

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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COVER
STORY



“
I remember going to my first cardiac arrest
”

Troops answer 999 calls – page 28



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46



42



“

There was a lot of pressure on me with this being my third title defence

”

Chez crowned king – page 78

Happy New Year



THE start of a new year is a great point at which to set fresh goals – and kid yourself that you might

just meet them. But if the words of performance nutritionist Gareth Nicholas are to be believed, it is a good sense of proportion that is the key to getting healthy.

On page 21 the adviser to the Army Triathlon Association offers his top tips for a battle-winning diet. And it is refreshing to see that his advice is as much about planning and preparation as it is about cutting out the finer things in life.

Turn to page 18 to read our fitness special in full. From workout hacks (page 18) to affordable training kit (page 25), there is plenty of inspiration to be found.

And finally, thank you to boxing stars Spr Ebonie Jones (RE) and LCpl John Marvin (PWRR), whose fighting physiques adorn the front cover.

Turn to page 78 to see how their fellow boxers got on at the latest ITC Catterick showdown.

From all the team at *Soldier*, we wish you a happy, healthy and adventure-filled 2018

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

Where to find *Soldier*

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> Purchase

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The logo for FORCES TV, featuring the word "FORCES" in a bold, black, sans-serif font with an orange dot over the 'O', followed by "TV" in a similar font. To the right of "TV" is a stylized orange and black chevron symbol. The logo is set against a white background with a curved top edge.

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A close-up, side-profile view of a line of British Grenadier Guards. They are wearing their iconic red tunics and bearskin hats with gold braiding. They are holding rifles with bayonets fixed to the barrels. The focus is sharp on the soldier in the foreground, with others in the line receding into a soft-focus background.

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Thrown in at the deep end

Rookie Army sailors praised for saving lives in choppy water

COURAGEOUS gunners on a sailing expedition showed "skill and resilience beyond their experience" when they saved the lives of a stricken crew in gale force winds.

The troops had been on a routine leg of Exercise Mediterranean Ubique on-board the Royal Artillery Yacht Club vessel *St Barbara V* (shown above) when they pulled five Swiss sailors from the water.

Club commodore Col Neil Wilson was skippering the boat. He recalled how the drama had unfolded at Punta Rasca, close to the tip of Tenerife.

The Army crew (above right) watched in horror as the nearby vessel, *Tyger of London*, barrelled into the water and capsized, throwing her crew overboard (near right).

"It had been obvious that something was seriously wrong – the mast crashed down into the water with the wind around Force 7," Col Wilson told *Soldier*.

"I called for my second-in-command to get up on deck and we sent a Mayday. As we circled we saw four people fall from the boat into the sea.

"Their lifejackets inflated – but one of the crew took his off and dived under the vessel.

"He had gone to help a fifth member who was trapped inside."

With the engine of the *St Barbara* started, and all eight soldiers on-board helping with the rescue, Col Wilson moved in and the sailors were pulled from the water.

The four men and one woman were taken below, given dry clothes and transported to the nearby port of Las Galletas, where they received medical attention.

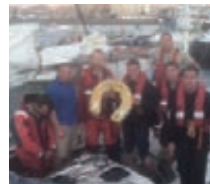
The yacht had been on an adventurous training outing sponsored by Royal Artillery regiments and designed to give troops a taste of sailing life.

Col Wilson continued: "The soldiers on-board during the rescue were from 29 Commando Regiment.

"Their actions were impressive given the fact that only one or two of them have ever sailed before – they showed skill and resilience beyond their experience.

"They performed well during the emergency but their care for the sailors afterwards was great to see.

"They showed real compassion."



SOLDIER

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“
The mast
crashed
down
”

GLOBAL SITREP



1. BERMUDA

LONG-DISTANCE SERVICE

A BERMUDA-based Reservist is continuing his service with the British Army despite living some 3,500 miles from his unit.

Cpl Geoff Byrne, a member of the newly formed 8th Battalion, The Rifles, moved to the Atlantic island nine months ago, where he works as a butcher.

The 48-year-old fulfills his Reserve commitments by training with the Royal Bermuda Regiment and visiting his company in Durham when he is in the UK.

A Regular until 1996, in 2007 he joined D Company, 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, which became part of 8 Rifles upon its formation last month.

"It's great to know I can still keep up training while I'm living here," he said.



“
Women’s
sport is
growing out
there
”

Footballers on tour in the Middle East
– page 75

1. BERMUDA



3. UK HIGH FIVE

SOLDIERS from the Royal Gibraltar Regiment have completed a five-week exercise at Otterburn training area.

Reservists and Regulars joined up for a live-firing package, practising fire and manoeuvre skills as well as day and night navigation.

The full-time troops then deployed on two exercises, the first being a week-long test for privates and lance corporals in various command roles to assess their readiness for promotion.

The focus was on section-level tasks that went through various stages of offensive operations in a conventional war-fighting setting.

A final exercise tested platoon-level tactics, with troops conducting nightly reconnaissance patrols and launching an early morning clearance operation.



2. FALKLAND ISLANDS



2. FALKLAND ISLANDS LET'S YOMP AGAIN...

A GROUP of veterans have successfully completed their retrace of the 1982 yomp to Port Stanley – paying tribute to fallen comrades along the way.

Organised by the Not Forgotten Association, the Falklands Trek Challenge saw a team made up of Army cap badges, plus the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, embark on the 60-mile journey.

The event – coinciding with the 35th anniversary of the war – took in battlefield sites including Two Sisters and Tumbledown.

Tweeting during the trip, association CEO James Stopford said: "The company is brilliant and the banter is flying".



INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

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IN NUMBERS
8,000



How many sappers have learnt to ski in the 40 years the Royal Engineers Winter Sports Club has run adventurous training in Stubaital, Austria. Members of the corps were gathering in Fulpmes to mark the milestone as this issue went to press.



5. KENYA COMMUNITY COOPERATION

SOLDIERS from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment took time out from training on the African savannah to improve the infrastructure for pupils at a school in Laikipia.

Troops installed a 5,000-litre water tank, constructed fences, redecorated outside areas and reinforced a pathway at the Bridge Academy in Likii.

Meanwhile, personnel from British Army Training Unit Kenya have been helping local people rebuild a vitally important dam in the Rift Valley.

The station supplied specialist engineering equipment, manpower and expertise to repair the structure, ensuring fresh water for the rural community of Dol Dol.



“
People pay thousands to come here
”

Africa assignment impresses troops – page 33

6. BORNEO GUNNERS GO APE



RESOLUTE gunners embarked on a series of tests – including conquering the highest peak in South East Asia – during a demanding adventurous training package in Borneo.

Exercise Jungle Monkey saw 14 Reservists from 101st (Northumbrian) Regiment, Royal Artillery brave demanding terrain and 100 per cent humidity. But they rose to the challenge, ascending nearly 5,000m to the top of Mount Kinabalu (pictured) and a further 2,400m on nearby Trus Mardi.

The trek provided an opportunity to remember the thousands of Allied soldiers who died in Japanese captivity during the Second World War.

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THROUGH
THE DAY**

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A personal view from Sara Baade, Chief Executive of the Army Families Federation...

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

AFTER a busy 2017, the coming year is set to continue in the same vein with some exciting projects.

We have been awarded £194,000 of Labor funding, which will enable us to develop an online information hub to better inform Forces families about future postings in terms of housing, education, employment and infrastructure.

This tri-Service project will give soldiers and their loved ones more decision-making power and leave them better prepared for the military journey.

I am also keen to continue improving the employability of Army partners and, to that end, we are working with Warwick University to carry out research in this area.

For those who want to work or train, we will do everything we can to improve access to supportive employers and realistic opportunities. Look out for a survey on this soon.

We will also be assessing the Army "offer" and whether it represents a fair deal for the modern family.

Many of you have taken part in our recent questionnaire about this, and we hope to gain some meaningful insights to continue effecting policy change.

The future accommodation model pilots are also expected to begin in 2018. We still have many questions around this, as

do families, but in the meantime we continue to ensure that you are properly considered in the process.



www.aff.org.uk



Picture: Steve Dock

New system to help Reserves advance

FRESH promotion rules aimed at making career progression fairer for Army Reservists will be rolled out this year.

In a move to bring personnel in-line with Regular colleagues, a Reserve promotion board is being introduced to consider majors aspiring to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Currently, cap badge pre-selection boards score candidates and those achieving more than 30 points are ratified and published on the so-called pink list.

But the five Reserve brigadiers on the new board will now carry out their own assessment and scoring before finalising which individuals should go forward.

Army Personnel Centre spokesman Maj Ali Hempenstall (Scots) said the pre-selection process would still take place but the extra scrutiny would bring more consistency as scores between cap badges can vary.

The board will mirror the procedures of its Regular cousin.

"It will allow us to compare apples with apples," Maj Hempenstall told *Soldier*. "The board will sit for the first time in February and will provide a pan-Army score for Reservists, bringing their career management in line with the Regulars."

Under the current system the numbers of Reservists being added

to the promotable list had been increasing year-on-year, with more candidates than available jobs.

"This is not good career management because it falsely raises expectations, which is not in the interests of either the individual or the Army," the officer added.

"The new board will ensure scores are truly comparable. It is in keeping with policy to integrate Reserve practice and procedure with its Regular counterpart."

A showstopping steed



THIS bizarre cake would be enough to stop Paul Hollywood in his tracks. Recreating a scene from Stephen Spielberg's *War Horse* movie, it was cooked up by civilian Emma Morris for a display at Birmingham's NEC. Her husband Owain, a fitness instructor at the Infantry Battle School in Brecon, told *Soldier* the cereal and marshmallow creation had "brought many to a standstill".

CADET FORCE FIRST

■ THE Queen has approved a new commission for Cadet Force volunteers. From now on it will replace the current Land Forces commission and personnel will no longer be classed as Army Reservists unless they serve in the Reserve separately. Existing ACF officers have been transferred to the new commission unless the appointment board decided otherwise.

RAPID REACTION TEST

■ THE expertise of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers serving with 16 Air Assault Brigade was put to the test in two days of intense competition to celebrate the corps' patron saint St Eligius.

Exercise Pegasus Bluebell saw the soldiers taking on tasks ranging from shooting to radio procedure and battlefield first aid.

8 Parachute Field Company were declared the winners.



HORSE HEALING

■ UK veterans facing mental health problems have undergone a therapy session with a difference under the guidance of American horse whisperer Monty Roberts.

A three-day workshop at the Royal Armoured Corps Saddle Club in Bovington saw the 82-year-old equine behavioural expert teach seven ex-Service personnel how to gain a horse's trust through body language and by lowering their heart rate and breathing.

Famous in equine circles for his training techniques, Roberts has already helped hundreds of former US soldiers suffering from PTSD, depression and anxiety.



Picture: Graeme Main

Sticks set to improve pain relief

“
It offers
greater
control
”

TROOPS are being issued with lozenges to relieve pain on the battlefield, which MoD officials say will be more effective than the current morphine shot.

The new "lollipops", which use the synthetic substance fentanyl, are thought to be both faster acting and easier to administer than the existing drug.

They will replace the single use auto-injectors used for severe pain.

An MoD spokeswoman told *Soldier* that the sticks, or oral trans-mucosal lozenges, are being phased in.

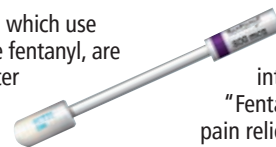
They will ensure personnel on operations and overseas exercises

(shown above) have the best possible medical support.

She added: "The principal benefit is the way the drug is administered – absorption through the inside of the mouth is more reliable than an intramuscular injection.

"Fentanyl is faster acting, enabling pain relief to be achieved more quickly. It offers greater control as it can be removed from the patient's mouth if needed."

The spokeswoman also highlighted that as fentanyl is a commercially available product, the MoD will be able to draw on existing research into its benefits.



Guard changes... for a day



■ ROYAL Navy sailors have performed the Changing of the Guard ceremony outside Buckingham Palace for the first time. The sailors' new skills were taught by drill instructors from 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards. One soldier told the *London Evening Standard*: "They could be better. They won't ever be able to do it like the Grenadiers can." Another joked: "We've been doing it for 300 years so it's about time we let them have a turn!"

Picture: PO Aaron Hoare, RN



Looking for underwater adventure?

SERVICE personnel are being sought to get involved with the biggest underwater excavation since the *Mary Rose*. *HMS Invincible* was captured from the French in 1747 and sank in the Solent in 1758, but not before it revolutionised British warship design.

Army divers have already retrieved artefacts from the wreck (shown), but the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust now wants soldiers and veterans to help with conserving and recording the finds, as well as with next year's dive season.

No experience is necessary and the centre is accessible to anyone with a disability.

To register interest contact Kevin Stratford on 07793 559 405 or kstratford@bournemouth.ac.uk



Picture: Michael Pitts



MISSION RECOGNITION

■ AROUND 100 soldiers from the 32 Engineer Regiment-led task force serving with the United Nations mission in South Sudan have received medals in recognition of their service to the war-torn country.

The troops, shown above, are due to return home this month and have been carrying out infrastructure work in Malakal, including camp construction and drainage-system building.

In Bentiu the contingent built a new permanent hospital for UN personnel and provided clinical training to local medical staff at the state hospital.

They also helped repair Rubkona airfield.

GOING ON EXERCISE?

 01252 787096

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CARPING ON

■ THE annual Forces Carp Classic competition provided the perfect catch for charity – netting £8,000 for Blesma and Great Ormond Street Hospital.

The week-long event at Abbey Lakes in France attracted some 100 serving personnel, veterans and blue light workers.



WELSH WONDERS

■ SOLDIERS have been recognised at the Armed Forces in Wales Awards.

Capt Glenn Hall (RLC) was among those to be honoured at a ceremony at Cardiff City Stadium. The officer was praised for his work to grow the Reserves in his role as recruitment officer for 157 Regiment, RLC.

UNLOCK SCHOOL CASH

■ ARMY parents and carers are being urged to tell teachers that their child has a military connection before January 18 to unlock extra education cash.

State and free schools, as well as academies, are granted £300 per youngster under the so-called Service pupil premium.

The money, from the Department for Education, is used to provide support during testing times such as a parent being away. Children from reception class to year 11 are eligible.



Picture: Simon Buxton

LEVISON'S LESSONS

■ EXPLORER Levison Wood will share his experience with Service personnel as part of an impressive line-up of speakers by the Centre for Army Leadership.

The former Parachute Regiment officer and Reservist will deliver sessions on "leadership in the field" at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on February 21, and the Harman Lecture Theatre in Catterick on March 22.

For more details on the events, which are open to all personnel, visit the Centre for Army Leadership Moss site on DII or alternatively www.sandhursttrust.org

GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL DELAY

TROOPS will have to wait slightly longer to receive the new incarnation of the General Service Medal (GSM) while a new contract to supply it is finalised, the MoD has said.

The award is due to be ready in the coming weeks, although a small supply is available now for urgent requirements.

The decoration was created at the end of the First World War and revised back in 1962.

Reflecting operations from the beginning of 2008, the latest version of the GSM was drawn up two years ago – with a new ribbon plus five clasps to

recognise deployments.

Eligible serving soldiers do not need to apply; they will be flagged on JPA and the medal sent via unit admin staff.

However, veterans will need to contact the MoD Medals Office.

Any troops with questions should contact their unit HR staff.

Meanwhile, Regular officers have been assessed for entitlement to the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal after it was announced that the decoration would be extended to this cohort.

An assessment process for veteran officers has now begun.



FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Aiming high

AN injured veteran battled his disability and intense altitude sickness to climb Everest base camp. Anil Gurung (ex-RGR), who lost his right leg after he stepped on an IED in Afghanistan in 2009, reached the height of 17,600 feet, raising money for Royal British Legion Industries in the process. Help him meet his target by visiting <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/AnilGurung>



Marathon task

A SUPER-FIT former Army officer is preparing to run a marathon a day for 15 days along the Western Front to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Lizzie Rosewell (ex-RA) will run some 360 miles, starting with the Paris Marathon before returning to London via Amiens, Thiepval, Arras and other major battlefield sites, carrying her own kit and camping most evenings. To support her visit www.lizzierunning.wordpress.com

Target:
£2,000
For ABF The Soldiers' Charity



■ PERSONNEL from 75 Engineer Regiment and the German Bundeswehr's 130 Pionerbataillon formed a 250-metre crossing over the River Elbe at Artlenburg to mark 40 years of the nations working together on amphibious missions. The construction involved 21 M3 rigs and took place close to where Fd Marshal Montgomery's Army conducted its own crossing of the river back in 1945.

Target:
£15,000
For RBL

“ I want to thank them for their work ”

Families to be the focus in 2018

THE well-being of soldiers, their families and the veteran community will be among the priorities for government in the coming year, the defence secretary has said.

Reflecting on the past 12 months and looking ahead, Gavin Williamson saluted the work of Service personnel and the support they get at home.

“Over the next 12 months I look forward to publishing our transition strategy for those exiting the Armed Forces as well as furthering our good work on our mental health and well-being,” he added.

“Alongside this, we will publish a new strategy to build on our initiatives to end domestic abuse.”

The politician said a pilot for the future accommodation model, an overhaul of military housing, would begin at the end of 2018.

But he stressed that it remained a long-term project, adding: “It will run for a number of years before we decide whether we might roll it out across the country so we can listen to your views.”

“We will be moving to an accommodation model based on need, not rank or marriage. I believe this is the right thing to do.”

“There are better ways to reward seniority than through housing that not everybody wants.”

● Home Truths – page 11



Really wild...

What to expect from an African adventure – page 33



■ THE MoD has awarded a £250 million contract to build more than 900 new homes near Salisbury Plain, which will accommodate troops relocating from Germany.

Lovell will begin constructing the housing in Bulford, Larkhill and Ludgershall in the coming weeks, with the scheme due to

complete by May 2020.

New office, catering, retail and leisure facilities are included in the plans, while health and education centres are to be created for military and civilian use.

A complex of new single living accommodation units – providing 378 additional bed spaces – has also been completed at Larkhill.



Antarctic heroes honoured

THE first all-British Armed Forces team to complete an unsupported, 1,100-mile coast-to-coast crossing of Antarctica was among the Army winners at *The Sun's* Military Awards, the Millies.

Known as Spear 17, the outfit was led by Capt Lou Rudd (Para) and featured five Reservists. They completed their quest in January after a 67-day battle in the polar wilderness.

Their achievement saw them presented with the "inspiring others" award during the annual ceremony at London's Banqueting House.

Lt Jared Bambridge (Yorks) received the "hero at home" individual

accolade in recognition of his actions in the immediate aftermath of the London Bridge terror attack.

The off-duty officer gave vital first aid at the scene, helping 12 victims.

And Cpl Philip Keogh (RAMC) was named best Reservist for the efforts he made in treating casualties of the Manchester Arena explosion in May.

Further recognition to medically-minded personnel was given in the "hero at home" unit category, where military co-responders were shortlisted for their work with South Central Ambulance Service.

Read more about their work on page 28.



AFGHANISTAN ACADEMY'S WINNING WOMAN

■ THE Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) has held its 10th graduation ceremony and passed the century mark for the number of female officer cadets who have been commissioned.

This year brought another milestone as the academy awarded the Duntroon Sword, for the best overall officer cadet to commission, to a female for the first time. Somaiya (above), 24, will be travelling to the UK next year to further her officer training.

Since September 2014 more than 3,000 cadets have passed through ANAOA, where around 30 British soldiers are working with other mentors from Australia, New Zealand and Denmark.



FACTFILE

AS90 TURRET TRAINER

The training aid hits a major milestone next month

50,000

Simulated rounds fired

3 Crew positions simulated – commander, gunner and loader

2 Turret trainers available – in Tidworth and Gutersloh

Savings on ammunition

£125M

SPINE LINE COMPETITION

WIN
a £165 pair of AKU books



ANY personnel with a love of travel may well have guessed the clues to last month's spine lines competition.

Haapsalu, Parnu, Rakvere and Valga are all places in Estonia – the mission we spilled the beans on in the same issue.

This month, *Soldier* has teamed up with our friends at AKU (www.aku.it) to offer one lucky reader a pair of Slope GTX hiking boots worth £165.

With a comfortable fit, this lightweight and breathable footwear is perfect for treks on easy or medium terrain.

It also features full Gore-Tex lining for superior waterproofing.

To be in with a chance of winning this smart prize – perfect for those who like to explore the great outdoors at any time of the year – tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Send your answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by January 31. Good luck!



GUARDSMEN REMEMBERED

■ TWO courageous Second World War troops now have a final resting place after their remains were formally identified in light of DNA evidence.

Joseph Goulden, 31, and 19-year-old Raymond Rose were serving with the Coldstream Guards when they were killed during the Battle of Salerno in Italy on September 25, 1943.

Discoveries by two Italian military history groups and research by the MoD Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre confirmed the identities of the guardsmen.

Relatives of the soldiers attended a rededication service at the Salerno War Cemetery, where the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has provided new headstones for the Servicemen.



मनाजिपु
सादल

VIKINGS



THE BIG PICTURE

Mahajan Field Firing Range, India

FAN-TASH-TIC

MAJ Dave Granfield (R Anglian) shares a hairy experience with Vijay Modi, a local legend in the moustache-growing fraternity of Bikaner, India, during Exercise Ajeya Warrior. The aim of the biennial exchange was to improve understanding between 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment and the 20th Battalion of the Rajputana Rifles, India's oldest unit.

Picture: Lt Col Simon de Labilliere, AAC

WEED TO KNOW

FITNESS / HEALTH / NUTRITION / EXPERIENCE / RULES & REGS / KITBAG

LEAN AND



Spr Sam Webster, RE
Boxing weight: 60kg

Aim to burn more calories than you're eating. Our nutritionist told us about the app My Fitness Pal, so I use that to log everything I eat. It tells you exactly how many calories you're consuming, your macros – carbs, fats and proteins – and everything else. It's easy to snack without thinking but with the app you're more conscious of what you're taking in. It helps massively. It's hard when I go home because my mum's a feeder, but I make sure I don't snack too much and maybe swap a chocolate bar for some fruit.

Spr Ebonie Jones, RE
Boxing weight: 51kg

Add some extra fat-burning runs, either in the morning when you've fasted or in the evening so you're running off what you've eaten. Strength and conditioning also helps with weight loss but for me it's the extra miles. I'll do some four- to six-kilometre steady-state runs in addition to our usual boxing training. I try and avoid carbs in the evening and only use them to fuel a session. We work with a nutritionist and diet safely, aiming for 0.5 to one kilogram weight loss per week. I believe in everything in moderation but I try and avoid alcohol because it really makes my weight go up.

MEAN

Clothes feeling tight after the festive season? These Army boxers have to stay within five per cent of their fighting weight, so they know a thing or two about burning fat. Here are their top tips for dropping the pounds in 2018...



Fus Sean Eng, Scots
Boxing weight: 69kg

Don't go in at the deep end if you need to lose weight, ease yourself into it instead. Start doing a few slow runs and pick it up from there, upping the intensity as you go on. After leave my weight usually goes up to 71 or 72kg but as soon as I start training and bringing my calories down it drops off again. I've got a sweet tooth and like chocolate, so I cut that out because it's just useless calories and stick to my three specific meals per day. Definitely avoid crash diets and those fad eating plans. Take it gradually and eventually you'll see results.

Gnr Karriss Artingstall, RA
Boxing weight: 57kg

Focus on your training rather than what you weigh, and the pounds should fall off naturally. It's easy to become obsessed with the scales otherwise. When I'm at my target weight I usually treat myself at the weekends but if I need to drop some weight I'll cut out the Nando's and chocolate and stick to three meals a day. I put in some extra runs, or jump on a watt bike for 20 minutes after a training session too. Also, doing lots of repetitions on light weights is a good way to lose fat.

LCpl John Marvin, PWRR
Boxing weight: 81kg

Drink plenty of water to flush out your system and keep hydrated. People massively overlook that. I'm quite lucky because I naturally sit quite close to my fighting weight but if I need to drop a few pounds I'll watch the portion sizes and I don't eat carbs unless I know I'll be burning them off. We do a lot of training anyway and I particularly like bag work – practising movement and power variation – but I'll also fit in some runs. It all helps.

● Speak to your PTI before embarking on any new exercise and diet regime

▶ HEALTH



Pictures: FreePik

Could e-cigs be your best shot at quitting smoking this year?

▶ WITH the experts still disagreeing over whether vaping is completely safe, and with many public places banning it, you could be forgiven for thinking that e-cigs are a bit of a no-go.

But with at least 2.8 million users in the UK, the devices can't be ignored. In fact, they are now the most popular tool to

quit. And according to the NHS Smokefree website (www.nhs.uk/smokefree), they only carry a fraction of the risk of the real thing.

Vapes produce neither tar nor carbon monoxide – two of the most harmful elements in tobacco smoke – so for those struggling to quit on willpower alone, they might be worth a glance.

What's inside? →

Nicotine

Contained in the cartridges. E-liquids can be bought in anything from 0 to around 20 milligrams, depending on the habit. Reducing the strength of what you buy gradually dials down the addiction

Propylene glycol

A synthetic food additive that is also used in various edible items such as coffee-based drinks, liquid sweeteners and ice cream



Vegetable glycerine

A food additive, made from plant oils such as palm oil, soy, or coconut oil

Flavourings

E-cigarettes come in more than 1,500 different flavours

Anything else

A 2017 law change banned certain additives such as colourings and the stimulants caffeine and taurine. If in doubt about what's inside, ask the seller

E-cigs:

SIX

things to know

1

There are various models to choose from, but most are rechargeable with a refillable tank

2

They work by delivering nicotine through vapour rather than smoke

3

This is created by heating a solution inside the device

4

There is growing evidence they can help smokers to quit, with similar or better results than patches

5

They're not available on prescription but you can get advice from pharmacies or vape shops

6

As with all electrical items, they shouldn't be left to charge. They have been known to catch fire



New Year, new menu

► WITH more than half of New Year's resolutions revolving around healthy eating, losing weight or other body changes, *Soldier* sought some professional words of wisdom. Here, performance nutritionist Gareth Nicholas – an adviser to the Army Triathlon Association – gives his top tips on how to boost your exercise regime with a healthy diet.



Gareth Nicholas

Avoid free sugars

Many of the foods we eat contain sugar. Some naturally occur while other items such as cakes, biscuits and chocolate have added sugar known as free sugars. Don't be fooled, sugar is still sugar, but it shouldn't be totally avoided. Limiting free sugar helps you live healthily and manage weight.



Give your portions proportion

Your daily diet should be balanced, with 60 per cent coming from carbohydrates such as pasta, vegetables, rice and potatoes. Protein should represent 20 per cent; this can be found in meats, dairy, fish, beans and pulses. The remainder is from fats, ideally healthy fats like nuts, seeds and oily fish.



Regular healthy snacking helps avoid junk

Eating little and often will keep your metabolism ticking over and fend off the cravings for unhealthy food. Try to add protein to every meal but don't go crazy – around five to 20 grams, depending on your goal. Try to eat every three to four hours and don't forget your three vegetable portions and two pieces of fruit to make up your all-important five-a-day.



Plan, prepare and refine food choices

We've all been there; food shopping on an empty stomach or skipping lunch in favour of a double dinner. Bad preparation leads to bad decisions. Try cooking a little extra at dinner and taking that to work as lunch. Also, remember that just because it works for the fastest/strongest/fittest person in your unit doesn't necessarily mean it is right for you.

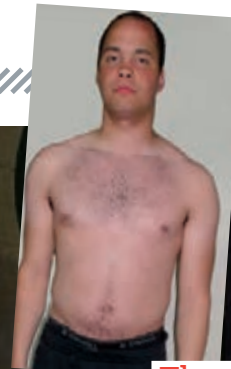


Eat breakfast – skipping meals is an unhealthy way to lose weight

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. During the hours of sleep your body has been on a forced fast and giving it energy in the morning is a perfect way to start the day. It has been scientifically proven that those who skip breakfast are more likely to make bad choices throughout the day and gain weight.

For more hints, tips and advice check out www.platformnutrition.com

'I was tired of being *that* guy'



Then

Fed up of struggling in PT sessions, Pte Levi Walker (RLC) decided to get serious about his fitness. Now he's winning bodybuilding competitions. Here's how he did it...

I WAS pretty unfit, always at the back of the group on PT with the entire squadron having to wait for me. I was tired of being that guy.

In 2013, on the first day of Herrick 20, we had a unit photo taken and when I saw it I thought, 'right, I need to lose weight'.

I dropped about 11 kilograms and started to look skinny but I didn't like that either. So I began working out, and the whole thing went from there.

In 2015 a mate and I were in the gym in Canada and decided we needed a goal so we said we'd aim to compete in bodybuilding.

I did my first show in June and won that, which I didn't expect.

Since then I've done two more and come first in one and second in the other. Next year I want to go to the world championships.

Before a competition it takes me two or three weeks to get down to the right body fat – about three per cent. It can be a chore but the end goal drives me on.

My advice is to set yourself an objective and every time you want

to quit, think of that aim.

Someone said to me once that they don't go to the gym because people like me are there. But that's not how it should be.

Anyone can do this. People have different body shapes so it might take some more time than others, but it's possible for everyone. Those new to training don't need to be as strict as me to get results.

When I first started I just went to the gym to have fun and get fit without any knowledge of training and nutrition, but I still got in good shape.

Now I love it more than ever – despite the strict regime.

I hope more people get into this sport and broaden its profile within the Army.

On the last day of our Afghanistan tour everyone took a vote on who was going to be the first to give up on the fitness, and everyone said it would be me.

But I'm the only one still doing it, and people from my old unit don't recognise me now. ■

PROFILE

PTE LEVI WALKER

Age: 29

Height: 6ft 2in

Weight: 92kg

Body fat: 5.6%

Competition category:
Men's physique (tall)

Accolades:

- Ultimate Sports Nutrition Classic 2017 – 1st place
- UK Drug Free Body Building Association UK and International Championships 2017 – 1st place
- Rhinos Classic 2017 – 2nd place





Now

TRAINING

I avoid too much running. I prefer low impact machines, especially the cross trainer, but as a by-product of losing weight and getting fitter I've actually cut my PFA time from 12min 48sec to 8min 59sec. Judges have said I need to improve my chest thickness, so I'm using heavy single arm exercises such as dumbbell bench presses, seated cable presses and decline presses. I've created a six-week programme for myself, after which I will review my progress and change if need be.

SESSIONS

10 per week, including
3-4 cardio sessions + **6X** 1hr20min weight sessions

PRE-SHOW PROGRAMME

Up to **14** sessions per week
 Including **DAILY** cardio and weight sessions

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

There's no magic pill that will help you lose weight - I think 70 per cent of your body comes from the kitchen and 30 from the gym. I don't believe in low-carb diets because the effect is temporary. I use protein shakes because it's a good way of incorporating more protein and meat is expensive. I try and have balance, though. At the weekend I might have a 15-inch pizza to myself.

Follow Pte Walker's training routine on Instagram @levi_jwalker

Walker's daily diet plan



130g of oats, one banana, scoop of Nutella



300g of potato, 70g of lean protein



125g basmati rice, 100g broccoli, 70g of meat - chicken or mince



100g oats, one banana



250g long grain rice, 70g of lean protein, 100g broccoli



(post-gym session) 300g potato, 70g of meat



protein bar

Bring your waist in-line

Are your vital stats a cause for concern?

▶ The UK has the highest level of obesity in Western Europe and, unfortunately, Army personnel are not immune.

Having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or above puts troops into a category that means their health, career and operational effectiveness are at risk.

The problem may be worse among the civilian population, but the Ministry of Defence is still

taking it seriously.

PTI and medical staff now monitor troops using a combination of BMI and waist circumference measurement (see below), and offer tailored support to anyone who needs it.

But responsibility also lies with soldiers to make sure they nip weight gain in the bud.

Here's how to check whether you measure up...

1

Work out your BMI

Weight (kg) ÷ Height (m) =

÷ Height (m) = BMI

5

Take action

Being overweight puts you at greater risk of health problems including cardiac arrest, muscular-skeletal injuries, depression and poorer mental health. The message to troops is to act early before it becomes an issue.

2

Measure your waist

Take a tape measure around your natural waistline - between your belly button and your ribcage - and take the measurement in centimetres.

3

Work out your risk

A BMI of higher than 25 is classed as **overweight**, higher than 30 is **obese**. If you fall into either of these categories AND your waist circumference is greater than 94cm (for men) or 80cm (for women) your health is at risk.

4

Seek advice

Approach your PTI, who will assess whether you are at increased, high, or very high risk and help you to create a personalised diet and exercise plan.

■ For full details on the Armed Forces weight management policy read **2017DIN01-179**

On the market

Looking for some new gear to kick-start the health regime? Here is a flavour of what your cash can buy you in 2018...



Activity tracker

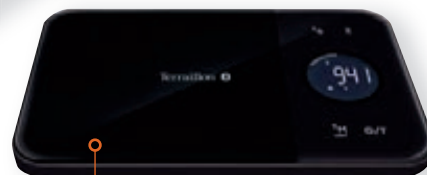
£169.95

Nokia's new Steel HR activity tracker is designed to look as good at mess functions as it would the gym. It features an advanced heart-rate monitor and personalised coaching programmes, and is available at <https://health.nokia.com>

Pull-up bar

£9.99

If you fancy subjecting your abs to some serious punishment without the cost of gym membership, you could do worse than the Bodymax doorway pull-up and chin-up bar. Okay, it isn't portable like some of its contemporaries, but what it lacks in versatility it makes up for in sturdiness and price. At the time of going to press this bit of kit was on sale for £9.99 at www.powerhouse-fitness.co.uk



Smart scales

Price TBC

Think Shazam for food. The NutriSmart is a set of scales that lets you check the nutritional content of your grub before it gets anywhere near your lips. Due to be released later this year, you can keep an eye out for it at www.terraillon.com



Gym wear

£19.99

This camo-design workout kit is helping to boost the coffers of The Royal British Legion as well as supporting your fitness plan. The lightweight, breathable wicking fabric comes in male/female designs with a choice of colours and sizes, and it won't cost the Earth. Buy at www.poppypshop.org.uk



£8/month

Cycling game

If you struggle to drag yourself away from the Xbox and you own a bike, check out Zwift. You'll need a turbo trainer, which hooks up to your TV via an Ant+ connection and USB so you can cycle across some stunning landscapes from the warmth of your digs. Ride with other athletes, and use the data to build a targeted training session. Sign up at www.zwift.com





Army chief's New Year message to serving soldiers...

THE Army was remarkably active in 2017. On any given day around 25,000 soldiers were either deployed on operations, on standby or protecting the homeland and overseas territories.

This included deployments in support of allies in Estonia and Poland to provide deterrence and reassurance with Nato to ensure a secure Europe; expeditionary engineering in South Sudan to enable the UN; capacity building in Nigeria and Somalia to help partner militaries counter insurgency and extremism; enabling partner militaries in the fight against Daesh and the Taliban; anti-poaching in Gabon and Malawi to disrupt funding flows to extremist organisations.

Being prepared to fight in Europe is largely the focus of 3 (UK) Division.

Exercise Iron Resolve at the end of last year (page 42) was a good shake-out of our war-fighting skills.

The light units in 1 (UK) Division, together with appropriate specialist capabilities, are delivering first-rate results in what has to be a long-term defence engagement strategy.

Patience and persistently building enduring relationships and growing insight and understanding equips us to "get left of the bang" and means we are better prepared should we be tasked to intervene.

The new Specialised Infantry battalions have made impressive progress and are increasingly recognised as important operational capability.

1 Armoured Infantry Brigade together with the Strike Experimentation Group have seized the opportunity to experiment and are discovering useful insights in to new ways of fighting.

At the unit level, I have been impressed with the imagination and enthusiasm that is being applied to improving our battlecraft.

This is important,

but fitness and well-being are also key ingredients of our fighting ability. And I have also been impressed by those units who are increasingly treating their soldiers as athletes by focusing on conditioning and nutrition as part of their physical training (page 18).

The British Army continues to prove its resilience and character. We are one of the nation's most popular and trusted institutions. That is down to the quality of our soldiers, both Regular and Reserve.

All good soldiers have courage, endurance, skill, adaptability and discipline. But the British Soldier blends these qualities together with compassion, humility and humour. No wonder the nation is proud of what you do.

2018 will bring both challenge and opportunity. Uncertainty about proposed changes to the provision of housing and other terms and conditions of service is unsettling. But no decisions have been taken and I shall ensure that the Army's particular interests are understood and accounted for as solutions are designed.

Your views are important and do make a difference. They provide me with the evidence I need to represent your needs. Please continue to engage with CGS' Briefing Team and the Armed Forces continuous attitude survey.

I would like to wish you and your families all a Happy New Year and thank you for your hard work and commitment in 2017.

I wish you a fulfilling 2018 that brings you the opportunity to further your ambitions.

You might use the opportunity presented by the hundredth anniversary of the end of the First World War to engage with your local communities, build understanding of the British Army, reinforce our reputation, and take the time to reflect on what we might learn from those who have worn our boots before us.

And remember that whilst 2017 was the Year of the Navy and 2018 is the centenary of the Royal Air Force, every year is the year of the Army. ■



Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter

Pictures: Dominic King, Graeme Main, Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC, Cpl Pete Brown, RLC, Cpl Paul Shaw, RLC and Cpl Timothy Jones, RLC



ENO
WONDER
THE
NATION
IS PROUD
OF WHAT
YOU DO

“

We are one of
the most popular and
trusted institutions

”



AFTER HOURS

Soldiers ditch their downtime to answer late-night 999 calls

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures: Graeme Main



LIFE begins at the end of your comfort zone, so the saying goes. And if that's true then LCpl Georgina Harvey (RAMC) and Maj Dai Tamplin (AGC (RMP)) must have more anecdotes to share over a pint than most. But as I sit in the back of their first responder vehicle – scrunched between various bits of medical kit, some high-vis jackets and a rather tense-looking *Soldier* photographer – it is the concept of life ending that we are all preoccupied with.

The pair are on duty as military co-responders with South Central Ambulance Service, and just seconds after signing on for the 1600-2300 shift their first job comes through via an arresting dashboard alarm.

The blue lights come on, accelerator awakens, and within two seconds my heart is in my mouth.

The Ford Mondeo estate – not a car synonymous with high-octane adventure – wails and whines its way through the red

lights and roundabouts of Aldershot's rush-hour traffic, and as we reach the motorway I catch a glimpse of the speedometer's pin hovering menacingly over the 100mph mark.

The engine moans furiously as Maj Tamplin confines it to a low gear, and for a brief and horrifying moment I find myself lamenting the absence of Trimble to keep things in check.

But there is no time for superfluous braking now. Somewhere in Reading a life hangs in the balance, and the responsibility to save it has been handed to these two Regular soldiers, who are giving their time for free to answer that call.

Having volunteered as a military co-responder for six years now, Maj Tamplin is all too aware of the difference his team of 270 tri-Service personnel are making.

"I remember my first cardiac arrest," he tells me as he negotiates our congested route with a baffling combination of speed and calm.

"The guy was 'dead' when we arrived but we shocked him, did CPR and by the time our backup arrived we had got a return of spontaneous activity (heartbeat to the rest of us). →



“That’s rare, and I don’t know if he is still alive, but even if it gave his family time to say goodbye it was worthwhile.

“When you leave a job like that there is huge elation. But then you also get the ones that are unsuccessful.”

His last words hang grimly in the air before he is forced to brake the car hard.

The officer’s siren is sending some drivers into panic mode and they are making bad decisions in a bid to clear his path.

I drift my hand over my seatbelt briefly before enquiring about the casualty we are headed for.

An elderly lady has fallen over and has been on the floor for some time. LCpl Harvey explains that although the ambulance service has been trying to dispatch a vehicle, resources can get diverted to more life-threatening calls.

No sooner do we make our own approach to the address than the soldiers’ dashboard device bleeps again.

The troops are needed on a more urgent job – a suspected heart attack in a 35-year-old man. The car does a U-turn and we head off in a new direction.

It goes quiet. As I watch blue lights bounce off the glass buildings I wonder how much longer that poor woman will have to wait.

“Obviously that’s hard because we know she is still waiting for help,” says LCpl Harvey, as if to read my mind.

The car edges through another set of red traffic lights, and Maj Tamplin spots a flashing speed camera.

I wonder how on earth he saw it at such high speed with so much rush-hour activity going on around us.

But travelling on a blue light means being on constant high alert, and the officer concedes that a busy shift can take its toll on the driver in particular.

No wonder, then, that the training course for rapid response vehicle drivers lasts three weeks. Perhaps not surprising in itself, but compare this to the four days of formal medical training these volunteers are given and it becomes clear where the risk lies.

I quiz the pair about the sorts of things

they have seen.

They explain that, like community first responders, their focus is on basic lifesaving skills such as defibrillator use and CPR.

The idea is that by answering calls very local to them, these personnel can arrive faster and help save more lives.

The cars cannot deliver patients to hospital and are stocked with limited medical supplies (first aid kit, a defibrillator, oxygen, gas and air and aspirin pretty much covers it).

So I am taken aback when I hear about the range of tasks they have encountered.

Choking babies, cardiac emergencies, strokes, assaults and elderly people living in isolation and squalor – you name it, these two have seen it.

And as the stories are told, it becomes increasingly hard not to make connections with my own loved ones.

We arrive at our destination, and the photographer and I edge nervously into the house behind LCpl Harvey, who is busy taking “obs”.

The patient is conscious, and as we watch the Grenadier Guards medic hand over to arriving ambulance crews with the utmost professionalism, I cannot help but feel proud.

“People always ask why I would do something like this and not get paid for it,” she tells me afterwards. “But I really enjoy it and for me it’s also about experience.

“Army medics rarely treat elderly folk or children – and we generally work with people who are healthy – so seeing things like asthma and cardiac arrest lets me develop my skills.”

She adds: “When my time in the Army is up I want to be a civilian paramedic so this also prepares me for that.”

No sooner are they finishing their paperwork back in the car, when another call comes through – this time to a confusing domestic situation where someone appears to have been assaulted with a knife.

Police are on the scene.

“Best you stay in the car for this one,” Maj Tamplin tells us as we pull up, before locking us in the vehicle.

After treating the patient for minor

On call: LCpl Georgina Harvey (RAMC), Maj Dai Tamplin (AGC (RMP)) and 268 other military co-responders helped South Central Ambulance Service by attending more than 2,000 patients between April and September last year





WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

To find out how to become a military co-responder contact cfr@scas.nhs.uk (for Hampshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire or Buckinghamshire) or your local ambulance trust. The positions are open to military personnel and MoD civilians.

wounds and signing off the job, it's straight onto the next emergency – a three-year-old boy with breathing difficulties.

My stomach twists as the details are read out, and I think about my own two-year-old tucked up in bed at home.

LCpl Harvey says she has never been sent to three calls on the bounce. It's a busy night.

"This is the sort of job where I start to mentally run through all my training," she tells me, shifting restlessly in her seat as Maj Tamplin hits the gas.

We approach a large roundabout. "Clear right," she calls out.

Somewhere between the medical jargon and high-octane driving, it occurs to me why this role is so important.

Tonight might be an unusually demanding shift – with others involving hours of sitting around at standby points – but it is the presence of the co-responders that is as significant as their individual actions.

By providing extra cover, they are giving members of their community the best possible chance of survival.

"We do sometimes encounter suspicion," Maj Tamplin says of his full-time ambulance colleagues. "But it's up to us to break down those barriers."

And if there's one thing that can help in that department, it's a sense of humour.

"As you can imagine, military banter mixed in with emergency service humour can create some pretty interesting jokes," the officer adds.

South Central Ambulance Service – which covers Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire – has the UK's biggest cohort of military co-responders.

But with troops usually committed to just one shift per week, the trust is keen for more to get involved.

The MoD has also thrown its weight behind the scheme, having recently overseen the purchase of five new rapid response vehicles through the Armed Forces Community Covenant grant scheme.

