasingly hard to move and hide as enemy sensors and surveillance systems become more powerful and their weapons will have the ability to kill with greater range and accuracy.”

It is for this reason that a rethink was needed, senior officers say.

They insist the move will make sure the Army is properly equipped for whatever is to come, as opposed to what happened in the past.

“It will become hard to move and hide”

## SERVICE CHIEF OUTLINES THE CHALLENGE...

“The nature of warfare is changing”

■ THE Army is an industrial-age organisation trying to confront an information-age set of problems.

That is how Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, set out the current situation to Service personnel in a message broadcast on Defence Connect last year.

He said: “The pace of change in our personal and professional lives is probably outstripping our institutional ability to reapportion resources, contemporise our culture, reorganise structures and upskill our workforce.”

But he added that the Army was not alone.

“It’s a set of challenges that almost every bureaucratic institution is confronting,” he continued. “But the gap between today’s position and where we need to be is probably still growing.

“The nature of modern warfare is changing very rapidly but we are not really engaged at war, and therefore our ability to realign ourselves is rather more challenging than if we were confronting it routinely on the battlefield.”







## OVERHAUL IN NUMBERS

# 73,000

Regular Army strength  
under the plan

# 30,100

Number of Reservists

# 4

New Ranger battalions

# 3

Land regional hubs –  
in Germany, Kenya and  
Oman

# 4

Administrative  
Infantry divisions in  
the new-look force



Picture: Graeme Main

## New formations take up position

**T**HE Future Soldier reorganisation will see the creation of new brigade combat teams (BCTs) – more agile formations designed to pack a potent punch.

Seven of these new outfits will be assembled, each with specialist capabilities to fulfil a variety of taskings and take the battle to the enemy.

New kit is coming online to underpin the reorganisation. An uprated Apache E attack helicopter will be joined by a third generation of the Challenger tank.

New armoured vehicles – in the shape of Boxer and Ajax – will also offer protection for sharp-end troops.

The reinforced 16 Air Assault Brigade BCT will provide the backbone of the high-readiness Global Response Force.

Training to move quickly on emerging crises, soldiers have additionally been developing joint working practices with their American and French allies. The global force will be backed by an Aviation Brigade Team.

Other noteworthy newcomers include the 1st Deep Recce Strike Team Brigade Combat Team, which will make use of the merged 1st Artillery and 1st Armoured Infantry Brigades to coordinate fires on enemy units deep within the battlespace, including with an enhanced rocket launcher capability provided by 26 Regiment (see page 28).

The coming months will see 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Mercian Regiment merged to form a new Boxer-mounted battalion in one of the armoured combat teams.

Another headline is the creation of the Ranger Regiment – which will initially be based on the former Specialised Infantry Battalions and will fulfil a similar overseas training and mentoring role.

Elsewhere, Army structures are being re-worked with four administrative divisions – designated the Union, Queen's, Light, and the Guards and Parachute – which will simplify the governance of the Infantry.

Defence chiefs have stressed that there will not be any loss of cap badges – although all troops will notice the change in posture.



## IN MY VIEW...



"The character of warfare is changing and the review addresses that. Would-be adversaries have looked at how we have responded in conflicts since the early 1990s and they have adapted their capabilities accordingly. The changes also reflect that threats to UK security can emerge from far afield."

**Maj Justin Crump (RWxY), chief executive of risk management firm Sibylline**



## THE DAY JOB

### AND HOW IT'S SET TO CHANGE

■ **CHANGES** to soldiers' terms of service will make it easier for them to move between the Regular and Reserve forces for a more flexible career path.

Defence chiefs have stressed that the two elements of the military will be more closely integrated under Future Soldier amid the reduction in numbers of full-time troops.

Secretary of State Ben Wallace confirmed that a new Reserve Brigade would be established in York to help cope with future home front crises.

And he stressed the assimilation of volunteers would "become more productive across the force".

The minister also suggested that the creation of a seamless career path would allow the Service to keep valuable experience within the ranks in future.

He told The House of Commons: "The Army will be more rewarding and enabling for young people – it will be more fluid, allowing Regulars and Reserves to move from one to the other, depending on their personal circumstances."





# WIN

a £350 break in Edinburgh!



LAST month's spine line clues were Service personnel who featured on the latest operational honours and awards list.

Sgt Frazer Berry (Int Corps), CSgt James Chissel (R Irish), Lt Col Brian Duff (RE) and Maj Sam Patterson (RLC) were decorated for their exemplary actions and service over the previous year.

This month, we have teamed up with Marriott ([marriott.co.uk](http://marriott.co.uk)) to offer one lucky reader a night for two, plus dinner, at the Courtyard Edinburgh West\*.

Ideally located to explore the city and all its attractions, as well as the Pentland Hills, this hotel's beautifully modern and spacious rooms boast all creature comforts.

To be in with a chance of winning this prize (to be claimed within 12 months, rooms subject to availability) tell us what links the words on the spine of this issue. Answers, including phone number, to the usual address or [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) by January 31.

\* transport excluded



**COURTYARD**  
by MARRIOTT  
EDINBURGH WEST

SPINE LINE COMPETITION

“It’s a stab in the back”



Picture: Graeme Main

## UPHILL BATTLE ON VISA FEES FOR FOREIGN VETS

CAMPAIGNERS have vowed to continue lobbying to end visa fees for Commonwealth veterans after the House of Commons voted against a waiver.

An amendment to the Home Office's nationality and borders bill tabled by MPs Johnny Mercer and Dan Jarvis called for foreign troops to be exempt from the £2,389 charge to secure indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

However, their proposal was voted down by 296 votes to 251, with several fellow ex-military personnel among those opposed to it.

In a separate consultation on the matter, the government put forward plans to scrap fees for troops who have completed 12 years' service, but as this issue went to press no progress had been announced.

Veterans' groups and charities including The Royal British Legion have long argued for a change in the law, which currently costs a family of four nearly £10,000.

David McMullen (ex-Rifles), campaign manager for Citizenship4Soldiers, emphasised the waiver had backing from across the political spectrum.

"It's widely supported that this needs

to be fixed and countless MPs have said they agree, but they voted with the whip," he said.

"I expected better, especially from those who have served. I've fought with Commonwealth veterans and I think it's appalling the way they're treated to the point where I actually handed back my medals last year because I could no longer wear them with pride."

McMullen also called the government's consultation "disingenuous", in part because it makes no allowances for those in physically demanding front-line roles who get discharged through injury before the 12-year point.

He added that his team were sending letters of complaint to local papers and MPs who voted against the waiver, as well as planning protests in London when the Covid situation allows.

Northern Ireland and Iraq veteran Dwayne Engelbrecht (ex-RGJ) described the fees as "a stab in the back".

"I've got friends, not just from South Africa, where I'm from, but also Fiji and the Caribbean, who had to get big loans to be able to pay the charge," he said.

"Like me, they didn't join the Army to get citizenship. They joined because they wanted to contribute."



■ BAKER Barracks on Thorney Island has finished hosting a three-month drone shuttle trial, taking vital drugs from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight's St Mary's Hospital. Transit times were cut from more than two hours by road and ferry to just 30 minutes. It will benefit cancer sufferers as chemotherapy has a limited shelf life, so at present patients often travel to the mainland for treatment.



Pictures: Chris Fletcher (Army Comms)



# SIERRA ALPHA VICTOR ECHO



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## ON THE RIGHT PATH

■ PATHFINDERS took to 16 Air Assault Brigade's state-of-the-art urban training facility at Merville Barracks, Colchester to hone their skills.

As an advance force, the troops are trained in specialist airborne insertion techniques and operate behind enemy lines in small patrols.

With moveable walls, special effects and a detailed monitoring system, the hub allows users to conduct drills in a cluttered and confusing environment that mimics the built-up areas inhabited by much of the world's population.



## SAFETY SPEEDS UP

■ THIS month sees the introduction of a more efficient reporting process for safety, environmental and fire incidents.

The Defence Unified Reporting and Lessons System (Durals) will be deployed gradually, replacing a number of the existing MoD systems.

It allows troops to use a Defence Gateway app to register an incident via a five-liner, triggering follow-up reports or investigations as required.

It also notifies any relevant Army departments about what occurred.

"Durals will reduce the time between incidents and their reporting using readily available electronic devices and an app-style approach," Col Graham Livingstone, Chief Safety (Army), said.

Look out for *Defence Alert* on Defence Gateway's opening screen.



## Reservist saves the day for elderly victim of medal mugging

A SECOND World War veteran who had his medals ripped from his chest by a mugger will again be able to wear his decorations in 2022 – thanks to a big-hearted Reservist.

Jim Marland, 96, was left devastated after he was attacked while paying his respects to fallen comrades at Rochdale Cenotaph last year.

But when Maj Phil Linehan (REME), who runs Northampton-based mounting firm Specialised Medal Services, heard about the attack on the former member of The Durham Light Infantry, he quickly set about replacing his decorations.

Having assembled the cluster of the Defence and War Medals plus the France/Germany and 1939-45 Stars, he packaged and presented it in uniform during a match at Rochdale Football Club, where the veteran is a fan.

Maj Linehan, an ex-Regular who serves with 103 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, said he acted after hearing about the assault on social media.

He told *Soldier*: "I'm a military historian and was in Sicily on a battlefield study when a friend from my Northern Ireland days shared the news on Facebook.

"It was shocking to hear – but I realised that I had the original Second World War medals in stock and called my old colleague later to say it would

be a pleasure to replace them."

Having recreated the grouping, the story took a further twist when Maj Linehan was asked by the football club if he would don his uniform and present the decorations.

Adam Trennery – an ex-Royal Navy Serviceman and member of the team's veterans' association – had asked directors if they could lay on a special occasion for the nonagenarian, who fought in the Second World War.

And they were happy to oblige with a half-time ceremony at a match with League Two rivals Stevenage.

Maj Linehan, who originally joined the Royal Corps of Transport in 1978, said it had been a privilege to meet Jim before the game.

"I was very keen to understand his journey – he joined up as an 18-year-old in 1943, fought at Ibbenburen and finished the war in Hamburg," he said. "The Army family got together to produce the award for him and it was a wonderful privilege to give back to someone who gave so much to us all."

Jim, who spent six weeks in a field hospital after being wounded during the fighting in Europe, said he was overwhelmed to receive the medals.

"It was a surprise and I want to thank everyone who has been so nice," he concluded.

Got a heartwarming story? Email [news@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:news@soldiermagazine.co.uk)



“It was shocking to hear”


 Contact Paul on Defence Connect


# Ground view

Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Paul Carney, offers his take on Service life...

**T**HE new year is upon us and it has just struck me that I have been in this post for nearly six months now.

The time has flown by and a busy 2022 lies ahead.

January is traditionally a time for resolutions and setting out all you want to achieve.

And there is certainly no shortage of work to do on my own agenda.

Progressing training opportunities for our junior leaders is one of my priorities – namely by firming up some of the detail around a proposed NCO academy.

This would allow soldiers to choose extra courses to develop their careers while at the same time promoting Service-wide good practice.

In short, it would form a cornerstone of continuous professional development.

While established training structures in the shape of the Army leadership

development programme will clearly remain in place, the academy would help our NCOs take more of an active role in their progression through the ranks.

I am also hoping the facility will form a hub where our leaders can find proven ways of doing business from across the Army.

If, for example, a squadron runs a good motor transport exercise, there is no reason why the template could not be quickly adapted and replicated elsewhere.

There is no need – if you pardon the pun in this case – to reinvent the wheel.

The academy would be a real asset on many levels. But we are still very much in the scoping phase with the project at the moment and a great deal of work needs to be done.

I want to see decent progress over the coming months.

We need to make sure that we are bringing out the very best in our leaders whenever we can.

“  
A busy  
2022 lies  
ahead  
”

## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

**Q** Any personal new year's resolutions?

**A** Making more time for my family

## At readiness in an uncertain world...



THE Army is now involved in a diverse range of global deployments – so it is important troops are prepared for any situation or environment they might face.

As such, it is great to see our new Mission Ready Training Centre – the successor to the Mission Training and Mobilisation Centre and Reserve Mobilisation and Training Centre – continue to take shape.

These days, we don't have the same continuous mission templates as in the Telic and Herrick era.

But tailored courses at Bassingbourn – which is being bolstered with state-of-the-art facilities as well as upgraded accommodation – will

enable us to remain flexible in a world that is uncertain and often volatile.

Both Regulars and Reservists now prepare for their forthcoming deployments at the same centralised location – assisted by small teams of specialists.

When I recently visited, I was able to watch some of our soldiers preparing for their forthcoming Operation Newcombe tour in Mali. The set-up is impressive.

Staying agile is critical to success.

**Above:** Members of A Coy, 2 Royal Anglian during an Operation Newcombe mission-rehearsal exercise last year  
Picture: Cpl Cameron Eden, RLC

## Raising the standard



■ YOU may recall the last couple of months in 2021 saw the Army hit the headlines again for lapses in integrity and professional standards – a totally unacceptable state of play.

Conduct is an issue that will remain high on my priority list during the coming 12 months (see page 34). I want to remind everyone that we all have a duty to call

out bad behaviour. If we do not, then we are failing in both our personal duty as soldiers and moral obligation to look after our colleagues. We also risk tarnishing the Army's hard-won reputation at a time when we must compete with a whole host of other employers to recruit and retain the very best people.

We can't afford to keep making mistakes.



# FEARLESS FUNDRAISING

## 30-30 VISION

VETERAN Richard Wilcox, who served in 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment, was tested in the wilds of Snowdonia as he completed an epic endurance challenge. The 45-year-old ran 30 marathons in 30 days as part of an effort to get into shape and improve his mental health.

Following a ten-year military career that included deployments to Northern Ireland and Bosnia, Wilcox developed PTSD, while his weight reached 18 stone. His marathon effort saw him run for more than 150 hours and cover in excess of 790 miles. Donate to the cause at [facebook.com/donate/216890443879647/](https://facebook.com/donate/216890443879647/)



“It’s a really exciting opportunity”

Money raised:  
**£1,500**  
For Combat Stress

## IN NUMBERS



Super League teams set to lock horns with the Army women in this season's Challenge Cup. Read reaction to the draw on [page 69](#)

## TRAINING BASE IS A HIT

■ A FLAGSHIP base set up to prepare troops for the rigours of modern deployment has been maintaining its growth as the operational tempo continues apace.

The Mission Ready Training Centre at Bassingbourn – which brought together old facilities in Folkestone and Nottingham – is now ensuring Regulars and Reservists are ready for tours.

The site has seen new buildings erected, including state-of-the-art accommodation, for the 12,000 or more soldiers now taking part in training each year.

Staff have been responsible for assisting personnel heading for Op Newcombe in Mali – most recently troops from 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards.



Picture: Sgt Paul Shaw, RLC

## HQ SWITCHES TO SPAIN

THE UK-led Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (Arrc) has completed its year-long tenure as Nato's warfighting corps headquarters.

Responsibility for the tasking passed to the Nato Rapid Deployment Corps Spain during Exercise Steadfast Leda (page 44).

Staged across command posts in Sennelager, Poland, Spain and Greece, the package simulated a pan-European collective defence operation and confirmed the combat readiness of the Spanish formation.

The Arrc, which had held the position since November 2020, will work towards becoming part of the alliance's high readiness response force in 2024.

Brig Matt Birch, chief of the

headquarters' joint fires and influence branch, said the exercise helped maintain its ability to rapidly deploy.

"As we move forward to being a land component reaction force it reinforces critical skills we need at a higher operational level," he added.

With a new commander at the helm – Lt Gen Nicholas Borton, who took over from Lt Gen Sir Edward Smyth-Osbourne last month – the Arrc faces a busy 2022.

Exercises Defender 22 and Dynamic Front beckon, along with a further command post simulation run by the US Army in Grafenwohr.

Training teams will also deploy to Estonia and Ukraine and the formation will continue to partner the Romanian-led Multinational Corps South-East.

## ARMY WARFIGHTING EXPERIMENT CHANGES COURSE

■ THE Army Warfighting Experiment (AWE) is taking a different tack from 2022 onwards, with all its trials over the next three years connected by one theme – urban.

The ambition, say top brass, is to use live and virtual technologies to produce evidence that makes major equipment programmes more efficient, enhances relationships with industry, partners and allies and boosts Army modernisation.

"The AWE urban series is a really exciting opportunity for us to work with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Defence Equipment and Support and a wide range of industry partners to accelerate improvements in our ability to operate in urban terrain," Brig Matthew Cansdale, head of Future Force Development, told *Soldier*.

"It will link with the new Experimentation and Trials Group, including 2 Yorks, the experimental battalion (see page 8), to ensure progress at a speed that generates operational advantage over our adversaries.

"And it will be a key building block of an exciting proposition that enables us to design the capability



needed for future success."

Full details of the experiments are still being refined but this year they will focus on the topic of 'sustain and protect', then in 2023 switch to 'shape and attack' before moving on to 'integration'.





# SAAB

# BATTLESPACE SIGNATURE MANAGEMENT



VIEW THROUGH THERMAL/IR WITHOUT  
CAMOUFLAGE



VIEW THROUGH THERMAL/IR WITH  
CAMOUFLAGE

The SAAB Barracuda range of Multispectral camouflage systems ensures equipment, vehicles and personal can now remain undetected even from the most advanced enemy sensors.

The Ultra-Lightweight Camouflage Net (ULCAS) offers the warfighter a capability that can defeat enemy Thermal/IR and Radar ISR platforms. SAAB Barracuda systems can be used on vehicles both mobile and static, dismounted infantry positions and static positions such as Air Defence, crew served weapons and Command and Control Centers.

For more info: [www.levelpeaks.com](http://www.levelpeaks.com)



# LEVEL PEAKS





How geo work made a difference during the pandemic...

**Name:**

Sgt Sam Adamson, RE



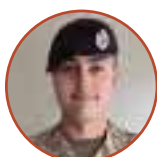
**Task:**

Deployed to NHS Gold Command, where his geospatial intelligence work informed the government decision to build seven field hospitals rather than the 13 first proposed – saving the taxpayer millions of pounds

*“There’s not a great awareness of the geo capability, but if you go into any planning tent someone is looking up at a map and trying to understand it. We enable that function. Without it the Army loses its eyes. I wouldn’t choose a different trade – the independence and responsibility you get is great. And when the assistant director of the NHS thanked us and said our actions had saved the taxpayer millions, it felt good.”*

**Name:**

Cpl Chris Underhill, RE



**Task:**

Worked to put various Covid data into easy-to-interpret graphics for the government, which led to the restructuring of the PM’s daily briefings, saving time and allowing vital info to be processed fast

*“The Cabinet Office wanted more graphics. It was outside my remit but I trained up on Adobe Illustrator. I needed to make the data come alive. To know my work was going to the very top was great. A few years ago this role was just making maps, but there is a lot of analysis we can do now. You get a lot of respect for the rank, and a degree. I don’t think there can be many better jobs for training and face-time with senior officers.”*



Pictures: Richard Beattie, Hayley Ward

# AWARDS

## put geo whizzes on map

Royal Engineers specialists are on a roll

**T**HE Army’s mapping specialists have been enjoying a run of accolades and high-profile praise for their work.

Individuals and teams from across 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) and beyond have received a string of three- and four-star commendations for their vital role during the pandemic, as well as a host of final places at various industry and defence awards.

This includes a win and second place at the UK IT Awards, and two prizes at the Defence Information and Digital Excellence Awards.

Their success story follows something of a transformation for the trade over recent years. Mapping experts have transferred their skills from paper to the digital sphere – now working in areas such as coding, networks and automation to deliver app-based maps and other on-screen resources that support operations.

This work was brought to the fore at the height of the pandemic when engineers were deployed to the heart of government to help process data that would decide where Nightingale hospitals should be built (see panel).

Col Richard Blunt, Commander Royal Engineers (Geographic), said he was “incredibly proud” of the work going on across the trade.

“We have so many good stories to tell,” he told *Soldier*.

“Our specialists are deployed on all the operations you would expect, but to have some recognition is really important because we do a lot of work in the background.”

He added that diverse teams, with people who approach problems in varying ways, was vital to their success.

Lt Col Alex Harris, CO of 42 Engr Regt, agreed it had been a fantastic time for the capability.

“We are going from strength to strength and the opportunities are all being created by our junior soldiers,” the officer added.

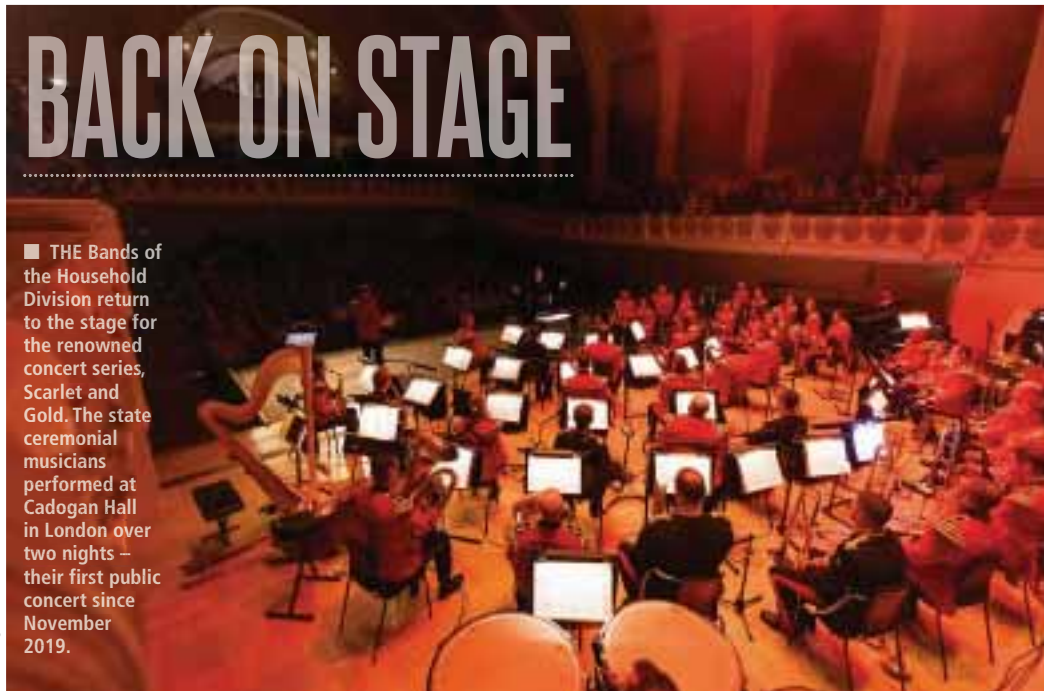
“They are very enthusiastic, using initiative to create new mapping products that make life easier for Service personnel on operations.”



# BACK ON STAGE

■ THE Bands of the Household Division return to the stage for the renowned concert series, Scarlet and Gold. The state ceremonial musicians performed at Cadogan Hall in London over two nights – their first public concert since November 2019.

Picture: Sgt Donald Todd, RLC



## Touching tale of Monty find

A FLAG flown from Gen Bernard Montgomery's armoured vehicle during fierce Second World War fighting has resurfaced – accompanied by a heart-warming story.

The yellow and black pennant bore witness to every action in the North African theatre.

But it has now emerged that the item, which has been donated to the Tank Museum in Dorset, ended its operational life on a child's bike.

Following the 8th Army's victorious campaign, Monty gave it to the squadron that was tasked with his personal protection.

But the troops decided it should be presented to mascot Michael Green, a comrade's child (shown right) who wrote to them with morale-boosting news from home.

After the item was flown back from Africa in 1943 and presented to the young evacuee, he added it to his bicycle where it took pride of place for a long time.

Now the pennant has joined other Monty memorabilia, including an iconic black beret and a letter written by the officer to his brother in Bovington.

Tank Museum curator David Willey (shown top) said Green had now died, but the donation of the flag by his widow meant a historic item – and the extraordinary tale behind it – would be preserved for generations to come.



Willey continued: "As a small piece of history this item has a wonderful personal story.

"Michael's father had been assigned as part of the troop protecting Gen Montgomery and he received regular drawings and letters from his son.

"He shared these with the men who were enchanted by them because they brought back memories of home.

"They decided Michael should be their mascot.

"Although we are a museum about tanks and have the finest collection in the world, it is often the human stories that get the best reaction."

“  
Human  
stories get  
the best  
reaction  
”



Picture: Bodmin Keep Army Museum

## Great War resources

AN online platform has been launched to provide access to the First World War archives held at UK regimental museums.

Set up by the Army Museum's Ogilby Trust, and funded by a Libor grant, the four-year project is designed to preserve the memories of those who served during the conflict.

More than 75 collections are already participating, with more set to join this year. Eventually, it will hold more than two million items including documents, photographs, letters and diaries.

Lt Gen Sir Philip Trousdell, the trust's former chairman, said: "This is an enormously powerful research tool for students, family researchers, historians and those with even a casual interest."

Visit [theogilbymuster.com](http://theogilbymuster.com)

## APP FOR SERVICE LEAVERS

■ AN APP designed to give Service leavers and veterans a place where they can come together and find employment has gone live.

JobOppO House allows its users to exchange experiences, share tips, introduce their own networks and understand what skills they have to offer in the workplace.

It can be downloaded via the Apple and Google Play stores.

## CASH FOR ARMY CAUSES

■ THE Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust has awarded more than £1.7million in its second round of sustaining support grants.

The money will help charities to maintain activities and services provided for military communities, with grants of up to £50,000 and £100,000 presented to 66 organisations.

Among those to benefit were the Military Wives Choir, who received £100,000 for their 'back, and stronger together' project.

The charity, which relies on performance opportunities to bring in funding, lost an estimated 25 per cent of its income during the Covid pandemic.



# THE BIG PICTURE

Belize

## In the thick of it

AROUND 470 personnel, led by three company groups from the Scots Guards, developed their soldiering skills in an array of harsh jungle conditions during the latest Exercise Mayan Storm.

“Our main focus was on the ability to find, raid, manoeuvre and communicate at reach – all key tenets of the Future Soldier concept,” explained Maj Huw Semken, officer commanding A Squadron, The Royal Lancers – one of the sub-units that participated in the package.

“Belize is an immersive environment where soldiers are detached from everyday life; our connectivity is much lower with no mobile phones or Wi-Fi.

“Instead, individuals are required to rely on their own judgement and instincts while working in a hot, humid and arduous environment, which is great for forging teamwork as well as personal skills.”

Picture: Cpl Danielle Dawson, RLC









# Fitness

## Why age is no barrier to realising your training goals

► **SINCE** catching the endurance running bug some five years ago, WO2 Si Hannaford (RE) has completed multiple long-distance challenges, including 26 marathons in 26 days and a 1,750-mile triathlon around Britain.

Next year he intends to break the 81-day UK record for the fastest run across Australia.

Now aged 43, he says it's never too late to get ultra-fit – the key is to identify the things standing in your way and, above all, stay injury free.

“Our system is so much more efficient when we're younger, but as we get older we can still do all the same things,” he explains.

“We just have to be cleverer about the way we train – don't just go out and run eight miles as fast as you can until you feel sick.

“Injuries in the over-40s take so much longer to get over and can become an excuse not to exercise anymore, however by managing our workouts we can avoid long-term problems.”

Below, he shares with *Soldier* his top strategies for staying in shape in mid-life and beyond...

### Use the 80-20 rule

This has got me through all my challenges injury-free. For 80 per cent of the time I aim to keep my heart rate down in zone two – that's the most energy efficient zone, one level above your normal resting heart rate. For the remaining 20 per cent I'll work in zones three to five, where you're using fast-twitch muscle fibres – the ones involved in high-energy activities like sprinting and jumping.

This puts your body under stress and raises your risk of damage to ligaments, fascia and bones, which is why you need to strictly limit it.

Everyone is different and people in the Army tend to be fitter, but the most simplistic way of calculating your maximum heart rate is to subtract your age from 220 – then divide that figure by five to work out your zones.

#### → Quick win: Use tech to help you

Invest in a smartwatch or fitness tracker so you can monitor your pulse. It doesn't have to be an expensive one. You can pick them up for £20 these days. But don't let the calorie data fool you into thinking you can eat more – that's a common mistake people make

### Lose weight if you need to

When you're jogging or running you're multiplying the weight going through your limbs by a factor of ten to 15. That's a huge amount of force. If you're carrying a few extra pounds choose low- or no-impact exercises such as swimming, cycling, walking or light gym work. Some studies have suggested weight training is more effective for losing weight than cardio.