For Maj Tamplin, the benefits to defence are obvious.

"Experience in first aid can only be good in our line of work," he says. "But we are also putting people into difficult scenarios and asking them to assess risk, form a plan and act – all of that develops the individual."

With soldiers hungry for new challenges and ambulance services under increasing pressure, surely this fantastic scheme will be seen in every part of the UK before long. ■



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COUNTDOWN

Deploying to the land of Masai warriors and wildebeest? Here are some of the things that could be in store...

1



African unions

Sharing expertise with local personnel is a key part of the experience at British Army Training Unit Kenya (Batuk), and with the nation's troops deployed on a challenging peacekeeping mission in Somalia these exchanges could save lives. "The partnership is important," Maj Mark Stone (Para) said during the latest Askari Storm. "It works both ways. We're understanding their capabilities, equipment, and what they can achieve on the ground, and hopefully we can pass on some of our niche skills."

Words: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures: Sgt Paul Randall, RLC, Cpl Dek Traylor, RLC, Cpl Luisa Scott, RLC, Graeme Main and Rift Valley Adventures



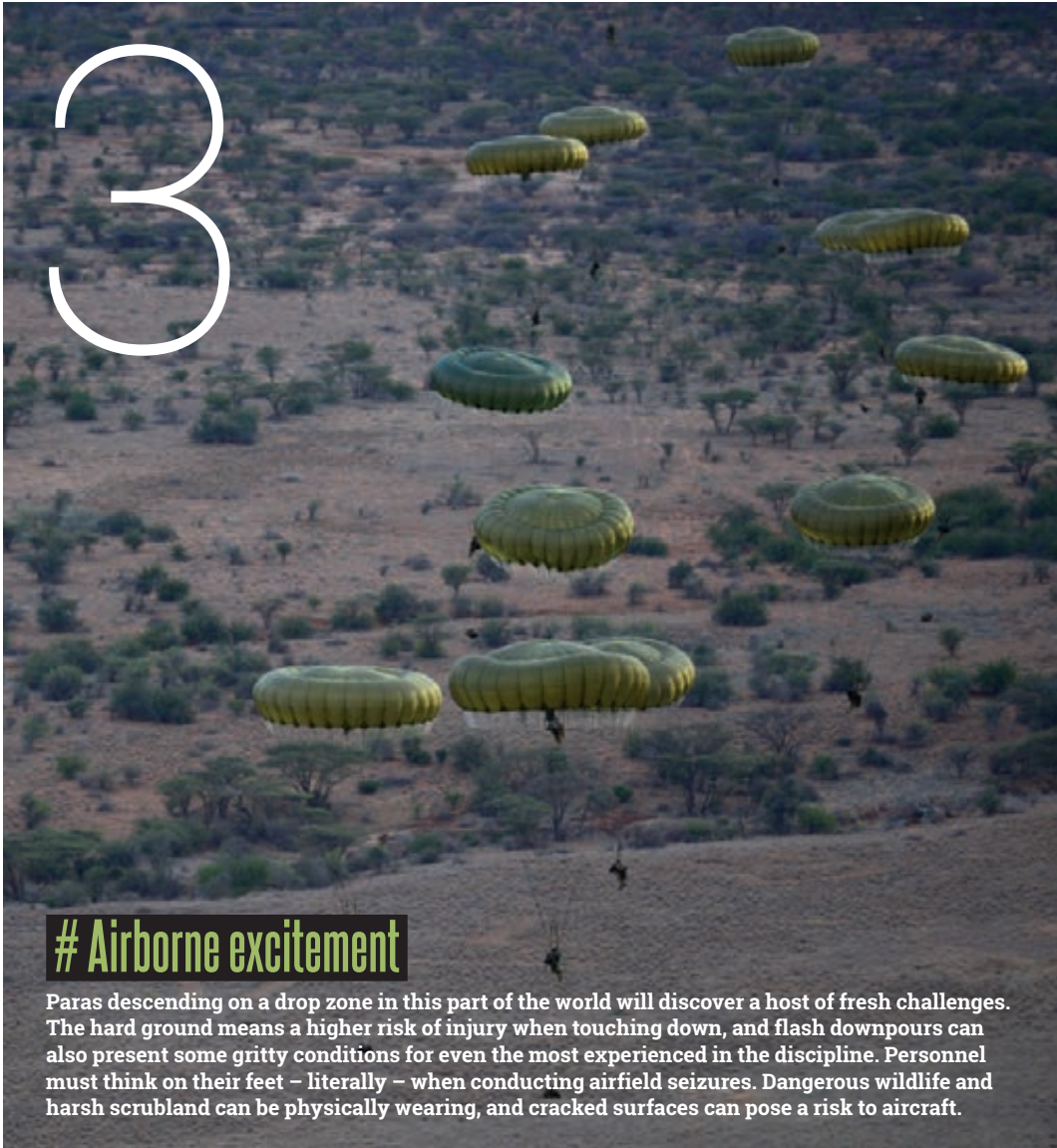
2

Outdoor adventure

From mountain biking and trekking to rock climbing and bushcraft, the opportunities for adventurous training and outdoor activities are plentiful in Kenya. After being on exercise many units take time out to enjoy this aspect of the country's culture, with many packages focused on the Mount Kenya region. →



3



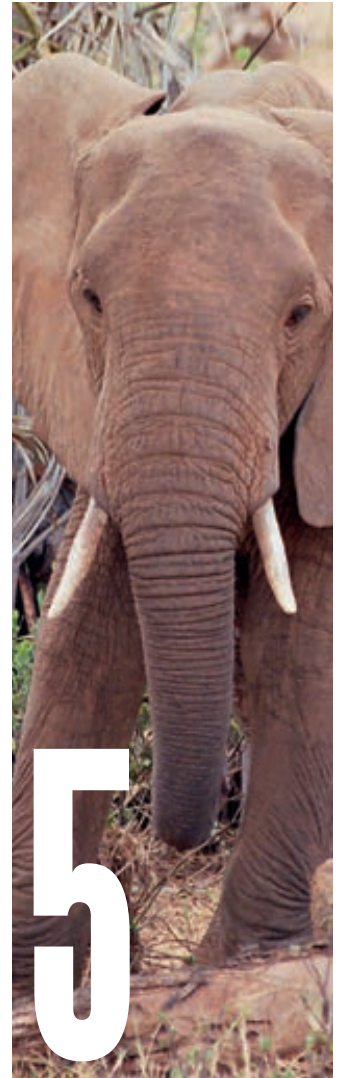
Airborne excitement

Paras descending on a drop zone in this part of the world will discover a host of fresh challenges. The hard ground means a higher risk of injury when touching down, and flash downpours can also present some gritty conditions for even the most experienced in the discipline. Personnel must think on their feet – literally – when conducting airfield seizures. Dangerous wildlife and harsh scrubland can be physically wearing, and cracked surfaces can pose a risk to aircraft.

4

Community kudos

Whether it's medics delivering healthcare to remote villages or an engineering project to repair wells and water supplies, Kenya allows UK personnel to see their skills put to lifesaving use. "Some of the communities are in real need of help," Sgt Thomas Nyanaro, a community health nurse in the Kenyan Defence Force, explained during Exercise Askari Serpent. "Medical facilities are very far away, so too are schools. Water and sanitation are also a problem for some. The soldiers have been very welcoming. It's been good to be part of a team and work hand-in-hand to improve people's lives."



5

Fierce wildlife

From scorpions and snakes to the so-called Big Five, Kenya's rich wildlife presents a threat to exercising troops as well as a spectacle. From encountering inquisitive hyenas on stag to herding game out of a training area, the experience is likely to be a memorable one. "People pay thousands to come to Africa and go on safari and we come here, work here, and have it for free," said Pte Mathew Haigh (Para) following the latest Exercise Askari Storm. But care must be taken. The black mamba, for example, is one of the fastest and deadliest snakes in the world.

6

Tough environment

With dusty savannahs and stifling temperatures, Kenya provides the perfect opportunity for personnel to hone their personal admin and fieldcraft skills in some of the most arduous conditions on Earth. Managing your water intake is vital; heat injury is a very real threat here. Moving tactically through dry scrub is challenging, as is digging-in when the ground is parched. Flash flooding can also be an issue. "People think there are safety nets but there aren't," Pte Mathew Haigh (Para), who has deployed to Kenya twice, explained. "It's just one of the things to deal with, but it prepares you for further operations."



Caught on camera: Members of 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment were the latest to hone their fighting and fieldcraft skills on Exercise Askari Storm



Intense live firing

Did you know that one of the Service's most important live-firing complexes is in Kenya? And with a £250,000 upgrade completed last year, it's a must-do for light infantry troops. Objective Silver at Archer's Post Training Area is a square-kilometre network of buildings and corridors sunk below ground level and members of 3 Para were the first to make use of the revamped site when they deployed on Exercise Askari Storm at the end of 2017. ■

7

FLYING



OPERATING a small drone may be as easy as riding a bike, but the two don't compare when it comes to abiding by rules and regulations. While youngsters around the country were free to leap on their Christmas pressies for a carefree ride around the park on Boxing Day, all those sparkling new quad, hex and octocopters should have stayed in their boxes until the owners had thoroughly familiarised themselves with the Civilian Aviation Authority's (CAA) Air Navigation Order 2016.

This document sets out the law when it comes to endangering the safety of people or property with any small unmanned aircraft, including relatively cheap, commercially-available drones.

For instance, did you know that these craft cannot be flown over or within 150 metres of any congested area, and if they have a mass of more than seven kilograms (excluding fuel but including equipment like cameras) they must not be flown at a height of more than 120 metres except in prescribed airspace?

You can be prosecuted for breaking these rules – and many have been.

For further guidance look up the Drone Code, which is available to download at www.dronesafe.uk along with a handy app.

You should also be aware that UK law on flying drones will almost certainly be tightened up in the near future thanks to a bill currently going through Parliament.

It is calling for individuals to be banned from operating these platforms near airports and for police to have the power to order the owners to ground them.

Not only that, there is a proposal that all such devices should be controlled via an app rather than simple remote controls in order to ensure the new rules are incorporated into flight plans.

A mandatory registry for larger unmanned aerial vehicles is also on the cards.

If you wish to use a drone commercially you have to first attend an accredited CAA course that will train and assess your ability to safely operate one.

The package includes flying competence, knowledge of the law, risk assessments and decision-making and is designed to ensure those who wish to legitimately use them for business can do so safely and not expose the general public or aviation to unnecessary danger.

Further information can be found at www.caa.co.uk

Military personnel also need to be aware that if they use a drone for work – even for non-core requirements such as photography or surveys – the flights will be regulated by the Military Aviation Authority (MAA).

This organisation's requirements are similar to the CAA's but if your unit does not have any in-house aviation expertise you may wish to consult the MAA for advice, or read **DIN 2015DIN06-023**.

Also, make sure you read a very important DIN that is due to be published in early 2018.

It will detail a whole host of new requirements and restrictions related to the operation of drones by Armed Forces personnel and contractors on defence estate, some of which should have already been communicated down through the chain of command.

Check out future editions of *Soldier* for the full details.



Small drones are more popular than ever for work and play but there are lots of rules to consider

INTO TROUBLE

DRONE DOS AND DON'TS



- **Never fly a drone in the vicinity of manned aircraft** More than 50 near-misses were reported last year and in 2016 a Lynx missed a drone by nine metres
- **Always steer clear of airports or airfields**
- **Keep your UAV in sight and below 120 metres**
- **Don't operate it over congested areas** and never fly within 50 metres of a person, building or vehicle not under your control
- **Take care with altitude** With the exception of some small toys, most drones can climb several thousand feet into the air

- **To use a drone for commercial purposes you must obtain permission from the CAA**
- **Ensure any images you take don't break privacy laws**
- **Think about what to do if your drone fails** Is it going to fall far enough away from people, buildings and airfields?
- **Never drop an object from your drone that could endanger people or property**



REALITY BYTES

Authentic and virtual
combo provide full-on
casevac experience



Report: Cliff Caswell | Pictures: Peter Davies, Birmingham University, FreePlk



IT was a flashback – a sudden plunge into a very different world and time. I'm stooped over in a Chinook, barrelling through the patchwork of a landscape below, hands instinctively clutching for the webbing to stay upright.

The gunner and loadmaster are sitting near the dropped ramp and the wind-disturbed engine whine and clattering rotors reverberate as the aircraft claws its way back to base.

For a few seconds this is reality.

Caught off balance by the pitching and hypnotised by the ground flowing below me, I am sure we are flying over Bosnia in the 1990s – the feelings are those of a much younger me on an operation long gone.

The strange hallucination evaporates after removing my virtual reality headset. In its place is a mock-up of the helicopter cabin, complete with the objects that were around me before.

But the view is gone, along with the crews.

The nauseating sense of motion has disappeared but it takes a few seconds to return to sure footing even though the movement was an illusion.

"We're still missing the smell of aviation fuel in this experience," admits Prof Bob Stone, director of the Human Interface Technologies team at Birmingham University, which has put this simulator together.

"Everyone who tries it tells me this – we're working on it."

The distinctive smell of the Chinook might be missing, but the experience is still very real.

This is what is known as a mixed reality simulation – a speciality for Stone's department, which has had a raft of successes with similar products.

The immersive world is a combination of real objects in the cabin combined with computer-generated effects.

And the centrepiece is a mannequin of an injured soldier. In a virtual casevac it is the job for medical teams on pre-deployment training to bring him back to base alive.

Cash for these types of projects comes from a mixture of government and private sector backers.

Joint Medical Command – through the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine – funds the Chinook project, which is part of the university department's wider Medical Emergency Response Team initiative.

The helicopter cabin is set up in an inflatable tent, which provides the feeling of an enclosed space.

Real-world kit includes a mock M60 machine gun, realistic seats and other familiar equipment.

Exercise participants can manoeuvre their way around the cabin using paddles to manipulate the environment.

Touching the mannequin is really unnerving. It both looks and feels very credible.

A variety of situations can be recreated – including altering the casualty's heart rate to the point of cardiac arrest.

"Using this mixed reality approach with real-world objects is definitely the way ahead," asserts Stone.

"Although this is currently a 'proof of concept', there has been interest in it from all three Armed Forces as well as various ambulance services.

"The model allows us to simulate pretty much any vehicle.

"We have been given the go-ahead to look at an Army Mastiff very soon."

The Chinook package – which has been tested by teams including those at the Royal Air Force Tactical Medical Wing – joins an impressive line-up of products being developed in Birmingham (see overleaf).

The technology is certainly immersive and has a lot of potential for a variety of training and real-world applications.

Matched with the likes of drones and the latest mapping techniques, the way troops view the world around them could soon be very different. ■



Mixing it up

FROM operations to training exercises, academics at the cutting edge of mixed reality believe it could give soldiers a battle-winning edge. Far from perching troops in front of a screen with a console headset, they can physically interact with the world around them. Steve Barraclough of the Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors believes these technologies can help to familiarise personnel with extreme situations. The CEO – whose organisation is a key supporter of Birmingham research – told *Soldier*: “We have a real opportunity in this work – it brings human factors into a situation and can allow troops to make mistakes and learn in a controlled environment.”

Here is a taste of the other work in the university’s research portfolio...



Tabletop ops

Resembling something akin to the old Xbox 360 real-time strategy game *End War*, the Future Mission Systems programme

overlays virtual images onto real objects – in this case an area of operations is projected onto a table. Wearing virtual reality glasses, would-be commanders find themselves in a digital room with the landscape, military assets and other aids projected onto their map and on screens around them. Environment data mapped by drones is used to create the backdrop. Academics believe the technology could assist in dealing with incidents such as a multi-site terrorist attack – like the Charlie Hebdo atrocity – by keeping tabs on all locations.



Virtual village

A digital representation of an Afghan village has been helping soldiers recognise signs that insurgents are at work. Clever lighting effects and shadowing show the signs of IEDs such as command wires, disturbed earth and markers – spotting them can mean the difference between life and death.



Cutting edge

The Birmingham team have developed a simulation package that accurately recreates the dynamics of the Cutlass EOD robot. Matched with the asset’s operating box, students can have the fully hands-on experience in a safe environment to supplement classroom training. With some trainees prone to pushing a complicated piece of kit beyond its limits – to the point of toppling it over – the simulation allows them to get to grips with it before taking to the controls for real. The UK Armed Forces have around 40 of the simulators available – they can replicate both outdoor and indoor situations.



Drone zone

According to Bob Stone, the concept of a “sacrificial drone” could be useful to future armies. The expendable device could be dropped from a mothership, uploading useful data before being hit by enemy fire.

Fighting fit

Casualties with limb injuries can use med cycles to do exercise around a virtual beauty spot. The Birmingham team have digitally mapped an area in Plymouth and, when linked to a cycle, patients can explore the scenery.



COUNTER- DRONE TECHNOLOGY



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HANDHELD REPULSE



WINGMAN 101

A sharp increase in IED attacks deployed from drones on the battlefield has created the urgent need for portable counter-drone technology. Level Peaks has partnered with PDA Electronics and MyDefence to offer a lightweight, single-man portable solution.

MYDEFENCE WINGMAN 101

Developed alongside military personnel and SOFs globally, Wingman is a an intuitive wearable personnel drone alarm, continuously scanning for and detecting remote controlled drones (uav, aus, rpas etc.) at long ranges - often before they have taken off.

It operates both as a standalone unit, or connected as a peripheral device to other equipment, such as a personal communication radio.

HANDHELD REPULSE

Using about the same power as a standard WIFI router the Handheld Repulse unit can repel all types of commercial drones at distances of over 1km. The unit creates an exclusion field on both the 2.4GHz and 5.8GHz bands which is over 160 degrees wide and 160 degrees

vertically. Any drone encountering the electronic enforcement field will be immediately forced to return to its sender.

The 2458H Handheld unit features a tripod mount in the handle and runs off 12v 6800ah battery. Weighing only 1.5kg including the battery, the unit is extremely portable and simple to deploy in seconds - it's as simple as turning it on.

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ON THEIR

Personnel go back to basics



METTLE

with Iron Resolve

WITH the sun climbing laboriously over the plains – heralding the slate-grey sky of a winter morning – troops are continuing to process the frenetic events of the past 24 hours. Amid the silhouettes of farm buildings and dagger-like arrangements of aerials, the ambient buzz of the Army at work hangs over this improvised camp.

The drifting aroma of boiling ration packs and coffee, the flapping of canvas in a cutting wind and the hum of generators give the semblance of normality.

But this is an illusion.

A few hours ago an air-to-ground missile was fired at this makeshift base – the command post of HQ 3 (UK) Division.

It is time to move out – and quickly – before a further strike causes greater havoc.

This might be a mock attack, but Exercise Iron Resolve is bringing troops back to core business – a dust-off of war-fighting skills that have not been extensively rehearsed for two decades.

In this serial, the headquarters has been broken up and deployed across different locations on Salisbury Plain to avoid it being wiped out in one strike.

The command post also frequently changes location – or “chocs” – as a further precaution, to avoid contact with the enemy.

Although this three-week package, which encompasses assets including Warrior and Bulldog vehicles, represents a return to many of the tactics familiar to the Cold War generation, the world in which it is set has moved on considerably.

The communications revolution has opened up a new front in cyber warfare, while social media means the eyes of citizen journalists are on combatants.

Skill sets to deal with these new areas are critical.

As the command post prepares to move from the buildings it has requisitioned on New Zealand Farm, command sergeant major WO1 Jon Frith (Gren Gds) is in a confident mood.

He believes soldiers are rising to the challenge and working well alongside the many international partners embedded in the headquarters. Colleagues from Nato's HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps are also taking part in the manoeuvres.

“Past operations mean we have experience – including coordinating joint forces, which is a huge asset,” WO1 Frith tells *Soldier*. “Iraq and Afghanistan have provided us with strong and credible leadership at all levels.”



WO1 Jon Frith (Gren Gds)



➔ With the “choc” under way, command has been transferred to a post rapidly established a few miles away. But there are developments on the battlefield.

Some 35,000 allied personnel are preparing for an offensive across a front spanning around 20 miles and a loss of leadership cannot be afforded.

Moving in a Warrior convoy to the new location is general officer commanding Maj Gen Nick Borton, who originally commissioned into the Royal Highland Fusiliers in 1989. He is pleased with the way his troops are adapting to large-scale peer-on-peer combat.

“It is fair to say we have been on a journey to rebuild the skill sets for war-fighting over the past few years – it is a long time since we have seen this type of exercise,” he admits, adding that the use of “choc” has not been rehearsed for some time.

“The training is all about regrowing the right expertise, taking lessons from past campaigns and putting them into a new context as we live and operate together.”

Service personnel at the sharp end of the HQ are impressed with the learning opportunities on offer.

“Life out here is quite a change from the likes of Iraq and Afghanistan,” remarks LCpl Mitchell Lawrence (RE), who is in the Royal Engineer cell. “The situation is different, even around protocols such as evacuating the wounded.

“We are talking about high casualty situations and we won’t be able to use Chinooks for extraction – ambulances will be needed for the numbers of wounded.

“And minefields, rather than improvised explosive devices, will be the problem.”

Cpl James Duncan (Para) emphasises that building relationships with allies has also been a high point of Exercise Iron Resolve.

“I have served for the past 15 years and this is something that seems to be getting stronger and stronger,” he adds.

“The package also represents a chance to see the bigger picture of command.”

The opportunities are certainly rich.

In a changing world, the Army must keep pace with the environments it may face – particularly in the war-fighting arena – and plans are now being made for divisional troops to take part in a major serial in the USA this year. ■

IRON DIVISION FRONT LINE

We asked officers and soldiers how the exercise had panned out...



I am here as an observer and seeing this exercise has been enlightening. The notion of distributed command – and how you do it – is very interesting. There are **different concepts here that we might introduce to French training.**

Capt Guillaume Barbe, French Army

It is interesting for somebody of my rank to have the GOC in the turret. You wouldn’t usually have the chance to interact and would normally only see him on a formal visit. Exercise Iron Resolve has been **a good opportunity to see the bigger picture.**

LCpl Joshua Kenny, RRF



The package has been **a challenge** – it has been **very physically demanding** at times. It is the first time I have supported a mobile divisional HQ and the moves have been **particularly testing.**

LCpl Jack Keates, R Signals

It’s a good way to test interoperability. The British and US militaries have been working closely together on operations for the past 15 years and **we have more similarities than differences.** But here we have **the opportunity to share ideas** – the value of being in a multinational environment is you learn from one another.

Brig Gen Douglas Crissman, US Army
Deputy Commanding General,
3 (UK) Division



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When recce commander Nathan Cumberland lost both legs to an IED blast his future seemed bleak. But in just a handful of years the determined Grenadier Guardsman has gone from wounded warrior to dedicated welfare worker. He tells *Soldier* his story...

“It turned out to be third time lucky for me,” Nathan Cumberland says grimly of his Herrick tour in 2009. The Serviceman was on patrol when he stepped on an IED, leaving him with catastrophic injuries that would see him become a double amputee.

“I sensed something wasn’t right that day,” he recalls of his final military mission.

“It had been quiet, like something was being planned. We’d all joke about whether it would be our turn next, and how we should have picked our wheelchairs out.”

The dark humour turned out to be a terrible prophecy. Cumberland lost one leg in the blast, and in the chaos of the aftermath he had to apply tourniquets to himself while awaiting the Mert helicopter.

Thirteen pints of blood, 27 operations, two years of rehab and several bouts of MRSA later, something of a normal existence was starting to come into view for the Serviceman.

“My regiment was amazing,” he recalls “People visited daily and I had no issues with the support.

“I was more worried about my family and fiancée.”

Following stints at both Headley Court and Tedworth House, Cumberland was eventually ready to enter civvy street.

He took up a job with Help for Heroes, coordinating the charity’s ambassadors, and even went on to compete at the Invictus Games in shot put (pictured) and powerlifting.

“Your head is going at 1,000mph, trying to accept that things have changed,” Cumberland explains.

“I was meeting all these charity people and the world of welfare just grabbed me.

“When you’re serving you don’t really think about that

side of things because you seem invincible.”

But when a position was advertised at the Defence Medical Welfare Service last year, the ex-Serviceman made the move.

And – as is often the case with those leaving the military – his experiences at the sharp end would prove to be a vital asset to his new employer, which supports Armed Forces personnel and veterans undergoing medical treatment.

The 33-year-old is based in Nottinghamshire, where he spends a lot of time assisting the elderly.

“It appealed to me to work with guys over 65,” he explains. “The sorts of stories you hear are fantastic.

“Often people just need our reassurance.

“It might be little things like telling them what’s what, or how long they will be in hospital for.

“Sometimes the doctors are busy and welfare officers can act like go-betweens.”

It doesn’t sound like the easiest of full-time jobs for someone who has seen more than his fair share of medical procedures.

“I found the first few months a struggle,” Cumberland concedes. “But I just got on with it.

“I think if you ask anyone you don’t do this job for the money; it’s a cliché but you just want to help.”

He continues: “It can be hard to see people with fewer injuries than you not coping – at one point I did wonder if I was cut out for the welfare thing.

“But there’s a lot of factors involved and over time I’ve learnt to see these.

“Someone may have lesser injuries, but their road to recovery could have been more difficult than mine.

“Perhaps they were on their own, maybe they don’t have a big family like I do, or a fiancée whooping their arse.

“Until you’re in someone else’s shoes you never know.”

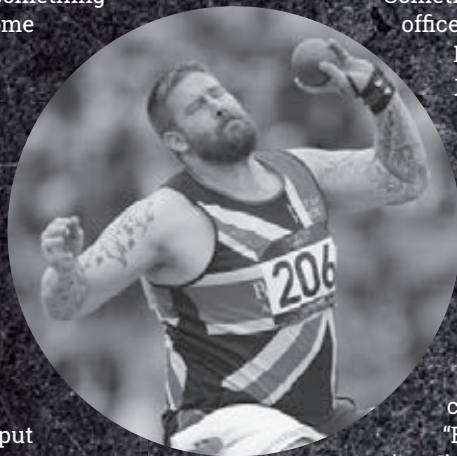
The veteran’s sympathetic yet no-nonsense approach is clearly one that many of his military patients appreciate.”

He tells me: “Sometimes I do have to be quite blunt with people, but as they are ex-Forces they usually want that.

“I explain that no one likes asking for help but that amputees like me will have to do that for the rest of our lives.

“It goes from there, really.”

It might not be the patrol-base banter he was wrenched away from, but Cumberland’s



career has been a boost to him as well as his service users.

"You usually find that sense of humour is there," he says.

"An elderly veteran might not recognise their wife any more but I guarantee they will know their service number and be up for a laugh."

Having the strength of character to take on other people's problems is an admirable trait in anyone.

But to do so after sacrificing nearly a decade of your own life to the recovery and rehabilitation process is nothing short of remarkable.

He may be out of uniform, but Nathan Cumberland is just about the most positive embodiment of grit, determination and courage it's possible to imagine – and yet another example of how the Army's values and standards can make a positive impact long after discharge.

"I will be part of the welfare bubble for the rest of my life," says the veteran matter-of-factly. "That's just the way it goes.

"No one can know what's coming if they get injured, and it comes down to how you want to deal with it.

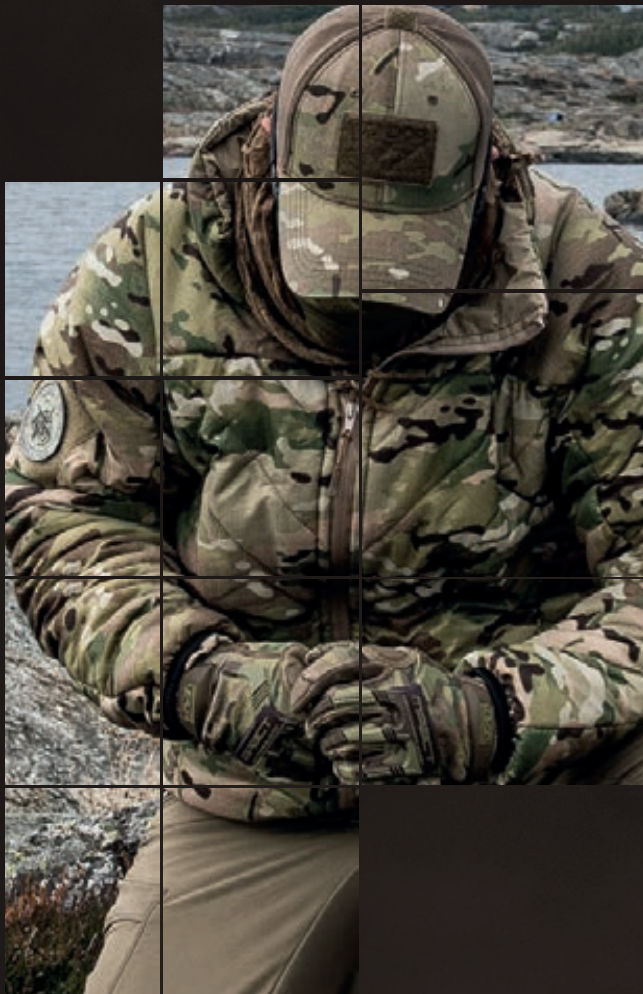
"When I was in Selly Oak I decided I had two choices – blame everyone or accept that I am never going to be in the Army again and focus on the future."

If that sort of outlook doesn't inspire those he works with, nothing will. ■



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In his sights: A reader is aiming for better conditions for volunteers

‘Reservist pay needs support’

MY Reserve battalion employs a number of personnel on voluntary training and other duties (VTOD) including as recruiters or in administrative roles.

These soldiers work 207 days a year and for the vast majority of them it is their sole form of income.

However, despite being part-time employees of the British Army they are not entitled to sick pay, or even paid compassionate leave when their kids are ill.

I recently found this out when one of my team, who is a single mother, had to take time out.

Should we, as a modern organisation, hire people on a zero-hour style contract with no employee benefits? – **Maj Pete Shergold, Mercian**

Lt Col Nigel Drayton, Senior Officer Policy, Directorate Manning (Army), replies: VTOD is entirely voluntary; the Reservist doesn't have to come in to work and the employer doesn't have to provide work.

The Army is able to employ members of the Army Reserve on part-time Reserve service VTOD and/or additional duties commitment (ADC), providing the aggregated total of both does not exceed 180 Reserve service days per year.

This is in addition to the Reserve's obligatory training requirement of 27 days per year for the regional Army Reserve, or 19 days per year for a national Reservist.

The employer and the individual can select either commitment exclusively or mix and match them to suit, but paid sick and compassionate leave are not part of

the conditions of service for VTOD as they are for ADC.

There are practical and legal reasons for this.

It follows that no agreement can be made to pay this individual on specific days if he or she does not attend for work on these days; the exception is maternity, which is covered in **2015DID01-167**.

An ADC is different in that a formal written commitment is made between the employer and the Reservist for specific work to be conducted on certain days.

If the soldier is not able to work at any of these times, due to sickness and/or for compassionate reasons, they are paid for these days just as they would be if they were on full-time Reserve service or a Regular.

VTOD has an attractive allowance package, namely pay in lieu of annual leave, pension earning under Armed Forces pension scheme 15 and assistance with daily commuting costs.

ADC is slightly different in that it grants paid annual leave and terminal leave but doesn't include daily commute costs.

In both cases a five per cent X-factor is included in pay which increases with annual increments and promotion and, if linked to obligatory training, an annual bounty is paid with all service being reckonable for the award of the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal.

We consider that both the VTOD and ADC packages compare favourably with equivalents for civilian part-time employment.

“
For the majority it is their sole employment
”

“
TALKBACK
”

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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RANT OF THE MONTH

Get it off your chest and on social media



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

The article on officer cadets conducting public order training in the December issue caused a riot on Facebook...



Ged McMichael

Public order training is an indication that the Army is trained to be used against the very civilians it is supposed to protect. A sign that something is broken. Sad.



Steve Hancock

The Army is not sworn to protect those involved in public criminality, so by default if they are deployed against those involved in disorder they are being used to protect those civilians who are at risk.



Ant Sharman

Public order training is part of their core syllabus – not something new. It is an excellent environment in which to pressurise decision-making and prepare young leaders just a little for the moment that it is bullets and not potatoes incoming.



Stuart Nicholson

The British Army has always trained in public order and used it in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Iraq and Cyprus.



Bryan Malyon

Did this back in '91 there at Longmoor, it was great fun

An unwelcome greeting

WITH the MoD correctly placing a lot of importance on various diversity, inclusion and gender-related issues, may I bring everyone's attention to the way we greet and speak to each other.

For example, when the telephone rings I must answer with the name of my department, my name, followed by "how can I help you sir?"

Presumably, we say "sir" because regimental sergeant majors and officers were once all male, harking back to a time when only men were allowed to serve in the military.

Secondly, when I see an officer walking through the barracks I must greet them with the word "sir" or "ma'am" but am I not risking offence here by assuming someone's gender or implying that they actually see themselves as having a gender?

Isn't it about time the Army considered abolishing these Victorian-style greetings?

I believe a new system should be looked at which is more up-to-date and lessens the risk of embarrassment or

offence to us all. – Name and address supplied

Col Steve Davies, Assistant Head Employment, Directorate Manning (Army) replies: The use of gendered terms when greeting officers as you walk around barracks reflects a convention that is used in many important sectors of British society, including the monarchy, judiciary and parliament.

I would disagree that the British Army is somehow out of step with the community in this regard.

Saying "sir" or "ma'am" is both appropriate and polite.

However, I agree that the convention of answering the telephone using "sir" without knowing who one is speaking to is now considered outdated and arguably unnecessary.

The opening gambit of saying your rank and name followed by "how can I help you?" is both respectful and applicable to all callers and should be adopted.

“ Am I not risking offence? ”

WHERE IS SOLDIER'S SENSE OF OCCASION?

● AS a long-time reader I was struck by the lack of festive content in your December edition – what happened to the special Christmas competition?

In the past you published celebrity messages to the troops as well. Am I being cynical or have companies and public figures lost interest in the Armed Forces now that we are no longer involved in combat operations?

And while I enjoy the editor's letter on page five, I was looking forward to the traditional update from the chief of the general staff. – Name and address supplied

The managing editor responds: You are correct that the Army's relatively low profile compared to the Herrick era makes it more difficult to attract companies and celebrities to participate in special articles or competitions.

As for the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, he opted to write a New Year message instead of a Christmas one (page 26).





“The outfit is obsolete”

‘Another bill for us to bear’

I AM serving with the King’s Royal Hussars and am being forced to comply with the requirement for some regiments to change their mess dress due to females now being eligible to serve in the teeth arms.

While I welcome the introduction of women into the Royal Armoured Corps, should we be forced to purchase new mess dress without support?

Several colleagues of mine recently bought the old-style outfit with a grant

(this doesn’t cover the whole cost).

However, they’ve been told the garments are obsolete and are expected to pay around £1,000 for new ones.

This is yet another bill soldiers have to bear and if a similar situation occurred in the civilian sector the cost would be covered by the company.

Most employees out there simply wouldn’t accept being told to “suck it up and put it on a credit card”.

A reasonable solution would be to

extend the grant to cover the price of the new mess dress, even if an individual has already taken advantage of the scheme to purchase the previous set of clothing.
– Name and address supplied

Lt Col (ret) Kestrel Simson, Ceremonial and Operational and Service Awards, Army Headquarters, replies: The Army Dress Committee first considered proposals to change the King’s Royal Hussars’ dress regulations in June 2017.

It then approved a modification to the design of the male senior NCO mess dress in order to make it more suited to females, but because this was a voluntary alteration there could be no additional grants or public funding to pay for existing members to update their outfits.

The committee also stated that there was to be no pressure for personnel to change their clothing.

However, the regiment voted that soldiers with more than 18 months left to serve should purchase the new jacket and bib.

In a similar vote, members of the corporals’ club, who are under no obligation to purchase any form of mess dress and receive no grants at all, also agreed to change to the new design.

If you or any other member of the warrant officers’ and sergeants’ mess or the corporals’ club are unhappy with this change to the rules, you should take up the matter with your regimental chain of command.

DOES TROUSER POLICY LEAVE TROOPS IN THE COLD?

● I HAVE recently deployed to Eastern Europe where we’ve been told that wind is one of the primary factors when it comes to feeling the cold.

However, we have not been supplied with windproof trousers, so under what conditions is this piece of kit issued?

– Name and address supplied

Col Neil Llewellyn, Assistant Head of Logistic Support, Army Headquarters, replies: Our deployments are supported through a specific schedule of clothing items and ancillaries which are designed to cater for the full range of weather conditions.

This schedule is the responsibility of Support Branch, Headquarters Field Army who have endorsed the requirement and funded the solution.

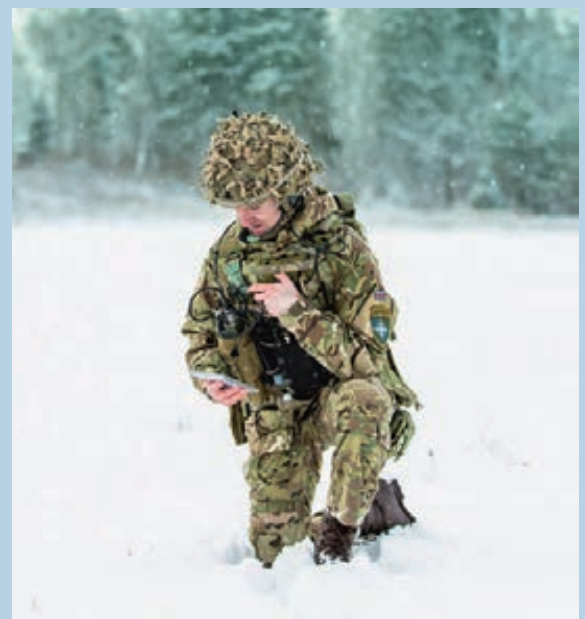
The schedule itself was produced by Royal Marine mountain leader subject matter experts.

A layered system was developed that is designed to allow soldiers to survive and operate in Eastern Europe.

If individuals identify what they believe is a deficiency in the clothing schedule or a defect in the issued items, they are encouraged to raise a report through their chain of command that identifies the problem.

This will then be analysed by the Field Army’s Support Branch to determine if a new requirement needs to be generated.

But thus far, no defect reports have been received relating to issued clothing for UK Armed Forces operating in this region.



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	Cheltenham College	55%
85	Bromsgrove School	54%
	Dauntsey's School	50%
	Dean Close School	49%
114	Kingswood School	48%
143	Kingham Hill School	45%
	Monkton Combe	42%
	Gordon's School	36%
	King's School Bruton	34%
	Welbeck College	34%
	King's Coll Taunton	31%
239	Stamford School	30%
	Millfield School	25%
	Barnard Castle School	21%
271	Licensed Vict Ascot	16%

If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, top ten academics a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, amazing sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects and first class confidence and self assurance. If you want the best for your child, and to stand a chance of achieving most of this list, we believe you would need to pick one of the top 10 UK Independent boarding schools as ranked by the Daily Telegraph. BUT, most importantly of all, we unashamedly also offer TLC - tender, loving care!



UK's Top 20 Independent Schools 2017 - % A*/A A-Level (Daily Telegraph)

Ranking of Schools taking boarders			
Nationally Ranking all type schools			
		% A* / A A-Level	
1	1	Cardiff Sixth Form College	91%
	2	Perse School, Cambridge	87%
2	3	Westminster School, London	86%
	4	King's College School (KCS)	86%
3	5	Queen Ethelburga's College	85%
	6	Guildford Girls High School	85%
4	7	Concord College, Shrewsbury	84%
	8	City of London Girls School	84%
	9	Haberdashers' Aske's Boys	84%
	10	St John's College, Cardiff	83%
	11	King Edward's Birmingham	82%
	12	Magdalen College, Oxford	80%
	13	North London Collegiate Sch	79%
	14	Royal Grammar, Guildford	78%
	15	Alleyn's School, Dulwich	77%
	16	Haberdashers' Aske's Girls	77%
5	17	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	77%
6	18	Brighton College, Brighton	76%
7	19	St Mary's School Ascot, Ascot	75%
	20	Hampton School, Hampton	73%



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Michael Furlong, Allenby Barracks, Bovington Camp.

Churchill DVD winners: Graham Drew, Wendy Sparrow, Pete Rendall, Jayne Hawkes, Lisa Telford.



DIARY

January 15: Deadline for the British Army's first poetry competition. See page 17 of November 2017's *Soldier* for details.

February 1-6: *Soldiery: British Army Portraits* exhibition at the National Army Museum, Chelsea. The work of photographer Rory Lewis will be on display – he will give a talk with Gen Sir James Everard at 1800 on January 31, ahead of the opening. Further details at www.nam.ac.uk/whats-on/soldiery-preview

March 23: N Battery (The Eagle Troop), Royal Horse Artillery celebrate the **175th Hyderabad Day**. Open to all ex-members, the event comprises a black tie dinner in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne from 1900. For more information and to confirm attendance email hyderabad1843@gmail.com

March 17: Opening of the National Army Museum's *Special Forces – Out of the Shadows* exhibition. For further details visit www.nam.ac.uk



DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

Armed Forces Buddhist Society: Chaplain 020 7414 3411 www.afbs-uk.org

Armed Forces Christian Union: 01252 311221; www.afcu.org.uk

Armed Forces Muslim Association: Chaplain 020 7414 3252; www.afma.org.uk

Armed Services Advice Project: 0808 800 1007; www.adviceasap.org.uk

Army Families Federation: 01264 382324; mil 94391 2324; www.aff.org.uk

Army LGBT Forum: www.armylgbt.org.uk;

chair@armylgbt.org.uk

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society: www.armybirding.org.uk

Army Welfare Service: 01904 882053; www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support

Big White Wall: www.bigwhitewall.com

Blesma, The Limbless Veterans: 020 8590 1124; www.blesma.org

Blind Veterans UK: (formerly St Dunstan's) 020 7723 5021; www.blindveterans.org.uk

Care After Combat: www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership: 020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk

Combat Stress: 01372 841600; www.combatstress.org.uk

Defence Humanists: www.defencehumanists.org.uk

Erskine: 0141 814 4569; www.erskine.org.uk

Family Escort Service: 020 7463 9249

Felix Fund – the bomb disposal charity: 07713 752901 www.felixfund.org.uk

Forcesline: UK – 0800 731 4880; Germany – 0800 1827 395; Cyprus – 080 91065; Falklands – #6111; from operational theatres – Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) – 0044 1980 630854

Forces Pension Society: 020 7820 9988

Help for Heroes: 0845 673 1760 or 01980 846 459; www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Heroes Welcome: www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround: www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01252 787574

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support

(multiple sclerosis group): www.mutualsupport.org.uk

National Ex-Services Association: www.nesa.org.uk

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office: 24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853; www.ngvfa.org.uk

Poppyscotland: 0131 557 2782; www.poppyscotland.org.uk

Regular Forces' Employment Association: 0121 236 0058; www.rfea.org.uk

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

Royal British Legion: 0808 802 8080; www.britishlegion.org.uk

Royal British Legion Scotland: 0131 550 1583; www.legionscotland.org.uk

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre: 01622 795900; www.rbli.co.uk

Scottish Veterans' Residences: 0131 556 0091; www.svronline.org

Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services: 01748 833797; www.spaces.org.uk

SSAFA: 0845 1300 975; www.ssafa.org.uk

Stoll: 020 7385 2110; info@stoll.org.uk; www.stoll.org.uk

The Not Forgotten Association: 020 7730 2400 www.nfassociation.org

The Poppy Factory: 020 8940 3305; www.poppyfactory.org

The Royal Star & Garter Homes: 020 8481 7676; www.starandgarter.org

The Veterans Charity: 01753 653772; info@veteranscharity.org.uk

Troop Aid: 0121 711 7215 or 07734 384260
uk4u Thanks!: 01798 812081; www.uk4u.org

Veterans Welfare Service: 0808 1914 218 (from the UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas) www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service



INTELLIGENCE

The following Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs and Defence Information Notices can be found online at www.armynet.mod.uk

ABN 137/17: Defence employer recognition scheme directive 2018

ABN 135/17: The management of trade and employment competences on JPA

ABN 134/17: Introduction of the Cadet Forces Commission

ABN 133/17: Introduction of the Army Reserve promotion board (pink list) in 2018

ABN 132/17: The Centre for Army Leadership's 2018 speaker series

DIN 2017DIN01-190: MoD civilian medical practitioners pay award 2017

DIN 2017DIN01-189: MoD civilian dental practitioners 2017 pay award

DIN 2017DIN01-188: Health service support for personnel assigned to European Joint Support Unit locations

DIN 2017DIN01-187: Reimbursement of professional body fees for Regular Armed Forces allied health professionals

DIN 2017DIN01-186: Selection for the attendance on the intermediate command and staff course (Land Reserves) in 2018

DIN 2017DIN01-185: Launch of the payment of professional membership fees policy

DIN 2017DIN01-184: Hepatitis A and B vaccine shortage

DIN 2017DIN01-183: Service pupil premium details for 2017/18

DIN 2017DIN01-181: Recruitment – the introduction of new sift and selection tools and the removal of mandated minimum educational qualifications for generalist roles

DIN 2017DIN01-180: Volunteer Cadet Corps – change of status

DIN 2017DIN02-009: Army national security vetting clearance requirements.