#### → Quick win: Cut down on sugar and salt

Sugar causes our brains to release serotonin, tricking us into consuming more. Stop adding it to your brews, replace fizzy drinks with diet versions and be wary of fructose-laden fruit juices. Best of all, drink tap water. Salt is just as bad. It causes your body to cling onto fluid, making you feel bloated and raising blood pressure. We don't need either in our food. Your taste buds will adjust quickly once you reduce your intake

# over 40

## Stretch daily

You don't need to be able to bend yourself into a pretzel – you just need enough flexibility to be able to move in a fluid, balanced way.

### → Quick win: Concurrent activity

Do some simple stretches while sitting in front of the telly if it helps you find time

## Don't just stick to cardio

I try to do at least three or four strength and conditioning sessions every week of up to 40 minutes each. High intensity interval training is good if you're short of time, but bear in mind it can put a lot of force on your joints and lead to injury.

### → Quick win: Online tuition

If you find it helpful having someone telling you what to do you can find loads of no-equipment workouts for free on YouTube

HEALTH CONTINUED »



## Make it fun

A lot of people see fitness as a chore, but it shouldn't be that way. It should be an enjoyable, team-building experience, where everyone can work at their own level.

### → Bonus point: Turn it into a family activity

You can spend time together, as well as modelling positive lifestyle choices for your children

## Hold yourself accountable to goals

Whether it's a short-term target, such as a half-marathon in a few months' time, or a bigger one for further down the line – make your mind up that you're going to do it and buy into it fully. If I haven't got that goal my motivation wains.

### → Quick win: Find a buddy

It can be someone to run your first 5km with, or give you moral support at a new gym class

## Prioritise sleep

This is as important as training and diet at any age, but especially as we age because sleep helps muscle tissue recover between workouts. It also gives us energy and motivation to stick to our fitness plan.

### → Quick win: Put down your phone

By now most of us have heard of the negative impact of blue light on our sleep. Keep your device out of your bedroom so you won't be tempted by late-night scrolling

## Play the long game

As humans we are impatient to see results and assume we need to run harder and faster to get there more quickly. But exercising essentially damages muscle fibres – then as they repair, they grow back stronger and more effective. So it's vital to build in adequate rest so they get a chance to do that.

Another way you burn yourself out is by getting addicted to the endorphins released during a phys session – over time they can start to mask pain or discomfort you are feeling, and this can do more harm than good.

### → Quick win: Listen to your fitness tracker

It will help keep you in check by telling you when to rest – or ask your training partner to tell you when it's time to take a break

## Understand that motivation comes in cycles

It's normal to feel less enthusiastic about working out from time to time. You miss a planned session or maybe you have a lazy weekend, and you start to think that everything you've achieved so far was for nothing and you lose impetus. Before you know it, several weeks have gone by with no training.

### → Top tip: Don't beat yourself up

Some people go through this cycle more quickly than others. Just tell yourself everyone deserves a break and get back on the horse



Follow Si on  
Instagram:  
**sihannaford**

# Use

How fast does  
fitness drop  
off during  
downtime?

▶ IT can be difficult to shake off that sluggish feeling when returning to the gym after the holidays.

Here with some advice about how to counteract deconditioning is former professional boxer and Army boxing team coach, Cpl Chez Nihell (RLC)...

## Everyone is different

How quickly you decondition depends on where your fitness was before leave. For a highly trained athlete, a break might actually do them some good, as long as they're not pigging out the whole time. But for the average soldier, or for someone who is trying to lose weight or get fit, two or three weeks off is quite a long time and they're likely to notice it

## Deconditioning affects both your muscles and cardiovascular system

...so your heart and your lungs. You might notice you've put on weight, you get tired more quickly and are more out of breath than before



# it or lose it

## A little is better than nothing at all

Ideally, personnel should keep their phys ticking over so they remain at the required level to pass their fitness tests. The last thing you want to do is to come back from leave and be put on a reconditioning programme. But that doesn't mean training like mad. It could be just going out for a couple of three-mile runs over the break, followed by some simple ton-ups – bodyweight exercises like squats, push-ups and burpees in sets of ten that add up to a total of 100 reps

## But if you need to do a regain...

As a PTI myself, I'd recommend that you talk to the staff at your regimental gym if you're concerned about your weight or fitness – they'll be more than happy to steer you in the right direction regarding your diet and training. The good news is that it doesn't take as long to regain condition as it does to build it in the first place because the body retains muscle memory

## The science bit

Studies have shown that cardiovascular performance drops off more quickly than muscle strength. A fitness marker known as VO2 max – the body's maximum oxygen intake – starts to decrease after just a few days of inactivity, while resting heart rate increases. Muscle mass deteriorates more slowly but will usually be noticeable after two to three weeks



# Financial resolutions

Expert advice to get you back on track if the festive season has left you in the red

► MOST of us have had years when we entered fully into the Christmas spirit – only to find we have eaten up our new year wages along with the turkey and trimmings.

While careful money management is the easiest way to head off January's financial blues, there is action you can take in the event of being strapped for cash.

Johnny Timpson, consultant to insurers Absolute Military, provides some tips for putting your balance back in the black...

## Track it, trace it

It might sound obvious, but sitting down and keeping a close check on your income against outgoings each month is a critical starting point. This is important for bringing cash under control and maintaining resilience to deal with unexpected financial shocks



## Use a bucket list

Tools can be useful for budgeting – the three buckets are among my favourites. Imagine storing your cash in each of these containers. Place half your wages in the first, for essentials such as bills, rent and food. Keep 30 per cent in another to spend on lifestyle choices including clothes and meals out, with the final fifth of your income tossed in a bucket for savings



## Drop the passengers

Most of us have taken out a subscription for a service that did not live up to expectations. But it is surprising how many of us are still paying for something we no longer – or rarely – use. Trawl through your direct debits to identify any offenders. At the same time, compare prices for your car, kit and insurances to see if there are better deals available elsewhere

## Limit the damage

Work through your debts to identify those stinging you with the most interest and deal with them first. Most of us owe money in some way, from overdrafts to loans – prioritising is important and will ultimately pay off

## See who owes you

It might seem surprising, but we can be overlooking money to which we are entitled and should be pocketing. Take a fresh look at the benefits and grants out there and double check if there are any that you and your family can claim. The Turn2Us tool at [turn2us.org](https://turn2us.org) can be very helpful here

## And remember...

Do not underestimate the wider importance of planning for the future, particularly in the current climate. Check the rate of return you are receiving on your savings and consider taking advice on other ways of making money work for you

### PROFILE: JOHNNY TIMPSON

A consultant at Forces insurance firm Absolute Military ([absolutemilitary.co.uk](https://absolutemilitary.co.uk)), Timpson has four decades of experience in the financial services sector – including a variety of high-profile advisory roles. He has also served as Cabinet Office disability and access ambassador for the insurance and banking sectors during his career

## ► NUTRITION

# 5 reasons...

... not to bother with so-called detox diets this year

► **GOOD news** – those restrictive elimination diets that crop up every January promising to banish the festive bloat are mostly a waste of time. This is why...

### 1 They are unscientific

The whole concept of cleansing is irrational. Unless you have a serious medical condition, your body has its own built-in ability to remove waste and toxins. If it didn't, we would feel ill all the time. Organs such as the skin, gut, liver and kidney all play a role in this finely tuned system

### 2 Fruit and veg isn't a magic bullet

Yes, they are packed with goodness – and we should all eat our five a day – but no one sort of fruit or veg can provide all the vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre we need. It's variety that counts. Fruit is also high in sugar

### 3 They play into our fears of illness

Wheat and dairy products are often cited as culprits for allergies, but in reality these foods provide important nutrients, which it's potentially harmful to

exclude. Anyone suspecting they have a true intolerance to a food group should seek a medical diagnosis and then be supervised by a registered dietitian

### 4 They don't lead to lasting weight loss

You might find yourself rapidly dropping the pounds, but this is largely water and glycogen – the body's carbohydrate stores – rather than fat. At the end of the programme, when you return to your old eating habits, you are likely to put back on any weight you lost

### 5 You'll feel horrible

Severe calorie restriction will probably leave you dizzy and lacking energy. And depriving yourself of the vital vitamins, minerals, protein and fibre your body needs to function is likely to do more harm than good

### And what to do instead...

It's boring but a **balanced diet and active lifestyle** are the **best way to maintain your health**, along with **staying well hydrated**. If you need to lose weight, consider **reducing portion sizes**. **Give up cigarettes and cut back on caffeine and alcohol**. This action is more likely to improve your sense of wellbeing than anything you are or aren't eating, so start there

● For more information visit the British Dietetic Association webpage at [bda.uk.com](https://bda.uk.com)



# ***FAST & FURIOUS***

The deep fires units are not only expanding, they're becoming more lethal



Report: Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main





“  
The Army needs  
to ensure we are  
competitive  
against a near  
peer adversary  
”

**T**HE Future Soldier programme's intention is to transform the British Army into a more agile and lethal force with integration at its very heart.

Nowhere will this be more evident than with the evolution of the deep fires units operating the multiple launch rocket system (MLRS).

The Royal Artillery Regulars of 26 Regiment and their Reserve counterparts from 101 Regiment currently operate the platform. They are to be joined by 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, which is switching from the Light Gun to become the Army's second Regular deep fires unit by 2024.

Together, they will provide the Service's only all-weather long-range attack capability as part of the new Deep Recce Strike Brigade Combat Team.

Around 30 MLRS are currently in service, but this will be increased to at least 40 after the upgrade, with both 3 RHA and 26 Regt equipped with two batteries.

The personnel of 101 Regt will provide a third battery to support warfighting operations.

A small number of platforms will also be held back for training and research purposes.

However, the Army's sweeping modernisation plan isn't just about quantity, it's also focusing on quality. And that's where a half billion-pound investment to upgrade the equipment and its munitions comes into play.

Over the next five years MLRS assets will be sent in small batches to the US military's huge maintenance facility, Red River Army Depot in Texas, where they will be stripped out, the hulls refurbished, and a suite of cutting-edge systems installed to replace existing kit.

As a result, the Service's long-range missile capability will be improved in virtually every conceivable area.

"The entire fleet will be upgraded, making it more lethal and much better in every way," explains Lt Col Chris Wild, commanding officer of 26 Regt.

"The Army needs to ensure we are competitive against a near-peer adversary and some of our potential enemies have real range in terms of rockets and guns. To fight them and win we need the same. We have the edge when it comes to our soldiers, so now it's time to enhance our kit." »



“  
When upgraded,  
MLRS will be able  
to fire all 12 of  
its rockets in  
just 90 seconds  
”



» One of the – if not the – most important upgrades is to the load launcher module (LLM) and firing computer, which will be replaced by new versions.

One huge advantage they will provide over the incumbent kit is the ability to fire a wide array of munitions, not just the M31 precision rocket and its extended 150km-range variant but weapons still in the development pipeline, such as the US precision strike missile which can hit targets around 500km away.

“We can fight the deep battle now, but the technology we are going to get means we will be able to destroy targets at much greater range,” says Lt Col Wild (pictured right).

“MLRS gives us up to 84km range at the moment, but when it is upgraded this will be increased.

“We will also be more interoperable, giving us the ability to fire a wider range of munitions helping us to fight alongside our Nato partners and allies.”

The officer continues: “Work is also under way to allow the MLRS to fire a guided, medium-range, high precision Exactor-type rocket. That doesn’t mean we are phasing out Exactor, but it does mean we will have more tactical flexibility for deploying this kind of weapon.”

Another important component of the new module will be the speed at which it can be raised and manoeuvred into position.

“If you receive a multi-target mission it can take a few minutes to input each set of coordinates and get the LLM to raise and move around,” says detachment commander Sgt Lee Morley (RA).

“But the new version moves much quicker thanks to electric rather than hydraulic power, so it will cut that time significantly. When upgraded, MLRS will be able to fire all 12 of its rockets in just 90 seconds.

“That’s really important because it means we can fire and then move off quicker, which is vital for our survivability as the system’s







capability means it will always be a high priority target.”

Other modifications include new, more fuel-efficient engines and running gear that give greater driving range. Composite rubber tracks will replace the current steel versions to lower noise levels inside and out and improve fuel consumption, while better armour and a modified, enlarged cabin will provide greater safety and comfort for those on board.

These may seem rather mundane changes next to flashy supersonic long-range missiles, but for the crews that operate these beasts the changes can't come soon enough.

“These are fantastic bits of kit when they're working but they are old so they do have reliability issues,” says Lbdr Liam Jaggard (RA, pictured right).

“In general, we are very happy the new platforms will start arriving in a couple of years – I think most of us feel it's overdue and needs to happen.” »



## SHARING THE SPOILS

BY A weird coincidence, 26 Regt has two serving sub-unit commanders who worked on the MLRS upgrade project – and both believe lessons can be learnt from the way the kit was procured.

“We may be spending £250m on the platforms over ten years and a similar amount in new munitions in the long term, but the value is off the scale,” says Maj Piers Compton (pictured below), commander of 55 (The Residency) Battery, who was programme manager in the Capability Directorate at Army Headquarters when the initial upgrade contract was drawn up.

“The deal will future-proof us as we can be part of the development programmes for new munitions. If the UK had to do that on its own it would be catastrophically expensive, but with this arrangement

we pay a proportional share of the costs.”

The same principle applies to the upgraded MLRS, says Maj Owen Larsen (REME, pictured left), officer commanding the unit's workshops, who was previously attached to Defence Equipment and Support.

“There is a tier system for funding where we and the other partner nations pay a share of research and development costs based on the number of upgraded MLRS platforms we procure,” he explains.

“That means we pay a relatively small portion of the development costs, but we get to purchase the system at the roughly the same price as the Americans.

“And because it is proven technology we will start receiving the first upgraded platforms just five years after signing on the dotted line.”







» LBdr Ed Darby (RA) agrees. “The Americans are a bit ahead of us with this kit so it’s vital that we are on a par if we’re going to operate properly alongside them in combat,” he says.

“On the flip side, the new version will have rubber tracks and I’m not sure how I feel about that.

“Changing them won’t be as straightforward as it is with the current version’s steel ones but until we can get hands-on and practise in different areas, we don’t know what they will be like.”

Speaking of which, training in an array of environments will be high on the agenda once the new platforms arrive.

“In order to be ready to receive this new equipment we are looking at how best we fight with it,” acknowledges Lt Col Wild.

“With longer range weapons we can be more spread out across the battlefield and all the launchers can potentially engage on the same target at the same time.

“We are looking at our procedures and doctrine to focus more

on dispersal and constant movement – in soldier terms, that is ‘shoot and scoot’.

“Our tactics were rooted in the Cold War era, relying on mass and the fact that the enemy couldn’t return fire quickly, whereas we now know they can. If we are all grouped together and static, we are going to get killed.

“The challenge the detachment commanders will have is that in future they will genuinely be dispersed and on their own. They will need to understand the battle picture, how to navigate tactically and how to run a small team for extended periods.

“Meanwhile, the challenge for the command post and battery commanders is to coordinate fire, sequence the resupply of ammunition, manage the battlespace and operate with other units all across a larger area.”

One of those battery commanders is 26 Regt’s Maj Steph Manning (pictured right), who has been driving sub-unit level





“  
I think long-range  
artillery tech like  
this is the future  
of warfare  
”



training to get personnel thinking about operating in different environments, and perpetual motion and dispersal.

“We need to improve troops’ navigation skills,” she explains. “Our annual Matts include nav, of course, but moving around in the dark, under the pressure of combat, in a large noisy vehicle is an entirely different world.

“We must get better at that if we are to fully exploit the potential of the upgraded MLRS and we are also looking at using it in the urban environment, partly because it is stealthier on rubber tracks.

“We will look at everything from communications to questioning what the cam and concealment requirements are, to the impact of the asset on the local population, the management of firing points and moving around once you’ve launched.

“Even the demands of the logistic resupply chain are much more complex in an urban area and among people.”

The message has certainly got through to the personnel *Soldier* spoke to, and most seem genuinely excited the upgrade represents a serious investment in the capability and the growth of their role is to become more varied in future.

“We are looking to mix up our training more because if we do deploy we are probably not only going to be operating in somewhere that looks like Salisbury Plain,” says LBdr Jaggard.

“We are going to have to move through built-up areas and it’s going to be a challenging task learning how to do stealthy or fast movements in that terrain, although the vehicles are surprisingly nimble and move around streets well.”

His commander, Sgt Morley, is in no doubt that the importance of the deep fires capability will increase further once the potential of the new platforms is exploited.

“In my career I’ve been on Light Guns and the AS-90 and I prefer working with MLRS,” he says. “It’s the only all-weather long-range strike capability we have and in future it will deploy to more places than the guns.

“The great thing about the programme is that everything is being stripped off and refurbished or replaced and that includes the comms package, which is being improved so we can become part of the digital battlespace. Lots of these lads will be around long enough to see the full benefits of that.”

One of them is 28-year-old LBdr Darby, who believes the modifications are essential.

“There is a huge buzz around 26 Regt,” he adds.

“I might be biased but I really do think that long-range artillery tech like this is the future of warfare.

“We are going to have to move away from static gun lines – especially with aerial drone systems which are now so common and potentially lethal on the battlefield.

“Being able to strike a deadly blow from long range and keep moving is the way forward.

“And myself and many others here are really looking forward to using this exciting new kit.” ■







# “Sometimes bored soldiers do bad things”

But it's not just poor behaviours that Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Paul Carney, would like to see eradicated in 2022...

“**If you could change anything this year, what would it be?**

Accommodation and food, without a doubt. I'd upgrade, in one fell swoop, all our housing to the highest standard we now enjoy at certain locations. Thankfully

there is a large investment coming across the whole estate which will include some of the single living accommodation (SLA) under the defence estate optimisation programme and a new maintenance services contract is currently being rolled out across the country called the future defence infrastructure programme that will aim to improve our accommodation. It will be in place for both SLA and Service family accommodation by April 2022. These contracts will move away from a 'fix when broken' philosophy and allow us to invest more in preventing things from breaking in the first place. The contracts incentivise the supplier to provide quicker response times and to fix faults

on their first visit. It won't be perfect – nothing is – but it will be a lot better. We need to play our part as the customer and learn to report faults and failings as individuals. It's the only way we can iron out any early glitches and ensure the supplying companies meet their commitments.

**And how would you change the food provision?**

The problem here is understanding what our soldiers want. When you have an organisation of our size you are never going to please everyone. Many want to cook in the block, but they also want to be able to go to the cookhouse whenever they want and have numerous dishes to choose from. Having lots of choice costs money and we have to remember that the contractors are still providing three meals for around £5 per person per day which is hard to

beat. However, we also have to accept that our soldiers' expectations are changing and I know the Army Eats »





» programme is trying to work through this. This isn't just about the food on our plates, but how we order it, and how, when and where we eat. The six pilot sites for Army Eats will help form part of a long-term solution. Soldiers being able to cook their own food in the block is one fundamental – and we have a fund to upgrade a lot of our existing kitchenettes. Ultimately, it's about providing choice.

**That seems ironic considering the well publicised food issues on the *Fill Your Boots* Facebook page last month...**

I personally investigated that incident and it was just that, an isolated incident. Soldiers who had tested positive for Covid-19 were in two quarantine blocks and one received a meal box with all the rice and spaghetti and the other one had all the sauces and vegetables. It was purely a delivery mix-up but someone thought it would be funny to make hay with it online. The RSM had already established a *WhatsApp* group including those in quarantine and the catering manager so problems like that couldn't be repeated.

**They also complained about the blocks not having heating and hot water. Is that acceptable even if a major property upgrade programme is in the pipeline?**

Those upgrades can't happen quickly enough. I know the accommodation at that camp is in need of refurbishment and it's definitely one of the worst I have ever visited. The trouble is a lot of smaller camps are being wound down with a view to personnel moving to big basing areas such as Bulford and Tidworth, which have great facilities. The planners are looking many years ahead but in the meantime we have to be careful how we manage our personnel in these types of locations because these experiences can have major ramifications.

**In what way?**

Young people today are different from previous generations. They come out of basic training, from somewhere like Gibraltar Barracks in Minley, where they've enjoyed modern rooms, Wi-Fi and great training facilities, and can end up at a small camp with relatively poor infrastructure. I'm generalising, but I think if things aren't to their liking far more young soldiers these days are willing to jack in their British Army careers than was the case previously.

**Why is that?**

The job market has changed and youngsters now think nothing of switching jobs or careers over and over. A sergeant housed in a family unit with a spouse and children and with a decent wage coming in doesn't want to be kicked

out, but for young single soldiers it can be

different. It's a factor that we all have to wake up to, including the top brass, because it affects everything. I was chatting to some generals recently and disagreed with some of their views that the compulsory drug test (CDT) is really effective at deterring the small number of soldiers who take recreational drugs in their downtime. I discharged around a dozen personnel for taking such substances when I was a sergeant major and I've met a few of them since and every single one of them has moved on. The CDT is a decent sticking plaster but it isn't the deterrent it once was because young people, in general, have no qualms about upping and leaving.

**So how do you discourage or prevent drug taking?**

We still need CDT, but I think it comes down to education, training and keeping them busy with good opportunities because some bored soldiers will do bad things. The best solution is to create opportunities for them and make the Army such a desirable place to be that it is something they want to stay part of and not throw away. So a chain of command that cares for them, a nice room, decent food, opportunities to go abroad on exercises and enjoy adventurous training and sports are all vital for making this an organisation people don't want to leave or risk getting thrown out of for doing something silly.

**They can also get thrown out for bullying, either face-to-face or online, which are still prevalent...**

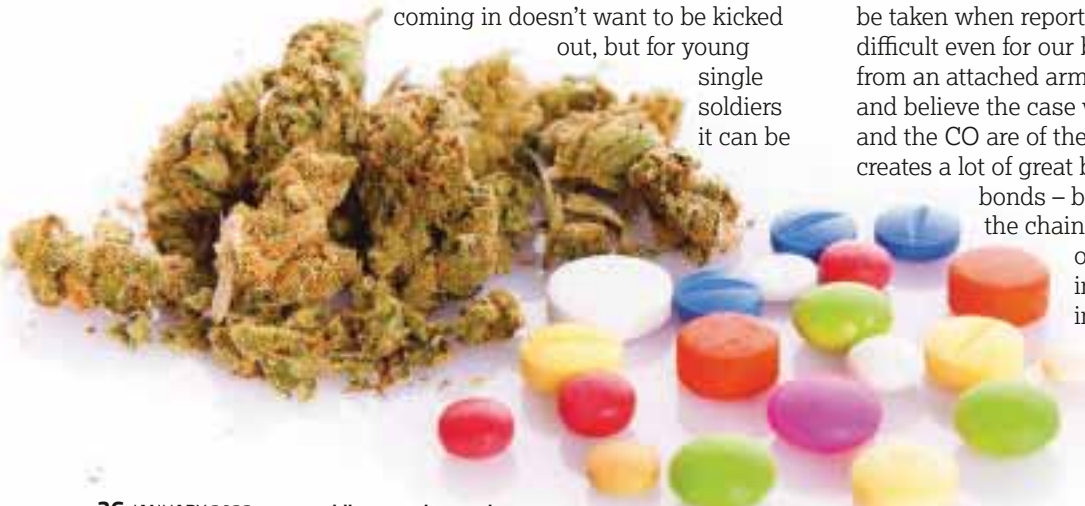
It's the world we face now unfortunately, but online trolling as well as physical, mental or sexual harassment go against our values and standards. We now have *#digitalarmy* which gives soldiers the guidelines on how to behave online, and there is a recently released handout called *Social Media Abuse* that adds further detail. We need to be training people out of these behaviours to make us better as an organisation.

**Does more work need to be done in this area?**

Yes, because I think we hurt ourselves too much. People wouldn't go online and abuse their family and we are a family so anything negative you post online is damaging us. Why would you want to do that to something you want to be part of? There also needs to be trust in the chain of command to report when this is happening.

**What about sexual harassment, which was highlighted in the Wigston Review among others?**

For me, stamping this out all begins with building trust. It is important that people feel they will be believed and action will be taken when reporting unacceptable behaviour. This can be difficult even for our best units. As an example, a junior soldier from an attached arm will find it difficult to approach their CO and believe the case will be dealt with fairly, if the accused and the CO are of the same cap badge. The regimental system creates a lot of great behaviours – cohesion, legacy, superb team bonds – but a negative can be the suspicion that the chain of command will naturally protect their own tribe. We need to somehow build trust in a system so everyone has confidence in all their leaders. This is why the NCO academy is so important. We hope »





“

I discharged around  
a dozen personnel  
for drug taking  
when I was a  
sergeant major

”





» to launch the first parts in 2022, using the Army leadership and development programme as a baseline, and we will create more development opportunities, support, advice and training. But for me the real value comes from building networks and connections across our NCOs that will help break down the barriers that unit life engenders. Soldiers will be much more educated about each other's roles and aware of the bigger picture, not just what their battalion or regiment do.

#### How will this help improve behaviours?

We draw our personnel from diverse backgrounds and some of our young recruits might never have met a person from another country before or have prejudiced views of women or people from other minority groups. By training and educating NCOs in monitoring, mentoring and intervening in the right way we can create an environment where soldiers can accept challenge and learn to respect each other's perspective and feelings. Junior NCOs are huge role models in this area. There is not one private who'll say 'I'd like to be like that general one day' but there will be loads who want to emulate their section commander. That's why we need them to be the best they can be. Our initial training



instructors only have a short amount of time to influence habits and behaviours so we need those skills and role models to continue in the Field Army units as well. We need to remember we are all on the same team and you look after your team.

#### **Lastly, and on a lighter note, we can't ignore the most pressing issue of 2022... should all personnel be permitted to wear beards?**

I'm not swayed either way. I understand both sides of the argument, but the current image of a male British soldier is clean shaven and short haired, just like the image of a banker is to wear a suit. But I think we will continue to look at it and we may change our policy, who knows. The wearing of a respirator is always quoted as a reason for saying no but I think that's an incorrect response. You need to be clean shaven to maintain the best seal but we are not at a high readiness for CBRN and it only takes five minutes to shave one off. The argument against beards is a compelling one: every soldier knew the standard when they joined. ■



“

**There's not one private who will say 'I'd like to be like that general one day'**

”







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# UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

New instructor package puts  
infanteers under pressure

**“WHEN you’re going into an enclosure and you know there’s enemy on the other side of the wall, that becomes your primary focus. Once you’ve breached the first room, all you’ll see is what’s over your sight. The adrenalin’s pumping – you can feel your heart beating. At that point your only concern is to find and engage the target. Everything else is a blur.”**

FOR the uninitiated, it’s hard to imagine the sensory overload troops experience when storming a building – or the discipline required to function effectively while doing so.

But as Infantry Battle School instructor CSjt Dave Clark (Rifles, pictured right) tells *Soldier*, zen-like awareness must become second nature to those looking to master this high-octane specialism.

The aim, according to the 36-year-old, is to develop a “competent sub-conscious”.

“If you don’t have that muscle memory when you go into a room you’re having to think about too many things at once and you’ll make mistakes,” he continues.

“You’ll revert back to a basic level of shooting,



with no discipline or coordination.

“That’s what it boils down to – being able to do things when that fight or flight response takes over.”

Nearby, students on the school’s newest training package are finding out just how demanding this form of combat can be.

The close quarters battle instructors’ course, which CSjt Clark helped design, will qualify successful graduates to deliver similar training to their own units and other armies.

They may not be doing the drills for real today, but with eagle-eyed assessors looking on from gantries above, the pressure is still very much on.

“Mentally, it’s quite challenging,” admits Sjt David Kavanagh (Rifles), who as a new instructor at the IBS will be required to teach these techniques in future.

“I haven’t done this kind of thing since Afghanistan and there’s a massive element of skill fade.

“The best way to explain it is through the chimp paradox.

We learn how to manage the various cognitive burdens and the added complexity of what we’re doing.

“You need to put that chimp on your shoulder to bed, understand the basics and develop that muscle memory.”

This part of the four-week course is staged at Northumbria Police Operational Tactical Training Centre in Gateshead – a bespoke facility featuring indoor ranges and mock buildings of various shapes and sizes. »







## Course Q&A

with Capt Alex Johl (Mercian)

### **Why has this new package been introduced?**

There used to be one in the Herrick era, but it's been brought back because there's a skills deficit we need to address. We're making sure the guys who really need those skills on the front line are as good as they can be.