DIN 2017DIN03-019: Treatment of military terrain pattern uniform and mosquito nets with permethrin

Continued on page 54

Continued from page 53

DIN 2017DIN04-195: Amendment to Army command standing order 9015

DIN 2017DIN04-194: Return of serviceable A1/A2 STAS equipment to Qioptiq is to cease immediately

DIN 2017DIN04-193: Declaration of obsolescence: Clansman ground spike antenna NSN 5820-99-620-5950

DIN 2017DIN04-191: Removal from service of sample kit, dog training No 3

DIN 2017DIN04-190: Publication of deployed antibiotic policy

DIN 2017DIN04-188: Declaration of obsolescence of Sophie R and all associated spares

DIN 2017DIN04-187: Declaration of obsolete equipment – Rapiscan security screening equipment

DIN 2017DIN04-186: Back-loading of L81A2 cadet target rifle

DIN 2017DIN04-185: Identify Friend or Foe mode 5 platform identification numbers

DIN 2017DIN04-183: Removal from service of cartridge electrically operated fire extinguisher (Lynx Mk 7 and 8)

DIN 2017DIN05-019: Support to

non MoD-sponsored cadet units and organisations

DIN 2017DIN05-018: The Defence Medical Services Regulator initial operating capability structure, roles and responsibilities from December 1, 2017

DIN 2017DIN05-017: Contact with parliamentarians

DIN 2017DIN06-025: Publication of International Air Transport Association dangerous goods regulations 59th edition

DIN 2017DIN06-024: Container weighing verification

DIN 2017DIN06-023: Duty to consult with the Defence Fire Safety Regulator

DIN 2017DIN06-022: JSP 800, vol 4b, ed 2, management and detail of latest amendments

DIN 2017DIN07-139: Chainsaw training audience

DIN 2017DIN07-138: Adventurous training offshore sailing – planning expeditions to Cyprus in 2018

DIN 2017DIN07-137: Flotilla Express

DIN 2017DIN07-135: Recording foreign language proficiency and multi-level language assessments – independent candidates

DIN 2017DIN07-134: Joint Service adventurous training parachuting – planning expeditions to Cyprus in 2018

DIN 2017DIN07-133: Offshore sail training craft from Joint Services Adventurous Sail Training Centre for unit adventurous training exercises

DIN 2017DIN07-132: Defence Medical Services Reserves external course application process

DIN 2017DIN07-131: Defence information management passport

DIN 2017DIN07-130: Defence medic level 3 uplift course to level 4 associate ambulance practitioner – attendance criteria

DIN 2017DIN07-129: Adventurous training – mountain biking expeditions – Harz Mountains

DIN 2017DIN07-128: Defence recovery capability employment training courses. Schedule April 2018 until March 2019

DIN 2017DIN07-126: 2018 Senior signals intelligence adviser training course

DIN 2017DIN07-125: US Air Force advanced course in engineering cyber internship

DIN 2017DIN07-124: MoD managed learning service – procurement of external training for MoD personnel

DIN 2017DIN07-123: Joint operational planning course – FY 2018/19

DIN 2017DIN09-020: General Service Medal 2008 with Eastern Africa clasp for Operation Tangham HQ British Peace Support Team (Eastern Africa)

DIN 2017DIN10-053: British Army motorsports event – Saxon Express 2018

DIN 2017DIN10-052: Army Support Command – South Climbing Competition

DIN 2017DIN10-051: The Army Indoor Tennis Championships 2018



ROADSHOWS

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ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY

11 November 2017

1st Prize (£10,000): Gnr H Davies, M Bty, 3 RHA, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. 2nd Prize (£5,000): Maj E Thompson, HQ RSME, Chatham. 3rd Prize (£4,000): WO2 G Osborne, LSP, Oman, BFPO 747. 4th Prize (£2,000): SSgt P Chamberlain, 244 Sqn, 30 Signal Regt, Nuneaton. 5th Prize (£1,000): Pte A Gurung, Sp Bty, 40 (AD) RA, Emsworth. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): Name withheld, RAF St Athan, Vale of Glamorgan; SSgt R Fawcett, HQ Sqn, LAD, RL, Catterick; Name withheld, HQ Hereford Garrison; LCpl S Christian, HQ Sqn, 1 AAC, Yeovilton; Cpl M Hill, 21 Sqn, 101 Engr Regt (EOD), Saffron Walden; LCpl M Atkinson, HQ Sqn, LD, Catterick Garrison; Bdr J Westall, 79 Bty, 29 Cdo Regt RA, Plymouth; Cpl T Millis, 25 MI Coy, BFPO 801; LCpl A Purvis, 228 Sqn, 3 Signal Regt, Bulford Camp; Pte A Lisle-Brown, B Coy, 1 Yorks, Warminster; Pte K Baptiste, 8 Bn REME, DSEME, Chippenham; Maj S Bowerbank, 151 Regt RLC, Croydon; WO2 C

Spence, NISGU HQ, BFPO 801; WO2 P Aling, WDSU, DSPA, Winchester; SSgt M May, 8 Sqn, 27 Regt RLC, Aldershot.

18 November 2017

1st Prize (£10,000): Spr D Bogle, 102 Sqn, 71 Engr Regt, Paisley. 2nd Prize (£5,000): WO1 D Rai, 10 QOGLR, Aldershot. 3rd Prize (£4,000): Capt G Main, 4 Scots, Catterick Garrison. 4th Prize (£2,000): Capt L Morgan, Regional Command, EHT, Cardiff. 5th Prize (£1,000): Col G Livesey, D Jt Cap, London. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): SSgt D Urbaniak, 60 Sqn, 39 Engr Regt, Kinloss; Capt D Weston, CJSU, BFPO 57; Sgt G Burke, Armour Centre, Warminster; Sgt J Hartland, Cbt CIS School, Bovington Camp; Cpl R Hanson, 105 Sqn, 1 MWD, BFPO 16; SSgt P Pagan-Skelley, 1 Bty, 14 Regt RA, Salisbury; Name withheld, HQ Hereford Garrison; CSgt N Watson, A Coy, 4 Scots, Catterick Garrison; Capt H Morton, PEW, 1 RSME, Chatham; Rfn C Penfold, C Coy, 5 Rifles, Salisbury; Cpl A Lund, HQ SIB, RMP (UK), Bulford; LCpl J Grainger, 71 Avn Coy, 7 AA Bn REME, Ipswich; LCpl H Lee, RSMS, Thatcham; LCpl D Tooth, B

Coy, 1 Rifles, Chepstow; CSgt K McGuigan, RG, BFPO 52.

25 November 2017

1st Prize (£10,000): Capt C Booth, HQ 12 Armd Inf Bde, Salisbury. 2nd Prize (£5,000): Cpl K Stockton, 34 Fd Hosp, Strensall. 3rd Prize (£4,000): Cpl L Tippett, 1 Rifles, Chepstow. 4th Prize (£2,000): Maj J Linegar, HQ Sqn, 5 Regt AA, BFPO 808. 5th Prize (£1,000): Tpr B Burgess, HQ Sqn, RL, Catterick. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): WO2 R McAulay, UKTI DSO/Est (L), Salisbury; WO2 D Kirkpatrick, 4 Armd Med Regt, Aldershot; Sgt L Barker, Sp Coy, Mercian, Chester; Cpl K Nyalemegbe, Dental Centre, Lyneham, Chippenham; Capt D Brown, 1 ITB, Catterick Garrison; LCpl S Bain, DCHET, Lichfield; Lt M Cole, ATC (P), Woking; LCpl J Brooks, 22 Sqn, 14 Signal Regt (EW), Haverfordwest; LCpl B Lockeridge, 14 Signal Regt (EW), Haverfordwest; Gnr G Brown, C Bty, 3 RHA, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Pte J Broadhead, 60 Sqn, 4 Regt RLC, Abingdon; Pte I Rogers, 3 Med Regt, Preston; Pte M Price, 8 Bn REME, DSEME, Chippenham; Lt Col J Watt, HQ DA, Swindon; Col M Lindsay-

Smith, Fd Army HQ, Andover.

2 December 2017

1st Prize (£20,000): 2nd Lt A McCormack, B Coy, 2 Scots, Penicuik. 2nd Prize (£10,000): Maj S Robertson, 32 Signal Regt, Strathclyde. 3rd Prize (£8,000): Lt Col B Smith, D Pers Manning Team, Andover. 4th Prize (£4,000): Capt J Shipley, SPA, Ruislip. 5th Prize (£2,000): Pte A McKenzie, A Coy, 3 Para, Colchester. 15 Consolation prizes (£400 each): WO2 D Perryment, ATC(P), Woking; Capt A Hosking, 243 Sqn, 10 Signal Regt, Andover; Sgt G Lucas, 659 Sqn, 1 AAC, Yeovilton; SSgt G Lynch, QRH, BFPO 16; Sgt D Hawker, RMA, Camberley; Pte T Le Sauter, 28 Sqn, 1 Med Regt, BFPO 16; LCpl F St Rose, 1 IG, Hounslow; LCpl C Stronach, HQ Sqn, RDG, Catterick Garrison; Maj C Wooldridge, Dental Centre, Lyneham, Chippenham; Fus A Thorne, 1 R Welsh, Tidworth; Rgr D Baker, B Coy, 1 R Irish, Tern Hill; Cfn J McCaig, A Coy, LAD REME, 1 SG, Aldershot; Sig G Mole, 1 Nato Signal Bn, Blandford Forum; Spr A Gardiner, 53 Sqn, 39 Eng Regt, Kinloss; LCpl C Marshall, 174 Pro Coy RMP, BFPO 801.



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REVIEWS



TOP GEAR

A FINE BALANCE

Whyte mountain bike gets *Soldier* treatment

THE Whyte 801 is a trail bike with a bit of cross-country pedigree.

And with a price tag of around £899 (the version I tested came courtesy of Edinburgh Bicycle Cooperative), it offers good value to boot.

The spec includes a Shimano Deore ten-speed drivetrain coupled with a 30-tooth front chain ring and 11-42 tooth rear cassette.

This helped me to climb the very steepest of hills as I put the bike to the test across North Yorkshire's countryside.



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BOOKS

P64

MUSIC

P65

MOVIES

TOP GEAR



Gear changes all proved to be smooth and precise.

In fact, in the eight or so weeks I have ridden the Whyte 801 there have been no issues with this kit at all.

The RockShox 30 forks smooth out the trail, but it is fair to say the bike struggles on very pebbly terrain where there is a rapid succession of big hits.

However, I was pleasantly surprised by the power of the Tektro Auriga hydraulic disc brakes.

I had no problems with these, despite the challenges thrown their way, and they certainly boost confidence when going downhill or tackling tricky terrain.

I mainly rode on rocks or hard-packed trail, where the Maxxis Ardent 27.5-inch tyres were equally up to the mission – although they struggled slightly with the traction in the deepest mud.

Generally, though, they roll over the ground easily and help soak up a lot of the heavy bumps.

The 801 can be chucked into corners and will track nicely.

The wheels are Whyte's own rims coupled with non-branded hubs and, again, these were perfectly functional and reasonably stiff, remaining true to the test.

All other components are own-branded but, again, they didn't give me any headaches.

As someone who mainly rides cross-country, this bike certainly served me well and, overall, I enjoyed riding it.

Its handling is good and the short stem makes for direct, poised steering.

The bike platform is stable, inspiring confidence over testing terrain, and when climbing its stiffness allows for effective power transfer.

Overall, the Whyte 801 is a well-balanced machine, as suited to new riders as it is to those looking for comfort on longer excursions. ■

REVIEW: WO1 JASON MARRIOTT, RIFLES

VERDICT:

A pleasure to ride, with a design that inspires confidence

★★★★★

DESIGN DOSSIER

A UK-based company, Whyte attributes its success to the fact its designs have pushed the front wheel of trail bikes further in front of riders at a slacker angle to the frame. The idea is that this helps the steering to self-correct, keeping riders on track over uneven surfaces. The Whyte 801 represents some significant upgrades from the 605 model – including a 66.5-degree head tube angle. Browse Whyte bikes online at www.edinburghbicycle.com



BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH:

BREAKOUT AT STALINGRAD

The incredible story of a German PoW's lost manuscript

▶ IT is rare that the appendix of a book proves as absorbing as the text itself. But that is very much the case with the afterword to Heinrich Gerlach's *Breakout at Stalingrad*, in which academic Carsten Gansel relates how this remarkable novel came to be published.

Gerlach was a lieutenant in the Wehrmacht's ill-fated Sixth Army. In November 1942, after months spent struggling to control the city on the Volga, a Russian counterattack encircled and trapped the 300,000-strong German force on the freezing steppe.

By the time Fd Marshal Paulus surrendered the following February, only 91,000 soldiers remained alive.

They were taken prisoner and during his seven years in captivity, Gerlach penned a semi-autobiographical account of his experiences.

The manuscript was discovered and confiscated by the Soviet authorities, and after his eventual release the officer found he could no longer recall the detail and structure of his text.

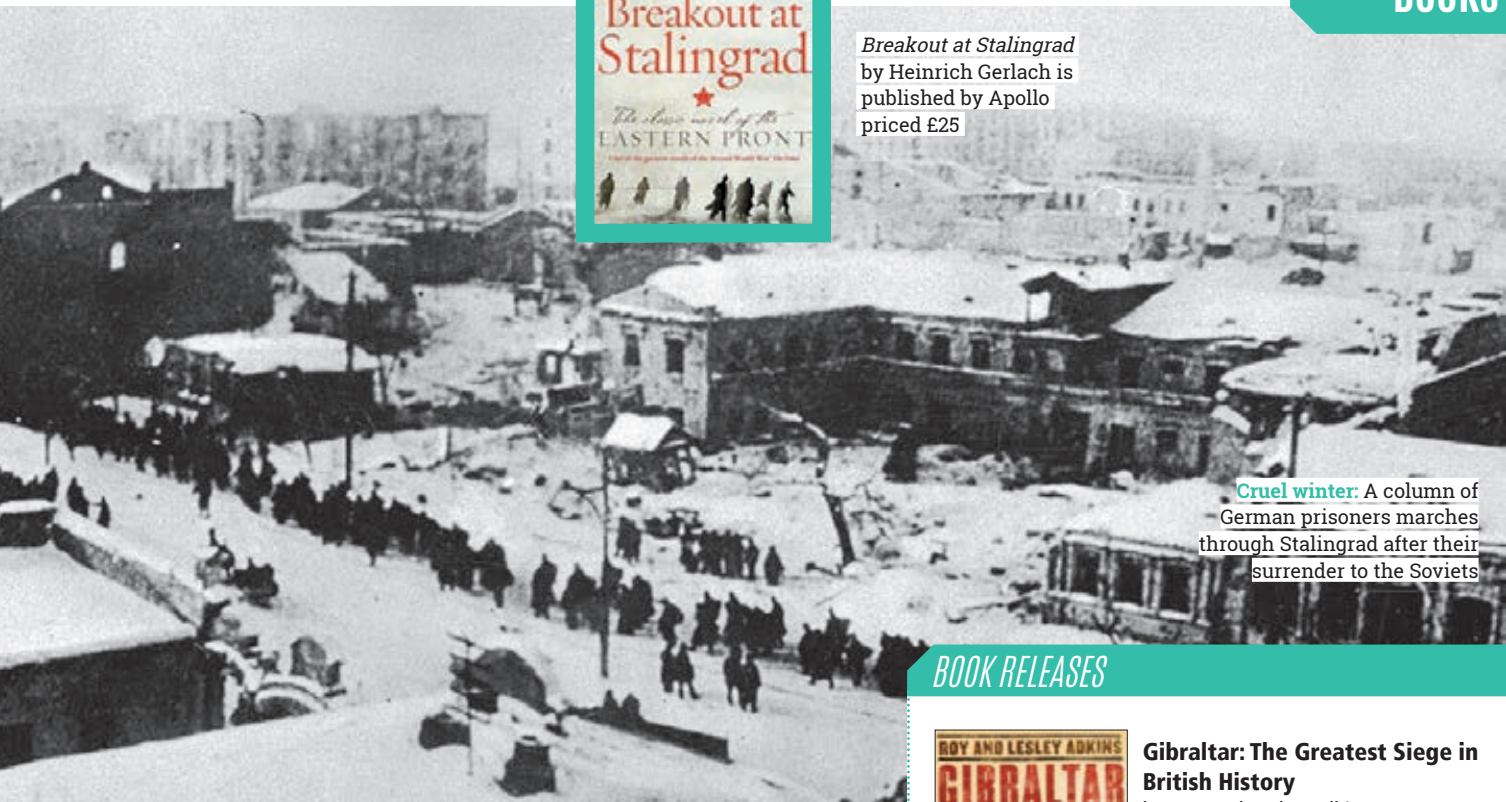
However, thanks to multiple sessions with a hypnotist, he was able to rewrite his book and in 1957 it was published – to wide acclaim – under the title *The Forsaken Army*.

The story would have ended there but, incredibly, in 2012 Gansel

Heinrich Gerlach
Breakout at Stalingrad

The decisive battle of the EASTERN FRONT
From the greatest battle of the Second World War to the present

Breakout at Stalingrad by Heinrich Gerlach is published by Apollo priced £25



Cruel winter: A column of German prisoners marches through Stalingrad after their surrender to the Soviets

Picture: Imperial War Museum

unearthed the original copy in a Moscow archive.

It is this version, along with his notes, which has now been translated into English for the first time.

The story follows Gerlach's alter ego, Lt Breuer, and his compatriots as they struggle to survive their ordeal in the so-called "cauldron" on the outskirts of Stalingrad.

Hitler effectively condemned his troops to death by refusing to allow a retreat, and the book is a bitter indictment of his hubris, echoing *All Quiet on the Western Front* for its anti-war message.

The novel is compelling in itself but the added context provided by Gansel's appendix is utterly fascinating.

Gerlach was among a group of disillusioned German officers recruited by the Soviets to form an anti-fascist league. Their main undertaking was to produce anti-Nazi propaganda to distribute to those troops still loyal to the Fuehrer.

In an article about Stalingrad for the organisation's newspaper, Gerlach wrote: "...they didn't go to their deaths with a victorious smile on their faces...and singing the national anthem, but instead, dressed in rags,

emaciated by hunger, filled with all the pain of tormented animals, they died a miserable death in the frost and snow, and with a curse on their lips against the man whom they'd once trusted. That was Stalingrad."

By speaking out against Hitler, the officers hoped to shift opinion and end the war more quickly, thus preventing the total destruction of Germany.

Ultimately, of course, they were unsuccessful but this insight into their efforts is riveting.

Of nearly 100,000 Germans taken prisoner, only 6,000 returned home after the war.

Gerlach was determined that their story should be heard and, 60 years on from its first publication, this excellent book will shine a light on the horrors of the Eastern Front for a new generation of English-speaking readers. ■

REVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*

VERDICT:

An absolute gem of a book that filled a gap in my knowledge of the Second World War

★★★★★

BOOK RELEASES

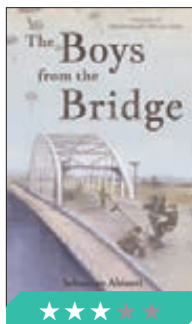


★★★★★

Gibraltar: The Greatest Siege in British History by Roy and Lesley Adkins

THIS book tells the story of the Siege of Gibraltar from 1779-83 following the outbreak of war between Britain and the alliance of France and Spain. Through the letters and journals of the people on the Rock at the time, who endured starvation, battle casualties, disease and desertion, just about every human failing and strength is revealed. This is a very detailed account, well annotated, illustrated and with an excellent index and bibliography. I feel it lacks a bit in analysis but the authors do a good job of connecting events. This is well worth reading to get an idea of such an important time in Britain's history.

Andy Kay, ex-RS



★★★★★

The Boys from the Bridge by Sebastian Abineri

AS a lifelong *A Bridge Too Far* buff I leapt at the chance to read this account of the author's time as an extra on the movie. The title starts off as more of an autobiography but eventually offers a behind-the-scenes look at filming. Being a member of Attenborough's Private Army was undoubtedly a fantastic experience and something Abineri is clearly proud of. I was disappointed there weren't any photos of the all-star cast – or even perhaps the author in uniform – if only to try and spot him on my next viewing. But I would recommend the book to fans of the film.

WO2 Mike Owens, RE

BOOK RELEASES CONTINUED



Churchill Warrior by Brian Lavery

THIS informative title paints an interesting picture of how life in the British Army at the end of the Victorian era in Sudan, India

and South Africa helped mould Churchill into the greatest British (and American) war leader of all time. As Lord of the Admiralty he was known more for failed ventures at Antwerp and Gallipoli, but what people forget is his time as a battalion commander on the Western Front and the subsequent development of true amphibious, armoured and air warfare. It was these visionary ideas that the author persuasively argues are responsible for his and the nation's success a generation later against the Nazis.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



Women Warriors by Tracey-Ann Knight

INSIGHTFUL and heart-rending, this is a well-researched, authentic text on the plight of female

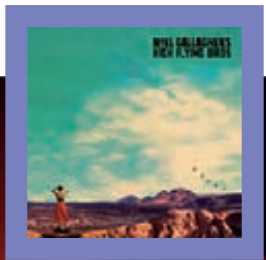
soldiers throughout the centuries and from all over the world. Not motivated by equality, the desire to break stigmas or prove their worth against their male counterparts, each individual instead had one simple need: to serve their country. I've read this book three or four times now and still find their stories incredible and exciting because every one of these soldiers gave up what was expected of them to follow a common dream of answering the call alongside their countrymen.

Sgt Helen Asquith, AGC (SPS)

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MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH:

MOON MISSION

Ex-Oasis star embraces fresh ideas on third solo offering

➤ **HAVING** spent more than two decades at the forefront of the UK rock 'n' roll scene, fans of **Noel Gallagher** know what to expect when an album comes around.

So when talk of a bold new direction and a novel approach to recording surfaced ahead of the release of *Who Built the Moon?* there was a certain degree of trepidation in some quarters.

More than two years in the making, the record saw Gallagher immersed in the Belfast studio of renowned producer and DJ **David Holmes**, where anything with a passing resemblance to previous solo offerings or the mighty **Oasis** back catalogue was swiftly banished.

The end result is an album brimming with experimentation, electronic diversions, guest musicians and vocalists, as well as hints of soul, rock, disco and dance.

"People are going to be surprised," Holmes explained. "I think people love Noel and they're desperate for him to make a really big, bold, up-tempo beast of a record.

"A lot of his music is mid-tempo. This one is fun."

The change in direction is obvious from the very outset, with opener *Fort Knox* embracing an electronic approach that would not be out of place on the likes of a **Chemical Brothers** record.

Lead single *Holy Mountain* proved divisive when it first aired, with some even drawing unfair comparisons to **Ricky Martin** in his heyday. But this is much better than anything ever delivered by the long-forgotten Puerto Rican pop prince.

It is a track full of joy and optimism – which are rare commodities in the

VERDICT:
Creativity
at its best
★★★★★

music of today – and its tin whistle riff proves to be a welcome addition.

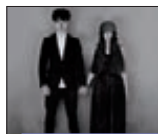
The delights continue with *Keep on Reaching*, *It's a Beautiful World* and *She Taught me How to Fly*, tracks which boast wide-ranging influences and a similarity to **New Order** in their prime.

Greater familiarity is found on the album's final song, *Dead in the Water*, which slots seamlessly into Gallagher's repertoire of acoustic masterpieces.

Change isn't always seen as a good thing but here it has delivered spectacular results. *Who Built the Moon?* is an outstanding record that serves to underline the artist's reputation as one of the greatest songwriters of his generation. ■

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, *SOLDIER*

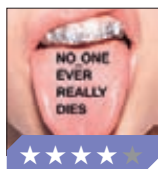
MUSIC RELEASES



Songs of Experience
by U2

BILLED as a companion to 2014's *Songs of Innocence*, this latest offering from Irish rock heavyweights **U2** proves to be a limp and toothless affair. The band's cutting edge has been replaced in favour of a more radio-friendly approach, which serves up a largely forgettable selection that fails to get out of second gear. The 2017 tour marking the 30th anniversary of acclaimed album *The Joshua Tree* served as a reminder of the greatness **Bono** et al are capable of but this effort will only further irk those who are still annoyed at being force-fed the group's previous record via iTunes.

Richard Long, Soldier



No One Ever Really Dies
by NERD

HAVING ventured down the mainstream path during the more recent offerings in his solo career, producer, rapper, singer and all-round music mogul **Pharrell Williams** has returned to his early roots with the resurrection of funk-rock collective **NERD**. The move proves to be a wise one as it allows the artist to successfully explore political and hard-hitting themes, rather than penning infuriating soundtracks to animated films. As with the band's previous albums, there is a wealth of guest collaborators – including **Rihanna** and **Kendrick Lamar** – and the sheer variety of musical genres and subject matter make this a reunion to welcome.

Becky Clark, Soldier



Greatest Hits: God's Favorite Band
by Green Day

THIS is the second "best-of" collection to be served up by the USA's premier punk-rock outfit. The first came in 2001, prior to the group's diluted second coming that spawned ubiquitous and tedious hits such as *American Idiot* and *Boulevard of Broken Dreams*. It is no surprise to see this era well represented here but the real highlight comes from the inclusion of ten tracks from **Green Day's** frenetic 90s pomp, including *Basket Case* and *When I Come Around*. These songs serve as reminder to a triumphant past and come as a marked contrast to the bland stadium anthems delivered in recent times.

Cliff Caswell, Soldier



PICK OF THE MONTH:

RENEGADES

The battle for Bosnian bullion

► SOME of Hollywood's finest minds have come together to give the all-American action thriller treatment to the less well-charted subject matter of the Bosnian war.

Written by **Luc Besson**, (*Taken*, *The Transporter*, *Taxi*) and **Richard Wenk** (*The Equaliser*, *Jack Reacher*, *The Expendables*), *Renegades* sees their talents focus on a conflict that has yet to see much mainstream coverage from the big screen.

And by applying a formula that has proven quite successful in the past they have done a decent job.

The big CGI chase scenes, high body counts, classic one-liners and good old Uncle Sam dishing out freedom by the lorry-load will have you on your feet shouting "Murica".

The story centres around a haul of stolen Nazi gold that is rumoured to be hidden at the bottom of a Bosnian lake.

A team of Navy Seals are persuaded to help recover the treasure so that the

town's folk can use it to rebuild their lives after the war.

To succeed they must evade a ruthless enemy, overcome seemingly insurmountable odds and blag all the kit required for an almost impossible underwater heist.

There are some hilarious cameos by British Special Forces characters, who play a supporting role in the action. Complete with bogus accents and fake moustaches, they somehow seem to come off second best every time they encounter this particular US outfit.

The film is packed with explosive fight scenes, ranging from a tank chase around downtown Sarajevo to some expert underwater knife action.

And if you've ever wondered who would win in a dogfight between a light reconnaissance helicopter and a fighter jet, *Renegades* has the answer.



MOVIES



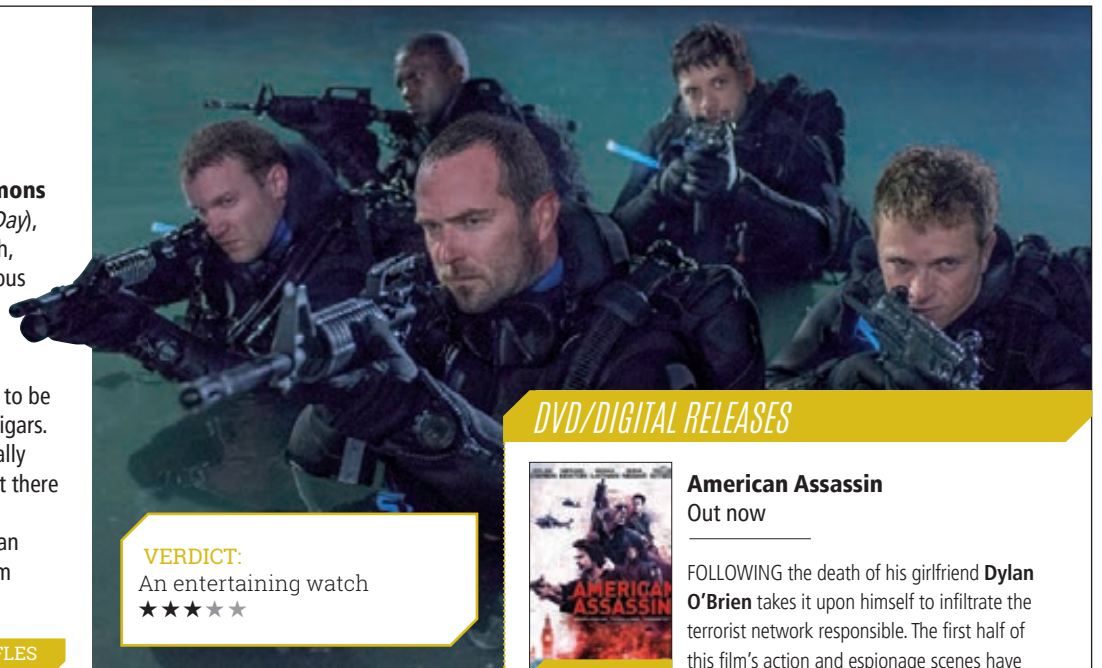
One of the standout characters is played by **JK Simmons** (*Whiplash*, *Spiderman*, *Patriots Day*), who adopts the role of the tough, uncompromising and cantankerous Rear Admiral J Levin.

The officer boasts an endless supply of witty one-liners that is only surpassed by what appears to be a constant flow of alcohol and cigars.

If you're hoping for a historically accurate depiction of the conflict there are better titles out there.

But if you want an all-American action-packed adventure this film delivers in spades. Hurrah! ■

REVIEW: CSJT CHRIS CORBY, RIFLES



VERDICT:

An entertaining watch

★★★★★

DVD/DIGITAL RELEASES



American Assassin

Out now

FOLLOWING the death of his girlfriend **Dylan O'Brien** takes it upon himself to infiltrate the terrorist network responsible. The first half of this film's action and espionage scenes have echoes of the *Bourne* franchise, but this is truly ruined by the second half's completely implausible plot line about a US carrier group involved in a submarine nuclear blast. While one-time *Batman* **Michael Keaton** makes a believable former Navy Seal responsible for training the CIA's operatives, the film is let down by cheap CGI. O'Brien's wooden acting leaves you thinking he would be unable to infiltrate a dance floor, let alone a terrorist cell.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



IT

Out now

A GROUP of pre-teen geeks battle a child-eating monster in small-town America while the adults around them remain oblivious. I've never really got the whole clown-phobia thing but even so, this remake of *IT* had me jumping more than I care to admit. My recollections of the original mini-series are hazy but this version seems more violent and no less sinister. It also devotes more time to the dysfunctional home lives of each of "The Losers", allowing a brilliant young cast to shine. The classic **Stephen King** vibe will keep fans happy but the frequent comedy and 1980s nostalgia give the film wider appeal.

Becky Clark, Soldier



Revolt

Out now

PART sci-fi actioner, part road movie, this title sees **Lee Pace** (*Guardians of the Galaxy*) and **Berenice Marlohe** (*Skyfall*) trek across Kenya. The small problem is the alien invasion that's under way. With cues taken from *War of the Worlds*, *Skyline* and *Monsters*, this movie punches above its low-budget weight with solid performances, good use of the African countryside and reasonable direction.

Maj Alex Janaway, RAMC



This widow was offered less than half the pension to which she was entitled as a result of a simple calculation error.



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Emma Flood, FPS Member

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SOLDIER SPORT



◀◀ NIGHT TO REMEMBER

ARMY boxers wowed the crowds at ITC Catterick in a series of superb bouts with international rivals from England and Finland. Read more about their success in the ring on pages 78-79...



COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

ARMY COACHES TAKE THEIR SKILLS TO CIVVY STREET AS RUGBY SEARCHES FOR NEWCOMERS TO THE GAME

AS administrators of England's top-flight game, Premiership Rugby have become keen investors in community projects that see rugby union flourish at grass-roots level.

Recent success stories include the provision of mixed ability rugby sessions for those with disabilities or mental health issues as well as an initiative to bring the sport to schoolchildren in low socio-economic areas.

And the Army has been playing its part.

Working with Worcester, Wasps and Harlequins, Service coaches have been keen to test themselves in a different environment, where the challenges have come thick and fast.

SSgt Adrian Cubbin (AGC (SPS), pictured near left) is the sole military representative associated with Harlequins, where he served as a community coach after returning to the UK from a posting in Germany.

"We are engaged with schools based inside the M25," the senior NCO, who won an RBS coaching award in 2013 for his efforts in creating the Bielefeld Bulldogs youth team, told *SoldierSport*.

"In Fulham I have to coach rugby to 120 boys who are predominantly footballers and not really interested in the sport. That is a challenge.

"But coaching girls is much simpler. They want to learn and that makes things a lot easier whereas adolescent boys, who do not necessarily want to be there, can be tough.

"The language you hear from some 13-year-olds is

unbelievable and it is about knowing how to address issues like that.

"For us it is a great way of learning how to coach in a civilian setting. We are used to coaching military men and women but this is something completely different."

While attitude problems and some choice language are among the hurdles to overcome in the South there are other challenges in the West Midlands, where a strong Army contingent has formed close bonds with Coventry-based club Wasps.

The youngsters they work with often hail from a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) background, where rugby is an unfamiliar pursuit.

"At the schools I work in 85 per cent of children are BAME," explained Lt Col Jason Kennedy (R Signals, pictured far left), one of those based in the region.

"There are a number of issues when it comes to coaching 13-year-olds but when you throw in a sport that is pretty much alien to them it becomes a difficult challenge and one that I am not used to."

Kennedy, who is also director of Army academy rugby, got involved after being posted to Birmingham and sees coaching as a logical step after finishing his playing career.

He said: "This is the next best thing. It is about giving something to young children in and around the city.

"We've been teaching rugby in PE lessons and a number of schools are now playing fixtures on the back of that. The kids who are really interested are forming the teams. It is all related to fun.



"IT IS ABOUT HOW YOU TALK TO PLAYERS"

"I've always believed that if you get children to play a team sport it provides them with the grounding of how to be a decent human being.

"And the core values of rugby and the Army help articulate what it is to be a good citizen."

Programme coordinator WO1 Simon Hopkins (R Signals, pictured centre), a former Army player, is another coach linked to Wasps.

As well as being involved in the community projects he is part of the club's developing player programme, where he delivers leadership training to potential stars of the future.

"While we are trying to grow the sport of rugby, the thing for us is that we are developing as coaches," he said.

"It is about how you talk to players and what you can do to make rugby more enjoyable.

"There have been challenges along the way but that only makes us better.

"Every unit has a role to play in terms of community engagement and this feeds nicely into that. The regional command is also on-board.

"Having Army branding on our kit is a great thing. We are embracing sport and coaching but are soldiers as well. It shows people what opportunities are available in the military."

The programme is due to expand in the coming months as Wasps create closer links with the Muslim community, and the soldiers will be involved once more. ■



ANGLERS ON THE UP

FISHING is a sport in good health, with more than 1,500 soldiers signed up as members of the Army Angling Federation (AAF).

Carp is one of the disciplines that has seen considerable growth in recent times but all tastes are catered for – from individuals seeking the tranquillity of fly fishing to those who are willing to brave the elements at sea.

"We have got guys who have perhaps done this once or twice in the past," AAF secretary Maj Gus Brindle (AGC (SPS)) told *SoldierSport*. "They join the Army but are not necessarily interested in football, rugby or cricket and they want something else."

"We also have people who are representing at the very highest level of our sport, so there is a really good mix."

"The AAF has deals in place with various companies who offer good discounts on tackle and we can support anyone who wants to get involved in angling through our regional structure."

For more information on the different disciplines within the Army Angling Federation visit www.armyangling.co.uk



CARPERS CALLED TO ARMS



"I'M SURE THERE ARE A LOT OF TROOPS OUT THERE WHO FISH"

WITH the new carp fishing season looming on the horizon the Service's anglers are being urged to cast their lines and boost numbers within the ranks.

Early matches are planned for this month and soldiers will be vying for places on corps teams ahead of major competitions later in the year.

Among those looking to impress will be anglers from the Infantry, who have to balance work commitments and deployments with their sporting ambitions.

Team member Gdsm Marc Preston (Coldm Gds) is one of those returning to the water and is hoping to build on a unique opportunity to fish at Virginia Water, in the Windsor Great Park, at the end of the 2017 campaign.

"It is a 170-acre site that is normally closed to the public," he told *SoldierSport*.

"But through the Army we got the chance to fish there. It was a massive lake; I have fished

some big lakes before but this was phenomenal.

"We were going in blind as I don't think anyone has fished for carp there before, so it was a really good test."

The Infantry, like many corps, are keen to recruit newcomers to the fold and with around ten matches already planned for the year ahead there will be plenty of opportunities for soldiers to get involved.

From there, the best anglers will go on to compete at the Inter-Corps Championships.

Preston added: "We have got around 40 members but don't always see them due to deployments. Sometimes it can just be ten at a time."

"Our captain has just been posted to Estonia so he may not get selected. We'd like to get more people interested so we can create greater depth."

"I'm sure there are a lot of personnel out there who fish but do not necessarily realise that there are teams they can get involved with. We want them to come forward." ■

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GOALS GALORE: THE ARMY WOMEN GOT THEIR SOUTHERN COUNTIES CUP CAMPAIGN BACK ON TRACK WITH A 4-1 WIN OVER SUSSEX



GREAT GRENADIERS

THE Grenadier Guards were the big winners at the Household Division boxing competition finals as they emerged victorious from three of the six bouts contested on an energy-charged night.

Gdsm Daniel Barham (pictured above left) secured the honours in the super heavyweight ranks, with Gdsm Rob Greaves claiming the cruiserweight title and LCpl Josh Bell the heavyweight crown.

Elsewhere, there were triumphs for LSgt Luke Campbell (WG, pictured below right) at light heavyweight, CSgt Wayne Sampat (IG) at light middleweight and Gdsm Quin Eccles (Coldm Gds) at light welterweight.

Campbell's win also helped the Welsh Guards – who performed strongly in the tournament's earlier rounds – to the team title.

The event was resurrected after an absence of more than 50 years in 2016 and organiser Maj Milton Butler (IG) was pleased to see the boxers building on the success of last season.

The officer added: "This competition proved that we have put together a very credible and formidable Household Division team that can go out and take on the wider Army."



SOLDIERS TESTED ON GULF TOUR



"THAT IS WHAT WE JOIN THE ARMY FOR"

A TWO-WEEK tour of the Gulf States has given the Army women the perfect springboard from which to launch their bid to regain football's Inter-Services trophy.

The defence engagement trip featured visits to Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and, with the soldiers boasting a 100 per cent record from four matches played, the squad appears to be in good health ahead of the challenges to come.

Goals from WO1 Krissy Wright and Cpl Libby Dixon (both AGC) steered the Reds to a 2-1 win over the Bahrain national team, while a hat-trick from LCpl Jemma Dinning (REME) was the highlight of a 4-0 victory against the UAE.

"Being away for two weeks was really good for team cohesion," defender Capt Emma Askins (REME) told *SoldierSport*.

"It proved to be a great bonding experience for the players.

"In many ways it was like pre-season training – we were straight in at the deep end.

"A lot of the girls had never been to the Middle East before so to go there and play football was a great opportunity.

"Actually, that is what we join the Army for."

As well as performing on the pitch the players were involved in organising coaching sessions at English-speaking schools and local clubs, where their efforts were met with enthusiasm.

"It was really well received and we were surprised by how much they already do in terms of football," Askins added.

"Women's sport is growing out there and this was a massive opportunity for us in terms of defence engagement; it was a chance to really push football in those countries."

On their return to the UK the players took part in the annual trials week, which featured matches with Portsmouth and Millwall Lionesses.

Their competitive campaign then started with a 3-2 loss to Middlesex in the Southern Counties Cup – despite a brace from Dixon. ■

SPORT SHORTS



Winchester awaits

THE Service's top squash players return to the court this month for the annual Army Championships.

Staged in Winchester, the three-day tournament comes hot on the heels of a successful showing at the UK Armed Forces Individual Championships, where the soldiers won three of the four trophies on offer.

The men's open final proved to be an all-Army affair with defending champion Capt Sam Miller (RA) defeating WO2 Lenny Westover (REME) 3-0. It was the same story in the women's final, where Capt Rosie Hamilton (RE) triumphed over Capt Michelle Higgins (AMS). Maj Rich Green (AAC) won the masters competition.



Picture: Andy Johnson

Loggies lead the way

ATHLETES from the Royal Logistic Corps excelled in the wintry conditions of Penn Woods to retain their Inter-Corps orienteering crown.

The loggies posted a collective time of 9hr 20min 21sec to win the men's long class – finishing almost 20 minutes clear of the Royal Engineers in second place.

It was a similar story in the women's competition, where the Royal Signals successfully defended their title from the 2016 season.

However, there were new champions in both the men's short class and under-25 events, which were won by the Royal Artillery and Army Medical Services respectively.

NATTY STARS IN SHEFFIELD

BOXING star LCpl Natty Ngwenya (Gren Gds) continued his rapid rise in the heavyweight ranks with a deserved victory at the GB Championships in Sheffield.

The win capped a terrific year for the soldier, who also triumphed in the same competition in May and was runner-up at the English Amateur Boxing Association Championships.

His latest success was secured on a split decision against Team GB member Lewis Williams and has earned the fighter a three-day talent assessment with the celebrated set-up.

"To be a two-time GB champion in the same year is phenomenal," Ngwenya, who was nominated for sportsman of the year at the last Army Sports Awards, said afterwards.

"I'm thankful and grateful for the all the support I've received from my friends, family and within the Army boxing team."

The Service had three other fighters on the bill and all performed strongly despite missing out on top honours.

England's Louis Lynn defeated LCpl Kyle Morrision (RLC) in the 56kg division, while LCpl Megan Reid (RLC) suffered a contentious loss to Team GB's Claudia Havranek on a split decision. Cpl Steph Wroe (REME) was beaten by Lauren Price. ■



"OUR LADS PLAYED WITH THEIR HEARTS ON THEIR SLEEVES"



● ARMY wing LCpl Semesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) will be looking to start the new year in style in a bid to force his way into the England squad for next month's Six Nations.

The Bath flier was recalled to the squad for the recent autumn internationals and came off the bench to score tries in victories over Argentina and Samoa.

The soldier made his England debut against New Zealand in 2014 (pictured) and has now scored four tries in four appearances.