### **Who is eligible?**

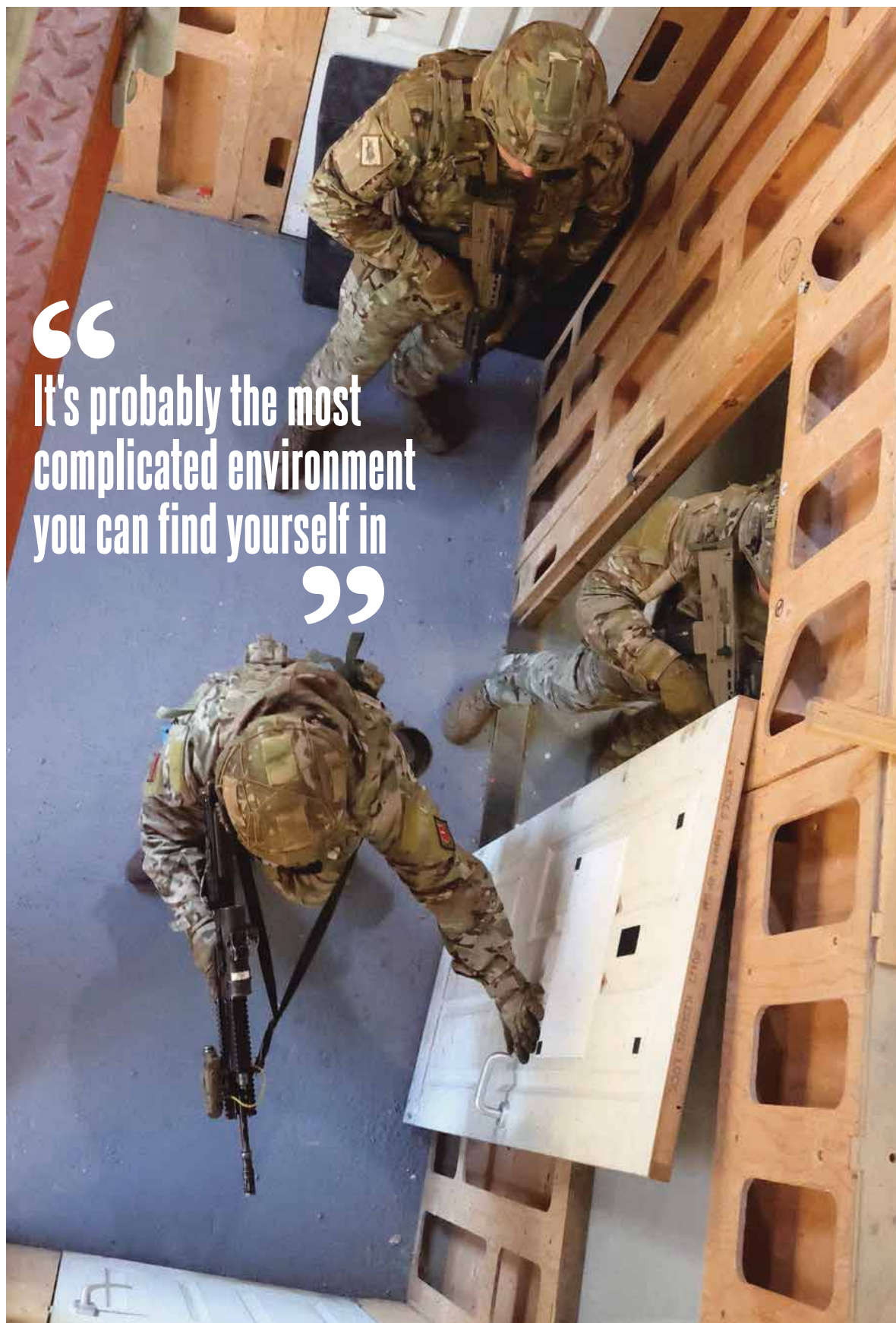
Infanteers who are tactics trained – so, they must have done the section commanders' battle course as a minimum – as well as having class B range qualifications so they can plan and conduct static ranges. Their knowledge from their time in the military gives us a good base to build on.

### **How realistic is the training?**

About as realistic as it can be. They're using paint rounds in their primary weapons system – the SA80 – and the secondary, the Glock pistol. On top of that, they have a variety of pyrotechnics, such as distraction grenades to seize the initiative through speed and surprise.

### **What are instructors looking for?**

An element of humility. This is a course of learning through mistakes. They've got lots of experience, but they need to be able to come here and look at themselves in the mirror and go, "I'm not perfect". As long as they rectify those issues and address their weaknesses, we will deem them competent.



“It's probably the most complicated environment you can find yourself in”



» But before the action moves north, students must first prove their marksmanship credentials with the SA80 and Glock pistol on the 25m range at Brecon.

Partially based on existing packages run by the Royal Marines and Royal Air Force Regiment, the training is open to experienced infantry only.

However, Cpl Lawson Hadley (pictured below), a member of the machine gun platoon at 1st Battalion, The Rifles, said those completing the package should also be prepared for the syllabus to differ from what they may have learnt in the past.

"You tend to be set in your ways from how you were taught before," says the 26-year-old. "But the close quarters battle environment changes and you have to combat any new methods the enemy has come up with."

"Everything is out there on the internet and they'll be looking online to see how modern armies operate, so we have to adapt our drills to be more up to date."

"Honestly, it's hard. It's probably the most complicated environment you can find yourself in because everything is up close and personal – you have to be quick on your feet."

"You're just thinking about what doorway is coming up next, what stacks – or configurations – your team will be in and trying to prepare yourself for whatever's

coming at you."

"It's interesting though, and I certainly think the Army should do more of it."

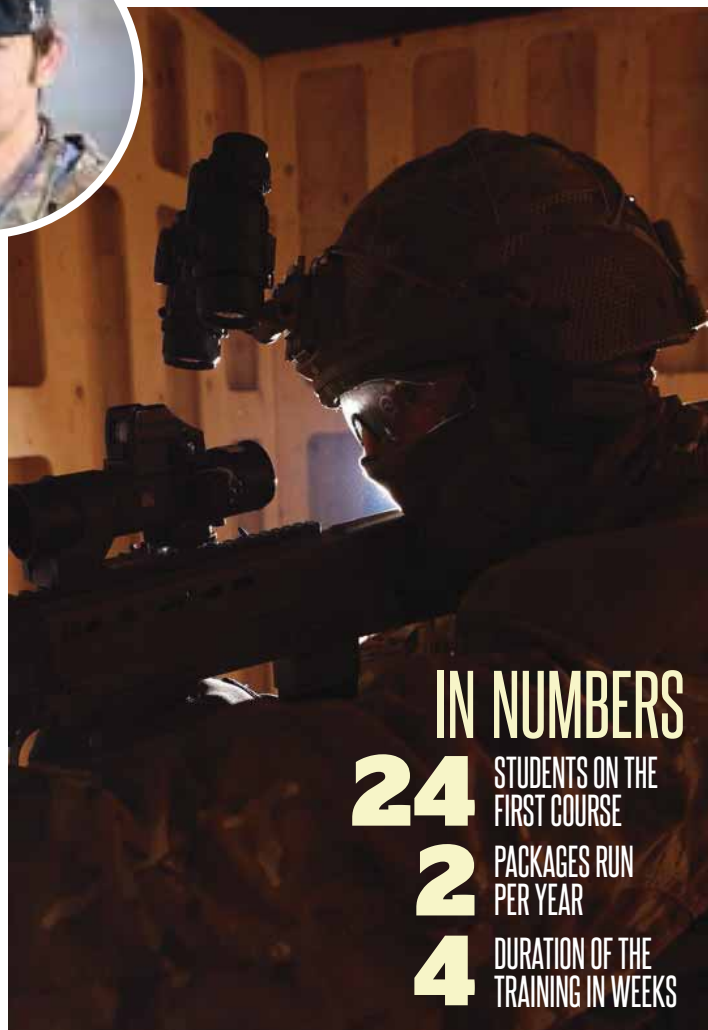
With plans to restructure the Service now under way, the NCO looks set to get his wish. The majority of spaces on the initial courses have been allocated to personnel from the newly formed Ranger battalions, whose bread and butter will be to deploy overseas and train up foreign troops.

Then, from late 2022 onwards, the course will be open to the wider infantry, which Capt Alex Johl (Mercian) – officer commanding the dismounted battlecraft wing – believes will soon see knowledge filtering down through the ranks to address any skills deficits.

"It's about getting better at the lowest level," he says.

"If they're successful they'll go back to battalion fully qualified and able to deliver, confidently, marksmanship packages on the range and close quarters battle tactics in varying environments – whether that's urban, woods and forests or trench systems."

"The same principles apply, and a competent instructor will be able to use their soldier IQ, see the similarities across those different terrains and develop their personnel in the close space." ■



**IN NUMBERS**  
**24** STUDENTS ON THE FIRST COURSE  
**2** PACKAGES RUN PER YEAR  
**4** DURATION OF THE TRAINING IN WEEKS







# CENTRE OF THE ACTION

New era dawns for Sennelager as Army confirms regional hubs

**H**AVING spent the long years of the Cold War camped on the north German plain, the post-9/11 world saw Britain and its allies switch attention to dustier climes. But over more than a decade of increasing Russian aggression on Nato's eastern flank – most recently on the Ukrainian border – the region has grown in strategic importance once more.

No surprises, then, that the latest round of UK defence restructuring (page 7) has confirmed Germany as the home of the high-readiness armoured fleet – along with other hubs in Oman and Kenya.

And the focal point for activity will be Nato Forward Holding Base Sennelager (NFS) – newly renamed and redesignated to the Field Army – where the headquarters and supporting elements will grow between now and full operating capability in 2023.

The formation's commander, Col Tim Hill, said its status as a centre of excellence for battlegroup-level training would remain unchanged, but explained that its role would evolve into that of a staging post.

"It's a place from where we're going to be able to project Field Army's ability to conduct operations throughout Europe," he added.

"So units will come through here as part of their pre-deployment training for the Nato enhanced forward presence battlegroups in Estonia, or before going to the Balkans,

or to train elsewhere in Germany or with the Americans and multinational partners in Grafenwohr and Hohenfels.

"We will also deliver planning and execution of logistics in support of British and other nations' exercises, such as Defender 22 this year."

Among the first in line to visit are members of 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh, who this month embark on their validation package prior to an imminent stint on Operation Cabrit.

Exercise Tallinn Dawn follows hot on the heels of a five-week gunnery camp staged in Sennelager before Christmas – the condensed training cycle a result of the Covid pandemic.

"Geographically it makes sense for us to train in Germany," said Cpl Sam Hopkins (pictured below), a section commander in the battalion's B Company.

"It's closer to Estonia and the climate and terrain are pretty similar, so it's better preparation than being further west – in Canada, for example.

"The training area itself is much like Salisbury Plain, with a few more woodblocks, but always bad on footing – which is standard."

Exercising units will continue to draw equipment from the Land Training Fleet Germany in neighbouring Athlone Barracks, which will also undergo an uplift in »

Report: Becky Clark Pictures: Graeme Main and Cpl Rob Kane, Sgt Paul Shaw and WO2 Jamie Peters, all RLC







## IN NUMBERS

5

DURATION, IN WEEKS, OF THE  
LIVE-FIRING PHASE OF EXERCISE  
GOTHIC DRAGON



400

MEMBERS OF 1ST BATTALION,  
THE ROYAL WELSH  
WHO DEPLOYED



» both vehicles and staff as NFS takes shape.

Cpl Robert Slaney (R Welsh), who was working in a fleet management role for the first time during Exercise Gothic Dragon, said getting the Warrior armoured platforms up to standard in time had been the biggest challenge.

“We thought the target was a bit optimistic,” he admitted.

“But our light aid detachment got hands-on and had them all ready. I think there was a bit of a lull between battlegroups and the vehicles must have sat for a while.

“But hopefully as the pace of units going through picks up and they get more manpower they’ll start ironing out the creases and it will run a bit more smoothly.”

With the live-firing phase complete, the infantry retired to the on-site combined arms tactical trainer for a final week of

virtual drills, while next door in the command and staff trainer, the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps were staging a major pan-European simulation.

Replicating a real-life operation against a peer adversary, Exercise Steadfast Leda (page 16) saw some 850 personnel coordinating four divisions from two locations in Sennelager and Poland, while linking in with the Nato Rapid Deployable Corps in Spain and Greece.

Brig Matt Birch, chief of the Arrc’s joint fires and influence branch, said the complex multinational effort was a clear statement of intent.

“It is showing our ability to rapidly deploy into Europe should we need to, but it’s also reinforcing that Nato is prepared to act and routinely stand shoulder to shoulder with its allies,”





added the officer. "We can use NFS as a base for command-and-control purposes, as well as for storing equipment, and it allows us to project further east should we need to.

"It also reaffirms our enduring relationship with Germany as a fellow Nato partner."

In many ways, the focus on Sennelager as one of the Army's regional hubs is merely another chapter in the garrison's long history – manoeuvres have been staged there for the best part of 75 years.

However, it will now be with a fresh sense of impetus that a predicted 8,000 British and international troops will march through its gates during 2022. And with the relationship between Russia and Nato showing no sign of thawing any time soon, their presence will take on added significance. ■

## Exercise Steadfast Leda: the lowdown

“



Having a footprint across different continents gives a lot of my junior soldiers, who might have only been in the Army six to eight years and have missed out on previous operations, the chance to get out the door and actually operate in the way defence has always looked to operate.”

**Sgt Ryan Thomas,  
22 Signal Regiment**

“



Half of the unit is in Poland and half is in Sennelager. It adds a sense of realism because it's more remote and from a real-life support and planning perspective, having to cross borders, go through customs and do international road moves is not something people currently at the battalion have really done before, so that's been a good challenge. It's given us lots of useful learning points.”

**Lt Rachel Humphrey,  
Gurkha Arcc Support  
Battalion**



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Reservists from 24 Commando, Royal Engineers work through their annual two-week camp

## Reserve medal needs levelling-up

I RECEIVED the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (VRSM) at my ten-year point with the Army Reserve.

For the past eight years I have been employed on a full-time Reserve service (FTRS) contract and was surprised to see that the medal qualifying criteria does not fall in line with that of a Reservist.

It appears that my FTRS days count as half towards the qualifying period for additional medal clasps.

This also falls short of my non-Regular permanent staff colleagues who are accruing eight months of eligibility for every year served.

What is the reasoning behind this?

I seem to recall in a previous issue of *Soldier* the mention of a different service award being considered for FTRS long service. Is there any update with regard to this? – **Name and address supplied**

**Col Leigh Drummond, Assistant Head, Personal Services, Army Headquarters, replies:** There are two medals, each with its own qualifying criteria. Full-time Regular personnel are recognised through the award of the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (LSGC) which requires efficient service and good conduct over a period of 15 years with clasps available to recognise periods of a further ten years.

Part-time Reserve personnel are recognised by the award of the VRSM for long and efficient service over a period of ten years and

having qualified for their annual bounty in nine of them.

This shorter qualifying period recognises the demands placed on those who serve part-time.

Clasps to the VRSM are also available to recognise periods of a further five years.

Then there are, within the full-time contingent, those serving on FTRS. To recognise these individuals, defence utilises the VRSM with modified criteria which recognises a period of five years at full rate with any further years at half rate.

This acknowledges the fact these personnel do not have the same demands on their time outside of the Army.

The result is that an individual serving on FTRS – if they have not brought any other service over into the period – will qualify for the VRSM after 15 years and a clasp every ten years.

This is equitable to that of full-time Regular personnel.

The only exception to the full-time cohort personnel is the ex-Regular cohort (those with no Reserve service) who are not eligible for either the VRSM or the LSGC.

A project was undertaken to look at recognition for these individuals and this work is ongoing.

More information will be promulgated via the chain of command in due course.

“What’s the reasoning for this?”

YOUR letters provide an insight into the issues at the top of soldiers’ agendas... but please be brief. Emails must include your name and location (although we won’t publish them if you ask us not to). We reserve the right to accept or reject letters, and to edit for length, clarity or style. Before you write to us with a problem, you should first have tried to get an answer via your own chain of command.

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**Veterans into Logistics CIC** is a not-for-profit organisation based in Greater Manchester dedicated to training and supporting ex-military personnel for new careers within the transport and logistics industry. Visit [veteransintologistics.org.uk](http://veteransintologistics.org.uk)

**Forces Families Jobs** is a platform designed to help partners into meaningful employment. Visit [forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk](http://forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk)



## COMPETITIONS

**November HOAY winner:** Sgt R Rai, RMAS, Camberley

**November spinelines winner:** Alexander Seager, Sunderland



## DIARY

**Until January 9: Generations: Portraits of Holocaust Survivors.** In partnership with the Royal Photographic Society, Jewish News, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and Dangoor Education, this exhibition at the Imperial War Museum showcases works from 12 contemporary photographers. The images capture the special connections between Holocaust survivors and the younger generations of their families.

**Until January 28: The Last Hussar** – Tobias Wilkinson documented the daily life of the last British tank soldiers to leave Germany, prior to their homecoming in 2019. Explore his work in this photographic display at the National Army Museum.

**March 10-12: Operation Black Door.** Experience life during the Second World War through this

immersive experience. Choose one of five different journeys and take on challenges to uncover the stories hidden in the labyrinthine corridors of the Churchill War Rooms – solving missions inspired by real people who worked in this secret government headquarters. Participants are asked to dress the part to add authenticity. Tickets £35. For more information go to the events section at [iwm.org.uk](http://iwm.org.uk)

**Until May 6: Brothers in arms.** National Army Museum exhibition charting the story of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry, an elite British tank regiment whose men fought their way across North-West Europe during the Second World War.

**Until further notice: World War 2: War Stories** – an exhibition at The Tank Museum telling the story of the Royal Armoured Corps. Visit [tankmuseum.org](http://tankmuseum.org) for more information and opening times.



## DIRECTORY

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**Armed Forces Buddhist Society:**  
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[afbs-uk.org](http://afbs-uk.org)

**Armed Forces Christian Union:**  
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[afcu.org.uk](http://afcu.org.uk)

**Armed Forces Muslim Association:**  
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[afma.org.uk](http://afma.org.uk)

**Armed Services Advice Project:**  
0808 800 1007;  
[adviceasap.org.uk](http://adviceasap.org.uk)

**Army Families Federation:**  
01264 382324;  
mil 94391 2324;  
[aff.org.uk](http://aff.org.uk)

**Army LGBT Forum:**  
[armylgbt.org.uk](http://armylgbt.org.uk)

**Army Libraries:**  
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**Army Ornithological Society:**  
[armybirding.org.uk](http://armybirding.org.uk)

**Army Welfare Service:**  
01904 882053;  
[army.mod.uk/welfare-support](http://army.mod.uk/welfare-support)

**Big White Wall, now Togetherall:**  
[togetherall.com](http://togetherall.com)

**Blesma, The Limbless Veterans:**  
020 8590 1124;  
[blesma.org](http://blesma.org)

**Blind Veterans UK:**  
(formerly St Dunstan's)  
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[blindveterans.org.uk](http://blindveterans.org.uk)

**Care After Combat:**  
[careaftercombat.org](http://careaftercombat.org)

**Career Transition Partnership:**  
020 7469 6661

**Centre for Veterans Health, King Edward VII Hospital:**  
020 7467 4370;  
[cdunne@kingedwardvii.co.uk](mailto:cdunne@kingedwardvii.co.uk)

**Children's Education Advisory Service:**  
01980 618244;  
[dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk](mailto:dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk)

**Combat Stress:**  
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[combatstress.org.uk](http://combatstress.org.uk)

**Defence Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination 24/7 Helpline:**  
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**Erskine:**  
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[erskiner.org.uk](http://erskiner.org.uk)

**Family Escort Service:**  
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**Felix Fund – the bomb disposal charity:**  
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**Forcesline:**  
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Falklands – #6111;  
from operational theatres –  
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**Forces Pension Society:**  
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[forcespensionsociety.org](http://forcespensionsociety.org)

**Help for Heroes:**  
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[helpforheroes.org.uk](http://helpforheroes.org.uk)

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**Humanist, Atheist and Non-religious in Defence Network:**  
[defencehumanists.org.uk](http://defencehumanists.org.uk)

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**Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group):**  
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**National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office:**  
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[ngvfa.org.uk](http://ngvfa.org.uk)

**PoppyScotland:**  
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**Regular Forces' Employment Association:**  
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**Remount:**  
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[remount.net](http://remount.net)

**Royal British Legion:**  
0808 802 8080;  
[britishlegion.org.uk](http://britishlegion.org.uk)

**Royal British Legion Scotland:**  
0131 550 1583;  
[legionscotland.org.uk](http://legionscotland.org.uk)

**RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre:**  
01622 795900;  
[rbli.co.uk](http://rbli.co.uk)

**Scottish Veterans' Residences:**  
0131 556 0091;  
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**Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services:**  
01748 833797;  
[spaces.org.uk](http://spaces.org.uk)

**Speak Out – the Army's confidential bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline:**  
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**SSAFA:**  
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**Stoll:** 020 7385 2110; [stoll.org.uk](http://stoll.org.uk)



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**uk4u Thanks!:**  
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[uk4u.org](http://uk4u.org)

**Veterans Welfare Service:**  
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**WVRS:** 02920 232 668



## REUNIONS

**The Cheshire Yeomanry Association** is planning a dinner in Chester on April 23 to mark the outfit's formation 225 years ago. Email [kingsbr@gmail.com](mailto:kingsbr@gmail.com) for info.



## ROADSHOWS

**The Forces Pension Society** – an independent, not-for-profit

membership funded organisation that acts as a pension watchdog – is staging a number of roadshows. Log on to [forcespensionsociety.org/news-events/events](http://forcespensionsociety.org/news-events/events) for more information about the events, including dates.

**The Army Engagement Team** has resumed face-to-face events. For further information email [rc-aeg-mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:rc-aeg-mailbox@mod.gov.uk)  
The next roadshows are:

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The winner's name will appear in the March 2022 issue. All the usual competition rules apply.







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# REVIEWS

## PICK OF THE MONTH:

### Munich – The Edge of War

Political thriller asks what might have been

► THE film industry's fascination with the Second World War seems never-ending, but the prelude to the conflict is rarely given the Hollywood treatment, for fairly obvious reasons – political machinations lend themselves less to spectacular action sequences than bombs and bullets.

But this Netflix offering from German director Christian Schwochow bucks the trend. Based on a 2017 Robert Harris novel, *Munich – The Edge of War* depicts the ultimately futile attempts by diplomats on both sides to avert catastrophe.

It is Autumn 1938 and Hitler is preparing to invade Czechoslovakia. Desperate for a peaceful solution, Neville Chamberlain (Jeremy Irons) and a team of advisers travel to Munich for the emergency conference.



**P59**

GAMES

**P60**

BOOKS

**P61**

PODCASTS



## MOVIES



● *Munich – The Edge of War* is in select cinemas from January 7 and on Netflix from January 21

British civil servant Hugh Legat (**George McKay** – *1917*) is sent along to make contact with a former university friend, German diplomat Paul von Hartmann (**Jannis Niewöhner**).

The pair have not spoken since falling out over the latter's early support for Hitler. However, having realised his mistake, von Hartmann is now part of an insider plot to bring the Führer down.

Untrained in the art of spy craft, both men are at constant risk of discovery, not least by beady-eyed SS officer Franz Sauer – played by perennial Nazi villain **August Diehl** (*Inglourious Basterds*, *Allied*).

**Jessica Brown Findlay** (*Downton Abbey*), **Anjali Mohindra** (*Vigil*), **Alex Jennings** (*The Crown*) and **Liv Lisa Fries** bring up the rear in a talented Anglo-German cast.

Of course, in the end the protagonists are unable to prevent the inevitable – Hitler soon reneged on his promise of peace, the world went to war and Chamberlain resigned.

Amidst the impending doom, it is interesting to wonder what might have been had the real-life Oster conspiracy – which loosely forms the backdrop to the story – succeeded in overthrowing the Nazi regime.

The film also strikes a tone of melancholy as it

flits between the early 1930s and the denouement of 1938, posing further what-ifs – in particular, what would have transpired if ordinary Germans had taken Hitler's racist rhetoric at face value, rather than allowing themselves to be seduced by his vision of a country made great again? (A lesson for the ages if ever there was one).

Over drinks, von Hartmann tries to convince Legat that the Führer's anti-Jewish policies pose no concern. Later, by the time he understands his error in judgement, it is almost too late to atone for it.

Despite the massive spoiler looming from the off, the movie succeeds in ramping up the tension as the individual characters struggle for their political – and actual – lives, with the viewer invested in their fates.

All in all, it is well worth checking out when it drops on Netflix this month. ■

### VERDICT:

An engrossing political "what-if"

★★★★★

REVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*

## GAMES

# World War Z

## For Switch

➤ ZOMBIES have become a mainstay of video games in the last two decades – the ghoulish legion has prevailed ever since the 1996 release of *Resident Evil*.

Over the years, the proliferation of titles has ranged from coin-op actioners such as *House of the Dead* to the psychological console thrillers of *Eternal Darkness* and *Silent Hill*. Now – just when you thought it was safe to go back into the graveyard – a new nightmare has arrived in the Switch mix of *World War Z*.

While this third-person co-operative shooter – which is loosely based on the Paramount Pictures movie of the same name – revisits some familiar, well-trodden territory, it differs from its contemporaries on a couple of fronts.

Firstly, the sheer numbers of zombies facing players – all of which are intent on gnawing and infecting everyone with the same hideous virus to which they have already succumbed – adds a new dimension to player dramas.

The woes of those still in the land of the living are further compounded by the fact that the horde do not fit the plodding ghoul stereotype.

They are quick foes requiring an array of high calibre weapons and fighter pilot-like reflexes to finish them off.

It falls to players – as the hardened survivors of a global catastrophe – to deal with these creatures on missions in cities including Moscow and Jerusalem. And the result is pleasing, with a title that looks polished and plays well.

Those venturing into this most unusual of





conflicts must first choose their character type. Options range from the all-too-familiar British special forces soldier armed with a large part of the Army's current arsenal and a dodgy cockney accent to a baseball-cap wearing, assault-rifle toting American renegade.

All of the warriors have their own abilities and default weapon load-outs useful to fulfilling specific roles in battle. As well as laying down plenty of small arms rounds, players must square away some tactical admin relating to the positioning of machine guns and setting up barricades if they are to fend off attacks.

Squads will also need to think carefully about mission execution. The undead hordes have a chain of command of sorts and are controlled by so-called "screamers", which howl to attract more enemies to friendly positions. Dealing with them – and other zombie specialists – is crucial to success.

If this is not enough, foes will ambush and attempt to bite players from cover, requiring the rapid assistance of comrades to stop them being eaten alive.

While it offers little that is new to the co-operative shooter field, *World War Z* is an entertaining blast requiring a level of intelligence to play effectively. Developer Saber Interactive

has also put considerable thought into using the Switch to its best effect – the overall look and appearance of the game, and the swarming enemy hordes in particular, is impressive.

Although the solo campaign offers a decent measure of fun and plenty of action, this is a title definitely best enjoyed with a group of friends – either locally or online.

On the downside, the £35 price tag is a tad steep when balanced against the longevity on offer. But the game remains a worthy purchase if you are feeling flush and have some quality downtime to devote to it.

Overall, *World War Z* is a decent package and will appeal to fans of the genre, as well as more casual players. The zombie apocalypse has never felt so good. ■

#### VERDICT:

It's a blast – lock and load

★★★★★

REVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, SOLDIER

## Enjoyed World War Z? Try...

### Zombie Army Trilogy

DEVELOPERS at Brit studio Rebellion consistently deliver a masterclass with their Switch products – and this reworking of the *Sniper Elite* series into Second World War undead B-movie is no exception. Set in an alternative reality where Adolf Hitler has unleashed flesh-eating hordes, this is a shooter with action aplenty. While the zombies are more ponderous than in *World War Z*, they will happily keep advancing as you cycle through your weapons suite and dispatch you with a shovel when the rounds dry up.





## GAMES RELEASES



### Grand Theft Auto: The trilogy For Switch

YOUR reviewer is old enough to remember the two-dimensional game that spawned this series, which immediately courted controversy when it was released 24 years ago. But its progression into an open-world phenomenon made it a landmark in video gaming history. Its **Quentin Tarantino**-esque gangster stories casting players in lead roles as criminal anti-heroes always raised plenty of eyebrows but the titles were nonetheless outstanding, if an acquired taste. Unfortunately, this port of the three-dimensional games trilogy to the Switch fails to deliver through basic flaws such as sloppy controls, lengthy loading times and graphical glitches. A huge opportunity has been missed here – you'd be better off buying a PS2 if you want to see these releases in their full glory.