MONTH IN SPORT

January's key fixtures...



WHAT: Army winter sports
WHEN: January 13-25
WHERE: France
NEED TO KNOW: The winter sports season hits

top gear this month with Exercises Pipedown, Telemark Titan and Spartan Hike all taking place ahead of the main Army Championships



WHAT: Woolwich Cup football semi-finals
WHEN: January 15
WHERE: Venues TBC, for more details visit www.armyfa.com
NEED TO KNOW: The corps cup competition heads towards its climax as the Infantry take on the AGC in one semi-final, while the Royal Engineers battle the Royal Signals in the other



WHAT: Cambridge Uni v Army rugby union
WHEN: January 17 (1915 kick off)
WHERE: Grange Road, Cambridge
NEED TO KNOW: The long road towards Twickenham

starts here for the Army senior side as they get their 2018 campaign under way in what has traditionally been a challenging match against the students

RUGBY IN NUMBERS

SUCCESSIVE TITLE WINS FOR THE ROYAL NAVY AT U23 LEVEL

3

POINTS SCORED BY THE ARMY IN THE SECOND HALF AS THEY FOUGHT BACK FOR A DRAW

19

TRIES SCORED BY THE REDS IN TWO INTER-SERVICES GAMES

6

WINS FROM SIX MATCHES FOR THE SOLDIERS IN 2017

4



Picture: Alligin Photography

DRAW DENIES YOUNG GUNS

P OINTS difference proved to be the deciding factor as the Army's next generation of rugby stars saw their title hopes dashed in the final match of this season's Inter-Services showdown.

A 19-13 victory over the Royal Air Force gave the Reds the perfect start to their campaign but with the Royal Navy thrashing the same opposition 43-7 they needed to down the defending champions in Portsmouth a week later to claim the prize.

However, a keenly fought contest ended in a 19-19 draw – meaning the soldiers' wait for silverware continues.

The visitors were up against it from the first whistle as the Senior Service went about their business in style.

Two penalties and a converted first-half try set them on the way to what appeared to be a comfortable win before the Army finally sprang to life with their first attacking move of the match.

Gnr Jake Richards (RA) collected a kick over the top and the wing passed the ball inside for Sig John Davetanivalu (R Signals) to run in under the posts.

Another Navy penalty stretched the lead to 13-7 but with Fus Aaron James (Inf) touching down in the corner soon afterwards the soldiers remained in contention.

A fourth kick from the tee looked to have sealed the contest for the hosts until a moment of magic from LCpl Lloyd Wheeldon (Para) turned the match on its head.

The scrum half gathered quick ball at the back of the scrum and kicked downfield, where he sprinted past the final defender to touch down. James then kicked the extras to tie the game at 19-19.

"We're devastated," Army skipper Spr Marcus Mercer (RE) said. "Our lads played really well with their hearts on their sleeves and I'm proud to lead them out." ■



CHEZ CROWNED KING OF THE CATTERICK RING

SUPER heavyweight star LCpl Chez Nihell (PWRR) mounted a stunning defence of his English title belt to cap a superb night for the Army boxing team as they locked horns with international opposition at ITC Catterick.

The five-time Combined Services champion outclassed rival Hosea Stewart to score a unanimous verdict and delight a passionate home crowd at the end of a series of bruising encounters with fighters from England and Finland.

Victory represented a third straight triumph in the format and Nihell immediately vacated the title to allow other boxers to vie for the crown in the future.

The result underlined the soldier's status as the one of the country's premier contenders in the super heavyweight ranks and his combination of quick footwork and accurate punches – particularly with the left –

proved too much for imposing England international Stewart.

"There was a lot of pressure on me with this being my third title defence," Nihell (pictured above) said afterwards. "The support was phenomenal; it was a special night with a great crowd.

"I came through my training here six-and-a-half years ago so to return to Catterick to defend my title and then vacate the belt is a massive honour.

"I was the smaller man out there but that is the case with most super heavyweights I face. I have quick feet and hands and can take a punch, which seems to work for me."

The evening also saw Army fighters embark on a revenge mission against the Finnish national team having lost 4-2 to the same opposition earlier in the season.

Their latest attempt began in disappointing style as development squad boxer LCpl

ITC CATTERICK
BOXING

ARMY

2

FINLAND

2



Nathalie Coles (RLC, pictured below left) lost to Riikka Niemi.

The visiting athlete made a blistering start and maintained her form throughout the bout to seal a unanimous verdict against an opponent with just five fights to her name.

But the Reds were able to call upon the experienced LCpl Shamim Khan (RLC) in the next contest and the bantamweight ace oozed class and confidence in his win over Wael al Khaghani.

The soldier's rapid footwork and sharp reactions made him a difficult target to hit and with a sound defensive platform in place he was able to pick off al Khaghani at will.

"He came here to box," Khan told *SoldierSport*. "He's a strong boy and the Finnish number one and when he landed his punches they were hard shots.

"I kept it long on purpose and like to hit and move; it's about boxing without being hit. I really

enjoyed it in there and it was a great win."

LCpl Ben Rees-Davies (R Welsh, pictured below) then built on the momentum as he edged past Niazz Ahmadi in a tight contest at light welterweight.

There was little to choose between the two, particularly in a cagey opening round, but the Army man upped the tempo in the second and third to take the win on a split decision.

"I was up against it; he's a Finland champion who has done well over the past few years so I knew I had to perform and do as I was told by the coaches to get the job done," a relieved Rees-Davies said afterwards.

While the split decision edged in the Army's favour there was no such luck in the following bout as Gdsm Josh Plummer (Coldm Gds) succumbed to Muhammad Abdilrasoon.

The soldier was up against a two-time Finnish national champion and his rival underlined his pedigree with a controlled performance that saw the head-to-head record between the two teams end 2-2.

Elsewhere on the bill, Gnr Tor-Ellis Willets (RA) lost an English title belt eliminator to Natalia Rok and Mne Jack Stringer (RM) was named fighter of the night following an impressive victory over Santeri Laine.

Finland claimed two further wins as Rio 2016 bronze medallist Mira Potkonen outgunned England's Paige Murney and Elina Gustafsson triumphed over Hannah Shield. ■



CATTERICK IN NUMBERS

BOUTS ON THE EVENING

9

ENGLISH TITLE BELT VICTORIES FOR LCPL CHEZ NIHELL (PWRR)

3

BOUTS WON BY ARMY FIGHTERS IN MATCHES AGAINST FINLAND THIS YEAR

4

NATIONAL TITLES WON BY FINLAND'S OLYMPIC BRONZE MEDALLIST MIRA POTKONEN

8



BROWRING BOWS OUT

THE drawn match with Finland proved to be one of SSgt Jason Browring's (RAPTC) final shows as head coach of the Army's all-conquering boxing team.

Having initially served as part of the support staff the senior NCO landed the top job at the start of the 2013/14 season but has stepped down from the role as he prepares to leave the Armed Forces later this year.

During his time at the helm Browring has guided the fighters to four Combined Services titles while helping a number of athletes fulfill their ambitions at the upper echelons of the amateur game.

In the past year alone the team has won two Great Britain elite titles, two England elite titles and two Welsh elite titles.

"We have managed to turn 12 novice boxers into full internationals during that time," Browring, the reigning Army sports official of the year, told *SoldierSport*.

"Instead of relying on walkovers we've had to fight hard to win the Combined Services over the past four years. We have been challenged in that time but there has been a lot of success.

"At the beginning my aim was to create a more structured approach where people knew what they were doing and when.

"It was about making things more Army-orientated so those in the outside world would look at us as a professional set-up.

"We are now boxing at a really high level. Winning international vests and national titles proves that and people are impressed by us.

"I always wanted to get to a point where I could hand it over to the next guy and he can carry on the good work. Hopefully that will happen."

Former Army boxer Cpl James Allen (REME) is due to take over, with further appointments to be made in the coming months. ■

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GAME BRIEF

DATE: December 6-7, 2017
COMPETITION: Inter-Corps Swimming and Water Polo Championship finals
VENUE: Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre



THE Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers claimed a third successive Inter-Corps men's water polo title.

In a repeat of last year's final, the defending champions squared-off against the Royal Logistic Corps and edged an action-packed match to run out 11-8 winners.

The women's showpiece saw the Army Medical Services triumph 4-0 over the RLC.

And the medics completed a hat-trick of titles on the day as they reigned supreme in swimming's relay competition, with the Infantry winning the men's event.

CORPS COMMENTS:

"YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A TOP-END SWIMMER TO TAKE PART - IT IS ABOUT DEVELOPING TALENT FOR THE FUTURE"

WO2 Emma Argue (REME)



CORPS QUALITY COMES TO THE FORE

INTER-CORPS SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS

MEN

INF

WOMEN

AMS



RECORDS tumbled in the pool as the Army's top swimming talent returned to action at the annual Inter-Corps Championships.

A total of five competition-best times were set during an inspired afternoon of action, with LCpl Cat Green (Int Corps) the standout performer.

The athlete started a hectic day by winning the women's 50-metre butterfly in a record time of 30.22sec before eclipsing her achievement in last season's 200-metre freestyle.

Having finished in 2min 21.75sec she shaved almost six seconds off the record posted in 2016 and she completed a remarkable hat-trick in the 100-metre butterfly, where an effort of 1min 10.9sec secured a third milestone.

However, Green's personal haul was not enough to secure the collective honours as the Army Medical Services retained their title from last year.

The swimmers won eight of the 15 individual finals, with Pte Jodie Older celebrating a breaststroke double in the 50 and 100 metres and Maj

Kirstie Forbes winning both the 100-metre freestyle and 50-metre veterans' freestyle.

It was a similar story in the men's competition as the Infantry retained their corps crown in style.

LCpl Luke Conder led the charge with victories in the 50-metre and 400-metre freestyle – his second win coming in a record time of 4min 31.41sec. Teammate Capt Marcus Roberts took the 50-metre and 100-metre backstroke crowns.

Other highlights came from 2nd Lt James Gibson (RE), who won the 800-metre and 200-metre freestyle, while OCdt Jacob Randle-Bissell set a new record of 32.29sec in the 50-metre breaststroke.

"The standard was very high this year," organiser WO2 Emma Argue (REME) told *SoldierSport*. "To set five new records at one meeting is some achievement.

"Now we have a slightly calmer climate we are seeing more and more people coming back to the sport.

"Over the past few seasons we have had bigger teams entering, which is fantastic for us." ■



This year I will work out in the gym and run every week because I'm attending a 12-week course at Brecon so I need to be on top form for that.

Lcpl Ben Hubble

I try to do as much running as I can each week, and usually that's three runs of around ten kilometres each. If you stop exercising it makes coming back to work all the more difficult.

Capt Josh Cartwright



I swim for an hour on a regular basis at my local pool, which keeps my fitness levels up.

Lcpl Conor Wilson



On leave I usually do around seven hours a week, mixing swimming, running and cycling. Thankfully, I'm in good shape at the moment as I've just done a half Ironman.

Sgt Dean Geoghegan

Shake it off

Soldier asked troops from 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment how they kick-start their workout after the holiday season

You relax a bit over Christmas but you have to keep on top of your fitness. I go to the gym most days anyway and I keep that ticking over on leave too. After a while it becomes second nature.

Lcpl Daniel Tranter



When we're on block leave and there's a week or so left I go to the gym or start running again to prepare myself. It's much harder if you leave it all to when you get back.

Lcpl Leon Cozens



I do some extra stuff in my own time on top of the normal company PT – starting off slow and steady, and building it up from there.

Cpl Daniel Browning



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“

It's been nippy
but I've been
loving life

”

Cold spell – page 30

26



Keeping pace



OPERATION Cabrit takes centre stage in this month's magazine. Turn to page 30 to find out how British troops

are making the most of all Estonia has to offer in their never-ending mission to upskill.

Not content with the freezing Baltic region, our team also travelled to Northern Ireland to learn more about the stark changes to UK troops' way of life there since the conclusion of the longest continuous deployment in Service history (page 26).

If there is one thing this edition makes clear, it is the evolving nature of conflict.

Gen Sir Nicholas Carter's words on future warfare certainly bear this out too. It will be interesting to see how changes to military equipment – such as those outlined on pages 11 and 38 – keep pace with the times.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or comments on the day job then contact us using the details on page 7.

We are part of Army Media and Communication so you do not need permission to get in touch.

Enjoy the issue.

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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“ We are going to give it our best shot ”

Soldiers target podium push – page 74



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British Army personnel celebrate Antarctic success stories

A RMY adventurers are marking a double victory after the Ice Maidens became the first all-female team to cross Antarctica on foot and a 27-year-old officer became the youngest person to reach the South Pole alone.

After 61 days on ice – pulling 80kg sledges up to 43km a day – the six Servicewomen (shown above and right) crossed the finish line at Hercules Inlet on January 20.

Expedition leader Maj Nics Wetherill (RAMC) said she was “incredibly proud” of the achievement.

She added: “The journey has had good times, bad times and great times for all concerned and each experience has made us better people.”

Team member LSgt Sophie Montagne (HAC) said there had been “a flood of tears” as the mission – set up to inspire females of all ages – reached its conclusion.

Reflecting on the team’s stop at the South Pole back in December, she added: “As we stepped forward and touched the famous silver globe, a lifelong dream was realised.”

Lt Scott Sears (RGR, shown far right) reached the same point on Christmas Day in a privately-organised expedition to raise funds for the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

He told *Soldier* he was “very proud” to have completed the expedition.

“Doing the trip was the reward for two years of planning,” he continued.

“The main danger when you’re on



your own is there’s no one to double-check your decisions but I had a set plan and I didn’t deviate from it.”

The officer encountered a major setback when he ran out of food two kilometres from the end.

However, good weather meant he was able to finish without problems.

The officer later discovered that a camera bag – containing 12 SD cards filled with images and GoPro footage from the trip – had been lost in transit on his return to the UK.

Anyone with information about the whereabouts of the pictures can contact the *Soldier* editorial team via news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

IN NUMBERS:

40

the sort of temperature, in degrees Celsius, faced by the trekkers



“A lifelong dream was realised”



SOLDIER

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GLOBAL SITREP



1. NORTHERN IRELAND

STAYING SECURE

TROOPS heading to Northern Ireland have been reminded that they must register their intention to travel to the region with the Centralised Risk Assessment Cell.

Further details can be found on the Northern Ireland Garrison Awareness Site on DII, where travellers' details must be recorded on a form.

While the process is not mandatory for civilian MoD staff, they too are advised to complete the paperwork.

The site also gives some basic dos and don'ts for soldiers travelling to the region.



“
This is a
huge step
forward
”



2. FALKLAND ISLANDS



2. FALKLAND ISLANDS

IRISH GUARDS ON TARGET

MEMBERS of 1st Battalion, Irish Guards have been preparing to return home following a four-month

deployment as the Roulement Infantry Company.

The soldiers – from Number 1 Company – embarked on a busy programme during their tenure.

Battalion spokesman WO2 Kyle Reains said: “They have been developing their core infantry skills. Their schedule has included live firing and getting out patrolling – but they have also had a chance to do some tourism activities too.”

Elsewhere, Number 2 Company have been on Exercise Panther Gold in Thailand, where they embarked on a jungle exercise with the Royal Thai Army.



3. SUDAN

DIRECT TO DARFUR

BRITISH Army lawyers will deliver legal training to soldiers in the Darfur region of Sudan for the first time this month.

The law of armed conflict package is already run regularly in the country's capital, Khartoum, but the lessons have never been taken to the heart of this troubled area before.

“This is a huge step forward for the Sudanese, a major boost for UK defence engagement and a really interesting opportunity for the Army lawyers,” said Lt Col Lee Saunders (REME), Britain's defence attache in the country.

Sudan has long been beset by conflict, with civil war between the north and south costing more than a million lives and conflict in western Darfur displacing and killing and even greater number.



4. GERMANY

NATO OUTING

SOLDIERS from 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment have been honing their skills in southern Germany alongside thousands of other Nato troops.

Exercise Allied Spirit was coming to an end as this issue went to press.

Designed to improve the way troops work together on the battlefield, it saw the Brits (pictured above in 2017) take on the role of lead armoured infantry.

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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7. IRAQ 'A HISTORIC MOMENT'

HELPING to achieve a milestone in Iraq's history should be a source of pride for members of the 2 Rifles battlegroup, their CO has said. Speaking after the battalion's return home to Northern Ireland from Op Shader, Lt Col Neil Bellamy described the clearance of Daesh fighters around Mosul as a pivotal moment.

It was also a reflection of the hard work troops put into training the Iraqi Security Forces during the US-led mission, he added.

"Having a pitch-side seat at the moment Daesh was declared defeated was extraordinary and represented the high point of a great tour," Lt Col Bellamy said.

"Many of the soldiers were experiencing operations for the first time and had the opportunity to work with other countries in a true multinational environment."

The 2 Rifles personnel were deployed to Al Asad airbase, Anbar Province, where they were also responsible for protecting a coalition force of around 4,000.

They have now been succeeded by colleagues from The Royal Regiment of Scotland.



5. ESTONIA

SAAREMAA SLOGGERS TO ENTER RECORD BOOKS

PERSONNEL on Operation Cabrit in Estonia (page 30) are gearing up for a record-breaking crossing of Europe's longest ice bridge later this month.

Exercise Alphas Iceman will see A Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh and Estonian reservists attempt to traverse 26km of frozen sea between the mainland and the island of Saaremaa (shown below) on foot, ski and snow shoe.

If successful, they will be the first group to have completed the route using human power alone.

Elsewhere some 300 personnel from the 1 Royal Welsh battlegroup (shown inset) and the Estonian Scouts Battalion will take part in an 11-day winter training package at Soodla in the north east of the Baltic nation.



6. KOSOVO ONE YEAR MORE

THE deployment of around 30 British Army personnel – including Reservists – to Nato's Kosovo Force has been extended by another year.

The mission began as a peacekeeping operation back in the late 1990s.

It has now evolved into a body of around 4,000 troops to provide stability in the region and training for the Kosovo Security Force.

The British troops are working with Nato allies including Germany, Italy, Turkey and Poland.

The above image shows riflemen deployed to the region back in 2008.



DON'T SUFFER IT, SOLVE IT!



Workplace conflict can occur at any level and affects personal relationships and operational effectiveness. Mediation is an effective way to resolve conflict with independent mediators in a confidential environment. For details of how the Army Mediation Service can help you, please contact the AMS coordinator.



Civ - 0306 7707691*
Mil - 96770 7691
 Army-Mediation-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk
 *Local call charges apply, operators will ring you back if requested





War games just got better

THE first sets of improved laser-based tactical engagement simulation (TES) systems have been made available to the Field Army.

Designed to be more compatible with Virtus body armour and helmets, the new equipment (shown below) retains the audio and visual feedback of the previous version but now includes a sensory response device as well.

Worn on the wrist, it silently vibrates to alert the wearer of hits, near misses or injury and provide timings for simulated medical treatment.

"We used the new wrist sensor on our CT1 and CT2 training exercises and it proved to be really beneficial during casualty serials when first responders gave first aid to those 'wounded' by the TES kit," said Sgt Paul Cook (Scots).

Thanks to the new head detector band, it can now also identify simulated shots from 360 degrees as well as those fired from above.

"Previous users will remember the cumbersome

vest that interfered with webbing and other load carrying equipment," Maj Marcus Myles (PWRR), project manager for collective training simulation at Field Army Training Branch, told *Soldier*.

"The new vest is much slimmer and lighter than it was and has done away with shoulder detectors around the bicep.

"This allows a greater freedom of movement, makes it easier to fit around webbing and body armour and reduces total weight."

Another benefit of the updated system is that it offers an improved level of interoperability with partner nations – including the US Army in Europe. It is also set to be used by British troops training with Polish and Estonian personnel as part of the enhanced forward presence (page 30).

Units that want to use the latest version of TES can find information about the bidding process on the Army Knowledge Exchange, accessible through both Defence Gateway and DII.



“
It’s much
slimmer and
lighter
”

UP CLOSE: TES

New sensory feedback device sits on the wrist



Head gear detects hits from 360 degrees and even from above

The kit also fits better around webbing



GOT AN ATTITUDE?

■ RESERVISTS are being asked to express views on Service life as part of the latest Army Reserve continuous attitude survey.

The document was sent to around 11,000 soldiers last month and the results will be used to shape future policy.

Those selected to take part should return the survey by March 19 and an online version is available at www.surveys.mod.uk

‘MIX IT UP TO MEET THREAT’

■ A COMBINATION of traditional military skills and cutting-edge technologies will be key to the Army's future success, the chief of the general staff has said.

Addressing delegates at the Royal United Services Institute in London, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter warned that warfare is changing – with social media and fake news now used as weapons.

He highlighted that Russia has upgraded its military arsenal and had the ability to disrupt communications – including GPS.

The UK needs to act, he said, if it is to deal with these threats, with beefed-up equipment, better interoperability and an effective cyberspace force all required.

He said the possibility of retaining infrastructure in Germany was being considered, particularly Rheindahlen's vehicle storage areas as well as training and ammunition stores in Sennelager, for the creation of a forward manning base.

The prospect of large-scale mobilisation is being addressed through a military project called Henry Wilson and 77 Brigade is providing the ability to compete in the "war of narratives" at a tactical level.

NEED BROWNIE POINTS?

■ ROMANTICS can give their loved one a stylish gift this Valentine's Day while helping The Royal British Legion.

The charity's Poppy Heart jewellery collection includes drop earrings, a pendant necklace and charm bracelet featuring the iconic red flowers set in a silver heart design.

The items are available to buy at www.poppysshop.org with all proceeds from sales going directly to the Service charity.



SPECIALISED SELECTION

■ TROOPS are invited to apply to join one of the new specialised infantry battalions.

The eligibility criteria is aimed mainly at personnel in Infantry units, so soldiers should consult their career management officer before inquiring.

An initial sift will be followed by an intense two-week assessment cadre.

The first one starts on March 5, with two others planned for October 2018 and May 2019.

Read [2018DIN07-16](#) for details.

STOLL SCORES NEW DIGS

■ THOUSANDS of ex-Servicemen and women are to benefit from additional support services as part of a landmark proposal announced by Stoll.

The charity, which serves as the leading provider of supported housing for veterans in the UK,

is financing the move by selling part of its existing Fulham site to Chelsea Football Club.

If the deal goes ahead it will help fund a variety of services including bespoke transition advice

for those leaving the Armed Forces and outreach programmes in the community.

It will also see state-of-the-art social housing and communal facilities built for residents at the Fulham Road base (see artist's impression above).

FACTFILE



We might be living in a digital world, but the British Forces Post Office remains as busy as ever:

More than

2m

kilos of mail were dispatched last year.

Social media means that users are sending fewer letters...



...but the growth of online shopping means more parcels than ever before are being handled



A fully assembled bike



was the strangest prohibited item someone tried to send via BFPO during 2017.



Mr Williamson speaks to members of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland on his first visit to Iraq last month

Picture: Cpl Sally Raimondo, RAF

'No decision' on defence cuts

HEADLINES revealing parts of the British Army that could be cut back as part of another security review are "pure speculation", the Ministry of Defence has said.

Last month various newspapers claimed that efforts to try and balance the UK defence budget included plans to reduce the Armed Forces by another 14,000 troops and combine units of The Parachute Regiment and the Royal Marines.

But a statement from the department said: "A whole range of options have been discussed as part of the cross-government review on how to best to protect our country.

"No decisions have been taken and any talk of an outcome is speculation."

An update to 2015's Strategic Defence and Security Review is due to be published later this year.

It will look at all aspects of the UK's security capability.

Speaking about the project in Parliament last November, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said: "When you see our Armed Forces and everything they do, and the commitment with which they give themselves to it, you cannot be anything other than awed by it.

"I will do everything I can to deliver for them."

Home James

EXAMPLES of how next-generation kit can be paired with a logistic support package have been shown at a summit in Warminster.

The event, at the Army's Land Warfare Centre, provided an insight into how Lockheed Martin's Joint Asset Management and Engineering Solutions (James) can help to keep equipment in shape.

James allows users from across all Services to check information such as status and availability of kit anywhere in the world – including vehicle mileage and ammunition fired.

IN NUMBERS:

1.5 million
Bits of kit on the system

28,000
Users of James

15 million
Transactions per month



A Major wanted to understand the consequences of leaving after 16 or 20 years' reckonable service



FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES



"Many, many thanks for such a comprehensive and rapid response; the detail is exactly what I needed and is far more positive than I had anticipated. I am extremely grateful for your guidance and recognise you are a very busy team, so thank you. We are most fortunate to have access to the services the Society provides."

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At the Forces Pension Society, we value our independence. It enables us to serve the interests of the Armed Forces community as the Forces Pension watchdog. We hold governments to account, arguing for better pensions and campaigning against unfairness in the schemes. For example, our campaign won the right in 2015 for all future widows to retain their pension on remarriage.

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FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



On the pull

A BIG-hearted NCO has been on the pull for good causes in a wacky take on the Three Peaks Challenge. Cpl Ben Turner (Int Corps) climbed the combined 11,182ft height of the tallest mountains in Britain – Snowdon, Scarfell Pike and Ben Nevis – on a 20ft rope. He completed the mission at an indoor ice climbing centre, in Scotland, in 11hr 43min.

Money raised: **£1,000**
For: Mountain rescue charities.



Night owls needed

COMBAT Stress is looking for people to join its team for this year's Nightrider moonlit cycle ride in London. The event will be held on June 9 and features routes of 50 and 100 kilometres. For further information on taking part visit www.combatstress.org.uk/nightrider

Tell us about your daring
charity feats

news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

SOMETHING SPECIAL



THE work of elite soldiers is being recognised in the National Army Museum's first major exhibition since it was refurbished last year. *Special Forces – Out of the Shadows* looks at the skills required of troops in these units as well as some historic operations. A number of exhibits and interactive activities also feature. Visit www.nam.ac.uk for more details.

What would they have done?

ARMY education officers found themselves facing the same dilemmas as historic military figures when they embarked on a new kind of workshop.

Historian Alexander Falbo took the troops from the Adjutant General's Corps (Educational and Training Services) through the so-called case method project on a recent visit to Strensall Barracks in York.

The technique, which has already proven successful with American soldiers, takes a historical situation and puts students in the lead characters' roles at critical decision points.

The idea is that it teaches critical thinking skills as part of their continuous professional development.

Falbo, a resident expert at the United States Marines Corps

University, said it allowed personnel to consider their actions in unfamiliar encounters.

He told *Soldier*: "It encourages them to be decisive and to test each other's ideas."

"One of the measures of success is when they are still arguing with each other afterwards outside the lecture theatre."

The expert added that the scenarios had to be completely accurate, with sound research carried out.

The project can be changed to suit different settings, from an informal conversation to large-scale events, and at the end participants are told what action the real figure took.

"As much as anything else, this has changed the way I read history," Falbo continued. "I cannot pick up a book now without asking questions about how decisions were made."



“
It changed
the way I
read history
”

Flying high

■ ADVENTUROUS training in Cyprus has been given a lift by the arrival of a new aircraft.

A Cessna 208 has been purchased by the Cyprus Combined Services Parachute Club. It will provide more flights per day and allow personnel to jump from greater altitudes

than the outgoing aircraft – a 40-year-old Britten-Norman Islander, which could transport a maximum of nine people to a maximum ceiling of 11,000ft.

The Cessna can hold up to 15 and climbs to 13,000ft.

The \$1.3 million airframe was funded by various charities and trusts, and will be used by the club at weekends and Adventurous Training Group (Army) on weekdays.



Picture: Imperial War Museum



Picture: Freepik

Army teens turn backs on uni

QUESTIONS are being raised over why young people brought up in military households are less likely to go to university than their civilian counterparts.

Research by the University of Winchester has found that 40 per cent fewer Forces students whose grades make them eligible take this route.

This is despite figures suggesting most parents want their children to go on studying.

The Office for Fair Access now recognises those from Service families as an under-represented group.

Meanwhile, the Army Families Federation (AFF) has conducted its own survey into why so many decide against university, the results of which are due shortly.

AFF spokeswoman Lucy Scott said concerns of running up debts could be among the reasons why students

opt out.

She told *Soldier*: "They may not see it as value for money or might just want to go out to work."

"But one figure from our survey shows 78 per cent of parents would like their children to go to university, so we need to find out what's going on."

Ed Harris, senior education officer at the Upavon-based Directorate of Children and Young People, agreed the reasons were unclear.

He added that universities currently spend just over a quarter of their budgets supporting under-represented groups so candidates should flag up their military backgrounds in their personal statements.

"Students can speak about the high level skills they have had to develop to thrive in any context or location while adapting to a broad range of situations," he said.



TRANSGENDER ICON

■ **THE** National Portrait Gallery in London has acquired this striking image of the first transgender soldier to embark on front-line service. Ammunition technician WO2 Deborah Penny (RLC) was captured by photographer Rory Lewis as part of his *Soldiers* project. The senior NCO was one of nearly 280 personnel from the Service who appeared in front of his lens. A selection of the pictures are being shown in an exhibition at London's National Army Museum, which is running until February 7.

IN NUMBERS

371,600

former officers in the UK who could benefit from support from the Officers' Association

of these, some

116,000

are thought to have long-term illnesses

If you or someone you know needs help visit www.officersassociation.org.uk

SPINE LINE COMPETITION



WIN
tickets to the National Homebuilding and Renovating Show

RECKON you know your stuff when it comes to the world of physical fitness? Then last month's spine line clues would have been a walkover.

(Kai) Greene, (Phil) Heath, (James "Flex") Lewis and (Ryan) Terry are all the names of high-profile bodybuilders.

This month we have teamed up with the National Homebuilding and Renovating Show (www.homebuildingshow.co.uk/national) to offer five readers a pair of tickets to the event at the NEC Birmingham on March 22-25.

With around 500 exhibitors, free seminars and masterclasses, this roadshow is a must for anyone looking to improve their home this year.

Experts are on-hand to offer advice about everything from security systems to ways of funding new projects.

To be in with a chance of scooping a pair of day passes, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue. Send your answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by February 28.



Top pictures: Colin Poole and Richard Gadsby

SCOUSE SUPPORT

■ **A** WEBSITE has been launched for personnel leaving the Forces in the Liverpool area.

The city council set up the initiative to help members of the military community find information on accommodation and jobs, as well as on other local services.

For more information log on to www.serviceleaversliverpool.co.uk



Accommodation



Restaurant

The Premier Armed Forces Club

Think London think Union Jack Club

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membership at
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Bars

Changing Rooms

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Photo: ©2015 John M. Dibbs



A personal view from Sara Baade, Chief Executive of the Army Families Federation...

POWER TO THE FAMILIES

WHEN we quizzed families about the Army offer recently, nearly two thirds said they thought it had declined since they entered the military fold.

Many felt that policy changes were driven by financial implication rather than potential benefit. And our research also revealed a general lack of awareness of the measures in place to support Service families, such as the schools admissions code or help with healthcare waiting lists.

AFF's focus for 2018 will therefore be ensuring that troops and their loved ones have more information on what is available to them.

We'll be exploring one issue per month, hearing what families have to say and giving them the chance to approach us with specific queries.

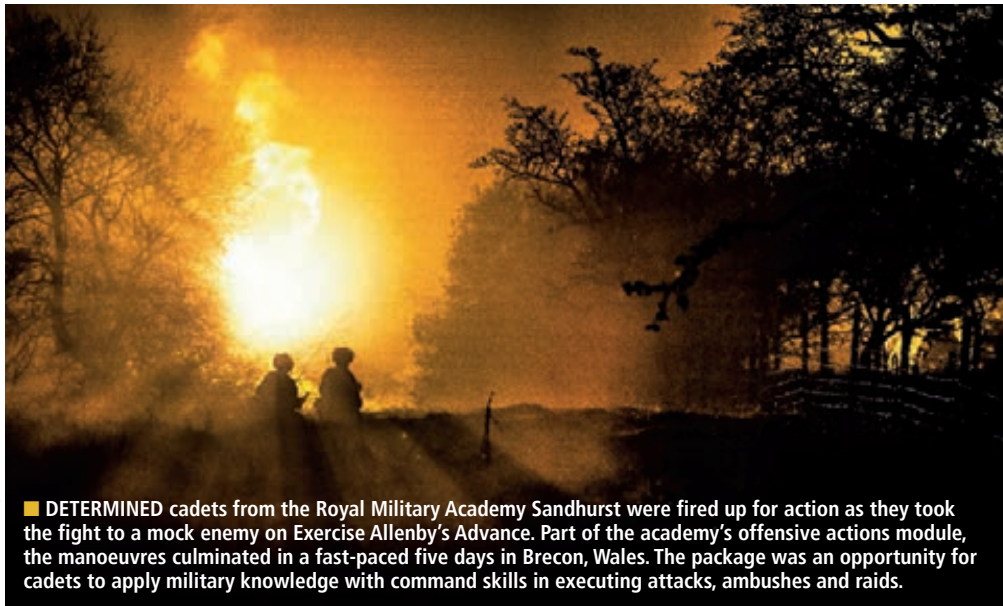
The project will cover things like employment, housing, work/life balance, money and allowances, and I strongly encourage everyone to engage.

With major housing changes on the horizon, it has never been more important for us to be able to find help. And part of my organisation's role is to discover whether that help is fit for purpose.

Look out for more updates and make sure you get your voice heard.



www.aff.org.uk



Picture: Bdt Murray Kerr, RA

■ **DETERMINED** cadets from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst were fired up for action as they took the fight to a mock enemy on Exercise Allenby's Advance. Part of the academy's offensive actions module, the manoeuvres culminated in a fast-paced five days in Brecon, Wales. The package was an opportunity for cadets to apply military knowledge with command skills in executing attacks, ambushes and raids.



Ex-soldiers offered £10,000 to fill specialist trades

FORMER Regulars who fancy trading civvy street for a life back in uniform are being offered an attractive reason to do so – with a cash windfall of thousands of pounds.

Troops from a range of trades can claim a £10,000 rejoin bounty if they return as part of an Army initiative to plug skills gaps in specialist areas.

But personnel must give a minimum of two years' Regular service, while officers need to commit to three.

The scheme launches on April 1 and individuals who left before January 3 – including musicians, drivers and armourers – are on the hit list.

Military chiefs claim rejoiners are of increasing importance and stress the bounty is being offered to those from trades "that cannot be addressed by other manning levers".

Maj Alistair Smith (RDG) from the Directorate of Army Manning said

more flexibility was needed in the way troops are retained and the bounty could offer significant savings.

He added: "The rationale is that it is far cheaper to bring experienced soldiers back on-board than to recruit and train people from scratch.

"But I would stress this scheme is an addition to – rather than replacement for – recruiting.

"There are a number of specialist cohorts and trades that qualify for the payment. They are undermanned and, historically, those who leave tend not to come back."

Maj Smith also said aspirations of younger people were changing – with many not choosing a job for life – and the Army needed to be flexible to them leaving and returning in future.

The rejoin bounty is budgeted for the next two financial years with an assessment expected in 2020.

“With budgets squeezed surely this is madness”

“Clothing kerfuffle”

TALKBACK
PAGE 49





THE BIG PICTURE

River Thames, Central London

FINAL FLIGHT

AFTER almost 40 years of service the Army's Lynx helicopter has taken to the skies for the final time. With Wildcat now acting as its replacement the Army Air Corps embarked on a farewell tour from RAF Odiham, flying five of the remaining assets to significant sites in its history before culminating in an impressive air "procession" along the River Thames.

Picture: Cpl Mark Larnar, RLC

NEED TO

KNOW

NUTRITION / HEALTH / CASH / EXPERIENCE



**FOOD
FIRST AID**

Eat your way out of injury

► IT sounds bizarre, but if you're not eating enough of the right grub you could be more likely to get injured on the battlefield.

It's all down to your muscles (or lack of them in some cases). Without enough energy they go into what is called a "catabolic state". Essentially, this means the muscle tissue itself starts to get broken down into fuel.

The result is a body more prone to injury, and less able to recover when it does get knocked about. Here are a few things you can do to avoid the problem. To find out more read the Defence Nutrition Advisory Service personal nutrition guide.

Scoff your five a day

+ **Fruit and veg** are an essential part of any healthy diet, helping to promote the body's healing.

Endure oily fish

+ It might not be everyone's top menu choice, but **salmon, fresh tuna, mackerel, sardines, trout** and **herring** are high in omega-3 fats, which have anti-inflammatory properties.

Eat calcium

+ Personnel with poor bone quality are more likely to suffer with stress fractures, and you need **1,000mg** per day. **Dairy products** and **green leafy veg** are two good sources.

Get enough carbs

+ This fuels training and helps to optimise recovering between your sessions. Read the **Defence Nutrition and Advisory Service factsheet SEN1** for more detailed guidance.

Don't forget zinc

+ This essential trace element is also involved in wound healing, and foods that are rich in it include **meat, seafood, sunflower seeds** and **almonds**.

IN NUMBERS

20%

The amount of extra energy your body can use during the healing process – particularly in the early stages of injury and if it is severe. But remember, this changes soon after, so adjust your intake while immobile to avoid weight gain

QUICK SWITCHES

■ Worried about your intake of the sugary stuff? Almost all of us are eating too much. Try these simple swaps to reduce your risk of obesity, heart disease and cancer...

Coco Pops with milk



Shredded Wheat with milk



Cola



Diet Cola



Sweet and sour pork with rice



Chicken chow mein



Cereal bar



Rice cake



Stress head

Is worry taking its toll on you?

▶ A bit of stress is normal – not least in the world of soldiering. And while a bit of it can help to push you through something difficult, too much can take its toll. Symptoms aren't just mental, either. Feeling worried can give you headaches, stop you sleeping and make you more susceptible to problems like depression, heart disease and alcohol dependence. Here are some of the tell-tale signs that it might be time to take action:

Emotionally you may feel...

- ✦ Irritable or wound-up
- ✦ Overwhelmed
- ✦ Anxious or fearful

Physically you may suffer with...

- ✦ Headaches
- ✦ Muscle tension or pain
- ✦ Dizziness
- ✦ Sleep problems
- ✦ Feeling tired all the time
- ✦ Eating too much or too little

Mentally you may...

- ✦ Have racing thoughts
- ✦ Worry constantly
- ✦ Find it hard to concentrate
- ✦ Struggle to make decisions

Things you may find yourself doing when you're feeling stressed

- ✦ Drinking or smoking more
- ✦ Snapping at people
- ✦ Avoiding certain things or individuals

STRESS-BUSTERS

Give yourself a break, and try one of these



Exercise

It won't make your problems disappear, but going for a run is great for clearing your head. Read *Soldier's* January magazine for hints and tips on how to get more active.



Connect with people

Tell your mate, partner, family, padre, doc or welfare officer how you're feeling. They are there to help, and the Army can offer advice.



Give back

Research shows helping others builds resilience. You could try community work or even smaller things like buying a mate a coffee or stopping to make small talk.



Breathe

A few calming breathing techniques can make a big difference. Visit <https://apps.beta.nhs.uk> for some relaxation and mindfulness apps that you can carry around on your smartphone.

Insurance intel



Car costs getting you down?
Read on for tips on cutting back

▶ With under-25s paying as much as £1,400 a year for insurance, owning your own set of wheels is an expensive business. Here are a few things you can try to make sure it doesn't take any more of your pay packet than it has to:



1

Add a named driver

Car insurance is all about risk and sometimes you get a better deal if you add someone else to the policy. Remember it must be someone who would reasonably drive the car.



2

Don't auto-renew

Loyalty is expensive, so note down your renewal date in the diary and shop around before signing up to the same policy again. You might be surprised by the alternative deals.



3

The more you pimp your ride, the more you pay

Consider how badly you want those spoilers, and make sure you tell your insurer about any upgrades otherwise the policy could end up being made invalid.



4

Beware paying monthly

This form of payment is like a high-interest loan. It is cheaper to pay upfront for the whole thing if you can afford to do so.



5

Keep the car in a garage or driveway

This can bring the cost down based on the fact the vehicle is probably safer here than on a road.



6

Add a voluntary excess

If you can afford to cough-up £100 or so in the event of a claim, adding an excess to your policy makes it cheaper.

■ For free and impartial money advice visit www.moneyadvice.org.uk



ARMY COMMUTE



Are you invalidating your insurance?

■ POLICE in West Yorkshire came under fire last year after they seized the car of a driver whose insurance didn't cover the commute to work.

Heavy-handed or not, it showed how important it is to have the correct cover.

And according to Forces insurance specialist Keith Frampton, this can be overlooked by serving soldiers.

Insurance companies usually offer a choice between "social, domestic and pleasure" – which means no cover to and from work – or "social, domestic and pleasure including commuting".

"Some soldiers living adjacent to their military base will have selected the first type of cover, thinking that a brisk walk or cycle trip will do the job," said Frampton.

"But horrendous weather may make the journey by car the better option, so commuting cover should still be selected.

"Often this is available at no extra cost, but you'd be wiser to select it from the outset or at renewal as admin charges can be added if you do it mid-term."

As well as commuting (which means to one usual place of business), Service personnel visiting more than one military base need to select the "class one business use" category. This type of cover is also required if you want to claim expenses on the JPA system.

'I am completely powerless'

For six months the career of WO1 Kev Hughes (AGC (MPS)) has been on hold to be at the bedside of his three-year-old daughter Esme, who is being kept alive by a mechanical heart at Great Ormond Street Hospital while she awaits a transplant. Here, the Serviceman talks to *Soldier* about the agony of holding out for that lifesaving phone call... and why troops should talk to their loved ones about organ donation today



“

PEOPLE always ask my partner Lisa and I how we cope. But there's no other option, we have to cope.

When Esme was a baby we found out she had a heart murmur, which turned out to be severe aortic stenosis.

Despite two procedures she developed dilated cardiomyopathy, which means the left side won't pump blood.

She began to get more poorly, and when she was connected up to the ECMO [a device that acts like an artificial lung outside the body] it took me a week to be able to speak.

I've served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland and Kosovo, but nothing equips you for seeing your daughter lying there like that.

I started suffering badly with anxiety, and I wish I'd spoken up about how I was feeling sooner because when you do it's a weight off your shoulders.

Luckily with Lisa and I, when one of us is down the other is stronger.

I've met other families at Great Ormond Street, and we have seen another little girl with a heart like Esme's pass away.

It is hard seeing all the poorly children as

you end up feeling other people's emotions as well.

Esme is amazing. Some of the treatments she has undergone have been firsts for the UK, and she surprises us at every turn.

At the moment she is learning to walk again. You see the agony on her face when she is doing physiotherapy, but she doesn't give up.

Everything I have done in my life, and in the military, has seen me take charge of my own destiny.

But with this I am completely powerless. I'm having to put my faith in the doctors, and at first that wasn't easy.

I remember shaking one surgeon's hand, and begging him to bring Esme back to us. You just want to get something into their heads to tell them how different and special your child is.

Unfortunately, we don't know what's around the corner for Esme.

But this has definitely made us appreciate life, so when she comes home we are going to live to the full.

Sometimes you have one of those days



IN NUMBERS

There are currently **6,472** people awaiting a transplant in the UK and last year nearly **500** people died waiting

Save a life – speak up

Families get the final say on whether their loved one's organs can be donated. If you would like to help someone like Esme after you die, tell your family. If you don't, you could leave them guessing what you would have wanted or it might come as a surprise that you have registered as a donor and they may say no.

To find out more visit

www.organdonation.nhs.uk

where the kids want to go to the park but you can't be bothered or have other things to do.

But now we won't put off things like that.

This has taught me to appreciate what you have whilst you still do.

Great Ormond Street has given our daughter a chance to make it to transplant, and we are so grateful, but we don't sit there and expect everything to come to us.

You have to get up and fight. So we have entered a couple of marathons now, and raised quite a bit of money for Esme's different heart hospitals.

Getting into this world of organ donations has been eye-opening.

In Wales everyone is automatically on the organ donor list, and now England is looking to go the same way.