**Cliff Caswell, Soldier**



### Knights of the Old Republic For Switch

THE *Star Wars* universe has spawned a plethora of video games over the years – allowing players to fight on various sides of the conflicts in a galaxy far, far away. Most genres have been boxed-off over in this time – from deep space starfighter dogfights à la *X-Wing Squadrons* to the squad-based land ops of *Republic Commando*. Originally released a couple of decades ago, *Knights of the Old Republic* introduced a role-playing title to the line-up. Set amid a conflict between the Jedi and Sith well before the galactic civil war, this new Switch remix works well although its slower pace might disappoint those who prefer *Star Wars* to be a more full-on experience.

**Cliff Caswell, Soldier**

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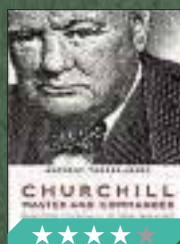
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## BOOKS

# Picks of the month

Start your new year of reading in style with this selection of recently released titles

## BOOK RELEASES



### Churchill by Anthony Tucker-Jones

SURELY there can be nothing new to say about Winston Churchill? Well, I was pleasantly surprised by the author's approach in this book and refreshed by his forthright and insightful views. If you are looking for a comprehensive biography, then this is not the title for you, but if you are after a less conventional, challenging perspective of Churchill and how he led Britain in the Second World War, you may find this book intriguing. It is a well-researched and well-argued offering that looks at some of his most controversial decisions and how they were influenced by his experiences in the First World War. I didn't agree with all of it, but that was part of the fun.

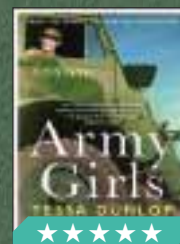
**Mike Peters, ex-AAC**



### Blackmail by David D Walker

SET in the build-up to the Somme offensive of 1916, this pseudo-fiction tale follows a former barrister turned military intelligence officer as he tries to unravel a failed assassination of the King. With his trusty followers, a cockney Royal Army Service Corps driver and Glaswegian (former) burglar batman, they uncover an international web of treason at the highest echelons of the military staff, complicit French officials and sordid attempts to blackmail the Prince of Wales with photos of him in a brothel. Fast paced and full of little historical titbits and cameos from people who would make their names in later wars, this is a really enjoyable read, even for those like me who usually avoid fiction at all costs.

**Sjt Scott Roberts, Rifles**



### Army Girls by Tessa Dunlop

WHEN thinking of Second World War veterans, elderly gentlemen with berets and medals tend to spring to mind – but this does a huge disservice to many thousands of women who joined up to do their bit. In this beautifully written book, the last surviving members of the Auxiliary Territorial Service relate their youthful experiences. Recruited to ease the pressure on an overstretched Army, they were nonetheless seen as a nuisance by elements of the chain of command – sexism went hand in hand with the rigours of the job. Told with candour and humour, their stories remind us how much – and in some respects how little – has changed in terms of equality over the years. And with the relentless march of time rapidly consigning such voices to history – two interviewees died before publication – the poignancy and timeliness of the book are all too evident.

**Becky Clark, Soldier**



### The Power of the Paddle by Jordan Wylie

THE man behind this offering is a former soldier, private security consultant and serial extreme adventurer. This is his second book about a major charity challenge, relating his efforts to paddle-board around the UK mainland to raise money to build a primary school in Djibouti. It's quite a feat. Trials and tribulations, exhaustion, Covid restrictions and an army of volunteers are all part of the experience. Once again, the result is a thrilling and inspirational read about a man willing to go to extremes to raise cash for good causes.

**Andy Kay, ex-RS**





## PICK OF THE MONTH:

# Forces Sport Podcast

**BFBS reporters get the inside story from the Services' leading lights**

► THEY are familiar pitch-side faces at sporting fixtures across the Forces community.

From a sell-out Twickenham stadium for rugby union's annual clash between the Army and Royal Navy to the Aldershot garrison pool for the Inter-Corps Swimming Championships, *BFBS Sport* reporters Julian Evans and Cath Brazier will be on hand to get on-the-spot comment from those at the centre of the action.

But the pressure of editing footage from such events, along with post-match interviews, into concise reports can sometimes lead to the expert insight from personnel being reduced to snappy sound bites.

However, the duo now have a new format where such analysis can be enjoyed in full – the *Forces Sport Podcast*.

Each episode combines a comprehensive

overview of the latest headlines from the military and civilian sporting worlds, as well as an in-depth interview with leading figures from all three Services.

"We have *Sitrep*, which is a hard-hitting news podcast, but sport is such a crucial part of the military community that we felt it was important to have a series of our own," Evans, who has worked for BFBS for 20 years, told *Soldier*.

"It is something we have wanted to do for a long while.

"The interviews are always with someone from the world of Forces sport, but they do not necessarily have to be at the elite level – we look at the grass roots as well.

"We have spoken to rugby players LCpl Semesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) and Capt Gemma Rowland (RA, pictured) and our latest interview is with Martin Colclough, who has been at the forefront of enabling injured personnel to make their way to the Paralympic GB set-up.

"Cpl Chez Nihell (RLC) gave an insight into the precarious nature of professional boxing,

and we will be talking to referees who have been at the top of the game with the Football Association.

"It is an in-depth chat, and we cover a variety of sports – not just football, rugby and cricket."

New episodes are available to download from all major providers at 1630 every Monday,

with the programme being broadcast on *BFBS Radio* at 1830 on the same day.

Extended video versions of the duo's interviews are also uploaded to the *BFBS Sports Show* YouTube channel. ■

● Anyone with suggestions for future interviewees should email [forcessport@bfbs.com](mailto:forcessport@bfbs.com)



INTERVIEW: RICHARD LONG, *SOLDIER*





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# SOLDIER SPORT

## KING OF THE RING >>

CRUISERWEIGHT star LCpl Carnell Brown (AGC (SPS)) added his name to the roll call of Army winners at the England Boxing National Amateur Championships. The 27-year-old returns to the gym this month as the team prepares for the Inter-Services. Read more on page 72...









# SENEGAL CELEBRATION

## BRONZE MEDAL SEES JUDO ACE ACHIEVE QUALIFYING STANDARD AHEAD OF COMMONWEALTH GAMES

**J**UDO player Cpl Sarah Hawkes (AGC (RMP)) has set her sights on the Commonwealth Games after a sensational return to the mat saw her hit the qualifying mark for this summer's showcase.

Having missed almost 20 months of action due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 31-year-old battled her way to a bronze medal at the Dakar African Open in Senegal – a result that saw her achieve the points tally required for selection for the Northern Ireland squad at Birmingham 2022.

"It is so special for me as it means I get to represent my home country," the +78kg player told *SoldierSport*. "At every other event it is GB, which is fine, but this is a little bit different.

"I was absolutely over the moon with the result. It was my first tournament back and my opening fight did not go to plan – I lost.

"That knocked me out of a place in the final, so the pressure was on, and I had to win my next contest.

"When the ippon was called to say I had won bronze there was a flood of relief as well as happiness that the pressure had been lifted.

"It had been nearly two years since my last fight and while my expectations going in were not necessarily low, they were not high either. It felt like I was heading into the unknown.

"When you are regularly fighting on the international circuit you know who you are going to be up against and where you're at, but having been away for so long it felt like I was stepping into my very first competition again.

"Pre-Covid I would be checking out my main rivals and watching their videos, but in Senegal I didn't know who any of the players were."

While clearly delighted to achieve the criteria, Hawkes said the process may have become more difficult had the result not gone her way.

The qualifying window closes in March and with Covid's Omicron variant taking hold, there could well be an impact on future events.

"It would have been a lot easier if I had done this in 2020," Hawkes, who trains full-time as part of the Army's elite athlete programme, admitted.

"Obviously, it would have been better if Covid never happened; I would have a lot more tournaments under my belt and I could quite possibly have qualified then.

"But we have not had that luxury. All athletes have been impacted by this – we thought we were going to competitions and at the last minute they were either cancelled or rescheduled.

"At the start of the initial lockdown I was left alone but when it became apparent that training was not possible, I went back to my unit – 3 Regiment, Royal Military Police – to work.

"At first it was a shock to the system, but it was great to get back into it.

"In August 2020 elite athletes were allowed to start training in bubbles and I was working with regular partners at set times.

"It wasn't easy. Normally you would be training for something, but we didn't know when we'd get the next opportunity to put what we've practised into action.



**"EVERY  
ATHLETE  
GOES IN  
WANTING  
TO WIN  
GOLD"**

"Being able to train again was fabulous, but it was hard not having something to look forward to.

"Since coming back from Africa I've been able to watch footage of my fights and I know what areas I need to work on.

"The circuit has changed, some people dropped off during Covid and there are new faces – so there are a lot of unknowns."

Having successfully negotiated the qualifying hurdle, Hawkes went on to compete at the British Championships, where she added another bronze medal to her collection.

She claimed gold in 2017 but then suffered a hamstring injury that ruled her out of a title defence the following year.

The soldier returned in 2019 to take bronze, before Covid led to the tournament's cancellation 12 months later.

"The medal means I keep my place on the British squad," the Servicewoman added.

"Now it's about seeing what other international events are available. Before Covid I would constantly be planning ahead, but since then I've had to change my perspective.

"My main drive is the Commonwealth Games and it's about focusing on one tournament at a time in the build-up.

"Everyone goes in wanting to win gold and that will be my mindset. Given everything that has gone on I'm in the best place I can be – I feel strong and fit and it's now about maintaining that." ■



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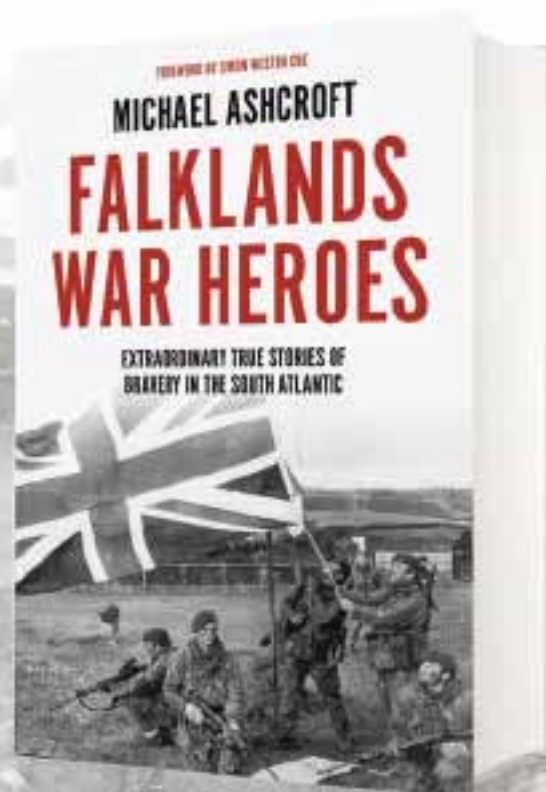


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**» ARCHERY**



Pictures: Cpl Becky Brown, RLC

# ARCHERS TARGET EXPANSION AFTER FORCES DOUBLE

**T**HE Army archery team is making big plans for the new year after they finished 2021 on a high with victory at the Inter-Services Indoor Championships.

Success in Stoneleigh came on the back of the soldiers' triumph at the outdoor equivalent earlier in the season and with the Forces double secured they are looking to capitalise on the growing momentum in the sport.

A series of beginners' sessions have been planned for the coming months and team captain WO2 Craig Cherrie (RLC) told *SoldierSport* he hopes the set-up's new coaching structure will help develop talent for the future.

"We ran summer and winter training camps last year and also saw members completing their level one coaching courses," the NCO explained.

"When I first started, we had to get coaches from Archery GB to run sessions for us.

"Now we have Service personnel within the organisation

who can do that.

"Our plan is to run beginners' courses so we can attract more junior soldiers. No experience is required, and we will be in a position where we can give them the right guidance.

"We have a really good backbone to the team and the main effort now is to bring more people in.

"For younger personnel this will be something new and exciting – we are diverse group, and it doesn't matter what physical condition you are in or age you are."

The team's latest Forces win was secured amid the backdrop of the National Indoor Championships and Cherrie said the elite stage provided valuable experience for the athletes.

Strong individual displays helped the Army secure the military honours, with Sgt Dan Everest (REME) topping the standings in the recurve category. LCpl Sarah Roderick (Int Corps) matched his achievement in the



**"THE  
MAIN  
EFFORT  
NOW IS  
TO BRING  
MORE  
PEOPLE  
IN"**

barebow and SSgt Retief Uys (AAC) was triumphant in the compound field.

Roderick also qualified for the head-to-head competition in the national finals.

"The championships were tough," Cherrie (pictured left) explained. "Over the past couple of years all three Services have upped their game – we have really improved as associations.

"When it comes to competitions everyone knows each other, which means it is a brilliant atmosphere.

"We felt really confident going in. The winter training camp gave us a lot of knowledge and we were well prepared.

"However, there were also some nerves as we were shooting at national level with Archery GB – the best archers in the country were there and we were alongside them.

"But that is something we do on purpose – it can be quite daunting for new members, but it is brilliant experience." ■



## SPORT SHORTS



Picture: Vestur Lás

### Gleeson makes gains

**B**OB SLEIGH ace LCpl Nick Gleeson (Para) secured his second World Cup medal of the season on the Winterberg track in Germany.

The soldier was part of the Great Britain four-man crew piloted by Brad Hall that claimed silver as they finished just 0.30sec behind the home nation's winning team. The quartet also secured silver in Igls earlier in the season.

Fellow soldier LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) – pilot of GB's other four-man crew – finished 23rd in Germany. The teams were in action in Altenberg as this issue went to press, with the series concluding in St Moritz in mid-January. The Winter Olympics in Beijing follow next month.



### Dainton's record delight

**A** RMY forward Bdr Beth Dainton (RA) made rugby union history as part of the Barbarians squad that ran out at Twickenham in front of a new record attendance for a women's match.

A crowd of 29,581 cheered on the invitational side as they recorded a 60-5 victory over South Africa.

Dainton, who also plays for Premier 15s outfit Harlequins, came on as a second-half substitute in the fixture.

# CLIMBERS BACK ON COURSE



**T**HE Army Mountaineering Association (AMA) maintained its momentum post-Covid restrictions by staging successful climbing performance courses in Exeter.

The fully subscribed programme was run by the British Mountaineering Council with the aim of developing military coaches who, moving forward, can help grow the sport within the Service.

With the Armed Forces Bouldering League in the midst of its latest series, the sessions at the Quay Climbing Wall provided a further example of a return to normality and AMA vice chairman Maj Al Mason (AGC (ETS)) told *SoldierSport* the event was well received following the disruption of the past 20 months.

"Everything stopped during Covid," he added. "I think people were grateful to have the opportunity – it was a chance to refine their skills, while getting together with like-minded individuals."

"We had three soldiers with us from 11 Signal Regiment who are really passionate about what they are doing. They organise climbing in Blandford in their own time and they can use what they have learnt to coach others to become better climbers."

"They will be producing the climbers of the future, which is so important for us."

As well as offering sports climbing and bouldering, the AMA is at the forefront of Service mountaineering expeditions and has big plans for the coming years.

"If you go to a bouldering league event there will be 120 people there," Mason continued. "We have those who join for the sporting side of things and to compete, while others prefer to get out on the mountains on expeditions."

"Both are popular in their own way."

"A lot of the expeditions are overseas, which was very difficult during Covid, and we had some exciting plans for 2021 that had to be transferred to 2022."

"For example, we are looking at ice climbing in Norway, and are working on an expedition at Mount Everest in 2023."

The AMA is also preparing an entry in the Patrouille des Glaciers in Switzerland in late April – a week-long test that features routes of varying lengths on challenging glacial, and non-glacial, terrain.

It is one of a number of events featured on the organisation's Defence Connect page and anyone with an interest in joining, and finding out more about what is on offer, is urged to log on. ■



# MONTH IN SPORT

## January's key fixtures...



**WHAT:** Army Jiu-Jitsu Championships  
**WHEN:** January 19  
**WHERE:** Combat Sports Centre, Aldershot  
**NEED TO KNOW:** The

Service's finest athletes come together to compete for individual glory, as well as for a place in the squad for next month's European Championships



**WHAT:** Army Cross-Country Championships  
**WHEN:** January 26  
**WHERE:** Gibraltar Barracks, Minley  
**NEED TO KNOW:** Individual and team prizes will be up for grabs in a host of men's and women's categories, with the top performers vying for selection for the Army's Inter-Services squad



**WHAT:** Army Cyclocross Championships  
**WHEN:** January 26  
**WHERE:** Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell  
**NEED TO KNOW:** The

mission to expand cycling's winter discipline continues at pace, with riders taking to the saddle in a battle to be crowned the Army's top performer in 2022

## LEAGUE IN NUMBERS

GROUPS OF FOUR TEAMS IN THE NEW-LOOK CHALLENGE CUP FOR 2022

**4**

DATE, IN MARCH, OF THE ARMY'S OPENING GROUP FIXTURE

**12**

DAY TRAINING AND SELECTION CAMP PLANNED FOR LATER THIS MONTH AS THE REDS LOOK TO RECRUIT NEW TALENT TO THE FOLD

**5**

PLAYERS CURRENTLY ON HEAD COACH WO2 WOZ BROADLEY'S DATABASE

**80**



Picture: Phil Mingo/PPAUK

## REDS FACE NEW CHALLENGE

**T**HE Army women's rugby league team will test themselves against the best in the business after being drawn alongside domestic treble winners St Helens in next season's Challenge Cup.

The Reds also face fixtures with Warrington Wolves and Barrow Raiders in the competition's new four-group format, which runs in March and April and sees the top two teams in each qualifying for the quarter-finals.

"St Helens will really push us," head coach WO2 Woz Broadley (RLC) told *SoldierSport*. "All three are Super League teams and I've been saying that the Army can compete at that level if we are at full strength.

"Warrington are growing and have signed some quality players, while Barrow are newly promoted and conceded very few points last year.

"We are looking forward to it and our aim is to make the quarter-finals."

With momentum building, the set-up is holding a training and selection camp from January 30 to February 5 as it looks to expand its player pool ahead of the new campaign.

"We are looking to create a development team," Broadley continued. "I have a big database of players but policy states that we can only select 25 every time we meet up, so a lot of people are missing out.

"A development squad means more personnel can get involved and the take up has been fantastic so far."

And following their success at the Army Sports Awards, the Reds have been named as the UK Armed Forces' team of the year ahead of the tri-Service ceremony in March.

"This means so much and is recognition for all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes," the head coach said. "We do not play for awards, we do it for the love of the sport, but it is fantastic to be honoured in this way." ■

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**MOTORSPORT**



# ARMY RACING CHARGED BY EXTREME EXPERIENCE

**T**HE Extreme E race series ended its debut season in style as its Odyssey 21 electric cars took to the off-road terrain of Bovington training area for the Jurassic X Prix.

Usually the domain of the Army's armoured vehicles, the venue provided a fitting finale for a championship that has staged legs in remote parts of the world, while raising awareness of climate change.

Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Greenland and Sardinia all hosted events prior to the show coming to the military base, which was selected following the cancellation of the planned Argentinian race due to Covid.

As well as bringing high-profile sport – Formula One world champions Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button both have teams in the field – to the Service's backyard, it offered valuable experience for those involved in the growth of Army motorsport.

A team of 20 soldiers were on

hand to help with marshalling activities and Maj Clive Allford (RLC, pictured right), director of the Army Rally Championship, said the benefits gained from the weekend would be plentiful.

"Marshals are fundamental to all motorsport," he explained. "The people we have here are new to this – they've done online training with the governing body and are working towards being able to stand as marshals.

"We want to increase our capability in this area so we can put on more events.

"As an organisation, the British Army Motorsport Association (BAMA) is not big enough to stage races entirely on our own – we rely on other clubs and marshals coming in. By having more numbers, we will be less reliant on those civilians.

"Marshals form the safety network that allows people to compete at the level – and speed – they want to be at, so it is a very important role."



**"THIS IS  
A GOLD  
TICKET"**

Allford also said the job offers an affordable way into a sport that can be very expensive, with BAMA's navigation rally forming the next step for those wanting to get behind the wheel.

Having Extreme E on its doorstep provided a notable feather in the cap for the Army and the officer believes there are distinct similarities between the two organisations.

"For BAMA, this is a gold ticket opportunity," he added. "This is one of the top five or six motorsport events in terms of scope and appeal.

"In many ways their operation is like a battlegroup going on tour. They have their own ship to transport vehicles and kit and are almost self-sufficient.

"The Army is looking at innovation in electric vehicles and alternate power sources and being involved with Extreme E, who are at the forefront of that, gives us a unique insight into what can be done." ■



# BROWN LEADS THE CHARGE AT NATIONAL FINALS

**C**RUISERWEIGHT star LCpl Carnell Brown (AGC (SPS)) became the latest Army fighter to rise to the top of the domestic scene after he battled his way to victory at the England Boxing National Amateur Championships.

The 27-year-old, who went into the tournament as the number one seed in the elite draw, defeated Sheffield City's Joel Aminu on a split decision to clinch the title and cap a remarkable rise through the Service's boxing programme.

"It has not really sunk in yet," the athlete told *SoldierSport* as he reflected on his success. "Obviously I'm really happy as there has been a lot of hard work and preparation involved.

"Every boxer strives to be a national champion and it is nice to finally get there.

"The fight itself didn't really go to plan and I wasn't able to implement my style; I got

dragged into what he wanted to do, which made it quite untidy.

"I had a points deduction in the third round and suffered a split eye from a clash of heads, but my will to win was overwhelming.

"I'm at peace with the fact you cannot perform the way you want to in every fight – it was a case of making the most of what was a bad situation."

Brown (pictured above) admitted the pressure of the occasion may also have impacted on his performance but said he was delighted to end a disrupted year on a personal high.

The Army team only returned to the gym in late summer, meaning the lead in to one the biggest tournaments of the season was shorter than it would normally be.

"We were so happy to be back and, fortunately, I was able to pick up from where I left off," the soldier explained.

"To have so much time away



**"I FELT  
LIKE WE  
WERE IN  
A GOOD  
PLACE"**

from boxing was strange, but the hunger was always there.

"We had the MTK Box Cup quite early on, which we needed. It was important to get back in the ring as you can only do so much in sparring. We had other run outs when we could and that really helped us prepare for the main goal."

The champion, and his teammates, will resume training in the coming days as 2022 returns to a more normal footing.

The UK Armed Forces Championships are scheduled for March, with another national showdown following on from there, meaning Brown will be the man to beat.

"In my head I will always be the number two, aiming to be number one," he said of the pressure to retain his title. "It makes me hungrier, and I will strive to improve.

"As a team we're really looking forward to the UKAF



Championships, the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force have a lot of new talent so it should be a brilliant tournament."

Elsewhere, Sig Lucy Kisielewska (R Signals, pictured below) lost to Team GB's Jodie Wilkinson in the women's 69kg final, while Pte Josh Millington (RLC, pictured bottom left) was defeated by Amaan Khayer in the men's 49kg development final.

Reflecting on the team's return in 2021, head coach Sgt James Allen (REME) said his fighters can be proud of their achievements in a difficult year.

"Lucy had a tough bout against the number one seed," he said. "But it is not a case of her having to go back to the drawing board, she just needs to make some slight adjustments.

"We thought Carnell would win if he performed the way we know he can.

"He has served his Army apprenticeship – he boxed for his regiment then joined our development team. He was in the national development semi-finals in 2017, and then won it in 2018, and is now an elite champion.

"All credit to our system – this shows the Army pathway works.

"After our success at the MTK show I felt like we were in a good place and we will hit the ground running in January." ■



## BOXING IN NUMBERS

NATIONAL  
SENIOR  
TITLES  
WON BY 17  
DIFFERENT  
ARMY  
BOXERS  
SINCE 2008

**30**

YEARS ON THE  
SERVICE TEAM  
FOR LCPL  
CARNELL  
BROWN

**4**

WINS FOR  
DEV TEAM  
BOXERS  
AS THEY  
DOWNED  
WESTERN  
COUNTIES IN  
THE BUILD-  
UP TO THE  
NATIONALS

**4**

VICTORIES  
FROM 30  
ELITE BOUTS  
FOR THE  
SQUAD  
DURING THE  
SHORTENED  
2021  
CAMPAIGN

**19**



Picture: Alligin Photography

## REDS REPEL POLICE CHARGE

**T**HE Army women's rugby union team overturned a first-half deficit to defeat the British Police in their first competitive outing in almost two years.

Their rivals crossed for two tries in the opening quarter to put the Reds on the back foot but scores from Pte Caralee Shaw (QARANC), Bdr Beth Dainton and Gnr Amy Carr (both RA) saw them head to the interval in front.

Gnr Asinate Kasowaka (RA) stretched the lead midway through the second half as she used her searing pace to break clear on the left wing. But the visitors refused to give up and when they crossed for a third try the soldiers faced the prospect of a nervy ending.

Fortunately, they held firm to claim a 20-15 win – a result that delighted head coach Maj Gemma Stonebridge-Smith (AGC (ETS)).

"There was a great effort in our defence at the end," she said. "It shows the heart and accountability among the squad, with people putting in that extra few per cent to help their teammates out."

She also praised the efforts of Dainton and fellow Welsh international Sgt Jade Mullen (AGC (SPS)), whose leadership proved vital in what was an inexperienced group.

"It's great to have these international athletes come in and look to bring people up to their level, as opposed to the other way round," she said. ■

● **CYCLOCROSS** rider Capt Simon Hale (R Anglian) battled his way to a podium finish at the UCI Masters World Championships in Ipswich.

Starting 67th in a grid of 70 athletes in the age 55-60 category, the officer moved through the field to force his way into second place on the final lap, only to finish in the bronze medal position.

"A third-place finish in the World Championships is amazing," Hale said. "I had the race of my life."

WO2 Matt Waters (R Anglian) was 29th in the 45-50 category, with Capt Jon Robinson (Yorks) 65th in the 50-55 field.





I'd like to be employed in an offensive role – taking on the enemy in that realm would be a really cool thing to do. I'm a Reservist and a software developer in my civilian life. I work with Bowman for 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron, but taking part in Cyber Spartan was an eye-opener. I now think these skills should be part of the standard training for all Signals personnel, not just the specialists.

**Cpl Teresa Bastiman-Davies, R Signals**



I'm currently a systems analyst attached to 13 Signal Regiment and provided support to help run Cyber Spartan. It's the first time I've got involved in this exercise and having seen it up close I now know the direction I'd like to go in career-wise, which is as a cyber specialist, helping to secure our networks from attack.

**Sgt Thamraj Gurung, RLC**



My ambition is to move to a cyber regiment. I'm a communications infrastructure engineer at the moment but cyber is growing in importance by the day and I want to move into that area as soon as I can. With the Army's help I'm doing lots of courses to upskill.

**Sig Peter Coates, R Signals**

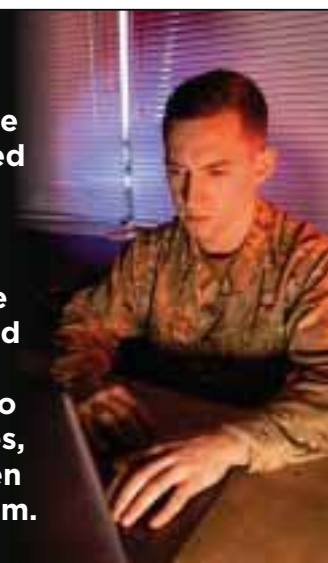


I'd love to be involved in taking down enemy systems, or blinding them by neutralising their battlefield Istar platforms. Currently, cyber is quite segregated with expertise contained to certain Signals units mainly. But I think the Army should branch training out to other parts, such as the Infantry, because I'm sure there's potential to do more with it in the field.

**Pte Daniel Dolan, Para**

If the Army is going to become more expeditionary and more dispersed, then we need to learn to secure our communication and Istar networks as well as we can. I'd like to be employed as a so-called ethical hacker, going into our own systems to find their vulnerabilities, reporting back and then helping to improve them.

**Sig Mitchell Saitch, R Signals**



## Warrior code

We asked participants in last month's Exercise Cyber Spartan what their dream cyber role for the Army would be...

I helped organise this exercise and I'd really like to do that for the Army on a full-time basis. These events are becoming more important because our potential enemies have major cyber capabilities. This scenario gave people a safe space to test their skills and helped us identify new talent around the Service.

**Sgt Bojang Dodou, R Signals**







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