But families can overrule this, so it's important people talk about what they would want to happen.

I believe that if you're willing to receive an

organ, you have to be willing to give one.

But in order for Esme to get a heart, another family's has to give the ultimate gift.

Lisa finds that very hard, knowing that someone has to go through that.

I look at it differently – my mind is just on Esme at the moment. But once she's got a heart of course I will start thinking about the donor family.

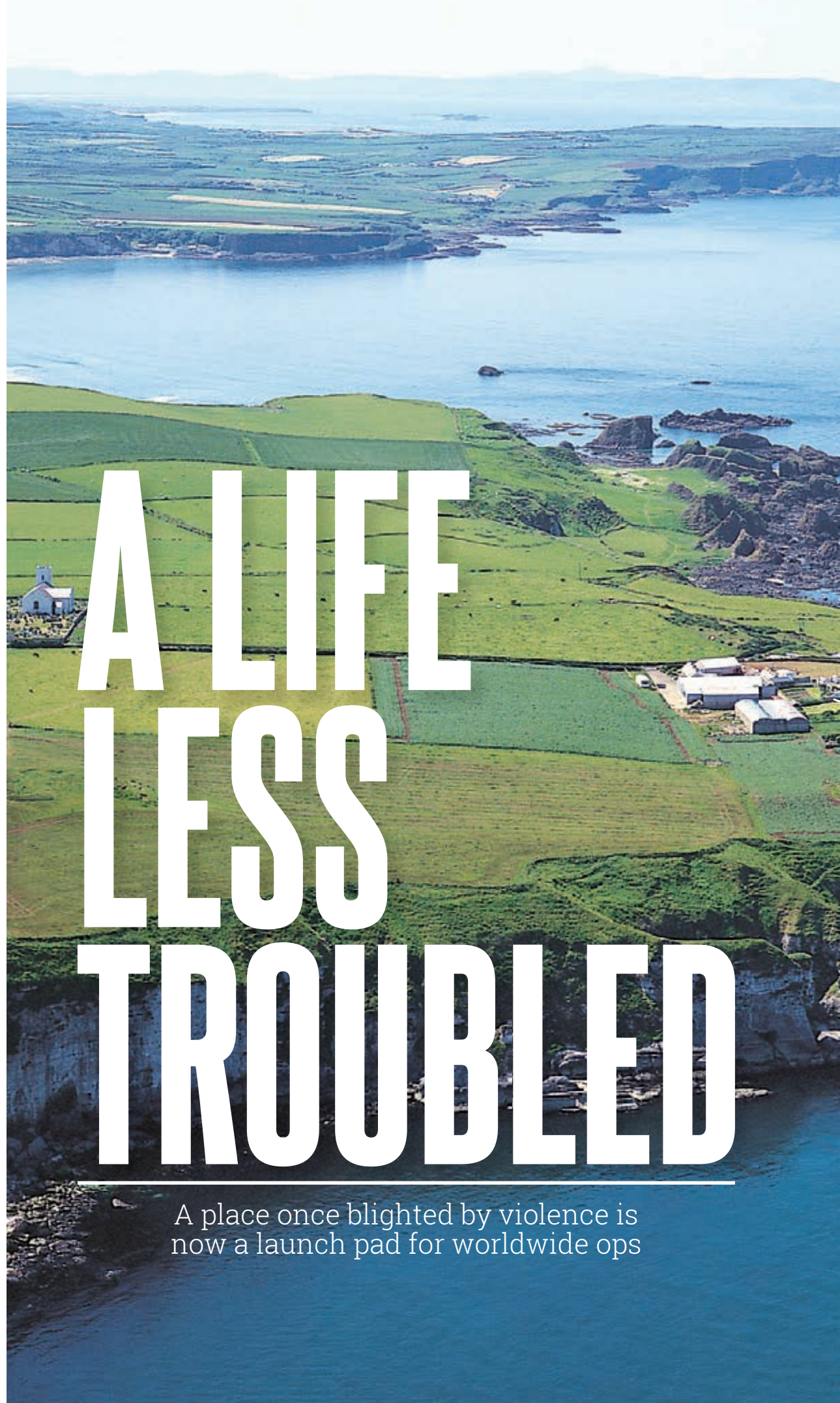
The help and support I've had from the Army through all this has been second-to-none; I couldn't have asked for any more.

The messages of support I've received from random people has been amazing.

But the pressure is constant: when Esme is having a good day so are we, when she's having a bad day so are we.

She is at the top of the organ donation list, but she has been for months now.

Every morning I wake up at 0400 thinking, 'is today the day?' ■



A LIFE LESS TROUBLED

A place once blighted by violence is now a launch pad for worldwide ops



I was amazed
to see such a
difference



WITH the bright winter sunshine and dark blue sky evaporating as the 737 descends, the view outside the windows is replaced by a vague sketch of rolling fields and lakes – the gradual appearance of Northern Ireland through the clouds.

The aircraft shakes off the turbulence and banks around as it loses altitude carrying a mixture of families, tourists and those on business as they prepare for arrival. Belfast is a popular destination for them all; a cosmopolitan and flourishing city.

But generations of troops have also seen this view; for decades it was their first glimpse of the backdrop to an often difficult operational tour. And as wheels rumble across the runway and cabin doors are opened, departing passengers tread the path of soldiers past.

Belfast International Airport was once shared with RAF Aldergrove – where countless tours to the country began and ended.

But the military aircraft have long gone. Now the tailfins of civilian airlines and panels advertising holidays and duty-free shopping are testament to significant change.

Only the breath-sucking wind and pelting sleet remain a constant. So much is now different, but the erratic weather refuses to compromise.

Northern Ireland was the focus of Operation Banner – a counter-terrorism campaign that lasted some 40 years. It drew to a close just over a decade ago.

Since then the political initiatives underpinning the peace process have continued to gather pace and now the violence that defined The Troubles era has long gone.

There is no evidence of military infrastructure that once existed. Some relics of times past can be seen on the tourist trails around the old flashpoint areas, but you have to look carefully. Northern Ireland is no longer the focus of operations – it is the home of 38 (Irish) Brigade.

Many of those now serving here are too young to remember a time any different. But veterans of Op Banner are struck by the transformation.

Richard Dorney, a former soldier with 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, was astonished when he visited the region for the first time since the last of his six deployments more than 20 years ago.

“It was extraordinary to see normal



Left: Operation Banner, the British Army's longest continuous military campaign, ran from 1969 to 2007. **Main picture:** An aerial view of Ballintoy harbour and village, County Antrim. **Overleaf:** Members of 2 Rifles train on Ballykinler beach



police officers on the streets, and a Northern Ireland without patrolling soldiers, sangers and the anti-rocket mesh," the retired lieutenant colonel admitted. "I was amazed to see such a massive change.

"Many of my generation went on to serve challenging tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. But my time as a young soldier in Northern Ireland when I first went there in 1978 had a real impact on me – I was young at the time and it was the first time I had ever seen conflict."

The journey from a violent past to today's position of ongoing normalisation has been extraordinary. Author and counter-terrorism analyst Andy Oppenheimer – who has written widely on Irish history – said the achievement of bringing stability to the north should not be underestimated, particularly given the situation that had previously existed.

The Banner campaign claimed the lives of more than 650 troops and nearly 300 police officers. In the 1970s and 80s, a bombing campaign carried out by the Provisional IRA on the UK mainland targeted venues including the Conservative Party conference at Brighton's Grand Hotel and Downing Street as well as the Harrods department store in London.

"Every day, every week there was violence – if there had been a threat level in times past then it would have probably been at critical much of the time," Oppenheimer emphasised.

"Bombs were indiscriminate and killed and injured innocent people while places were perpetually being evacuated for fear of terrorist attack.

"There were new devices all the time and ways to counter them would have to be found."

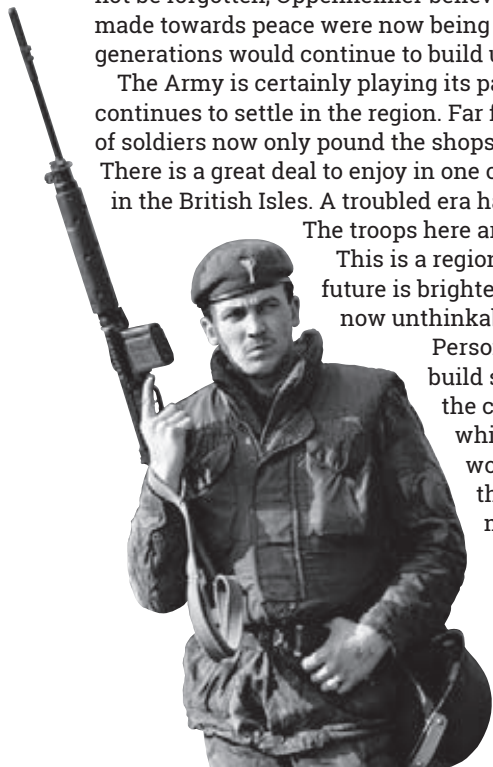
While highlighting that the past – and its victims – must not be forgotten, Oppenheimer believed that the "great strides" made towards peace were now being cemented, and that future generations would continue to build upon them.

The Army is certainly playing its part in helping peace as it continues to settle in the region. Far from patrolling, the boots of soldiers now only pound the shops and tourist hotspots. There is a great deal to enjoy in one of the most beautiful places in the British Isles. A troubled era has long passed into history.

The troops here are part of a new story.

This is a region on a journey but the future is brighter and a return to the past is now unthinkable.

Personnel are continuing to build strong relationships with the civilian communities in which they now live and work – life has changed for the better in a place that has much to offer. ■



HEADING HOME

Northern Ireland is a welcome sight to troops returning from ops



As coaches full of returning soldiers continue to arrive through the gates of Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn there is satisfaction among commanders of a job well done.

Having completed a six-month tour of Iraq – where they have been providing force protection and training the Middle Eastern country's security forces battling Daesh – troops from 2nd Battalion, The Rifles are confident that they have made a difference in theatre.

During their tenure on Op Shader in Anbar province they have witnessed successes against terrorists and contributed to the ongoing United States-led action in the region.

Of equal significance, however, is the home to which they are returning. In the not-too-distant past, Lisburn was a place where troops were deployed during the years of the Northern Ireland Troubles. Now it is a springboard from which they embark on overseas operations.

"We live here now, in the same way as in Aldershot, Catterick or Tidworth," said Brig Jonathan Swift, commander of 38 (Irish) Brigade – the formation of which 2 Rifles is a part.

"Our role is not to operate within Northern Ireland but outside as an adaptive force.

"The Rifles, for example, have been on a successful tour but this is only one example – we have also had units deploying to Africa to assist with counter poaching activities."

With a mix of Regular and Reserve units, Northern Ireland is a useful location to launch operations. While there is an underlying threat from terrorism – troops are fully briefed on this – the environment is a comfortable place to live while offering



Above: A thriving Belfast is a highly popular downtime destination
Picture: Mike Weston

excellent preparation for deployment.

Ballykinler and Magilligan have well-equipped exercise areas while the surrounding environment – with lakes and mountains – provides opportunities for adventurous training.

“In terms of threat, there are areas in any place that you would avoid, and here is no different,” Brig Swift – who took up his latest post late last year – continued. “We need to make sure our soldiers stay safe although this is not hard to do.

“We are very well looked after here – in terms of leisure activities we are near Belfast and the Antrim coast and Mountains of Mourne are just a short distance away.”

For the soldiers returning from Iraq, Northern Ireland has become a posting of choice. Lt Col Neil Bellamy, (pictured below) CO of 2 Rifles, said Thiepval Barracks was a welcoming sight after six months away.

“It is fantastic to come back to Lisburn following our deploying on Op Shader,” he added. “I have been in command of the battalion for three years and we have never felt like visitors.

“I’m due to move on shortly and it has been a real privilege to be here with The Rifles.”

The soldiers under Lt Col Bellamy’s command were equally enthusiastic about living and working in Northern Ireland – and returning home after a busy period on operations.

“I have been posted here for four-and-a-half years now and there is a lot to see and do in your spare time,” said Capt Robert Prince (Rifles). “Belfast is very close to us and is really no different to any capital city – there is quite a good nightlife there.

“From my perspective, I enjoy being in Northern Ireland – it is a good place to live.”

LCpl Ben Latham was also happy to be posted to the region. “I have been here for four years now and it is not a massive drama,” he added. “You hear some people complaining but I’ll be coming back from leave early – I’ve never had any trouble.”

Cpl John MacDaid said there were plenty of opportunities in Northern Ireland – but stressed that troops needed to pay attention to the security advice and act accordingly.

“The threat is still there and there are certain places that you should not go to,” he highlighted. “But you are fully briefed on all this – that aside, there is plenty to do.

“Thiepval camp is great and you have Belfast a short distance away – the only real issue for me is that the weather in Northern Ireland can sometimes be a bit inclement.”

It has been a decade since the end of Op Banner – the British Army’s longest continuous operation. Some 20 years have passed since the Good Friday Agreement provided the political basis for a new and more peaceful era in the region.

Northern Ireland has passed many milestones. The path to peace has not been easy, and there have been difficulties and setbacks along the way. But the shift in the Army’s presence here is a clear indication of the huge progress already made.

Once this place was a deployment – a tour where troops could expect trouble. Now it is a home and a place of opportunity as well as a welcome sight to personnel returning from operations. ■



A soldier in full winter combat gear, including a helmet with ghillie suit, goggles, and a rifle, stands in a snowy forest. The scene is captured in a cinematic style with a cool color palette.

Troops weather
Baltic winter in style
on Operation Cabrit

COLD SPELL



NO news is good news, as the saying goes. And in the case of a politically and militarily delicate deployment such as Operation Cabrit, perhaps that phrase rings truer than ever.

It is a little under a year since British personnel first arrived in Estonia as part of Nato's enhanced forward presence in the region and troops from 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh have spent the past three months settling into the routine of their stint heading up the 800-strong multinational battlegroup.

Soldier dropped in on several locations around the country to get a flavour of what a tour to the Baltic state entails.

First stop: Cabrit HQ in Tallinn, where the man in charge, Col Giles Harris, explained that the mission defies any neat definitions.

"This is both a deterrence and reassurance operation, so you can quantify success by how little action is seen," he said.

"We spent the first six or seven months trying to compare it to previous deployments but it's not like Iraq or Afghanistan – or even Germany in the old days.

"There's a whole new edge to it; it is novel and unique.

"It has that mix of real-life threat and very challenging training, the like of which the troops won't have done before."

This assessment was quickly borne in nearby Tapa, the main base for the battlegroup.

At first glance the schedule is not unlike it would be back on home soil. There are core skills to maintain, MATTs to tick off and range packages to complete, interspersed with the odd community engagement task.

However, the environment is far from routine and the Baltic winter is not for the faint-hearted.

Laying any myths about generation snowflake well and truly to rest, members of D Company's mortar platoon completed an 11-day stretch in the field in temperatures as low as -15 degrees Celsius.

“It has that mix of real-life threat and challenging training”

Fus Jonathon Hamill described how a Royal Marine-led cold weather operators' course had equipped him and his team to withstand the conditions – and to put any inhibitions aside in the name of survival.

"We did some escape and evasion training where we had to kill a chicken and make some broth," said the 20-year-old.

"We also built a shelter to protect us from the wind and slept in it with just our bivy bags.

"The fire had to be kept going all night. We put brushwood on the floor to insulate us from the ground and we spooned – a lot.

"It was pretty much spoon or die."

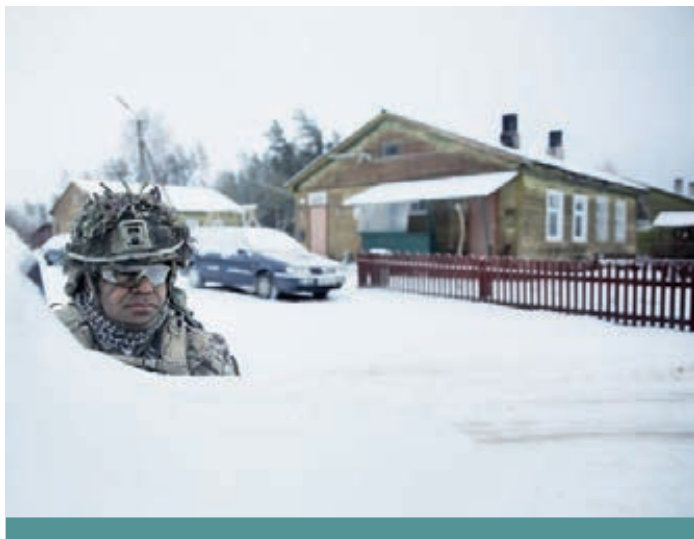
Nocturnal activities aside, the troops also rehearsed what to do in the event of a fall into icy water, camouflage techniques and how to cover the tracks left in the snow by their feet and vehicles.

Fus Hamill said his issued cold-weather clothing had helped to make the experience bearable.

"The kit works for me," he added.

"It doesn't keep you warm if you just stand there – you do have to actually move and generate some body heat.

"But if you do the drills correctly it will do the job. ➔



IN NUMBERS

300

number of vehicles
belonging to the 1 Royal
Welsh Battlegroup, including
Challengers from the King's
Royal Hussars

800

personnel making
up the multinational
contingent



Cool customers: British and Estonian troops mount a joint attack on an empty apartment block in the village of Varstu



"It's been nippy but I've been loving life."

Elsewhere in the southern village of Varstu, not far from the Latvian border, members of A Company were conducting urban drills alongside their Estonian colleagues – watched by a crowd of curious locals and excited schoolchildren.

UK-based training doesn't usually involve an audience but here civilian life continued as normal while the two nations mounted a joint attack on a deserted block of flats in the middle of a housing estate.

According to Cpl Joseph Jones, the facility added an extra level of realism to that offered by basic stone structures at the likes of Copehill Down. He explained: "The really good thing with this particular building is that the remnants of what was in there to make it a home are still there – furniture, debris on the floor, curtains, window panes. We don't have that back in the UK.

"It adds complexity and risk. We have to be aware of the obstacles and actually move things out of the way, to check all the corners and make sure we're fully clear."

Reflecting on the unusual style of operational tour, the 32-year-old said it brought back memories of the Falkland Islands.

"I went down there a few years ago as part of the Roulement Infantry Company and this is similar to that because there is a credible threat but you go out on exercises and do real patrols to reassure the local people," he continued.

"And although we're not out here mending fences as perhaps you would in the Falklands, just being seen like this achieves that same aim of supporting and reassuring the population."

For the Estonian troops too the joint training was a good opportunity to hone their skills alongside counterparts equipped with platforms such as Warrior.



“It was pretty much spoon or die”

"It's important because we haven't exercised with armoured vehicles before so it's good experience for us to fight against a unit with that capability," commented Lt Semjon Malinovski.

"We usually imitate it with trucks but it's not the same as having it for real.

"On the soldiers' level it's positive because they will take the experience home and share it with their family.

"Our defence is based on good relationships with allies."

In fact, British military relations with Estonia date back to 1918, when the Royal Navy helped the fledgling state secure its independence.

One hundred years on, alliances are as important as ever and later this month UK personnel – and a newly arrived contingent of Danish troops – will celebrate the country's centenary alongside their hosts.

Op Cabrit may be an unconventional mission, but with the festivities taking place against a backdrop of uncertainty, those deployed on Nato's north-easternmost flank can be sure their presence is welcome. ■

COMBAT KINGS!

AARGH!

Guards adopt close-quarter drills to boost aggression levels

THUD!



“ IT'S MORE OF A MENTAL EXERCISE ”

WHOOSH!

CONTROLLED aggression is a key component of an effective soldier. So when this important trait was perceived to be dwindling among certain personnel from the Grenadier Guards those in charge wasted no time in upping the intensity levels. For the past year the regiment has been engaged in close-quarter combat training – an activity that sees troops mastering martial arts moves under the watchful eye of an expert instructor – and the results have been impressive. ➔

Report: Richard Long Illustrations: Tudor Morgan and Maddie Marchment



"This all came about after the commanding officer and I went to watch an exercise in Albania," WO1 Martin Howlin, regimental sergeant major of 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, told *Soldier*.

"We were chatting about a dry attack that we felt lacked aggression and started discussing ways we could help the blokes improve on that, and then channel it in the right way.

"So we looked at martial arts. I knew a civilian instructor who has been doing this for years; he loves the military lifestyle and was the perfect man for the job."



A two-week trial followed and with the students posting positive feedback the sessions have become a regular fixture at the unit's home in Lille Barracks, Aldershot.

Operating under the guidance of instructor Neil Webster (pictured left), of the Epsom-based Kung Fu and Tai Chi Academy, the focus has been on developing technical skills rather than simply striking a punchbag.

They have progressed from learning basic punches and holds to thwarting a potential knife attack while dressed in full combat kit (see overleaf).

The training has been delivered at a busy time for the Grenadier Guards.

In 2017 they formed part of a high readiness joint task force with personnel from Albania, Latvia and the Netherlands, which saw them tackle a series of challenging overseas exercises.

And this year they will have companies deploy to South Sudan, Afghanistan and Iraq.

"We are not doing this to enhance our capability; it is more of a mental exercise," WO1 Howlin explained. "It is learning about how to build aggression and turn it on when needed.

"This training has helped to create a particularly effective battalion. It has also given the guys something different to do that is fun and builds team spirit and confidence.

"Having an activity to focus on and enjoy adds to the variety on offer in the Army, and can only help with retention."

After being offered the opportunity to work with the soldiers Webster had to tailor his training to the students he was working with, as his usual civilian approach would not be appropriate in this setting.

"I really had to give it some thought and it has been a learning curve," he said.

"The end result is that these guys may actually have to kill someone and that is obviously very different to working with members of the public.

"The focus has been on developing power, how to strike properly, hit hard and look for effective targets.

"One of the key things is not to remain static so we have concentrated on footwork and keeping balanced.

Instead of learning set techniques we have created a method that covers all eventualities.

"I've been getting some really nice feedback. It is fun, good for team cohesion and a very useful activity.

"Who knows, one day they may have to use this for real." ■

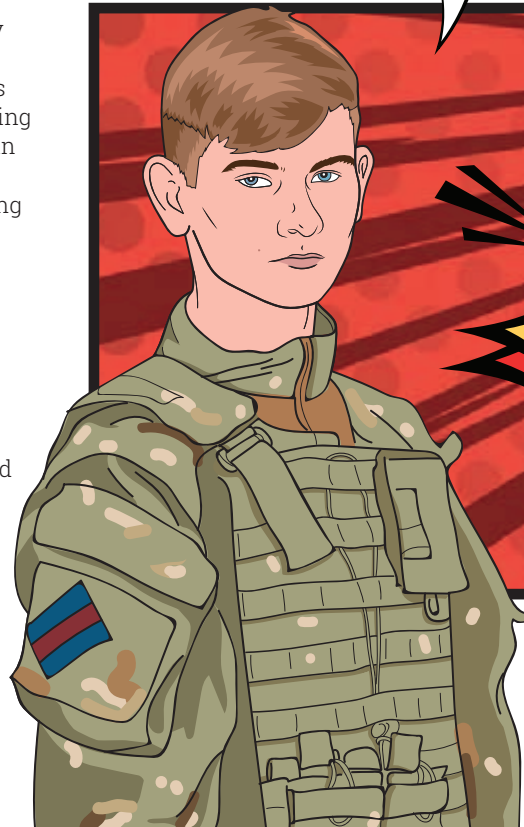
Training talk

Troops from the Grenadier Guards share their thoughts on the close-quarter approach...

It's good to be tackling a new skill. We started by learning how to throw a punch and from there it has evolved into manipulating the body and how to repel a knife attack.

It has been great for team cohesion.

Gdsm Richard Halliburton



Mentally and physically, it is something different.

Many of these guys come from different sporting backgrounds – boxing, karate or other martial arts – and this can only help in a combat role.

L Sgt Kane Peters



These guys are at the peak of their training

when it comes to weapon systems, tactics and fieldcraft, but hand-to-hand combat is something we don't do that much. This is a way for them to focus their aggression and build discipline; they love it.

Maj Rupert King-Evans

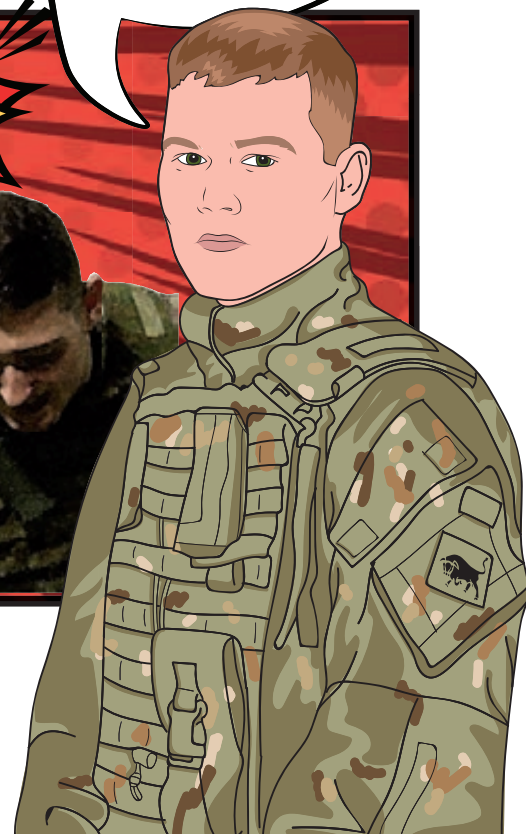


At the start I was sceptical but we are enjoying it and want to carry on.

It's better than being stuck in a classroom!

Gdsm Tom Dell

THUD!





WARRIOR EVOLUTION

Next generation of Army workhorse is readied for trials

WHEN the first incarnation of the Warrior armoured vehicle rolled off the production line in the late 1980s it soon proved its mettle during the Gulf War.

Since then it has gone on to earn the respect of generations of troops on worldwide ops – from the peacekeeping roles in Bosnia to high-intensity action in Afghanistan.

But times have changed since this platform first saw action some three decades ago.

And an example of how its next generation might look, unveiled by defence contractor Lockheed Martin, is now being readied for reliability trials as part of the MoD's Warrior capability sustainment project.

The blueprint for the new asset boasts a host of refinements – including a potent 40mm cannon, enhanced comms and uprated protection.

Defence chiefs envisage that these will equip the vehicle for the next phase of its working life.

Capt Tony Dale (pictured below right, Lancs), who has been assisting with the initiative as part of the Armoured Trials and Development Unit, said the changes reflected the future environments in which it could operate – as well as comfort and safety upgrades.

He added: "The original Warrior dates back some 30 years and we have learned a great deal about the platform since then – particularly through operations.

"On paper, the asset represents a huge increase in performance overall – but at this stage we are still talking about a demonstration vehicle and trials will begin this year." ■

“
We are still talking
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vehicle and trials
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”

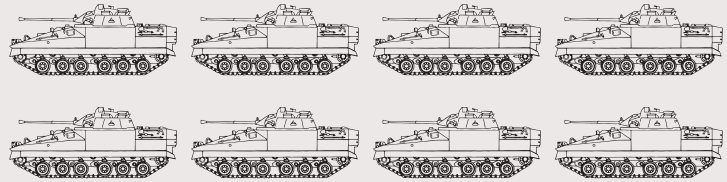
EVALUATION STATION

Soldiers are assisting Lockheed Martin with the contractor's **initial trials** of the vehicle at Bovington in Dorset – **eight of them** have now been delivered. All variants are represented – the **520 version**, which carries dismounted infantry, **521 command vehicle**, **521 observation post vehicle**, and **522** and **533**, used by REME to back up ops.

IN NUMBERS:

8

demo
vehicles
delivered



1,500

effective range of new weapon, in metres

30

years Warrior has
been in service





IMPROVED ENVIRONMENT

The original Warrior had to be retrofitted with an environmental control system as the extreme temperatures of Iraq and Afghanistan began to bite. But the new demonstration vehicle features a system fitted as standard, making life more comfortable for all on-board – and keeping them fit to fight in the toughest weather conditions.

DOWN THE HATCH

The new turret is at the heart of the upgraded vehicle – and is a potential game changer. Crews are better protected by a beefed-up armour package and improved seating. With more comfortable conditions for troops at the sharp end of operating the vehicle, the turret is also stabilised – enabling its cannon to be fired on the move.

FULLY LOADED

A key feature of the Warrior's new incarnation is the 40mm CT40 cannon that replaces the existing 30mm Rarden. Gunners will find it offers higher rates of fire, greater range, enhanced accuracy and more penetrating power than the existing kit. It can also be elevated to a greater degree than its predecessor – a potential lifesaver in urban environments.

Ammunition choices are also expanded and potentially include an airburst round for the first time – enemy troops behind cover will be vulnerable to the Warrior's reach. High explosive and armour piercing rounds are also in the arsenal.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

The original Warrior features limited communications between the crew and the infantry dismounts. But the new incarnation features a visual display unit in the back, giving troops real-time updates on the situation as they advance on a target.

TRACKED CHANGES

TOP GEAR

Although the new platform's top speed is broadly similar to its original counterpart's, an improved transmission system makes for a more efficient overall performance.

The Warrior capability sustainment project introduces a raft of refinements to the platform. *Soldier* was given a sneak peek...

PEUGEOT 208 1.2 PureTech 82 Allure 5dr Hatch

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4 years lease/Annual Mileage 8,000



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IN STOCK

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A grape move



Battlefield find leads to fruitful business for NCO

WHEN WO2 Fred Donnison (Rifles) headed to Greece on a battlefield tour he never imagined that it would mark the start of life after his long Army service.

The senior soldier and keen military history enthusiast had been visiting Thermopylae to see the place where the famous 300 Spartans clashed with the Persians and where the British fought the Germans during the Second World War.

But having arrived at the region, WO2 Donnison fell in love with the local food and wine and he was soon raising a glass to the launch of a new business.

In his firm, Guarding Thermopylae, he created a partnership with local vineyards and a farm to bring the produce to outlets in the UK.

And the Serviceman is looking to develop the venture when he retires from his final role as regimental operations support warrant officer with 3 Military Intelligence Battalion in the coming months.

"I very much used to be a beer drinker, but when I was introduced to the wine out in Greece I was converted," the senior NCO explained during an event promoting the venture at the Honourable Artillery Company HQ in central London.

"The local produce was very special, and I was somebody that already liked Greek food.

"The area is also beautiful.

"I first arrived at night and all I could see was lights – it could have been anywhere.

"But when the sun came up the green countryside, mountains and Aegean Sea were lit up; it was an extraordinarily beautiful place."

Setting up the business, however, was to prove a challenge and WO2 Donnison drew heavily on skills forged in decades of military service.

Having started his career in 3rd Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets in 1979 he went on to serve more than 20 years with the unit in Cyprus, the Balkans and Northern Ireland before signing up once again on full-time Reserve service.

"You pick up a lot of knowledge in the Army," he continued.

"The MoD operates a global network and it taught me the logistics of how to move goods from A to B in difficult circumstances and harsh climates, keeping them in perfect condition.

"As much as anything, though, the military teaches you to be confident in basic skills such as speaking to people – and to have the balls to go out and take a chance on something.

"I have put a lot of time and money into this project and it is a risk."

Importing in limited volumes, WO2 Donnison is firmly focused on the likes of military messes and high-end hotels as the target market for the produce.

"This wine is never going to be in competition with the likes of Tesco, which is a different market entirely," he added.

"It is produced organically, using traditional methods and with all of the grapes cut by hand.

"It will be available in low volumes.

"But I think that the British are very open minded when it comes to wine – the public will try offerings from all over the world and seem willing to taste something different."

WO2 Donnison said he was looking forward to retirement and his new civvy street venture – as well as seeing the fruits of his work develop in future.

"I never wanted to follow a traditional pathway like private security work when I left the Army," he said with a smile.

"With this business the only bosses I have are clients, and importantly I get to choose them." ■



Battlefield bottle: Thermopylae's landscape has a rich military history





“
When I was introduced to the
wine in Greece I was converted
”



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Believe it or not Maj Gen Bill O'Leary - the new Deputy Commander Field Army and joint head of the Reserve - has a lot in common with soldiers. An engineer by profession, he joined the territorials as a craftsman and has now held every rank except WO1. Here, he spills the beans on Reserve life...

Why did CGS pick you for this job?

I'd like to think he sees me as a people person. I like nothing better than getting out and talking to soldiers. I think I can relate to them.

We receive lots of letters from Reservists, usually about lack of parity with Regulars. What do you say?

I read *Soldier* regularly and I've seen many of those. Some have valid points but I can't promise we'll solve all their problems. What it does highlight is the importance of participating in the Reserve continuous attitude survey (page 11) so their voices can inform policy.

How do you feel about this sort of negative feedback from Reservists?

Saddened if their concerns stem from our communications not working properly, and I acknowledge that some do. We have been levelling the playing field as best we can and Reserve conditions of service have improved. There will, unfortunately, always be limitations to what we can achieve because of budgets, but we've done great things in recent years. For example, we now receive a pro rata pension for our service and a day's paid leave for every ten days we serve. There are also more opportunities for sport and adventurous training.

So how will you improve comms?

Obviously the chain of command remains essential but I'm also aiming to communicate regularly via Defence Connect. CGS's briefing team is another essential route.

Any other priorities?

I want to champion the wider use of Reserves. We don't have to use full mobilisation, we can use Reserve service days for things like flood work or even terrorist incidents. One of my goals is to create more flexibility in how we are used.

But isn't that expensive?

There is a belief that the Army pays double if Regulars could have filled the roles, but there is a price for deploying those personnel too so the net cost of a Reservist is actually far less than many think. A great deal of work is being done on determining the true amount. Supporting the Regulars is hugely positive for recruitment and retention; this is why we join.

Speaking of which, the current recruitment campaign is proving controversial...

A brigadier said to me recently, "I keep hearing about the 'belonging' campaign but I haven't seen a single advert". I told him that's because he's not the target audience. As CGS said at the Army conference, this is part of a long-term campaign. We've done well in building Reserve numbers in recent years and the proof is in the pudding.

And how's that 'pudding' looking?

We're on course to have 30,100 soldiers by April 2019 but it's not just about numbers. We need to turn manning into trained capability.

Many Reservists bring amazing skills to the table - do you know what you

have at your disposal?

One ambition I have is to create a new database. We don't capture the civilian expertise of our people very well and JPA can't be used, although that would be ideal. In my last post at the Army Personnel Centre we started cataloguing the experience of those Reservists between posts. It meant we could trawl the directory for certain proficiencies across cap badges. For example, we needed a CO for a Reserve field hospital so we used the list to find Col Damian Griffin, an infantryman and former 7 Rifles commander who is a professor of trauma and orthopaedic surgery. We need that capability.

What one piece of advice would you give troops?

Get all you can out of the Reserve experience as well as the training and education on offer. It's boosted my confidence hugely in my civilian role when I occasionally have to conduct presentations to the board directors of huge companies.



Interview: Steven Murcey Picture: Cpl Mark Larner, RLC

'It's not just about numbers'



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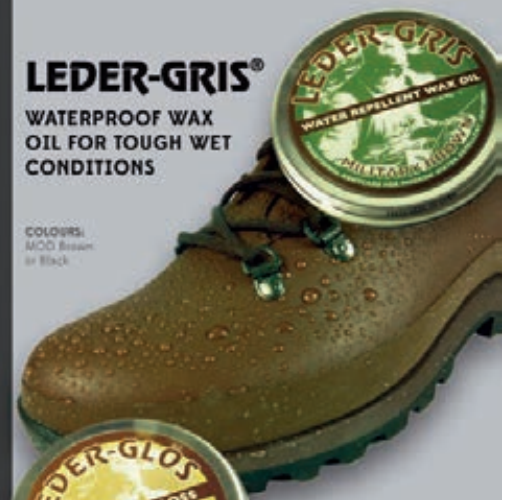
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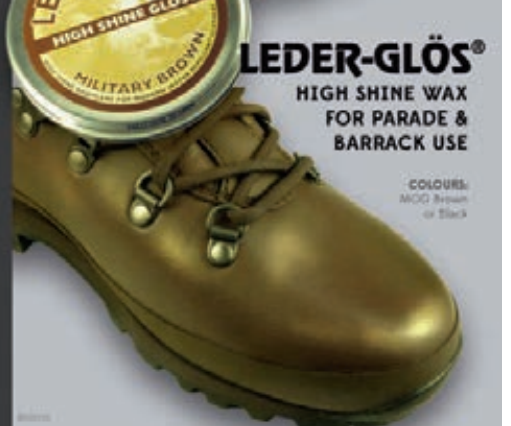
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‘Don’t sublet our housing’

I AM worried about a Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) project to sublet Service family accommodation (SFA) on the private market.

While it might seem financially attractive to offset the costs of the disastrous contract the MoD signed up to when they sold off the SFA estate in 1996, there are risks for our personnel.

The move could create “bed-blocking”, where soldiers are denied access to housing.

Short-term lets could be extended so what is deemed adequate surplus for the Army one month might not be the next.

There’s a risk, too, that DIO will bulk-let properties to local councils, leading to mixed estates with council tenants and potential social and crime problems.

Resources may also be diverted from military to civilian properties in order to make them more attractive for lucrative commercial lets to the general public.

I hope the Army watches this initiative like a hawk because I fear it will negatively impact Service personnel somehow regardless of DIO assurances.

– Name and address supplied

Richard Sewter, Assistant Head, Accommodation Plans and Requirements, DIO, responds: We are subletting surplus SFA simply because we have too many empty houses in certain locations.

In deciding whether to do this, first we consult the local station commander or commanding officer to take into account any potential unit increases in manning and whether there are opportunities to use the properties for Service personnel who might need them.

For example, someone may want

to live in a house rather than a block if they have weekend access to their children.

We would only sublet if the alternative would be just to leave the property standing empty.

In the vast majority of cases, DIO rents out to the general public on a rolling six-month basis.

After the initial period a tenancy can be terminated by giving two months’ notice so this does give us a great deal of flexibility.

The MoD has been dealing with surplus housing in this way for about ten years and the legal processes for regaining possession and negating “bed-blockers” are clear and not particularly onerous.

Conversely, leaving houses empty increases the chance of squatters which is far more of a risk.

Also, we will not be giving priority to civilians for income generation or any other reason.

Military personnel have protected rights regarding access to family housing and these are enshrined in your terms and conditions and wider personnel policy.

DIO, as part of the MoD, cannot rent to the public at the expense of Servicemen and women so military families will not lose out as a consequence of subletting.

On the contrary, the income generated by private sector lets can be reinvested in the defence estate rather than our limited resources being drained by properties standing empty and deteriorating further.

I hope this gives you some reassurance for the future.

“TALKBACK”

“There are real risks for personnel”

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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RANT OF THE MONTH

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The Lynx helicopter's farewell flight around the country (page 18) caused a whirl of comments on Facebook...



Sandra West

Farewell, you served us well.



Michael Long

Many a trip in one of those in the Falklands. Tough old lady.



Paul Thompson

Awesome chopper, flew in them many times, especially with 3 Regiment, Army Air Corps.



Jo Melling

I thought it was strange when my 2 year old and I heard them coming. We stood outside and watched them change formation from our back garden. Soo sad to see them go but lovely to witness them one more time.



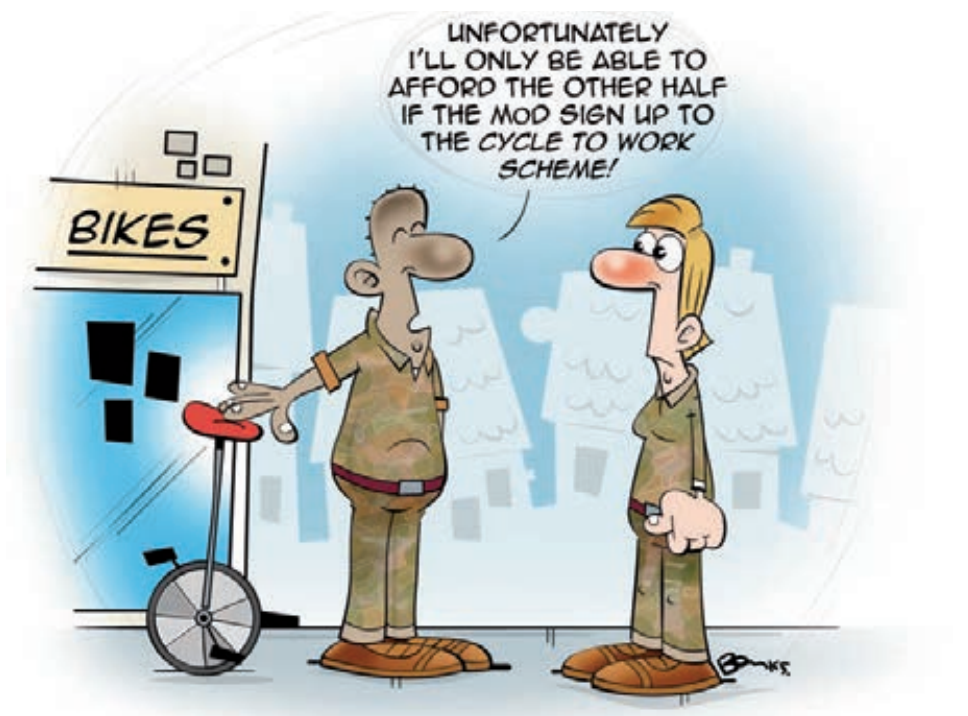
Adrian Russell

Gazelle, Lynx, Chinook, Puma and Sea King, rode them all, hedge-hopping in a Puma or a Lynx in Northern Ireland was brill.



Steven Breach

38 years on and I still prick up my ears at the sound of a Lynx, unmistakable. Used to cabby me about Fermanagh, the only way to travel.



Bike scheme needs to get rolling

THE Department for Transport (DfT) runs a buy-back scheme that allows employees to purchase a bicycle for their daily commute.

Operated through a salary sacrifice plan, individuals effectively rent a bike from their employer at first, with the opportunity to take full ownership after a specific payment period.

Depending on where the kit is rented from, the scheme provides savings of up to 40 per cent compared with retail prices.

As such, it is an extremely attractive offer that is supported across the private and public sectors. Indeed, other government departments have signed up to the scheme to pass the benefits on to their employees.

Noting that our people are our principal asset, should the MoD not be doing the same, especially as increased financial controls have been delegated to the top level budget holders?

I've been told ministers considered joining but decided against it. – **Name and address supplied**

Col John Oldroyd, Remuneration Policy, Personnel Directorate, responds: You are correct to say the cycle to work scheme has previously been considered by the MoD but was rejected because alternative and more advantageous systems are in place the Armed Forces

A DfT-style offering would be expensive, requiring a significant

capital outlay to buy the bikes initially and then maintain and manage them during the period they are hired out for.

If the individual decides not to purchase the bike outright, provision must then be made for its purchase or disposal.

The MoD, instead, encourages Servicemen and women to cycle to work through the home to duty allowance (HTD).

An internal review of 2016 claimants found that just over 200 Army personnel benefited from claiming HDT; currently the rate is set at £0.15 per mile, with the individual contributing the first three miles, which would see someone with a five-mile commute from their accommodation receiving £131.40 tax-free per year.

The DfT cycle to work scheme is a non-taxable benefit, like HDT, so you would not be entitled to claim both at the same time.

Neither would a soldier be allowed to switch back to HDT – in a case, for instance, where he or she became injured and had to start driving to work – until the hire period was complete.

As personnel would also be spending part of their income to hire the bicycle before tax is paid, they would effectively be paid less, which impacts on pensions.

“
The MoD
rejected
the idea
”



Learning the ropes: Phase one recruits at Catterick get to grips with the basics

Rejoiner rues pitching up again

I JOINED the Army in September 2004 and left in August 2009 but re-enlisted in March this year.

I'm currently on a phase two training course at Lyneham and feel aggrieved at the recruiting process.

When I was going through it initially I was told I had to complete phase one as I'd been out of the Service for so long.

I was also informed that I had to start on basic recruit pay and that I'd lost all of my 500 longer separation allowance (LSA) days accrued from my previous time in the Army.

To top it all off, I've just found out they have revised the rules so that soldiers rejoining up to ten years after leaving now only have to complete a medical.

– Name and address supplied

Maj Ali Smith, SO2 Soldier Policy, Department of Manning (Army), responds: In order to make the rejoin process as efficient as possible, previously trained ex-Regular soldiers are separated into three bands: those who have been a civilian for less than six years (A), personnel who left six to ten years ago and reached a minimum rank of substantive corporal (B) and all others (C).

The minimum medical and training requirement is different for each status, but individuals are also looked at on a case-by-case basis to determine what is the

most appropriate band and how to provide the best result for the Army.

Similarly, seniority and pay are assessed by the Army Personnel Centre, taking into consideration a soldier's previous service, including whether they have incurred any skill fade, the level of experience within the trade they have to offer, and any knowledge, skills and experience gained since they last served.

You would have been classed as a category C rejoiner.

Your initial service and a break of more than seven years has created a significant retraining requirement. It would have been decided that your skill fade was such that you were required to undertake phase one training again and return to recruit levels of pay.

Those rejoining the Army with a shorter break and/or higher previous rank require less retraining to become fully employable.

As for retaining LSA days accrued in previous service, the tri-Service policy is laid down in JSP 752: "Personnel re-entering the Services after a break that does not exceed four years may count former qualifying separation for the purpose of LSA eligibility."

Your break surpassed the prescribed limit, hence you are unfortunately not able to retain the LSA days you had accrued.

“Surely this is madness”

RAGE AT RAG TRADE

● I RECENTLY learned that Army-issued clothing that's been worn cannot be reissued but must be thrown away or sold as surplus.

So a pair of trousers worn once, washed and returned because they are the wrong size cannot be reused.

With budgets being squeezed surely this is madness. Hopefully I've been misinformed. – Name and address supplied

Col Neil Llewellyn, Assistant Head of Logistic Support, Army Headquarters, replies: Every effort is made to ensure that the supply chain operates in the most cost-effective manner while maintaining capability in the field.

Items are returned to stores for a wide variety of reasons.

Clothing will be categorised according to its intended use so, for example, "next to skin" items are not returned to stock because of health risk factors.

While at first glance it may seem logical to reissue clothing, the viability of this process depends on the economic value of an item versus the cost of restoring it to stock condition.

Returned clothing needs to be categorised, assessed for damage, cleaned, repackaged and relabelled, which uses resources.

This burden needs to be carefully considered and, ultimately, many items are not cost-effective to refurbish because the work required to bring them up to a condition where they can be reissued is more expensive than their disposal.

What might seem madness at first glance is in fact the best value for money for the taxpayer – not to mention the fact that the British Army cannot be accused of issuing second-hand clothing items.

The final element of this process should also be considered; previously-issued clothing is often reduced to rags which the Army either uses for a wide variety of tasks or is sold to offset the cost of future purchases.

The process is therefore quite clever and logical and has been passed down to us by our predecessors who had developed the supply chain.

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If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, top ten academics a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, amazing sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects and first class confidence and self assurance. If you want the best for your child, and to stand a chance of achieving most of this list, we believe you would need to pick one of the top 10 UK Independent boarding schools as ranked by the Daily Telegraph. BUT, most importantly of all, we unashamedly also offer TLC - tender, loving care!



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3	5	Queen Ethelburga's College	85%
	6	Guildford Girls High School	85%
4	7	Concord College, Shrewsbury	84%
	8	City of London Girls School	84%
	9	Haberdashers' Aske's Boys	84%
	10	St John's College, Cardiff	83%
	11	King Edward's Birmingham	82%
	12	Magdalen College, Oxford	80%
	13	North London Collegiate Sch	79%
	14	Royal Grammar, Guildford	78%
	15	Alley'n's School, Dulwich	77%
	16	Haberdashers' Aske's Girls	77%
5	17	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	77%
6	18	Brighton College, Brighton	76%
7	19	St Mary's School Ascot, Ascot	75%
	20	Hampton School, Hampton	73%



Commonwealth leave takes flight

THE new rules on domiciled collective leave and its substitute have come as a complete shock to me and have been implemented with little education.

My understanding is that the policy has changed significantly so that Commonwealth soldiers who have become naturalised UK citizens are no longer eligible for a free return ticket to their home country and/or extra holiday.

When I signed up, one of the key motivators was the guaranteed bonus of having a flight and extra days or simply the extra days (dependent on marital status) to return home.

Like many Commonwealth soldiers, the decision to become naturalised was done mainly to remove travel restrictions as a result of visa issues (yes, dependent on where we go, such personnel are still required to obtain a visa), when being deployed on tasks and to spare us embarrassment at borders.

It is my view that current Commonwealth troops should have been given grandfather rights and the travel incentive in their contractual agreement should be honoured.

Why was this incentive removed and why the secrecy in the change of the JSP?

I would hate to think the MoD has reverted to the 1960s where the sentiments were “do your time, help us out while you’re in, but don’t stay”.

I don’t believe that Commonwealth soldiers should be penalised for upward mobility. – **SSgt David Vitalis, RLC**

Col Nathan Sempala-Ntege, Assistant Head, Personal Services, responds:

Firstly, let me be quite clear that the Army values the significant contribution across a wide range of roles made by foreign and

Commonwealth soldiers and officers.

There are some conditions of service which recognise their specific circumstances, one of which is domiciled collective leave.

The purpose of it is to allow personnel who join from outside of the UK or Irish Republic to return to their home country at public expense for specified periods.

To authorise a request for this, the chain of command must be satisfied that the soldier meets a number of eligibility criteria, including that their home is still in the country from which they joined.

After five years’ residency foreign and Commonwealth Armed Forces personnel have the opportunity to apply for British citizenship.

Once they are naturalised, these soldiers are considered to have made Britain their home, even if they retain dual nationality.

Therefore, certain conditions of service, such as eligibility for this type of leave, no longer apply.

It became apparent that the policy was not always being applied consistently across the Forces and in some instances personnel were being granted it after they had gained citizenship.

This was judged to be unfair and not in keeping with its intent.

JSP 760, chapter nine was amended to provide clearer guidance about how to determine whether such troops have made their home in Britain.

This amendment may not have reached all those who need to be aware so we’ll ensure it’s highlighted to the chain of command.

“Why was this incentive removed?”

RESERVE MEDALS IN THE FIRING LINE

● I WAS interested to read your article in the August 2017 edition entitled “Medal Mistake” in which the writer asked about the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal criteria.

I was even more intrigued to read the response of Lt Col Kestrel Simson in which he states that recognition for long and distinguished military service for full-time Reserve service (FTRS) personnel is under review.

Could I please ask what the current considerations are and how these may affect serving FTRS soldiers and officers? – **Name and address supplied**

Lt Col (retd) Kestrel Simson, Ceremonial and Operational and Service Awards, Army Headquarters, replies: While it has been acknowledged that there should be some form of medallic recognition for all personnel on FTRS and additional duties commitments with long service in uniform, exactly what should be given to them is, I’m afraid, still to be decided.

The Volunteer Reserves Service Medal, recognising ten years’ qualifying service in the Army Reserve, is available for FTRS officers and soldiers who come from the Volunteer Reserves, but Regular Reserves are not eligible for that or any other award.



Looking ahead: These Reservists at Grantham are just starting out – will they receive a medal for sticking around?

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APPOINTMENTS

Maj Gen Rupert Jones appointed Assistant Chief of the General Staff, replacing **Maj Gen Nicholas Welch**

Maj Gen Bill O'Leary appointed Deputy Commander Field Army, replacing **Maj Gen Simon Brooks-Ward**



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Pete Walker, Senior Storekeeper Op Account, Mission Training & Mobilisation centre (individual), Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell, Nottingham.



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INTELLIGENCE

The following Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs and Defence Information Notices can be found online at www.armynet.mod.uk

ABN 14/18: Definition for Army Regular and Army Reserve trained strength

ABN 13/18: The Army higher education pathway update 2 – registration of interest

ABN 12/18: Launch of the Defence Security Handbook

ABN 11/18: JPA preference flags

ABN 10/18: Army Parents' Network launch

ABN 09/18: Armed Forces weight management policy

ABN 08/18: National recruiting campaign

ABN 07/18: Applications for pardons and return of medals – Turing's Law

ABN 06/18: 2018 Army Reserve continuous attitude survey

ABN 04/18: Career management boarding manual v1.4

ABN 03/18: Introduction of the Regular Army rejoin bounty

ABN 01/18: Army manning priority policy

ABN 140/17: Performance management evaluation survey

ABN 139/17: Removal of the civil service initial sift tool and introduction of new sift tools

ABN 138/17: Changes to Regular Army officer commissioning regulations

DIN 2018DIN01-014: The Firmin Sword of Peace Awards 2016 – results

DIN 2018DIN01-013: The Firmin Sword of Peace Awards Competition 2017

DIN 2018DIN01-011: Tax-free childcare scheme for eligible working parents (Service personnel)

DIN 2018DIN01-010: Purchasing added pension or buying an effective pension age

DIN 2018DIN01-008: MoD NHS/Agenda for Change grades – submission of form 1720A

performance appraisal development report for 2017 reporting year

DIN 2018DIN01-007: The automation of medic incremental progression

DIN 2018DIN01-006: Anthrax vaccination policy

DIN 2018DIN01-005: Operational deployment allowance

DIN 2018DIN01-004: Defence augmentation policy

DIN 2018DIN01-003: Recent changes to the state pension

DIN 2018DIN01-002: The Cadet Forces Commission

DIN 2018DIN01-001: Employment of general duties medical officers

DIN 2018DIN04-010: Identify friend or foe mode five platform identification numbers

DIN 2018DIN04-009: Planned withdrawal of support and disposal of obsolete items from artillery system project team

DIN 2018DIN04-008: The process for the tasking of deployed air movements support

DIN 2018DIN04-007: Urgent capability requirements

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DIN 2018DIN04-006: Aircrew in-ear communication devices

DIN 2018DIN04-005: Declaration of obsolescence A0 Plotter NSN:7025-99-741-3098

DIN 2018DIN04-004: Firemark fire extinguishers to replace current Chubb fire extinguishers

DIN 2018DIN04-003: Change of order process for batteries currently procured through contract number MEDGS/00310 with Carwood Motor Units Ltd

DIN 2018DIN04-002: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – June to November 2017

DIN 2018DIN04-001: The management of TacCIS HQ equipment on James and MJDI

DIN 2018DIN05-004: Use of SHA-1 in MoD

DIN 2018DIN05-002: Records management – the 20-year rule

DIN 2018DIN05-001: Publication of MoD configuration management a functional framework for acquisition

DIN 2018DIN06-007: Contracting commercial diving services

DIN 2018DIN06-006: Radioactive substances annual holdings return for year ending December 2017

DIN 2018DIN06-005: New

regulations introduced to implement the EU basic safety standards directive 2013/59/Euratom

DIN 2018DIN06-004: Phase down of fluorinated greenhouse gases

DIN 2018DIN06-003: Ionising radiation regulations 2017

DIN 2018DIN06-002: Publication of DSA02 DLSR movement and transport safety regulations and DSA03 DLSR MTSR defence codes of practice

DIN 2018DIN06-001: JSP 800, vol 4b, ed 2, detail of latest amendments

DIN 2017DIN06-027: Emergency pollution response service

DIN 2018DIN07-017: Exercise Arctic Express 2018

DIN 2018DIN07-016: Joining instructions and training requirements for the specialised infantry assessment cadre

DIN 2018DIN07-015: Joint Intelligence Training Group training courses for training year April 1, 2018 until March 31, 2019

DIN 2018DIN07-013: Defence chemical biological radiological and nuclear centre course schedule training year 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN07-012: Joint Information Activities Group training provision 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN07-011: Application instructions for defence anaesthesia simulation course, surgical

training Denmark, medical device decontamination operator and pre-deployment courses

DIN 2018DIN07-006: Unit welfare officer training courses 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN07-005: Unit custody staff course, unit custody staff refresher course and operational detention course

DIN 2018DIN07-004: Highland Express

DIN 2018DIN07-003: Refund of farrier professional body fees

DIN 2018DIN07-002: Temporary landing zone safety officer course dates 2018

DIN 2018DIN07-001: Core recovery events for wounded, injured and sick Service personnel

DIN 2017DIN07-140: Units wishing to conduct training/trials/exercises/sport in Cyprus

DIN 2018DIN08-001: Claims for loss of, or damage to, personal property (regulation claims)

DIN 2017DIN08-006: Joint Services Command and Staff College international student charging regime and allowances

DIN 2017DIN08-005: Insurance arrangements for charging activities (income generation and repayment)

DIN 2017DIN08-004: Non-entitled cash casual meal charge for financial year 2017/18

DIN 2017DIN08-003: Non-entitled

accommodation rates

DIN 2017DIN08-002: Provision of ad hoc clothing including corporate/team identity clothing

DIN 2017DIN08-001: 2016/17 Annual report and accounts – closure of feeders

DIN 2018DIN10-004: Inter-Services Paragliding Championships 2018

DIN 2018DIN10-002: Basic gliding courses at the Army Gliding Club, Upavon

DIN 2018DIN10-001: Army Rifle Association target shooting courses January to December 2018



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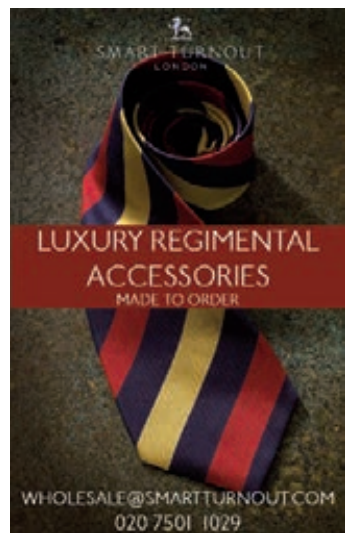


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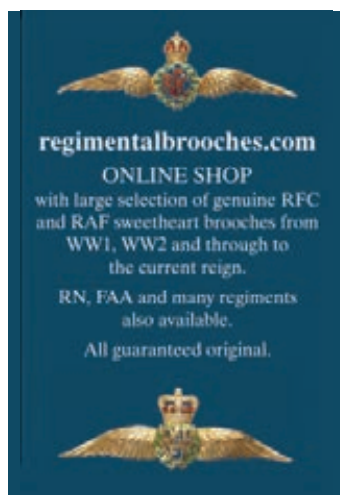
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Llewellyn-Jones, 29 Regt RLC, South Cerney.

16 December 2017

1st Prize (£10,000): Sgt L Ireland, MoD A Block, London. 2nd Prize (£5,000): Cpl D Williams, Army Foundation College, Harrogate. 3rd Prize (£4,000): OCdt A May, 509 STRE, 65 Wks Gp, Chilwell. 4th Prize (£2,000): Cpl J Bennett, JSSU (Ch), Cheltenham. 5th Prize (£1,000): Sgt M Farnan, 1 Rifles, Chepstow. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): Capt L Richardson, HQ SG SMG, Lichfield; Sgt P Carr, RMAS, Camberley; CSgt B Martin, B Coy, 1 SG, Aldershot; SSgt A Philpotts, 11 Signal Regt, DSCIS, Blandford Forum; Name withheld, RAF St Athan, Vale of Glamorgan; Bdr D Hyde, A Bty, 1 RHA, Tidworth; Maj I Thomas ICSCM, Defence Academy, Shrivenham; LCpl J Cuffe, 14 Signal Regt (EW), Haverfordwest; Sig A Gurung, 217 Sqn, 22 Signal Regt, Beaconside; Lt A Rolfe, 95 Sqn, 9 Regt RLC, Chippenham; Pte M Bates, 91 Sqn, 27 Regt RLC, Aldershot; Rfn L Bunting, A Coy, 5 Rifles, Salisbury; Pte J Simons, 3 RSME Regt, Camberley; Maj R Willcocks, MTMC, Chilwell; SSgt T Hannaford, HQ 29 EOD & Search Gp, Saffron Walden.

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30 December 2017

1st Prize (£10,000): LCpl M Pawson, 68 Sqn, 7 TLR RLC, Cottesmore. 2nd Prize (£5,000): LCpl S Donkin, 3 AAC Wksp REME, Ipswich. 3rd Prize (£4,000): Gnr J Qeva, 24 Bty, 14 Regt RA, Salisbury. 4th Prize (£2,000): SSgt A Maguire, 212 Fd Hosp, Sheffield. 5th Prize (£1,000): Capt N Aitken, 7 Regt RLC LAD REME, Cottesmore. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): SSgt A Gartshore, 421 Sqn, 11 EOD Regt RLC, Didcot; Capt R Maynard, 7 Para RHA, Colchester; SSgt W Vasey, QEMHC, DPHC Wessex, Tidworth; SSgt A Biggin, 4 RMP, Aldershot; Cpl D Swain, Egypt Sqn, RTR, Tidworth; Sgt D Roche, 256 Sqn, 30 Signal Regt LAD, Nuneaton; Cpl Mv Koroiyadi, DIO SDT Kenya, BFPO 10; LCpl M Kent, Gibraltar PC Tp RLC, BFPO 52; Sgt K Cameron, 1 Signal Regt, Stafford; Cpl S Lang, MPGS, Bovington, Wareham; Name withheld, HQ Hereford Garrison; Capt D Ward, Sp Coy, 1 RRF, Tidworth; Pte J Evans, 66 Sqn, 9 TLR RLC, Chippenham; Lt Col M Smith, HQ ARTD, Pewsey; Maj S Ferguson, SVC Adviser, Islamabad, BFPO 747.



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★★★★★ **Maximum support air control
DeltaPad sports bra, Anita**

THE thing I like most about this is the stylish design, which is something you don't typically see in a sports bra that provides a good level of support. For that reason, I mainly used it during high intensity sessions. The bra also has a foam cup that doubles up as protection for activities such as battle PT. The material is a mesh-like fabric which reduces the sweat build-up that can be particularly uncomfortable. This bra is the perfect all-rounder for PT sessions in the day job or workouts in your spare time.

★★★★★ **Thermal hoodie, ACAI Activewear**

DURING the winter months I wear a second layer over my training top to stay warm throughout, especially during cool downs after big sessions, so this hoodie was a welcome addition to my kit. The sleeves easily slide up if you get too hot and there are two zip pockets either side for storage of keys, phones and other items. This also acts as a great general wear garment, such as to and from the gym, as it boasts a relaxed look and is extremely comfortable.

★★★★★ **Ironman compression leggings,
ACAI Activewear**

THESE tights double up as workout clothing and a compression piece to aid recovery. They are lightweight and boast a simple plain black design so they could also be worn as part of your PT kit. My favourite part is the pocket on the right leg, which is really useful for storing things on long runs outside of camp. It is made from the same material as the leggings and that means there is limited movement of items. The garment is also seam free to reduce chaffage on the skin and that is something I found most useful while clocking up the winter miles on Salisbury Plain.

➤ IF Amazon's bestseller lists are anything to go by, military fiction is a lucrative business.

The likes of Andy McNab, Chris Ryan and Lee Child have earned themselves a loyal fan base with tales of modern-day derring-do, but now a newcomer to the genre is hoping for a slice of the action.

Once a Pilgrim is the debut novel by former paratrooper and elite soldier James Deegan.

With 22 years in the Army and tours of Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan – not to mention a Military Cross – to his name, the retired regimental sergeant major certainly has the pedigree to back up his words.

Talking to *Soldier* shortly before

the book launch he was confident his experiences would lend the story a dose of realism.

"I think it's as authentic as you'll get," he told *Soldier*.

"Some thrillers are completely implausible but I want readers to be wondering 'how real is this?'"

"Actually, when the book went to the MoD [any title on military matters must be cleared by the department prior to publication] they queried whether it was all fictional, so I suppose that was a good sign."

The plot follows Special Forces veteran John Carr, a steely-eyed killer and ladies' man, whose murky past in Belfast comes back to haunt him.



BOOKS



When a police enquiry into historic allegations leads to his address being leaked to his old enemies, he must take matters into his own hands to protect his family.

"The legal investigations into British troops who served in Northern Ireland is prominent in the papers so I thought it would make an interesting story," explained Deegan.

"With Carr I tried to create a character who is human – he's fallible.

"He's not a crook or a criminal but if you cross him he won't hesitate to do whatever it takes."

Having left the Army in 2007, Deegan – not his real name – was originally approached to write his autobiography, however he was keen to avoid the McNab-style fame that would bring.

Now 51, he works for a major international security company, but looks back fondly on Service life.

"I miss the camaraderie and being part of something special – you don't get the same esprit de corps in the business world.

"I don't miss what I would have been doing had I stayed on as a late-entry officer, though" he said.

"I had a good run for my money but it was time to leave."

With a sequel in the pipeline it seems Deegan's third career as an author is a viable prospect.

Billed – fairly accurately it transpires – as a literary version of *Patriot Games* meets *Taken*, *Once a Pilgrim* rattles along at breakneck speed.

It assumes a certain level of military knowledge and so avoids talking down to the reader or getting bogged down in lengthy descriptions of tactics or kit.

If you like your fiction fast-paced, with plenty of violence and sex thrown into the mix, then you're onto a winner with this offering. ■

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, SOLDIER

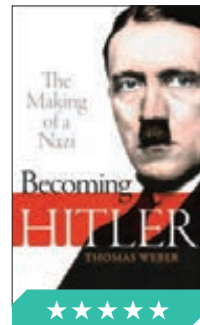
VERDICT:

A heart-pounding military yarn, with the ring of truth

★★★★★



BOOK RELEASES



Becoming Hitler
by Thomas Weber

A HEAVYWEIGHT book in every sense, this title explains clearly how Hitler evolved to become a

manipulative and cunning political operator whose narcissism and desire to stand out drove him to expound ever more extreme ideas. The final paragraph is a warning we should all note: "Whether one day there will be a new age of tyrants will not only depend on our vigilance against future Hitlers... it will be determined by our willingness to protect and mend the fabric of liberal democracy, of our own age of globalisation before conditions become such that demagogues of the worst kind will flourish."

Mark Hainge, ex-RE



He Was No Coward
by Janet Booth and James White

BRITISH Army military executions during the Great War remain a contentious topic

almost a century after the Armistice in 1918. This book is in effect a case study of Harry Farr, a North London soldier who served in 2nd Battalion, The West Yorkshire Regiment and was shot for cowardice in 1916. The story is a personal account of his descendants' efforts to ascertain the facts and their subsequent campaign to secure his exoneration. As such it offers an insight into a thorny subject and the events that led to a pardon for the majority of the 306 Servicemen who were executed.

Mike Peters, ex-AAC



PICK OF THE MONTH:

LAST FLAG FLYING

Cranston and Carell embark on bittersweet road trip

> A GRIEVING father seeks out his old Vietnam buddies to help him bury his son killed in action in Iraq.

That's the premise behind **Richard Linklater's** low-key but thoughtful drama, *Last Flag Flying*.

Unassuming family man and former Navy medic, Larry "Doc" Shepherd (**Steve Carell** – *The Office*, *Foxcatcher*), has lost his wife and only child in the space of a year.

Thirty years since he last saw his comrades Sal Nealon (**Bryan Cranston** – *Breaking Bad*, *Malcolm in the Middle*) and Richard Mueller (**Laurence Fishburne** – *The Matrix*, *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*) he looks them up and asks them to accompany him to Arlington Cemetery for the funeral.

At the repatriation Doc learns that the circumstances of his son's death were less glorious than the authorities first claimed, so he decides to forego a military burial and take the casket back home to New Hampshire.

The three veterans embark on a

VERDICT:

An understated but touching drama about the ripples caused by war

★★★★★



road trip up the East Coast, reminiscing along the way about their wartime experiences, and how their guilt over an incident towards the end of their tour shaped their lives.

Cranston is in typically good form as impulsive alcoholic, Sal, while Fishburne's character Mueller has found God and become a somewhat humourless preacher.

The two struggle to reconnect and have very different ideas about how to best help the unfortunate Doc, portrayed movingly by Carell, who combines his usual air of meek haplessness with a sense of quietly contained anguish.

Despite the melancholy vibe, it's not all downbeat and there are some genuine moments of comedy (mainly delivered by Cranston) as the three friends rediscover common ground.

This is a bit of a strange film in that not much actually happens – even though the running time is more than two hours.

But the protagonists' reflections raise some interesting questions about laying the ghosts of the past to rest, comradeship and the nature of grief.

There are a few annoying clichés of the American military variety thrown in but on the whole it avoids mawkishness and moralising.

Last Flag Flying stops short of being wildly entertaining – it's more of a slow burner. However, thanks to its cast there are some memorable moments that should stick with viewers after the credits have rolled. ■

REVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*



Flashpoint Trieste
by Christian Jennings

THIS book examines the city of Trieste at the end of the Second World War and the beginning of

the Cold War. Due to its geographical location on the borders of Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia the city was fought over by advancing Russian forces, communist partisans, and the Allies. The title shows the lives of 12 different men and women from varied backgrounds and nationalities during this period. It is written in a journalistic style and is very readable and highly informative as well as being full of historical detail with a good range of images and mapping. Fully recommended.

Robert Shaw, ex-RLC



Malcolm MacPhail's Great War
by Darrell Duthie

THE concept of trench warfare and the accompanying mud during the First World War

is a prominent theme in this very readable work of "faction". Malcolm MacPhail is a Canadian intelligence officer who finds himself extracted from his headquarters location and plunged into the stalemate of the Western Front. There his disdain for the senior officers committing many thousands of young men to their certain demise in and around Ypres does him no favours. The friction between HQ politics and the front line resonates throughout this tale. All in all, it is an enjoyable read.

Sqn Ldr Paul Merry, RAF

DVD/DIGITAL RELEASES



Batman: Gotham by Gaslight Out now

WITH an animated Jack the Ripper roaming Victorian Gotham City, who can save the pseudo-cockney street walkers? Batman – obviously. And with Alfred and his band of cheeky ruffians, plus all the other main characters – Harvey Dent, Commissioner Gordon et al – what is there not to like? The answer is everything. There is no reason to watch this truly awful offering. Save your money and spend your time doing absolutely anything else.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



Battle of Algiers Out now

THIS restored masterpiece from director **Gillo Pontecorvo** has lost none of its impact five decades after it was first released. A gritty snapshot of the insurgency in French occupied Algeria during the 1950s, it pulls no punches in laying bare the brutality that unfolded in the postcolonial period following the Second World War. This 4K restoration features a host of worthwhile extras, including interviews with former insurgents. Well shot, authentic and balanced, the *Battle of Algiers* remains one of the great movies of world cinema.

Cliff Caswell, Soldier

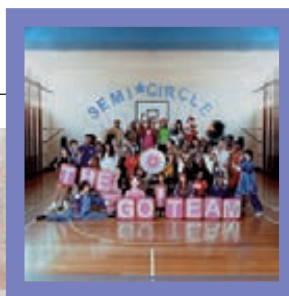


The Man with the Iron Heart Out now

BASED on the brilliant novel *HHH* by **Laurent Binet**, *The Man with the Iron Heart* stars **Jason Clarke**, **Rosamund Pike** and *Boardwalk Empire*'s **Stephen Graham**. The film recounts the real life Operation Anthropoid, the audacious mission to kill Reinhard Heydrich. Having seen other movies, and read books about Operation Anthropoid, I particularly enjoyed the character study of Heydrich and his family life. I'd highly recommend this to anyone with an interest in Second World War operations.

Cpl Adam Jackson, Para

MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH:

MARCHING TO A TUNE

Optimism washes over Brighton collective's fifth studio effort

➤ SINCE bursting onto the scene with energy-driven debut offering *Thunder, Lightning, Strike* Brighton-based outfit **The Go! Team** have become famed for their big sound and big tunes.

So when frontman **Ian Parton** effectively disbanded the group to forge his own path alongside a collective of Soundcloud singers in 2015, it seemed as though a change in direction was afoot.

The result – indie-inspired offering *The Scene Between* – boasted a stripped back, more tranquil feel that was positively received but now, three years later, a certain degree of familiarity has returned.

Semicircle is packed with trademark hip-hop beats, guitars, cheerleader-esque chants and samples, while also incorporating the multi-instrumental approach of a full marching band.

"I like the swing and toughness

of marching bands, the physicality of feeling a beater walloping a bass drum," Parton explained.

"But I wanted to reclaim them from patriotic or sporty associations. That was the kick-off for this record."

The artist also crossed the pond to work with the **Detroit Youth Choir** as part of his quest for vocal support.

He added: "I've always had a thing for gang vocals and group singing, particularly the roughness of community choirs.

"Normally they might be singing show tunes but I like the idea of getting people to do something they wouldn't normally do.

VERDICT:

The Go! Team doing what they do best

★★★★★

MUSIC RELEASES



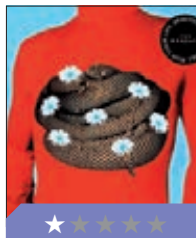
★★★★★

Unleash the Love

by Mike Love

THIS is the latest release from legendary Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Grammy winner and co-founder of **The Beach Boys**, Mike Love. As a double album it features 13 brand new tracks as well as 12 re-recordings of his band's classic numbers, including *California Girls*, *Help Me Rhonda* and *Good Vibrations*. The original material ranges from rock and gospel to R 'n' B and pop and celebrates the singer's connection to the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his journey to find personal love and peace. It all sounds very deep and a bit hippy, but with a legend like Mike Love pulling the strings you just know it's going to be a belter. The deep and meaningful message works well and the anthems from the past seal the deal.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



★★★★★

Beautiful People Will Ruin Your Life

by The Wombats

WITH the modern British indie rock box bursting at the seams, what certainly isn't needed is another dreary album from a band ten years past their best and with less personality than **Liam Gallagher's** eyebrow. But that's what we have here. *Single Lemon to a Knife Fight* could be an ode to the group themselves, while the next best thing – *I Only Wear Black* – has more than a hint of a student union anthem. They even attempt a psychedelic nod to **The Beatles'** songs of the late 60s on *Dip You in Honey* but it's a move that falls flat. Essentially, this album is little more than a total waste of time and you'll be advised to steer clear.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

"I like making things happen that wouldn't otherwise happen. It's always a gamble but in this case it paid off."

The album starts in characteristic style with *May Day*, where Morse code beats and repetitive spelling of the track's name underpin an almost Motown vibe.

Parton's admiration for the marching band comes to the fore on standout offering *Semicircle Song*, which acts an optimistic, youthful breath of fresh air.

More familiarity is found on *She's Got Guns*, where the returning **Ninja** resumes rapping responsibilities, while *All the Way Live* is another high point that bears more than a passing

resemblance to the group's earlier sound.

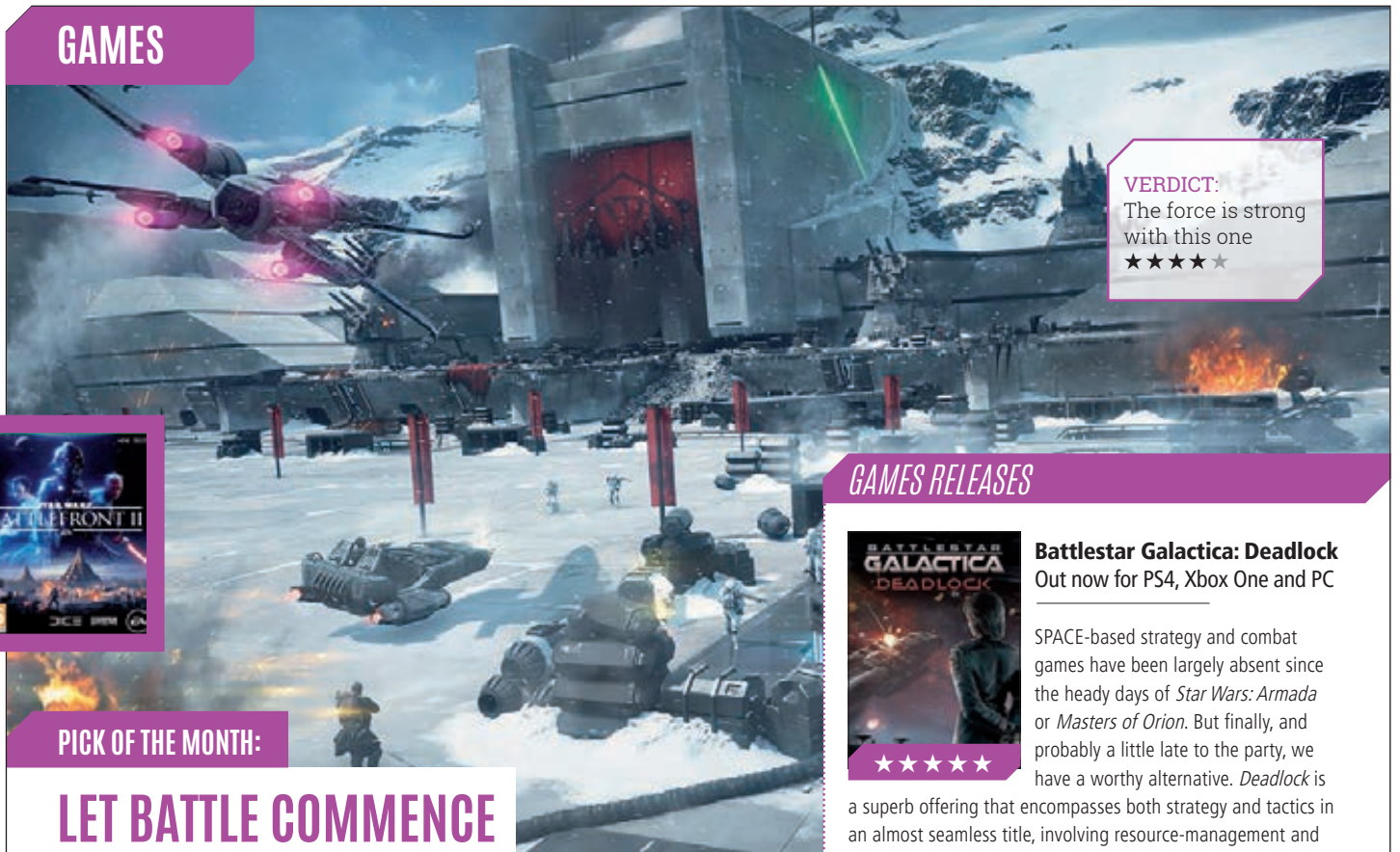
Although there is plenty to enjoy there are some lows as well, particularly in tiresome instrumentals *Chico's Radical Decade* and *Tangerine/Satsuma/Clementine* that add little to the flow of the record.

It also seems as if the intensity levels have dipped slightly, meaning it never really hits full gear.

That said *Semicircle* is still a decent offering and is the perfect tonic for anyone seeking some light and joy as the winter grind continues. ■

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, SOLDIER

GAMES



VERDICT:
The force is strong with this one
★★★★★



PICK OF THE MONTH:

LET BATTLE COMMENCE

Intergalactic adventures await in Star Wars spin-off

▶ THE previous *Star Wars Battlefront* game was hugely popular and it is easy to see why – blasters, lightsabers and the ability to use the Force were all very appealing.

But of course the main draw was always the multiplayer option as the campaign, if you can call it that, was largely absent.

The follow-up is equally attractive and exciting. However, it boasts a far bigger fictional canvas this time – stretching from prequels such as *The Phantom Menace* and *Attack of the Clones* to the more recent *Force Awakens*. In addition there is also a full campaign.

Unusually, the viewpoint is from the Empire, which I'll admit is a nice diversion from the usual Rebel perspective. But I won't spoil the outcome here.

The multiplayer needs to be on point and for the most part it is. Although the controversy of the loot boxes – which essentially enabled players to pay to win – was a sore spot for the release, EA have now more or less ironed out the creases.

Having said that, the reward and promotion system in *Battlefront 2* is not as straightforward as the first title and seems to provide additional awards and perks at a snail's pace when you first start out, although it does pick up.

The gameplay is almost identical to its predecessor so it's fairly smooth and very entertaining. And visually it is stunning. Vast planets provide jaw-dropping backdrops, as do the star-studded ones when taking to the vacuum of space in a Tie-fighter or X-Wing.

In essence *Star Wars Battlefront 2* is your typical shooter with your typical rewards and promotions but it happens to be packaged in one of the most popular and successful film franchises of all time.

While the game can be frustrating and maddening at times it will certainly do a good job of bringing an interactive universe into your living room.

And this often means you'll overlook some of the more frustrating elements in favour of hurtling around Starkiller Base with a lightsaber in hand. ■

REVIEW: DAVID MCDUGALL, CIVVY

GAMES RELEASES



Battlestar Galactica: Deadlock

Out now for PS4, Xbox One and PC

SPACE-based strategy and combat games have been largely absent since the heady days of *Star Wars: Armada* or *Masters of Orion*. But finally, and probably a little late to the party, we have a worthy alternative. *Deadlock* is a superb offering that encompasses both strategy and tactics in an almost seamless title, involving resource-management and a superb turn-based combat system that encourages forward thinking, organisation and sometimes a little daring. Combat revolves around setting your movement and orders before each turn and then seeing them play out. It's the full-on armchair general experience as you issue out orders and direction, trying to anticipate your opponent and then seeing how it plays out, turn by turn – all the way from darting swarms of fighters to the imposing and powerful capital ships. And the bonus? It's wonderfully wrapped in a *Battlestar Galactica* suit.

David McDougall, civvy



Spintires: MudRunner

Out now for PS4, Xbox One and PC

THOUGH it might boast a roster of unusual vehicles, *Spintires* isn't for those seeking a *Mad Max*-like experience involving smashing into opponents or something akin to *Forza Horizon*, where you race to the finish. No, this is a game firmly focused on technical perfection. Well, if you're keen to traverse a muddy track, that is. The main aim is to complete multiple tasks, all of which involve utilising numerous vehicles to carry or tow a load to a defined destination along routes that are more than just unsuitable for anything that doesn't have four-wheel drive. This isn't rallying, this is getting from A to B without getting stuck. It's about knowing the limits of your machine and using that to get through terrain that wouldn't be out of place in the Somme. This game is intriguing and addictive but probably not for everyone.

David McDougall, civvy

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SOLDIER SPORT



GOING FOR GOLD >>

PISTOL shooter Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) is among a handful of Army athletes to be selected for the Commonwealth Games. Read more about their hopes for the Gold Coast showpiece on pages 76-77...



AIMING FOR SUCCESS

ARCHERS LAUNCH RECRUITING CAMPAIGN AS SPORT LOOKS FOR NEW DIRECTION IN 2018

ARMY archers are setting their sights on an intake of new talent as they look to expand their set-up for the 2018 campaign.

Availability issues, coupled with the logistical challenge of having members scattered across the country, saw the soldiers struggle for consistency last year and those charged with running the Service sport are adopting a fresh outlook as they seek an upturn in fortunes.

While the immediate focus is on attracting newcomers to the fold, they are also considering plans to create regional bases so sharpshooters can meet and train together ahead of the various competitions that form the basis of hectic indoor and outdoor seasons.

"The main event we aim for is the national championships, which fall in early December," WO1 Jason McCoubrey (AGC (RMP), pictured left), Army team captain and outgoing secretary, told *SoldierSport*.

"But a lack of preparation and training beforehand really cost us last year.

"We rarely get together as a full squad as we have people posted right across the UK. When it comes to organising a weekend of shooting, and when everyone is available, it proves to be a difficult task.

"So we are looking at different ways of doing things and want to create a main hub in Aldershot but it all comes down to kit – whoever has the equipment is where we have to go.

"We need to have interested people based in various Army locations to make the idea of regional centres work."

Archery has yet to receive full sporting status from the Army Sport Control Board, which means it lacks the funding afforded to other disciplines within the Service.

However, the organisation currently has around 30 archers on its books and McCoubrey was quick to stress that athletes of all abilities are more than welcome.

Novices are advised to contact their local clubs and sign up for taster sessions before developing their skills in the Army fold.

The senior NCO added: "They may not think they are good enough to make the squad but if they can pick up a bow and shoot we are happy for them to come along.

"We can then teach them from there.

"It all comes down to confidence – once they have that in place they can start to build scores.

"Most archery clubs will have equipment for beginners to use.

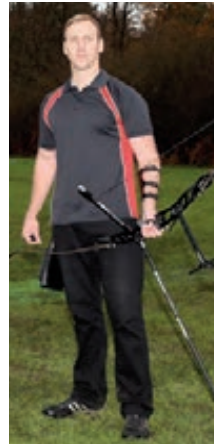
"We need to get more soldiers into those local clubs, which is where they'll build the confidence levels needed for our bigger contests.

"But every competition also has a novice section so you don't need to be an amazing shot to get involved."

Another key fixture on the calendar is the Army Outdoor Championships in June, with the Inter-Services following from there.

Honours have been spread among the three Services in recent times and, after a brief spell of Army dominance, the Royal Air Force are now the team to beat.

One of those hoping to



"IF THEY CAN PICK UP A BOW AND SHOOT WE ARE HAPPY FOR THEM TO COME ALONG"

feature prominently in both competitions as 2018 progresses is Sgt Craig Cherrie (RLC, pictured left).

The Aldershot-based chef has a background in football and contact sports but after completing a beginners course at his local club, Farnham Archers, in March last year he was immediately hooked on the pursuit.

"I progressed quickly through the different distances and by the time I reached 60 metres I had become quite good," the soldier explained.

"I then reached out to the Army team and competed at the indoor championships in October, where I finished in third place.

"I was really chuffed with that result.

"We need to push the message out there and get more people involved.

"It is a brilliant organisation. There are some really good archers of all ages; there are wounded veterans and guys who have competed at the Invictus Games as well, so there is a great mix.

"As soon as I did that first course I knew this was the direction I wanted to go in.

"I have got 15 years left in the Service so I know I can progress within the association."

Personnel looking to get involved in the sport should visit the Archery GB website (www.archerygb.org) for more information on local clubs, beginners courses and basic kit and equipment. ■



NUMBERS ON THE UP

THE Army Individual Squash Championships in Winchester served to highlight the sport's growth among the ranks.

The competition attracted 120 entries across the various categories, with more than 250 matches played in the space of three days.

"Last year we had around 150 players involved, so we are a little down on that, but we are doing much better compared to the seasons before," explained Lt Col Yvette Ashman (AGC (SPS)), chairman of the Army Squash and Rackets Association.

"We have especially seen a lot of new faces in the novice category, where people who do not necessarily play at corps or Army level are coming along to have a go.

"We need to get new blood in. Four or five years ago the ladies made a real effort to grow their team and on the back of that they have been very successful.

"That has made the other squads open their eyes."

Army and Armed Forces number one Capt Sam Miller (RA) claimed the men's title, with Maj Elaine Radcliffe (RAMC) taking the women's crown.



PARTNERS IN PROGRESS



"THIS HAS BEEN A SEMINAL YEAR FOR US"

THE Army squash set-up is targeting significant progress in the coming years after agreeing a formal relationship with England's national governing body.

Signed under the Armed Forces Covenant, the deal will see ten players embark on a year-long programme of bespoke training and mentoring with some of the top coaches in the country.

In return, the Service will deliver leadership and team building courses for the finest academy prospects in the England Squash system.

"The aim of the partnership is to increase participation and develop more talent for the Army," Lt Col Yvette Ashman (AGC (SPS)), chairman of the Army Squash and Rackets Association, told *SoldierSport*.

"It will not necessarily be our top players who take part but is aimed more at those with the potential to go on and play for one of our four representative teams in the future.

"It is about improving so we can have long-term success at elite level."

The application window closes later this month and

the training cycle for the ten successful candidates will start in May.

The initiative is among a raft of changes that have been introduced to encourage a growth in the sport.

With participation on the rise there is now an equal focus on the men's and women's senior squads, as well as the masters and under-25s.

"It used to be all about the men's team," explained Maj Gen Tyrone Urch, the organisation's president. "But over the past couple of years there has been a focus on raising the standard of all four groups.

"On our recent tour to San Francisco we had two or three players from each team and that meant the juniors could learn from the seniors and the men from the women. It worked really well.

"This has been a seminal year for us. Having that understanding with England Squash means we will get specialist training of the highest standard.

"I can't think of many Army sports that have such a close relationship with a national governing body." ■



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Pictures: Mike Varey, Elite Pix

SOLDIERS TARGET PODIUM PUSH

THE Army will have two representatives on the bobsleigh track at this month's Winter Olympics after LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) and Pte Nick Gleeson (Para) were selected for Team GB.

Pilot Deen will lead one of two four-man crews at the Pyeongchang showpiece in what will be his second Games campaign and the soldier is being tipped as an outside medal bet in some quarters.

He claimed a silver medal at the World Cup event in the Canadian resort of Whistler in December and the squad as a whole have secured a further six top-ten finishes in the competition this season.

"I'm overwhelmed," Deen (pictured) told *SoldierSport* after the line-up was confirmed.

"Last time I was a little like

a rabbit in the headlights just taking it all in but this time we are going there to compete.

"We've been working on a lot of combinations to test our equipment and set-ups. There have been some mixed results but we feel we are ready to push for a medal.

"We are racing against the same people we have raced throughout the year and we know we can beat them.

"Now we face them at a neutral venue, which will really help us.

"The more runs you have down a track the more you find out how to tackle it.

"The Germans, on a home track, will find half a second on you but there won't be that advantage now."

Brakeman Gleeson's call comes after just two years in



"WE ARE READY TO PUSH FOR A MEDAL"

the Team GB fold.

He was recommended to the set-up by his coach at 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment and is still coming to terms with his inclusion.

"It is unreal," the Serviceman told *SoldierSport*.

"When I first saw the guys who are at world-class performance level I thought 'I can never do that', but here I am going to the Olympics.

"I'm one of the newest members of the squad and this is only my second season with Team GB.

"I'm still letting it all sink in but when we get out there we would love to finish on the podium. We have every possibility of winning a medal, there is nothing holding us back and we are going to give it our best shot." ■

LIGHTFOOT LEADS THE WAY

Pictures: Dominic King



TELEMARK'S TEST

THE slopes of Pralognan-la-Vanoise in France formed the backdrop for the annual Army Telemark Skiing Championships.

Around 80 soldiers took to the piste for the showdown, which began with five days of familiarisation training and tuition before progressing to the racing stages.

With icy conditions making life difficult for the athletes it was OCdt Ben Emsley (Bristol UOTC) and OCdt Ellie Thorn (Exeter UOTC) who showed the greatest consistency in the sprint and classic disciplines to emerge as the Service's overall male and female champions.

"We had a great couple of weeks that culminated with some fantastic racing," said Brig Suzanne Anderson, chair of Army Telemark. "This is a sport that is inclusive for all skiers.

"Seeing those who have had little previous experience developing to the stage where they are tackling the different aspects of Telemark and actually racing is really satisfying."

Anyone interested in getting involved should visit www.awsa.org.uk/telemark or email telemark@awsa.org.uk



BIATHLON star Sgt Amanda Lightfoot (AGC (SPS)) will make her Winter Olympic return this month after being named as Team GB's sole representative in the sport.

The soldier made her debut at the 2014 Games in Sochi – just six years after taking up the sport – and finished 71st in the 15-kilometre individual event and 75th in the 7.5-kilometre sprint.

But with further experience to her name the 30-year-old is expected to improve on her scores this time and after claiming 32nd spot in the 15-kilometre individual race at the 2017 World Championships she is well placed to succeed on the snow.

"It's absolutely amazing to be selected," Lightfoot told *SoldierSport*.

"It has been a roller coaster journey over the past four years so it is really nice to pick up my kit and officially be part of Team GB.

"The qualifying races ran up until January 21 so it has been a long wait but I'm really chuffed.

"I'm in a much better place than I was going into the last Games.

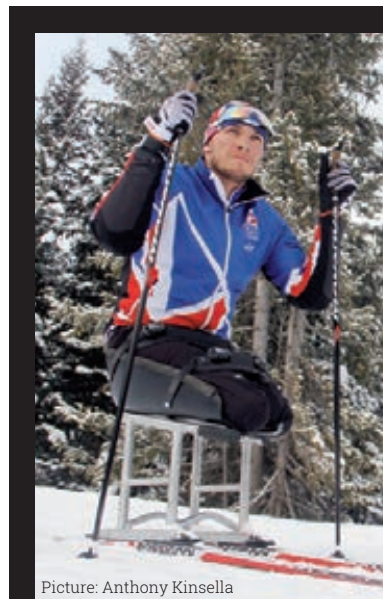
"I've got a better coaching system and training programme and have support in areas such as nutrition and psychology.

"Now it is all about doing the job on the range and hitting the targets and correct loop times. Small goals contribute to the bigger picture." ■



Picture: Marcel Laponder

"I'M IN A MUCH BETTER PLACE THAN I WAS GOING INTO THE LAST GAMES"



Picture: Anthony Kinsella

● A HOST of wounded veterans are vying for places at the Winter Paralympics in Pyeongchang, which get under way on March 8.

Invictus Games star Scott Meenagh (pictured), who served in 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, is hoping to compete in the Nordic skiing disciplines but faces competition from fellow ex-soldiers Steve Arnold and Terry Aherns.

Owen Pick, formerly of 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, is in contention for the snowboarding squad, while Capt Jen Kehoe (RE) could potentially be named as a guide for the visually impaired ski team.

Team GB will finalise their line-up later this month.



ARMY'S ELITE GEARED FOR AUSTRALIAN QUEST

BOXING star Cpl Alanna Nihell (RLC) is eyeing a golden return from Australia's Gold Coast following her inclusion in the Northern Ireland squad for the Commonwealth Games.

The Army team captain won a bronze medal at the Glasgow Games of 2014 and is now aiming to top the podium after a sublime run of 17 victories from 21 bouts over the past two seasons.

Such impressive form made the soldier a certainty for selection but the 32-year-old was taking nothing for granted ahead of the official announcement in early January.

As well as earning her place in a field of 13 boxers she was handed the extra bonus of being named women's team captain.

"I was confident of getting a spot as I have been performing well," Nihell told *SoldierSport*.

"I've fought against the number two and three in the world and

have held my own even though I lost. There was no real difference between us and I had forgotten how good I can be.

"The captaincy is a real honour. I've got the knowledge and experience which means the other girls look up to me. It is about leading by example and this is the pinnacle of my career."

Nihell is now based at the squad's Belfast camp and will head down under for three weeks of training and acclimatisation before the showpiece starts on April 4.

The athlete stepped up to 64kg after the last Games but has returned to her original weight for her latest medal bid.

"I feel a lot better this time round," she explained. "I trained hard over the summer and now have a nutritionist on board. Being more educated helps me hold the weight and I feel in great shape."

If Nihell is to realise her dream



"MY GOAL IS TO WIN THAT GOLD MEDAL"

of winning gold she faces a potential clash with defending champion and home favourite Shelly Watts, a boxer who beat her at the semi-final stage four years ago.

"I'm going over to her country and there's a chance we'll have to fight in her backyard," the Servicewoman added.

"I'm confident I can go there and make the final – my goal is to win that gold medal. I'll be disappointed if I don't as I believe I have a great opportunity this time.

"This is my second Games and the pressure is on me but that is something I thrive on, it brings out the best in me."

Northern Ireland have also called upon the marksmanship skills of Cpl Stuart Hill (R Irish).

The shooter will compete in the small-bore rifle three position and prone events but only found out about his inclusion when the final team

announcement was made on Facebook at the beginning of last month.

"Nobody knew who would be picked," Hill told *SoldierSport*. "I had hit the qualifying scores but it was a case of wait and see.

"I was quite shocked when I saw my name on the list. I didn't want to get my hopes up but it was a great confidence boost to see the hard work paying off.

"Now it is all about focusing on the improvements I need to make ahead of the Games."

The soldier will embark on a period of full-time training with his coach and has camps planned across the country as well as in Germany.

"I have set myself some targets and now I have to sit down with my coach and work out a way of achieving those," he added.

"I've got a few ideas but I want to keep things quiet at this stage.

"We have made some changes to my gun and firing position and things have been going well in training. Hopefully I can reproduce that in the matches."

Hill only started firing the small-bore rifle in June 2015 but believes his rapid elevation to the standard needed for the Commonwealth Games highlights the sporting prowess that exists within the Service.

He said: "This will be a great experience for me and is something to be proud of.

"It is also good news for the Army as it shows there is talent within the ranks. If soldiers are given a chance to shine they will do just that." ■



GAMES IN NUMBERS

LENGTH IN DAYS OF THE GAMES - WHICH RUN FROM APRIL 4 TO 15

12

SPORTS ON THE ROSTER

23

MEDALS WON BY BOXERS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND AT THE 2014 GAMES

9

NUMBER OF TIMES CPL STUART HILL HIT THE QUALIFYING SCORE AHEAD OF BEING NAMED IN THE TEAM

2



HOT SHOT'S NATIONAL CALL

PISTOL shooter Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) has seen his remarkable rise in the sport rewarded with a place in England's Commonwealth Games team.

The Army ace only started shooting competitively last year but after just six weeks of full-time training he caught the eye by reaching the country's minimum consideration score.

Gowin's form progressed from there and he went on to secure fourth place in the rapid-fire pistol at the Commonwealth Shooting Federation Championships – the test event ahead of April's Gold Coast showpiece.

The achievement left the national selectors with little option but to call upon his services for the Games.

"I trained hard beforehand but was still expecting to struggle," Gowin told *SoldierSport*. "Some of the best shots in the world were out there.

"Obviously, I was happy

with the result and I loved having the chance to perform in front of a big crowd, there was a great atmosphere.

"The coaches were saying it was shame I was not going to the Commonwealth Games.

"Initially I was named as first reserve but I eventually got an email to confirm I was in the team.

"It was overwhelming."

The soldier has refused to set any targets ahead of his first shot and will be opting for a considered approach on the day.

"I'm just going to stay cool and shoot like I normally do," he explained.

"If that happens it will be good enough for me.

"I'm not expecting to come away with anything but a good performance would definitely be nice."

Gowin will then target a World Cup place with a view to qualifying for the World Championships in September. His long-term goal is the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. ■



GAME BRIEF

DATE: January 17, 2018
COMPETITION: Army v Cambridge University – rugby union friendly
VENUE: Grange Road Stadium, Cambridge

ARMY

Titchard-Jones 1	Austin 2	Smith 3
Bean 4	Smith 5	
Cross 6	Taura 8	Dawson 7
Evans 9	Dixon (c) 10	
Leathem 12	Davetanivalu 13	
Edwards 11	Davies 15	Rokoduguni 14

SUBS: Brown, Dowding, Gill, Parkins, Miller, Vunivesilevu, Nacavamuto, Wilson

COACH'S COMMENTS:

"WE HAD A STRONG PACK AND THEY SET THE PLATFORM FOR OUR BACKS. WE SCORED SOME DAZZLING TRIES - IT WAS A GREAT DISPLAY"



Pictures: Alligin Photography

STUDENTS SWEEP ASIDE

RUGBY UNION FRIENDLY FIXTURE

CAMB UNI

10

ARMY

73



THE Army's rugby union stars made an emphatic start to their 2018 campaign as they demolished the students of Cambridge University in a 73-10 rout.

Sig John Davetanivalu (R Signals), Bdr Pete Austin and LBdr Craig Edwards (both RA) all crossed twice as the ruthless Reds ran in ten tries against their shell-shocked rivals, with the tally being further boosted by a late penalty score.

The boot of Jake Hennessey gave the hosts an early lead but it proved to be the calm before the storm as the soldiers asserted their authority.

Davetanivalu capitalised on the strong running of Austin and Cpl Matt Dawson (Int Corps) to open his account midway through the first half before rounding off a swift cross-field move moments later.

The Army's policy of favouring attacking territory over kickable penalties reaped dividends in the 29th minute as Cpl Lewis Bean (Rifles) crashed over from a line-out and the visitors added two further efforts on the stroke of half-

time through Austin (pictured) and Capt Stu Cross (Yorks).

The onslaught continued after the break as Edwards used his searing pace to touch down in the corner and Austin capped a superb individual display as he darted to the line following a surge from the forwards.

LCpl Chris Leathem (R Irish) rounded off a clinical break to post further points on the hour mark and the centre turned provider soon after as Edwards ran clear on the wing.

Replacement scrum half LBdr Sailasa Vunivesilevu (RA) maintained the Army's stranglehold as he jinked to the line following a prolonged spell of pressure in the Cambridge 22 before a penalty try completed the scoring at the death.

Dawson and Austin formed the spearhead of a dominant Army pack, with both forwards making impressive carries at will. The pace and clinical finishing of the backs will also have pleased head coach Capt Andy Sanger (RE), who was preparing the team for their clash with Oxford University as this issue went to press. ■

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SPORT SHORTS



Injury ends Roko's hopes

RUGBY union ace LCpl Semesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) has been ruled out of England's Six Nations campaign following surgery on a shoulder injury.

The 30-year-old wing was forced from the field during Bath's match with Exeter in early December and was expected to be out for two months.

However, a longer recovery period is now needed and he will miss the entirety of the tournament, which starts on February 3.

Rokoduguni was recalled to the squad for the autumn internationals and impressed as he came off the bench to score in wins over Argentina and Samoa.

The Army will be hoping he returns to fitness in time for this season's Inter-Services campaign, which gets under way against the Royal Air Force on April 11.



Sappers seal final place

DEFENDING champions the Royal Engineers booked their place in this season's Woolwich Cup final with a 3-1 win over the Royal Signals.

The sappers will take on the Adjutant General's Corps – who defeated the Infantry in the other semi-final – in the showpiece fixture on April 18.

In other football news, the Army women saw their hopes of Southern Counties Cup success dashed by a 3-1 loss to Kent.

ARTISTS RAISE THEIR GAME

BRAZILIAN jiu-jitsu continued its upward curve in Army sporting circles at the inaugural Armed Forces, Veterans and Emergency Services Championships in Aldershot.

More than 130 competitors took to the mat for a tough day of martial arts action watched by former UFC star Roger Gracie – one of the most successful jiu-jitsu fighters of recent times.

The Brazilian ace trains a number of Service athletes and has been a keen supporter of the set-up in its formative years.

He said: "The growth in the discipline is great to see, the level is so high."

Among those taking part was blind veteran Robert Long. A former lance bombardier in the Royal Artillery, he was wounded on operations in Afghanistan in 2008.

He tried a number of sports during his recovery but jiu-jitsu was the pursuit he followed to a higher standard. Long recently won the Army Championships against able-bodied rivals.

"I was proud to be a soldier and this is a way for me to get that back," he said. "It's great to compete with these guys." ■



Picture: Cpl Mark Lamer, RLC

"I WAS PROUD TO BE A SOLDIER AND THIS IS A WAY TO GET THAT BACK"



● THE latest Grand Military Gold Cup Day will be staged at Sandown Park on Friday, March 9.

Armed Forces jockeys will compete in two of the six races scheduled for the day, with the remainder featuring some of the country's finest professional talent. Discounted tickets are available for personnel at www.sandown.co.uk by quoting GM2018.

MONTH IN SPORT

February's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services Ski Championships
WHEN: February 3-10
WHERE: Meribel, France
NEED TO KNOW: With

the Army Championships complete the Service's top stars lock horns with their Forces rivals during the highlight of the winter sports season



WHAT: Inter-Services Under-23 Football Championships – Navy v Army
WHEN: February 7
WHERE: Portsmouth
NEED TO KNOW: Back-to-back defeats last season – including a 4-2 home defeat to the Navy – saw the Army's young guns relinquish their title. The Reds will be looking for a positive start in this opening fixture



WHAT: Army women v England Under-20s rugby union
WHEN: February 14
WHERE: Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot
NEED TO KNOW: The

servicewomen have become regular opponents for England's finest young talent and they'll be looking to avenge a 38-15 defeat in 2017

INVICTUS IN NUMBERS

TOP SPEED, IN MILES PER HOUR, OF THE JAGUAR F-TYPE RACING CAR

200

LITRE SUPER CHARGED V8 PETROL ENGINE

5

MEMBERS ON THE TEAM – INCLUDING FOUR FORCES DRIVERS

6

ROUNDS STAGED IN THE 2018 SERIES AT TRACKS SUCH AS BRANDS HATCH AND OULTON PARK

9



Pictures: James Meigh, Holder Racing

INVICTUS HITS THE TRACK

A SELECT group of wounded, injured and sick veterans will compete in the 2018 British GT Championship as part of the newly launched Invictus Games Racing team.

The set-up – which is a collaboration between James Holder, of clothing brand Superdry, and the Invictus Games Foundation – will feature two bespoke Jaguar F-Type SVR racing cars that have been in development for more than a year.

Motorsport fanatic Holder was inspired to launch the project after watching the 2016 Invictus Games in Orlando and believes it will play a vital role in the recovery process.

He said: "This will enable ex-Servicemen and women who have experienced physical or psychological trauma to compete against each other and the rest of the top-level racing field in cars that are tailor-made for them."

The championship will

feature events at some of the UK's most iconic circuits, with the opening round being held at Oulton Park on March 31.

A series of trials were held over the past six months to identify and train four Forces' drivers and the cars have been adjusted to meet their needs.

Among those taking to the track is former soldier Basil Rawlinson. He served in 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder following a tour of Afghanistan. He also suffered with degenerative discs in his back and was discharged from the Army in 2014.

"I am hugely grateful to Invictus Games Racing for giving me this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," the driver said.

"I am looking forward to the thrill of the competition and the opportunity to be part of a tight team – things that were integral to my time in The Parachute Regiment." ■



Interviews: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Peter Davjies



People walking too slowly. I just want to get to where I am going in reasonable time!

Lt George Gillard, Rifles



I tend to brush off the stresses of military life. They can be demanding but I deal with them. Bad driving, on the other hand, really annoys me. People who don't indicate are the worst – they seem to have no idea where they are going.

LCpl Ben Latham, Rifles



People who comment on military issues without any experience annoy me. They speak without having a clue about what we're doing. There seems to be an element of the population that has a skewed perception of reality.

Cpl John MacDaid, Rifles



I think some stress can be good, particularly in training. You want to be able to push the bounds of capability to get results. But you need to manage stress and get a good work-life balance.

Lt Tom Callard, Scots

To be honest, I don't stress about anything. But we should look out for each other. On an operation such as Shader in Iraq you spend six months in a confined space with people and you learn about them – I think I would notice if somebody wasn't themselves.

Rfn Jordan Hobbs, Rifles



On edge

Soldier asked troops what stresses them out in life



You don't have the same freedom in Army life as you do on civvy street – you could look at that as a stress, but some guys need structure and I really like it. I love coming to work because of the routine we have.

Pte Kieran Toman, Scots



I am the adjutant in a Reserve unit and I think it's important to remember the particular stresses that these soldiers can be under. They are very dedicated people who put themselves forward for service. We need to be aware that they have a life outside the Armed Forces, and be alert to any issues that may arise from this.

Capt Toby Hartle, RLC

● Turn to page 22 for stress-busting tips



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“
They learn
a huge
amount
about
themselves
”

The fight for full screw – page 36



Variety begins at home



ONE of the best things about working on *Soldier* is the interaction we get with our readers as we follow them

around the world.

Cataloguing the Army's various operations and training packages for this and future generations is without doubt a huge privilege.

But with so much activity happening across Eastern Europe and the rest of the world (page 8), it is easy to forget how much brilliant stuff is going on back in the UK too.

This month we take a closer look at some of those taskings – from preparations for Wildcat's operational debut (page 32) to the varied work of Northern Ireland's Reserves (page 42) and the mission to mould the next generation of Army leaders (page 36).

As ever, though, Service life is far from perfect. If something is irking you check out page 47 for a lively mix of readers' letters and details of how you can submit a question or comment yourself.

Whether at home or abroad, we hope you enjoy the magazine.

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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Picture: Tim Browne

Sky Sabre missile system unveiled

Rapier replacement to provide major leap in capability

THE Army has been given a first glimpse of the new cutting-edge air defence weapon that will be heading its way in 2020.

Sky Sabre will provide a major uplift in capability for 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery, offering greater range, accuracy and firepower compared with the existing Rapier short-range air defence system that it replaces.

"It represents a real change to how we do our business as ground-based air defenders," Lt Col Chris Coton (RA) told *Soldier*.

"It not only offers us the ability to engage targets beyond visual range, but also to attack multiple platforms at the same time – it really is revolutionary stuff."

A special preview day at Baker Barracks on Thorney Island (pictured above), the home of 16th Regiment, showed Sky Sabre's three main components together for the first time.

The electronic brain is a state-of-the-art battle space management command, control and information system provided by Rafael Advance Defense Systems of Israel.

The Saab Giraffe agile multi-beam radar can detect targets over 100km away, providing accurate real-time information to help guide the new, highly advanced Common Anti-air Modular Missile developed by MBDA.

The launcher is mounted on a Man

SV 8x8 vehicle equipped with eight ready-to-use missiles.

The system is designed to be deployed remotely and reloaded by its crew who can then intercept a wide variety of aerial targets including fixed wing, rotary and cruise missiles.

Personnel can monitor and predict the path of incoming threats and once the weapons are in flight they can be updated and directed on to multiple targets, enhancing the kill probability.

Air Cdre Ian Gale, the senior responsible officer for the introduction of Sky Sabre, commented: "You are seeing the future here, you can't replace like for like in the digital age."

"This will take the Army from short to medium range and is a truly integrated air defence system. It's fast, reliable and trusted."

“
It really is
revolutionary
stuff
”

IN NUMBERS: SKY SABRE

25

Range of the MBDA missile in kilometres

22

The system's radar range in kilometres

46

Years since Rapier began Army service

1020

Speed of the missile in metres per second

SOLDIER

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GLOBAL SITREP



1. BELIZE

PARAS PREPARE

AIRBORNE personnel have converged on Belize for two separate training packages.

Some 200 troops from 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment are carrying out a range of maintenance tasks around Price Barracks and the training areas as part of Exercise Sailfish – the first time the serial has been run for six years.

Meanwhile, soldiers from A Company, 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment became the first to test a new training area in the north of the country.

Exercise Mayan Warrior has seen them take on skills and drills in previously untouched primary jungle (pictured).



2. NORTH CAROLINA

BRAGGING RIGHTS

NEARLY 1,000 personnel will deploy to Fort Bragg later this month to conduct the biggest divisional headquarters training package since the British Army of the Rhine era.

Exercise Warfighter will see 3rd (UK) Division fighting directly under the American 18th Airborne Corps and is the formation's chance to prove its readiness for modern operations.

IN NUMBERS

3,800 miles from Portugal to French Guiana

65 Days, 16 Hours and FOUR minutes time taken to complete the crossing

500 miles further than the more direct route from the Canary Islands to Antigua

2. NORTH CAROLINA

1. BELIZE

3. FRENCH GUIANA

3. FRENCH GUIANA

TRANSATLANTIC TRIUMPH

A ROYAL Engineer completed his last day of service in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, half way through an astonishing world record attempt.

Spr Duncan Roy and his companions set off from Lagos in Portugal in December, aiming to become the fastest team to paddle unsupported from mainland Europe to South America.

But after being forced to stop at Lanzarote and then Cape Verde for repairs, they instead ended up becoming the first team ever to complete the so-called "Trade Winds Two" route from Africa to French Guiana, landing in Cayenne just 28 days later.

Writing on Instagram, Roy – who served with 24 Commando Engineer Regiment – said: "It was an absolute honour to represent the regiment on my Atlantic row."

"It gave me motivation and inspiration every single day."



4. GERMANY

SEND YOUR SNAPS

MEMORIES and photographs from troops who have served in Germany are still being sought for the British Forces Germany legacy project, which will be compiled in a book produced by HQ BFG.

Find out how to participate by visiting www.bfgnet.de





5. NORTH POLE

4. GERMANY

6. CHAD

7. MALAWI

5. NORTH POLE COOL RUNNINGS

A FORMER Army officer is gearing up to take on the world's only long-distance race staged entirely on the frozen sea.

Rob Shenton (ex-REME, pictured below in his Arctic training gear) will tackle the North Pole Marathon next month.

The 45-year-old has already completed the Marathon Des Sables and the Everest Marathon in his quest to run the toughest, highest and coldest foot races on Earth. To help him raise funds for Help for Heroes and Combat Stress visit www.runningrob.com



Meribel hosted the Inter-Services Snow Sports Championships – page 70

“ Being busy makes the time fly ”

Troops ponder Estonian stint – page 82

6. CHAD UNITED FRONT

THE UK has taken the lead for the liaison and coordination cell that supports the anti-Boko Haram Multinational Joint Task Force.

Based in N'Djamena under the command of Col Jon Cresswell, the unit is comprised of specialists from France, USA and the UK together with liaison officers from participating nations, while the task force features personnel from Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Benin.

“The challenge is significant due to the vast area of operations, the number of nations involved and limited resources, and yet the achievements to date have been significant thanks to international will and determined leadership,” Col Cresswell said.

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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8. AUSTRALIA DIPLOMACY DOWN UNDER

CHIEF of the Defence Staff Air Chf Mshl Sir Stuart Peach met senior Australian politicians and Armed Forces representatives to discuss a range of issues during a visit to the country.

Big talking points included closer working between the two militaries, as well as global concerns such as North Korea, Syria, Iraq and countering international terrorism.

Air Chf Mshl Peach said: “From the First World War right up to the fight against Daesh, the UK and Australia have stood shoulder-to-shoulder as the strongest of allies.”

8. AUSTRALIA

Pyeongchang calling

Army Olympians take on the world – page 79

CRIMINALS illegally hunting animals are now the quarry of British troops.

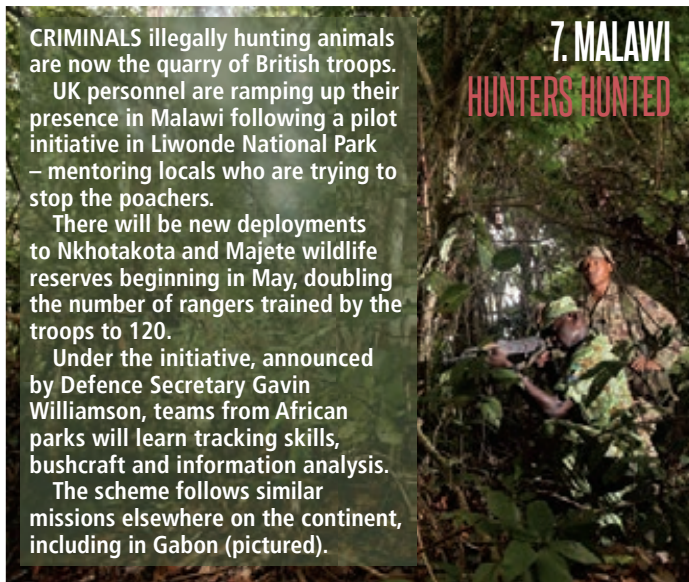
UK personnel are ramping up their presence in Malawi following a pilot initiative in Liwonde National Park – mentoring locals who are trying to stop the poachers.

There will be new deployments to Nkhotakota and Majete wildlife reserves beginning in May, doubling the number of rangers trained by the troops to 120.

Under the initiative, announced by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, teams from African parks will learn tracking skills, bushcraft and information analysis.

The scheme follows similar missions elsewhere on the continent, including in Gabon (pictured).

7. MALAWI HUNTERS HUNTED



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Picture: Cpl Tom Evans, P1C

Show of strength on Askari Storm

RESOLUTE troops have been put to the test in a demanding environment as they sharpened their skills in readiness for deployment anywhere in the world.

The soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Rifles were pushed to their limits on Exercise Askari Storm – where the heat and arduous conditions of the British Army Training Area Kenya proved testing.

But they rose to the occasion, taking part in a range of serials including live fire attacks in urban as well as rural areas, defensive tactics and convoy moves.

The validation training prepared the battalion for its current Nato readiness role. From March 1, the formation will be attached to 12th Armoured Infantry Brigade.

The soldiers arrived in Kenya in mid-January, conducting acclimatising physical training and recces of the training area before embarking on the exercise package, which lasted for around six weeks.

They faced determined opposition mounted by troops from the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment during the manoeuvres as well as regular debriefings on their performance.

Elderly gay veterans could be pardoned

VETERANS who were convicted of sexual offences before homosexuality between men was decriminalised five decades ago may be eligible for a pardon under legislation known as Turing's Law.

Those who served until 1967 can now apply to the Home Office for a pardon. If granted, they can contact the MoD Medal Office to establish whether it would be appropriate for Service decorations to be reinstated.

Only the abolished offences in the Sexual Offences Act 1956 and earlier civilian legislation – which relate to gay sex – are covered, even if they were tried by court martial.

Other military offences, such as disgraceful

conduct of an indecent kind or scandalous conduct by an officer, are not currently covered but may be considered for future changes.

An MoD spokeswoman said: "This is a complex area – we are asking people to contact the Home Office in the first instance and, if a pardon is granted, individuals may then approach the MoD.

"It is important to note that the act that attracted the discharge must not remain an offence today – it must have been consensual and with a person over the age of 16."

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Policing and Crime Act 2017 made the pardoning of the historic offences relating to gay sex possible.



MEDICAL MANOEUVRES

■ AIRBORNE medics have been sharpening their skills on manoeuvres in Suffolk following a testing deployment to South Sudan last year.

Troops from 23 Medical Squadron, 16 Medical Regiment, faced a variety of drills on Exercise Pegasus Serpent in Woodbridge in preparation for future ops.

LEAVERS: HELP AT HAND

■ ARMED Forces Charity SSAFA has launched a new mentoring facility for Service leavers.

The two-year trial at Catterick Garrison will offer troops emotional and practical help through weekly face-to-face meetings, which supplement the support provided by the Army and Career Transition Partnership.

Catterick-based personnel can apply via their employment advisor, resettlement career consultant or directly via the charity.

GO GIBBS

■ CAPTAIN Mark Gibbs (RLC) will try to smash the Guinness World Record for running a half-marathon in a 65lb bomb suit in Bath this month.

The officer is hoping to raise £2,500 for the Felix Fund charity by completing the feat in less than 3hr 15min.

Visit his fundraising page at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/58-ato



DEATH BENEFIT EXTENDED

■ THE Army Dependants' Trust has extended membership to all Regular Reserves at no cost – provided they were members during their service and completed their annual reporting letter during their liability.

The organisation makes awards – currently £15,000 – to dependants or next of kin after on- or off-duty deaths.

Membership is also open to Regulars, Reservists, full-time Reserve service troops, non-Regular permanent staff and Military Provost Guard Service personnel.

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Record row

A COURAGEOUS amputee has set a record time for rowing across the Atlantic. Jordan Beecher (ex-Para), 28, and 31-year-old Capt Jon Armstrong (RGR) braved tough conditions to complete the 3,000-mile Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge from the Canary Islands to Antigua. They shaved around 72 hours off the existing record to finish in 37 days. Beecher, who

lost his lower left leg in an IED strike in Afghanistan in 2012, worked in two-hour shifts with his friend to complete the challenge.

Money raised:
£100,000
For: Blesma



Ultra-marathon men

TWO Royal Engineers are preparing for an ultra marathon in the Amazon jungle. Over five days and 230 kilometres, majors Chris Hulme and Nick Hedgeley (pictured) will battle dense undergrowth, rivers and stifling humidity, while lugging all of their food, water and equipment. To help them fundraise for Combat Stress and the Rainbow Trust log on to <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/junglesappers>

AFTERCARE SERVICE IN NUMBERS

63,000

members in the UDR
and Royal Irish
veteran community

700

widows and
parents of fallen
troops helped

2007

year the service
was set up

Visit [www
aftercareservice.org](http://www.aftercareservice.org)
for more



Picture: Soldier archive

Op Banner legacy lives on

AN organisation set up with the backing of the MoD has been continuing to support veterans of Northern Ireland's harrowing Troubles era – a decade after the end of military operations.

The Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Irish Aftercare Service is dedicated to looking after the welfare of the 63,000 personnel who served with both outfits during the four decades of Op Banner.

The UDR was later assimilated into Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, but these were disbanded in 2006 as part of the military drawdown in Northern Ireland.

However, the aftercare service remains in demand from veterans – and has helped some 20,000 people since it was set up in the wake of the climax of Op Banner a decade ago.

It has also assisted some of the 700 spouses and parents of the soldiers who were killed.

Peter Baillie, who heads up the service, said the disbandment of the Royal Irish battalions meant veterans could not access the traditional route to help through their military family.

He pointed out that the organisation could assist with benevolence and general welfare for the Northern Ireland veteran community as well as assisting those with mental and physical injuries.

Baillie added: "One of the issues here in Northern Ireland is that our veterans are constantly reminded of the past – but we have ex-military people in our team who understand.

"We also work in close partnership with other groups such as the regimental associations."

Metal in sight for Service marksmen

■ TOP-notch sharpshooters will soon be taking delivery of striking bronze badges.

Made by military accoutrement manufacturer Firmin and Sons, the Army marksman and Army sniper marksman insignia replicate the cloth badges already available.

There are also versions for the Army 100 and Reserve 50 marksmen awards at the Army Operational Shooting Competition.

"The badges will be issued to those who are qualified and are to



be worn above the left pocket on combat uniform in barracks," Lt Col Paul Redding of the Small Arms School Corps told *Soldier*.



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*Military Saving programme available to current and ex-Service Personnel, including veterans and retired members of the UK Armed Forces. Customer savings of 5% to 20% off the Recommended On The Road price available across the Ford range (excluding KA+, Mustang and Focus RS) on vehicles contracted between 1st January 2018 and 31st December 2018 and registered between 1st January 2018 and 30th June 2019. Retail customers only. This promotion cannot be used in conjunction with other manufacturer promotions or incentives. At participating Ford dealers – for terms and conditions, including the eligibility criteria, eligible models and customer savings visit: www.ford.co.uk/militarysales



BOOTS ON THE GROUND

■ **MANPOWER** will be provided to Army units at the start of their training year rather than during their readiness year, the Service has announced.

The change in policy has been introduced to avoid troops arriving at regiments too late in the cycle, meaning they might not complete qualifying exercises in time to be prepared for operations.

The adjustment ensures units can begin their readiness commitments or deployments with a higher level of fully qualified manpower.

Read **ABN 01/18** for more details.



TRENCH TIME-HOP

■ **SURVEYORS** from the Royal Engineers have been helping to plot First World War training trenches at RAF Halton.

Members of 170 Engineer Group spent a week mapping as-yet-uncharted parts of the dugouts (pictured), sections of which have already been restored and opened to the public.

"The system extends further than we thought," explained Sgt Dairmaid Walshe (RAMC), an archaeologist and Reservist attached to the formation.

"We've spotted a lot of features that hadn't been noted before, like what could be a rifle range."

Troops used the Buckinghamshire site for exercises before deploying to France 100 years ago.

The tunnels were constructed to mimic the front-line environment.

"It's not just about recording the trenches, but also connecting Service personnel to their heritage," said Sgt Walshe.



Picture: Steve Dock

New league for Army leaders

“ This is unique and exciting ”

THE Army is further boosting the leadership skills of its troops with the launch of a degree apprenticeship qualification.

Run in conjunction with the University of Portsmouth, the three-and-a-half-year course combines academic studies with real work challenges, with 80 per cent of study done on the job.

There are currently 44 apprenticeship programmes in the Army but this is the first to be targeted at degree level.

A total of 30 senior NCOs were selected as the first intake, and they have already completed a week-long residential stage at the university.

They will study via regular modules, online chats and video conferences, liaising closely with Army mentors.

The qualification has been given the thumbs-up by the

Service because it allows troops to apply academic theory in the daily leadership challenges at their units.

Students were selected from a wide range of corps and cab badges.

If successful they will graduate with an honours degree in leadership and management, while gaining chartered manager status by the Chartered Management Institute.

"This is unique and exciting, not only for the individuals but for us as an organisation," Maj Rachael Lamont (AGC (ETS)), project lead for degree apprenticeships, told *Soldier*.

"It will provide a unique opportunity to upskill our workforce."

Initially held as a trial, a further cohort of 30 Servicemen and women have been added to the programme since it began.

● **The fight for full screw** – page 36



■ **SOME 400** proud teenagers headed off to start the next part of their military life after graduating from the Army Foundation College in Harrogate. College CO Col Rich Hall said: "These soldiers represent the very best of our nation's young people." The youngsters will move on to phase two training in a variety of careers.

Picture: Cpl Donald Todd, RLC

Soldiers 'on-track to win jobs race'

SERVICE leavers are better equipped for the jobs market than their civilian counterparts, research by Barclays has found.

The bank put former personnel through different psychometric tests to measure their workplace strengths.

It concluded that ex-soldiers bring a host of important attributes and outperform civilian workers in various key skills.

For example, veterans came out as top performers in social influencing and creativity.

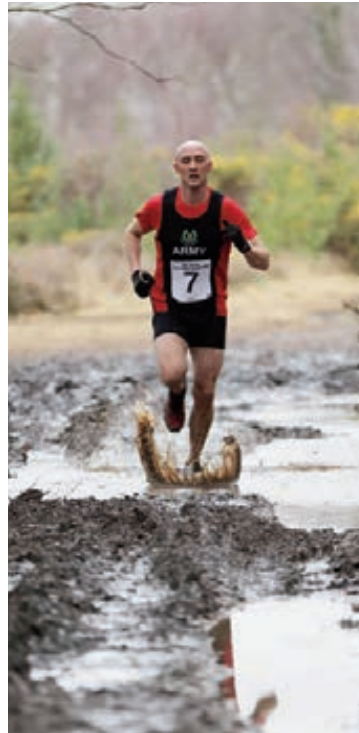
But there are concerns some employers still don't understand the benefits of taking them on.

Stuart Tootal – a former 3 Para commanding officer who heads up the firm's Armed Forces Transition, Employment and Resettlement programme – said the new research demonstrated "the strength and depth" of veterans' skills.

"They proved to have twice as much potential as civilians in demonstrating board-level leadership and innovative solutions to problems," he said.

"Around 20 per cent scored at the top end of creative thinking compared to 16 per cent of civilians.

"This, combined with the fact that veterans are less than half as likely to need rigid structure in the workplace, shows the powerful role they can play in a team."



Picture: Graeme Main

Barclays' findings follow an earlier study by the bank, which found that half of employers would look favourably at an applicant's service in the Forces.

However, one-in-eight admitted that military experience would go against their candidates.

“It shows the powerful role they can play”



FLEXIBLE WORKING

■ A LAW has been passed that will allow some soldiers to serve part-time for certain periods to do things like raise children or care for sick relatives.

The Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Act comes into force in 2019.

It means personnel will be able to restrict the time they spend away from their home bases.

Applications will be assessed against the needs of the Army and troops would still need to deploy on operations in emergency situations such as a national crisis.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said that consultation with troops had found they wanted more options when personal circumstances change.

He added: "Flexible working is key to retaining the expert personnel we have invested in."

BRAVE ENDEAVOURS

■ THREE courageous veterans who battled their way back from injury to complete tough challenges received royal recognition at a ceremony in London.

The achievements of Ben Lee (ex-RE), Sean Gane (ex-Rifles) and Royal Marine Daniel Claricoates were applauded at the second Endeavour Fund awards.

Led by Prince Harry and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, the fund helps veterans have the opportunity to rediscover their self-belief through physical challenges.

Read more about the recipients online at www.endeavourfund.co.uk

GOING ON EXERCISE?

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✉ news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

'We want to stop other people from suffering'

A MILITARY family is gearing up for a charity bike ride to raise awareness of the serious illness that claimed the life of their newborn baby.

Cpl Jon Roden (REME) and his wife Becki lost their son Tommy to sepsis when he was just six days old last July.

The illness – sometimes called blood poisoning or septicaemia – is a rare but serious complication of an infection that causes the body to attack its own tissues

Born prematurely at 31 weeks, Tommy was in the neonatal intensive care unit when he fell ill and died in his parents' arms the following day.

"They told us his body was basically shutting down," Becki said. "They put him in my arms and he took a breath, let it out and passed away."

"It's devastating, but our goal is that through our pain we can stop other people from suffering."

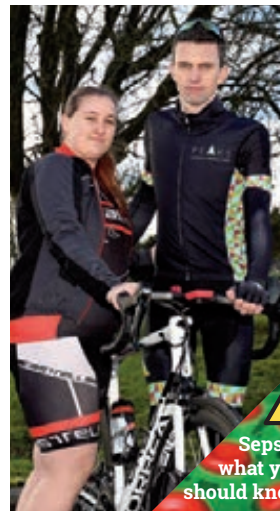
In April the Rodens will cycle from John O'Groats to Land's End and back to their home in Tidworth – a distance of 1,250 miles – along with a team of fellow soldiers.

The couple, who also have three sons aged two, seven and nine, will be raising money for the UK Sepsis Trust.

"Anyone can get sepsis," added Becki. "Doctors sometimes pass it off as flu, but if you're concerned don't take the first answer."

"Ask, could it be sepsis?"

To support the Rodens visit www.justgiving.com/ridefortommy



⚠ Sepsis: what you should know – page 26

LOGGIES MAKE BOMB SAFE

■ ARMY specialists joined forces with Royal Navy and police colleagues to make a Second World War bomb safe.

The troops from 621 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps were called after the 500lb device was found in the George V dock during work at London City Airport. Personnel freed the shell and took it away for destruction.



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*Finance subject to status. Retail sales only. Subject to availability at participating retailers only on vehicles registered by 31st March 2018 on Personal Contract Purchase. Terms and conditions apply. Applicants must be 18 or over. Guarantee may be required. Volvo Car Financial Services, RH1 1SR. The complementary servicing offer is only available when purchasing on Volvo Advantage Personal Contract Purchase at participating retailers, on vehicles ordered between 01/01/2018 and 31/03/2018. Services must be carried out at a Volvo Authorised Repairer. Retail offer only. Excludes fleet operators and business users. See volvocars.co.uk for full terms and conditions.



Ice Maiden Lt Jenni Stephenson (RA) takes to the treadmill in the environment chamber. Picture: Coventry University



Female adventurers go to extremes

PIONEERING research from the Ice Maidens Antarctic expedition will help the Army to better understand the impact of women being moved into front-line roles.

Medical tests carried out on the six female explorers at Coventry University were part-funded by the military and will feed into its data on women in ground close combat.

The first of their kind, the trials aim to establish how a woman's body reacts to prolonged exercise in extreme conditions. Previous studies have only focused on men.

Having spent 61 days skiing coast-to-coast across Antarctica, becoming the first all-female team to complete the feat using muscle-power alone, the troops headed to Coventry to repeat a set of tests they first took before they left in October.

Data from both will now be analysed to see how their bodies changed during the expedition, which covered 1,700km in temperatures plunging to -56 degrees Celsius.

The women were pushed to their limits on a treadmill in the university science and health building's environment chamber, running at increasing speeds until exhausted.

The experiment simulated both sea-level conditions and the 3,000-metre altitude the personnel experienced on their mission.

Several measurements were taken, including oxygen consumption and how efficiently it was used.

The team also spent 36 hours in a facility checking their energy use.

Ice Maiden Capt Zanna Baker (RA) said: "It has been really interesting to do these tests to see how our bodies have changed.

"Hopefully, this will be useful in understanding more about female physiology and will positively influence women's roles in the military."

Dr Doug Thake, applied human physiology lecturer at Coventry University, said: "The Ice Maidens' achievement was absolutely amazing and it has been riveting hearing stories about their expedition.

"It will be fascinating to look through the data – this is an excellent opportunity to understand more about how a challenging environment affects women's physiology."



SPINE LINE COMPETITION

HAS Pyeongchang left you feeling like a bit of an expert in the field of winter sports?

If so, last month's spine lines competition will have proved a walkover.

(Jenny) Jones, (Eve) Muirhead, (David) Murdoch and (Lizzie) Yarnold were all Team GB medalists at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

This month *Soldier* has teamed up with British nutrition and beauty brand Proto-col (www.proto-col.com) to offer one reader a bundle of Informed Sport-registered products worth more than £200.

To be in with a chance of winning the set – which includes Collagen Pro Sport Plus tablets, Pro Gold Protein and Collagen Whey Powder, vitamin D supplements, sports bag, bottles and more – tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by March 30.

WIN
A £200 Proto-col sports nutrition bundle

“It will be fascinating to look through the data”



CAMBRIAN CALL

■ **SOLDIERS** are being invited to challenge themselves and face down the elements at this year's Exercise Cambrian Patrol.

The famous manoeuvres run from October 12-21 in Wales, and focus on infantry skills and drills.

The deadline for bids to take part is July 15 and for more details call 01874 613280.

PARENTS UNITE

■ A **FACEBOOK** group has been launched to support serving parents.

The Army Parents' Network is a closed forum where troops can find help on issues such as pregnancy, shared parental leave, schools and childcare.

Members include policy desk officers, who can offer guidance.

Some 1,500 troops had joined as this issue went to press and a website is also due to be launched in the coming months.

Search for the "Army Parents' Network" on Facebook.



A personal view from Sara Baade, Chief Executive of the Army Families Federation...

SIGN UP TO STAY TUNED

MOST of this year's work will be based on feedback from our "offer" survey, where we asked whether the difficulties you face as Army families are mitigated by your package of benefits.

And our current focus is on healthcare issues.

We're making soldiers and their loved ones more aware of where to get help in certain areas – using the Armed Forces Covenant to get parity on waiting lists, for example.

We have heard that some are struggling to access NHS dentists, so we'll be investigating that.

And we plan to launch support groups for carers of youngsters with additional needs.

Families in adapted quarters have many questions around the future accommodation model, and we will get those answered.

Empowering our families with the information they need is part of our core business. But we too are facing challenges.

A change to data protection laws in May will mean that families in mainland UK will now need to opt-in to continue receiving our trusted *Army & You* magazine.

We have produced this title for 35 years, and a campaign to encourage as many people as possible to sign up launches in our spring edition.

Look out for the full details at www.armyandyou.co.uk

[armyandyou.co.uk](http://www.armyandyou.co.uk)



www.aff.org.uk



Picture: Steve Dock

WINTER SPORTS

Soldiers shred it up – page 70



THE Royal Regiment of Fusiliers is marking its half-century with a busy programme of events – including services and parades – over the coming year.

Commemorations begin on April 21 with a freedom parade in Newcastle ahead of the regimental 50th anniversary on St George's Day, which will be marked at the Tower of London.

Other events include a gathering at the National Memorial Arboretum in

Staffordshire. Special commemorative medals are also being issued to Regular and Reserve personnel.

An amalgamation of four regiments, the RRF (members of which are shown above) was formed in 1968 and has since seen operations in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Regimental secretary Col (retd) James Denny said: "This year is very important for us. You're only 50 once, so we want to mark the event properly."



CAPT DEAN SPROUTING (46)
STAFF AND PERSONNEL SUPPORT,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S CORPS
DIED JANUARY 31 – IRAQ

COLLEAGUES of a gifted officer have paid tribute to his professionalism, and compassion following his death on Operation Shader.

Capt Dean Sprouting was serving with 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland when he died at Al Asad Airbase.

An inquest into the married father-of-two's loss was told that the Serviceman had been in collision with

a forklift truck while jogging.

Lt Col Rob Hedderwick, CO of 3 Scots, said: "He had become an indispensable part of the battalion, not only for his professional expertise but also for his compassionate manner and camaraderie.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife and children whom I know he cherished more than anything in the world.

"I am hugely proud and thankful to have known him."

Capt Sprouting, who came from Stirlingshire, had nearly 30 years of soldiering experience.

Initially enlisting in the Royal Green Jackets, he transferred to the Adjutant General's Corps before joining the 3 Scots administration office in late 2017 from HQ 51st Infantry Brigade.

He arrived in Iraq in January, where he was the detachment commander of a human resources team.

The officer had previously served in the former Yugoslavia and Cyprus as well as Sudan, Angola and Germany.

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Picture: Graeme Main

Exercise shines light on 'fake news'

TACTICS for dealing with fake news and misinformation have been honed by officer cadets in a pioneering training package at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

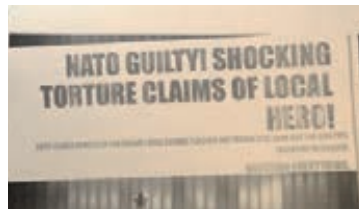
Exercise Agile Influence put soldiers at the heart of a community in which a prolific media machine puts out stories – not all of them accurate.

The day-long exercise forms a prelude to Templer's Triumph on Longmoor Training Area, and is an opportunity for cadets to don costumes and take on the personalities of the type of characters they could face on operations.

The company-sized scenario was designed to improve troops' influencing skills.

A variety of media outlets were simulated in real-time, putting out a combination of radio broadcasts, TV reports, blogs and print material.

Gareth Bloomfield, senior lecturer from the academy's Department of Communication and Applied Behavioural Science, explained that soldiers also needed to learn how to engage with journalists.



"Troops could find themselves in the media if they do not respond to events," he said.

Exercise creator Dr Deborah Goodwin – who heads the department – said the serial had received considerable interest from outside organisations.

"Agile Influence is still unique in terms of officer training internationally," she said.

"Those who have come to see the exercise played out include representatives of our sister organisations from other branches of the Armed Services."

Although the exercise was custom-written for Sandhurst, Goodwin can advise other units on creating their own influencing scenario.

“
Soldiers
could find
themselves in
the media
”

DEFENCE LOGISTICS

■ A CHANGE in terminology has been introduced to avoid future confusion in supply chain comms issues.

The Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Logistical Operations) directorate has now been rebranded as Defence Logistics.

It is hoped the move will better distinguish the wider department from the two-star general in command.

SWORD AWARD

■ THE selfless work of troops committed to protecting the UK public from explosive hazards during 2016 has earned 11 (EOD) Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps the prestigious Firmin Sword of Peace.

The unit saw more than 2,850 call-outs during the year, while raising around £30,000 for charity.

The sword will be presented during a ceremony at Blenheim Palace this month.



TRAGIC TREK CONTINUES

■ A MEDICAL officer who died taking part in the charity event he created will be remembered when the trek is relaunched this summer.

The D-Day 44 Challenge will see participants undertake a 44-mile run and 22-mile walk around Normandy to raise money for Blesma, Blind Veterans UK and Combat Stress.

Army surgeon Lt Col Mike McErlain (pictured above right) collapsed during the trek five years ago.

To get involved search for D-Day Challenge 2018 online.

SUPPORT FOR SAPPERS

■ A 24/7 mental health helpline, set up after the death of a Royal Engineer, has been recognised with a national award.

Founded by Tim Evers following the loss of his colleague Chris Walmsley, Sapper Support (www.sappersupport.com) received the best new charity accolade at the *Charity Times Awards*.

Although the organisation initially helped Royal Engineers, its nine volunteers now work across all three Armed Forces as well as blue light services.

Evers, who left the Army two decades ago and is now a firefighter with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, said it had been "an honour" to receive the gong.

In this month's

**SOLDIER
SPORT**



» ATHLETICS P68

» FOOTBALL P73



» RUGBY LEAGUE P75



THE BIG PICTURE

Bergen-Hohne ranges, Germany

FLASH TO BANG

SOLDIERS from A Squadron, The Queen's Royal Hussars unleash the firepower of their Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank during a range package at Bergen-Hohne. The intense three-week exercise tested individual drills, crew cohesion and teamwork as well as target accuracy.

Picture: Dominic King





C

ARROGANT

NEED TO KNOW

MENTAL HEALTH | HEALTH | NUTRITION | NEXT STEP | SKILLS & DRILLS | EXPERIENCE | HOUSING

Mental muscle

How building a tough mindset
can help you weather the
storms of Service life

Picture: FreePik



▶ LET'S be honest, soldiers face more than their fair share of challenges. So being mentally resilient is just as important as physical robustness.

Resilient people don't dwell on failure, they quickly learn from it. And evidence shows these individuals are quicker to solve problems, suffer less stress, perform better at work and have higher levels of wellbeing and happiness.

The good news is that everyone can learn to develop a strong mindset. Try these tips from online mental health service Big White Wall...

Practise **thought awareness**

If you notice any negative or unhelpful ideas creeping in, challenge them. Instead of being overly critical of yourself, adopt more realistic thoughts.

Keep a sense of **perspective**

However overwhelming events are, they are usually short-lived.

Problem solve as you go along

Don't store or bottle stuff up in the hope someone else will deal with it.

Be **more flexible**

Accept that things change and your plans may sometimes need to be altered or scrapped.

Change the way you approach new or difficult tasks

View them as opportunities for learning and growth. Being negative can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Confidence leads to success.

Don't worry about "losing face" by asking for

help

Others can offer a different view on a problem, and can help you reach your end goal more quickly.

Develop strong personal and work relationships

Having a strong support network to fall back on increases your resistance to stress.



Worried about your mental health? Speak to the chain of command, a doctor, welfare officer, medic, padre or SSAFA Forcesline on 0800 731 4880 (UK). You can also log on to www.bigwhitewall.com for support.

Sepsis

What you should know

⚠ What to do:

Seek medical advice immediately from NHS 111 if you are showing possible early signs of sepsis – especially if you've recently had an infection or injury.

If it becomes severe the body can go into septic shock when blood pressure drops to a dangerously low level. This is a medical emergency. If you think you or someone in your care could have this condition **go straight to A&E or call 999.**

Did you know?

Sepsis is sometimes referred to as septicaemia or blood poisoning, although these terms actually refer to the invasion of bacteria into the blood stream.

What is it?

A rare but serious complication of an infection in which the body attacks its own tissues.

It can lead to multiple organ failure, loss of limbs and death.

Who is at risk?

Anyone is susceptible but young children, old people and those whose immune systems are impaired, or who have recently had surgery or been injured are most at risk.

What to look out for:

Symptoms can be hard to spot and easily confused with illnesses like flu, gastroenteritis or chest infections.

Early signs for older children and adults include a high or low body temperature, chills and a fast heartbeat and breathing. Children under five and babies may also develop a rash that doesn't fade when pressed, be lethargic, vomit repeatedly, be unwilling to feed, stop urinating or experience convulsions.



REMEMBER this acronym and seek urgent medical help if you develop any of the following symptoms:

Slurred speech or confusion

Extrême shivering or muscle pain

Passing no urine (in a day)

Severe breathlessness

It feels like you're going to die

Skin mottled or discoloured

In numbers:



250,000

the approximate number of cases in the UK, annually



37,000

deaths on average every year in England

Pictures: FreePik

■ For further information visit:
www.sepsistrust.org

Smashingly simple

Too much on your plate? Ditch the fad diets and stick to this simple rundown of what constitutes a healthy, balanced diet...

► IN general, a good daily diet should include the following:



Plenty of starchy foods (such as bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, oats)



Plenty of fruit and vegetables



2 to 3 portions of milk/dairy



2 to 3 portions of non-dairy sources of protein (such as meat, fish, nuts, soy)



At least 6 to 8 glasses of water

■ Advice taken from the Defence Nutrition Advisory Service. Download the full guide online or email navyinm-emsdnas@mod.uk

Fat	Sugar	Salt	Alcohol
%	%	%	%

Over the limit?
Remember to cut back on foods and drinks that are high in fat, sugar, and salt. As well as booze. If in doubt – check the label.

▶ **NEXT STEP**

Pack a

Leadership

A disciplined and confident approach to leading teams is something Service personnel can bring to the commercial world to great effect.

Drive

Soldiers are required to be task- and results-orientated to motivate the team around them. Roles in the military can change every 12 to 18 months, meaning troops are constantly taking in new information, learning and adapting.

Communication

Clear and concise comms are vital across all Armed Forces to ensure operations run smoothly, and this translates across most industries.

Service ethos

Integrity, honesty and responsibility are core values in the Army. Being willing to learn, with a can-do attitude to hard work is something that will serve you well in most civvy street roles.

Comradeship

Whether it's being a team player looking out for your colleagues, or a leader considering different ways to approach a task, being able to connect different opinions into one positive direction is a must in most military roles. And something civilian employers will want to hear about.

■ Tips provided by John Chantry (ex-Scots DG), vice president at Barclays Investment Bank and manager of the Veteran Employment Transition Support programme



PUNCH

Want a knockout CV?
Get these buzzwords
on there and open
civvy street's eyes to
the skills the Army has
given you

The lie of the land

With concerns about the GPS signal being taken down by enemy action, practising navigation skills with a map and compass is a necessity. Here, orienteering coach Maj Bernie Fowler (AAC) gives some advice on finding your way

Prepare properly

Before you set off make sure you **work through your checklist** – and don't let anything distract you.

Read the relief

Take time to **understand the scale and symbols** because they will vary from map to map. Read the contours – what is up, what is down and the height of the peaks. In your planning think in terms of identifying an easy-to-find "attack point" to head for and then plan your route.

Trust your compass

This is very important. You need to look at the map, work out what you can see and **make sure you orientate the compass properly**. Do not try to make the map fit the ground.

Don't fear getting lost

If you find yourself lost then stop and take a breather. If necessary, **relocate to a known point** where you were happy with your progress, go back to your map and compass and reorientate.

Pace yourself

Knowing how many paces you take for each 100 metres can really pay dividends. During your preparations **conduct a count on the flat, and on uphill and downhill gradients** because this will help you work out crucial information relating to speed, time and distance, especially when orienteering at night or over relatively featureless countryside.

Practice makes perfect

Make sure you practise regularly. **Using a map and compass is a life skill**. Satellite navigation is not something you are always going to be able to rely on. Orienteering training is available in the Army as a course and competitively at all levels.



Picture: FreePik

'You bring a great deal back to your military work'



In any area where the risk of contamination is rife, you must be well prepared at the start and your drills sound. We had strict rules governing our day-to-day life out there. Where possible, we stayed within the camp to minimise contact with local people. The team had to find effective ways of keeping up morale. Our padre had an important part to play here and my exercise regime – running – also helped. Op Gritrock was a really testing time for all of us, but we learned a great deal from the deployment and the team are the richer for having the experience. I'm glad about the habits I picked up, in particular that I wash my hands so often – it goes to prove that, ultimately, good personal hygiene can save lives”

Troops deployed to fight the Ebola outbreak in Africa faced a personal battle against a deadly infection – and the operation has continued to affect their work ever since, reflects Reservist doctor Lt Col Tom Trinick (RAMC) of 204 Field Hospital



It was a deployment where I learned to wash my hands like I had never washed them before.

You had to be scrupulous about your hygiene in Sierra Leone.

Ebola is a virus that is easily transmittable. If it finds its way into your body, you have a really serious problem.

Being deployed as a doctor was both restricting and stressful. But it was when we came home that a real sense of anxiety started for some of our team.

We were put into a loose form of quarantine, which was psychologically difficult. Ebola has a 21-day incubation period. We were all issued with thermometers and told to phone our temperatures to Public Health England every day.

There's not much else you can do other than keep going.

But as a result of the experience I am now far more aware of people's fear of illness – your role is to help keep your patients calm, and I have more empathy with them now.

You bring a great deal back to your military work from this type of situation. The protocols you hone can also help you develop transferrable skills for other environments – particularly, for example,

when you are dealing with CBRN threats.

Sierra Leone was extremely testing. I'm a consultant in general medicine and chemical pathology, and deployed on Op Gritrock near Freetown a few years ago.

You had a real sense of vulnerability in Africa and it really hit home when a nurse in our own team contracted the illness – fortunately she was well treated, evacuated and went on to recover after being flown back to the UK.

But it had been a tense time for all of us, particularly as we had already seen what Ebola could do.

People tend to think of the disease as a haemorrhagic fever.

But this is only part of its effect. It starts off like flu and in the end your organs start packing up. You can expect fits, crashing blood pressure and loss of kidney function as your vital systems shut down.

The situation was complicated for us because malaria is also a hazard in Sierra Leone, and its symptoms can be remarkably similar to Ebola when they first appear.



Be a *GOOD* landlord

Worried about the snags of letting out a property? Here are some words of wisdom



► IF you own a house and you want to rent it out, there is lots to know. The industry has never been more heavily regulated, so making the move involves far more work than simply finding a tenant. Ele Wolstenholme, Army spouse and director of Welcome Homes Property Solutions, has the following checklist for any personnel thinking of handing over their keys while deployed or on assignment...



Sort the paperwork

You're not allowed to advertise your property without an energy performance certificate and, legally, you must provide tenants with a copy of this before they sign an agreement. Visit www.epcregister.com to see if your property already has one. You also need to make sure tenants have a copy of the government's *How to Rent* guide, available on www.gov.uk

Check out the tenants

Landlords can face unlimited fines – and a prison sentence – if they don't ensure their tenants are allowed to reside in the UK. Make sure you carry out a "right to rent" document check on everyone and not just the main tenant.

Take a deposit

It's always a good idea to do this before anyone moves in. This safeguards against the cost of any damage caused during the tenancy. However, landlords are required by law to protect this money in an approved tenancy deposit scheme. If you fail to protect the deposit within 30 days of receiving it, the court may award the tenant up to three times this amount in compensation.

Leave them to it

Some landlords wrongly believe that because they own a house they can enter it at any time. But when you grant a tenancy, you are granting a legal interest in the property so you must follow the law when gaining access. If a landlord tries to illegally evict a tenant they can face a prison sentence and a hefty fine.

Stay safe

This is probably the most obvious responsibility, but what does it involve? You definitely need a landlord's gas safety certificate, and the tenant needs to have seen this before moving in. Fully functional smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are also a must. All electrical wiring, installations and appliances need to be safe, and any furniture should meet minimum fire safety requirements.



Get full advice

This is not an exhaustive list, and there are different rules for houses of multiple occupation. If you want to let out a property speak to a specialist or get a professional agent do it on your behalf.

IT'S a sad fact of life that some species fail to survive when their habitat changes rapidly, and that's exactly what happened to the much-loved AgustaWestland Lynx.

In the space of a few short years the battle space morphed from analogue to digital, and the Army Air Corps' trusty old workhorse didn't make the cut.

As a result, its successor – the Wildcat – was designed from the outset to be the king of the electronic jungle, a platform that could use an array of cutting-edge kit to fight, communicate, coordinate and see the combat zone more clearly than just about anything else on the ground or in the sky.

The platform formally entered service in 2014 but it has yet to be tested where it counts, on an operational deployment.

That will change in April, however, when 661 Squadron, 1 Regiment Army Air Corps travels from its base at RNAS Yeovilton to Estonia to support Nato's enhanced forward presence.

Four platforms, along with a supporting ground crew and experts from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, will head for Estonia, where they will support the country's defence forces alongside the 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh battlegroup in Tapa (*Soldier*, February).

"We learnt in the autumn that we would be deploying so there's been a considerable amount to do in a relatively short period of time," Maj Alex Rivett (AAC, pictured below), officer commanding 661 Squadron, explained.

"However, we are well prepared as we have been on a high-readiness footing

since April 2017.

"Last year we also prepared ourselves at short notice to support Op Ruman in the Caribbean, although we weren't eventually required there."

The squadron geared up for its deployment by travelling to Spadeadam in Cumbria for electronic warfare training and Kirkcudbright in Scotland for a live-firing package with door gunners operating their .50-calibre M3M machine guns.

As a result, the formation's air and ground crews are now itching to put their abilities to the test in Eastern Europe.

"I can't quite believe I'm getting a tour to Estonia so early in my career," commented Cpl Roan Botes (AAC, pictured overleaf), an aircrewman who joined the unit in January straight out of conversion training at RAF Shawbury and RNAS Yeovilton.

"The Wildcat is a complex aircraft and my role is more demanding than it was on the Lynx; we help pilots plan the routes, assemble the map pack which acts as a backup if the digital equipment fails, and carry out checks and drills as an essential part of the crew.

"I can't wait to employ all those skills during what will be a proper deployment."

LCpl William Dimmock (REME), a class two aircraft technician, added: "The Estonia mission has given everyone here a real boost – it feels like we're doing something important; it's exactly why we joined the service.

"We all want to see what Wildcat will be like to use and maintain in real operational conditions."

The squadron will have plenty of opportunity



ON THE





PROWL

Wildcat's
technology
is set to be
unleashed
in Estonia



The cat's whiskers: A gunner firing a .50-calibre M3M machine gun from a Wildcat Mk 1 during a 1 AAC live-firing exercise at Kirkcudbright, Scotland



It allows us to be reconnaissance specialists for the wider Army



for doing just that as the tour is due to last around four months.

During that time they'll not only be supporting the Estonians and The Royal Welsh in training, but plugging into a major annual Nato serial, Exercise Sabre Strike, which spans Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania and involves the armed forces of around 20 nations.

"The Estonians have only four Robinson 22 light helicopters in their fleet so they're really excited about us bringing a cutting-edge platform such as Wildcat to provide air support," said Maj Rivett.

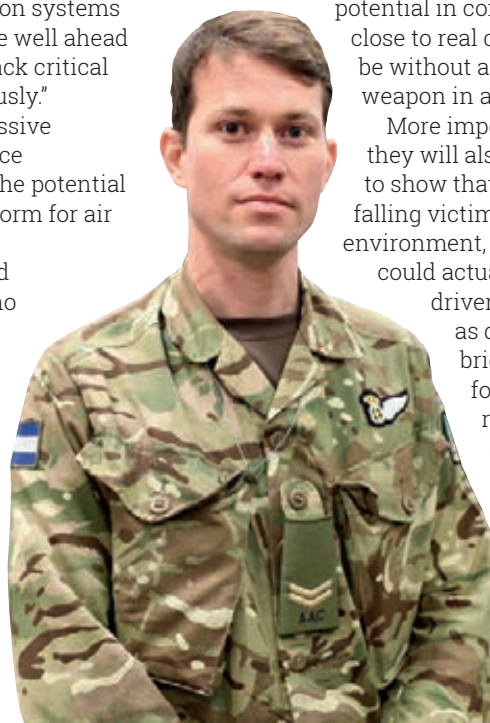
The squadron won't be hoping to impress only the locals, however.

"Many of our own ground forces are not fully aware of Wildcat's many capabilities yet," added the officer.

"Our sensors and mission systems mean that we can operate well ahead of other assets feeding back critical information instantaneously."

In fact, Wildcat's impressive communications and recce capabilities mean it has the potential to be the controlling platform for air and ground forces.

"The aircrew are trained reconnaissance pilots who have the ability to read the situation and direct ground-based weapons or aerial assets like Apaches and F-35s to prosecute targets,"



explained Maj Rivett.

"In Estonia we want to demonstrate those sorts of abilities to our own commanders and prove they do not need to see what the aircrew can see in order to trust their judgement.

"It's not a big leap from what we have always trained to deliver, but the Wildcat capability allows us to be reconnaissance specialists for the wider Army".

Whether this ambition will be achieved in one deployment remains to be seen but there will be more than one bite of the cherry because 659 Squadron, 1 Regiment's other operational Wildcat unit that was formed in January, will deploy to Estonia in 12 months' time.

Over the course of these two missions the helicopter's aircrews will be presented with a rare opportunity to demonstrate its full potential in conditions that are as

close to real combat as they can be without actually firing a weapon in anger.

More importantly, they will also be able to show that, far from falling victim to a new environment, Wildcat

could actually be the driver of change as divisional and brigade-level forces start to realise the full extent of its many capabilities. ■



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WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?

The technology troops in Estonia will have at their disposal



THE FIGHT FOR FULL SCREW

Airborne gunners eye
promotion in Welsh hills

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures: Graeme Main

» STEPPING up as a military leader can be a daunting task at the best of times. But when you're doing it in a bleak and inhospitable environment – with no rank over the men you command – the challenges may seem insurmountable. Luckily, these lance bombardiers of 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery are a determined bunch.

If they get promoted at the end of this week's junior NCO leadership course, they will have successfully faced off some of the toughest soldiering conditions to be found on the UK training estate – the cold, windy and boggy expanses of Sennybridge Training Area.

"These guys have shown outstanding grit and determination," Capt Phil Wright, the officer in charge of the package, tells *Soldier* as the troops move into their final exercise.

"The weather has been truly awful at stages.

"We are trying to create an environment that mirrors the conditions we might get in theatre. And Sennybridge presents opportunities that are almost impossible to mimic anywhere else, with uneven terrain and unpredictable weather."

He explains how the course's 20 hopefuls have been taking turns to write a set of battle orders and lead in their execution.

"In normal life you hold rank above the soldiers you lead, but here you're with mates of the same rank," he says.

"That changes the dynamic – many challenges are presented by giving these guys responsibility among their peers."

For LBdr Ben Pinkney (pictured overleaf), this element in particular has been a test of character.

"Working with guys of the same rank has been tough," he admits.

"It's harder to make sure they listen to what you want them to do, like they would automatically for a one-up rank.

"You need to start off strong from the very beginning, and change your tone so they know you're there to stay."

After getting through initial education and live-firing phases, troops are spending five days in the field – where a hostile Mother Nature is serving up a cold and callous reminder that sound admin is every bit as important as good battle orders and the estimate processes.

Out here, wet and dry drills could be the difference between success and failure.

Ambushes, patrols and survival challenges are all on the menu too, before a final exercise tests the troops on everything they have learnt.

Today, the participants are busy clearing a valley of enemy fighters played by phase two recruits from 24 (Irish) Battery RA at Larkhill.

Some of those on the course may not be eligible to promote for another two years, but by getting experiences like this under their belts early the regiment hopes to nurture strong leadership for the future.

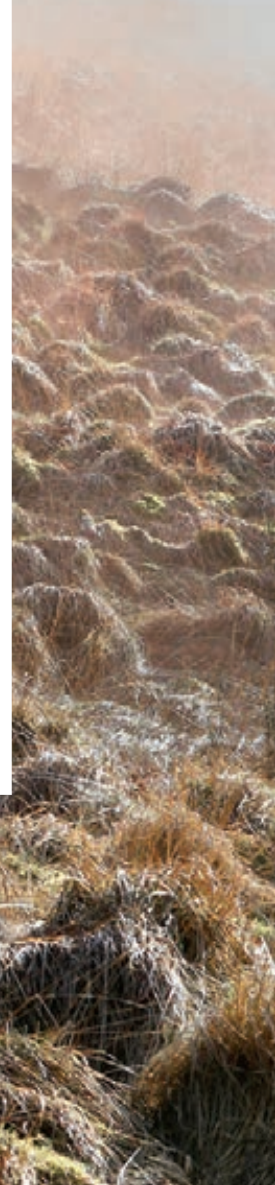
And all the better if that is done while developing their basic infantry skills.

Capt Wright explains why.

"It's all about putting ourselves in the best position to support manoeuvre arms," he says.

"Some regiments get troops to deliver presentations or lessons on this course, but we like to put them under pressure.





“Potentially, our role means we are going to be isolated for long periods with no real support or logistical chain.

“So robustness in arduous conditions is critical, and the infantry model is a great way to teach them basic leadership.

“It is stressful, high impact and unpredictable, with lots of fatigue.

“They learn a huge amount about themselves, and it’s about building that experience, and looking back one day to say ‘this isn’t as bad as that time we were in Sennybridge’.

“When you don’t have active operations, you have to manufacture these scenarios to build an understanding of the demands that has, mentally and physically.”

But excelling on this course does not mean soldiers will automatically be promoted; eyes are on them all-year-round.

“The lads could come here and be amazing, but if they are rubbish in their daily life they won’t be selected,” Capt Wright adds.

“For example, someone might be ninja at certain aspects of soldiering, but then be a little bit lazy when he thinks no one’s looking.”

They don’t know it yet, but one of these students is destined for an immediate promotion when the Sennybridge stint is over.

“That will be huge,” Capt Wright smiles. “To get to the end, have that sense of real achievement, and then get promoted in front of our brigade deputy commander.”

But for now, the worthy recipient is none the wiser as he soldiers on through bogs and marshes – unaware of the brilliant reward that lies in wait for him. ■



“
You need to
start off strong
from the very
beginning
”

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Much is at stake for the wannabe bombardiers... and the weather won't stop them

» "THESE guys are fiercely proud of being airborne soldiers," Capt Phil Wright explains as the sun makes a rare appearance from behind the clouds while troops clear through a marsh-riddled valley in Sennybridge.

"They have a strong aspiration to promote, and they really thrive on the pressures of the regiment and 16 Air Assault Brigade."

For LBdr Adam Duncan, the conditions have been "emotional" – and a big step up from the potential NCO course he did this time last year.

"A lot of the battle has been with the elements," the soldier says.

"It's about mind over matter – making sure your admin and drills are squared away. If they aren't, you're going to be no use in lessons let alone the field.

"I am normally the brigade commander's driver so this is completely out of my comfort zone. But I came to get stuck in."

LBdr Connor Stevens is in no doubt the course's lessons have already made him a better soldier.

"It's the organisation – trying to take control of the situation and knowing when to move," he explains.

Whatever the promotion outcome, these troops will certainly be taking fresh lessons and new skill sets back to the day job.



HEADS of SHEET

Troops join veterans and civvies in show of biker solidarity

MOTORCYCLE-MAD soldiers and civvies have been learning some new tricks from each other in an exciting project that is uniting the two communities.

Based at Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell, the Forces Bike Shed has been going from strength to strength since it was launched with a cash windfall three years ago.

The brainchild of bikers Pat Machin and Nigel Atkin, it is a place where members can trade stories about their hobby and learn more about maintaining their vehicles.

Machin – a retired paramedic – and former civil servant Atkin had taken part in the Ride to the Wall to the National Memorial Arboretum. They wanted to do something to bring military and civvy bikers closer together.

The pair approached Lt Col Stu Wiles – who was then CO of the local Personnel Recovery Unit – with their idea and he secured a hanger on the barracks to host the shed and an Armed Forces Covenant grant to launch the project.

Now retired, Wiles (ex-LD) remains chairman of the initiative and said it continues to bring people together.

“We now have many regulars attending our Wednesday and Saturday meetings, and are still growing,” he told *Soldier*.

“It is great to see the interest from our local community.

“Motorcycling is something we can all enjoy together – serving Armed Forces members, veterans and civilians.” ■

Report: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Graeme Main Icons: FreePik





Get in touch
www.forcesbikeshed.com
 @Forces_BikeShed

SENIOR SADDLEMAN

At 80 years old, Les Hooley is the most senior biker at Chilwell. A veteran of the The Life Guards, he has been riding since he was 16. The former cavalryman spent his 78th birthday with his beloved Triumph touring the Somme battlefield. "The Bike Shed members are good company," he said.



Forces Bike Shed in numbers

Launched in **2015**

80 Age of the oldest veteran member

£6,000 Cash grant that launched the scheme

SIX Ongoing projects at the site

50 Regular attendees

20 Bikes currently in the shed



FIRST

RESERVE

Report: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Robbie Hodgson and MoD



Northern Ireland's part-time troops are providing valuable skills in support of operations

IT WAS a focal point for service for generations of courageous men and women – the Northern Ireland Troubles were characterised by individuals who risked all to protect others.

In the 1970s, 80s and 90s the country could be deadly. With terrorists targeting volunteers in communities on- and off-duty, those in uniform found themselves in the line of fire. Scores were killed and injured in the most brutal years of the Op Banner campaign.



“
Our teams
punch well
above their
weight
”

More than a decade has passed since this 38-year operation ended and Northern Ireland is now a more peaceful place. But the experience of those who served in the likes of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and Royal Irish Home Service battalions is still present – providing a backbone of the potent Army Reserve based throughout the country.

Working with Regular counterparts, there are several specialist units around the region. As well as using their skills to provide capabilities such as medical support and front-line fuel supply,

many troops have years of operational experience at their core.

“I think there is a strong military ethos in Northern Ireland, which is deeply embedded in communities,” Col Mark Sheridan (pictured below), an anaesthetist and CO of Belfast-based 204 Field Hospital, told *Soldier*. “And the Reserve service is backed by unusually supportive employers.

“Obviously we have seen the years of the Troubles but I think the positive attitude towards serving actually goes back a long way before. People across Northern Ireland are unfailingly passionate; they like to do things professionally and they really enjoy their soldiering.”

Col Sheridan is typical of many locals who still thrive in the Army. A former member of the UDR and 9th (County Antrim) Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment – one of the Home Service battalions disbanded in 2006 – he has significant experience.

“Although my Royal Irish service was part-time, it was unique in the sense that we essentially worked as Regulars,” the officer added. “I enjoyed it and made a lot of friends.”

However, Col Sheridan went on to point out that the military has moved on from the days of the Troubles. He stressed that recruiting from across all communities in Northern Ireland provides a formidable wealth of talent. In addition, there is a sizeable number of Reservists from the Republic.

He is also convinced that the attitude of the area’s employers is crucial to the success of Reserve soldiering, highlighting that local National Health Service chiefs had given strong backing to his 200-strong regiment.

“We have built really good relationships with them,” Col Sheridan added. “They are positive about people going on operations and appreciate the skills they bring back to civilian life. As a result, our small medical teams are able to punch well above their weight. →



In numbers: Northern Ireland Reservists

2.5%
of the UK population
is in the region

1 in 5
Reservists at the
height of Herrick were
from NI

70%
of the Army Reserve is based there



Mission ready: Members of 204 Field Hospital train in York. Troops from the unit have deployed on operations across the world

➔ “I have been on Op Herrick in Afghanistan – other members of the unit have helped to deal with the serious Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone (page 30) among other deployments.

“We are representative of Northern Ireland’s populace as well as having strong retention rates. A lot of our guys are older, experienced and have been around for a very long time.”

Maj George McFarland – a spokesman with the Reservist 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment – also believed there was a strong service ethos throughout the region.

A former soldier who served with the UDR during the Troubles, he highlighted that the personnel in his battalion had years of operational experience between them.

“When I signed up during the late 1970s it was to protect life – the same was true of many others,” he added. “But this is all very much evident in those volunteering today.

“We have people here who were on Op Banner – and those coming in generally have family or relations who have served on Regular or Home Service battalions. A few have no other connection to the military but there are not many of them.”

Commitment to public service certainly appears to be a constant in Northern Ireland. With Reservists from all elements of the country’s communities serving, the dynamic is positive – and their skill sets are benefiting a raft of important capabilities.

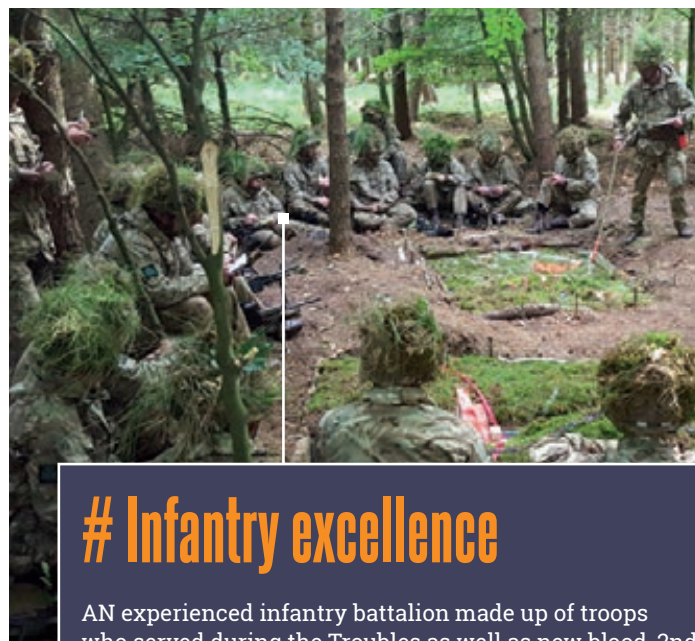
With crucial operational experience under their belts, the contribution of these soldiers is not to be underestimated. Pound for pound, they continue to punch well above their weight. ■

SMALL WONDERS

NORTHERN Ireland’s small population makes a huge contribution when it comes to the Army Reserve – with a range of units providing capabilities to underpin operations.

Drawn from all elements of the region’s communities and with the strong backing of employers, troops are involved in activities ranging from managing fuel to cutting-edge infantry work.

With a strong ethos of service clearly embedded in the volunteers, *Soldier* got a snapshot of the skills and experience on offer during a recent visit...



Infantry excellence

AN experienced infantry battalion made up of troops who served during the Troubles as well as new blood, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment is continuing to show its mettle around the world.

Having been involved in Afghanistan, the soldiers have more recently turned their attention to passing on their experience to counterparts in Eastern Europe including the Ukraine and Moldova.

Maj George McFarland said the unit would expand in future, continuing to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community.

But he emphasised that the rich heritage of the antecedent regiments was also important – and that veterans of campaigns past remained a vital part of the military family.

Maj McFarland added: “We are one of the biggest Army Reserve battalions in the UK.”



Getting technical

BUILDING strong relationships with employers in Northern Ireland – and an emphasis on developing skills that can be transferred to civvy street – are key to the success of the Reserve in Northern Ireland.

Maj Mark Brotherston, officer commanding 157 Divisional Support Company, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers said many businesses saw the value of allowing staff to volunteer in the military.

He commented: “Ultimately, we believe that the uptake of Reserve service is adding to Northern Ireland PLC – it is a small place and we are looking to contribute to the economy.

“Several REME personnel served during the years of Op Banner but we are now seeing soldiers who were not on the deployment – and are very much influenced by Afghanistan.”

Maj Brotherston said 157 Company now represented the REME Reserve in Northern Ireland – the corps’ presence has been consolidated into the unit in recent years.

As well as packing a punch in terms of operational experience its troops – who are drawn from across the region’s communities – have been involved in a raft of projects benefiting people living in Northern Ireland. They also work as ambassadors for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Fuel for thought

A SPECIALIST unit dedicated to keeping fellow soldiers moving has been proving its potential after going through an extraordinary transformation over the past three years.

The Reservists from 152 (North Irish) Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps are unique, being the only group of soldiers dedicated to handing fuel and moving it to where it is needed in the field.

With its heart at Palace Barracks in Belfast, the unit is continuing to develop its capabilities and will be rehearsing interoperability with American allies at Fort Stewart, Georgia, later in 2018.

The regiment’s adjutant Capt Toby Hartle highlighted that making the changes in a relatively short time had been a significant achievement.

Just a decade ago it was responsible for military ambulances before moving to more general transport duties.

Capt Hartle emphasised: “We reached full operating capability in October last year and the unit is now the largest single entity of petroleum operators in the British Army.”

The regiment packs a punch for its relatively modest size. Built around four squadrons – two of which operate tankers – its personnel can be called on to support operations and exercises where needed.

Using the joint operational fuel system, which effectively unpacks to create a deployable liquid bunker, the soldiers have an impressive reach, pushing well forward to assist their colleagues at the front.

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20 MISSILE ATTACKS

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‘This is not professional’

I WAS alarmed by the British Army’s recruitment video, where a young soldier stops marching on patrol to carry out his prayers.

In my opinion this is a breach of the Army service test that we all abide by as well as elements of current military annual training test regulations.

How are we to keep command and control when there are advertisements such as this suggesting that it’s fine to stop a patrol, remove your personal protective equipment, drink from an unknown water source and carry out prayer while the rest of the patrol look on and even turn off their radio so as not to disturb the young man?

This is not total professionalism.

Surely there are better ways to show the Army’s policies of equality, diversity and inclusion than this. – **Name and address supplied**

Maj Michael Mahoney, SO2 Marketing, Recruiting Group, replies: The current recruiting environment is uniquely challenging, with a reducing population, changing demographics, and the lowest unemployment levels for 40 years.

Additionally, the Army is seen by many to be intimidating, unobtainable and populated by negative stereotypes.

With that in mind, the current recruiting campaign is designed to demonstrate that the modern British Army is tolerant, respectful, fair and human, and that it supports you physically and mentally.

Consequently, all the adverts feature real Servicemen and women in scenarios that represent their

experiences of military life.

The clip that you refer to shows a team of soldiers during a tactical pause on exercise. They use the halt to attend to some personal administration, which includes taking the opportunity to pray.

Before the individual does this, he performs the special pre-prayer ablutions, known as wudhu, which includes washing the mouth, rather than drinking.

Tactical pauses on an exercise are the decision of the commander on the ground; he or she decides what level of personal administration is appropriate for the scenario.

In this instance, it obviously includes the decision to allow a soldier to remove his protective gear – just as on other occasions it might include a decision to make a brew – although if you look carefully you will notice the tactical positioning of sentries.

There is no breach of training regulations or the service test, real or implied.

Indeed, I would argue the opposite: the advert shows a practical demonstration of the Army’s commitment to its values and standards by illustrating the team’s respect for others.

It also represents the Army Leadership Code, which states, “teams that embrace diversity... are always stronger for it”.

Therefore, far from undermining the commander, it shows her actively exercising command and control, with a demonstration of effective and inclusive leadership that we should all aspire to.

“TALKBACK”

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.

✉ mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

🐦 [@soldiermagazine](https://twitter.com/soldiermagazine)

“I was alarmed by the recruitment video”

USING ART TO ESCAPE THE DARK

● WE have heard lots about the negatives surrounding post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) but I recently met a veteran whose experience of this condition has driven him to produce some incredible works of art.

Walt Freudenau is a former Royal Artillery soldier who made a stunning contribution to a civic project in Macclesfield that is to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

His transformation of a conference room into a trench overlooking a battlefield (pictured below) is incredible.

Walt told me he finds comfort and solace from his creative work and that if he gets into a dark place he throws himself into his art and it really helps.

"Otherwise I'm just a typical squaddie who wishes he was back with the lads," he said.

I hope his example shows other sufferers that as dark as life can get away from the Service, there is always something that can help.

– Cpl Mark Pattison, MPGS



**GOT A GRIPE?
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BMI is not fit for purpose

THE popular image of a British soldier is one of near-perfect physical prowess and the Army's high physical standards help reinforce this.

However, it is becoming increasingly common for personnel to receive Army general administrative action (AGAI) due to their body mass index (BMI) being too high, regardless of their physical ability.

Admittedly, weight gain is a national problem – with almost two-thirds of the UK's population reportedly being overweight or obese.

But I recently came across a warrant officer who completes all his mandatory annual fitness tests (putting some younger soldiers to shame), but due to his height and build has a BMI above the so-called normal level.

This has resulted in him receiving an AGAI and given three months to reduce his body mass – he has been ordered to attend remedial physical training.

The problem with this type of action is that it could cause severe negative effects such as eating disorders, which can produce an array of other physical, mental and emotional issues.

These could follow certain individuals far beyond their Army careers.

What can be done to help people like this and how can we change the old "too fat to fight" mindset within our higher echelons? – **Name and address supplied**

Dr Nicola Sides, SO2 Health Psychology (Lifestyles), Army Headquarters, replies: The first thing to acknowledge is the difference between BMI and body composition measurement (BCM).

Caution should be exercised when using the former as it does not relate to fatness or distribution of fat, which is linked to health risk.

Being a soldier is a physically demanding occupation so when using this indicator some personnel can be classified as overweight due to their muscle mass.

This is why the Armed Forces follow National Institute for Health and Care Excellence best practice guidelines and use BCM as a rule, which also takes into consideration the waist circumference.

We do this because part of the Army's duty of care is to look after its soldiers' health.

An increased BCM measurement not only puts an individual at a higher risk of suffering physical and mental health issues but also of medical downgrading.

It indicates a greater likelihood of increased medical care costs in the future and a reduced ability to work. These have serious implications for both the individual and the Army.

With regards to treatment, you assume that by asking a person to reduce their weight they are at risk of developing an eating disorder but this is very rarely the case. Such a condition usually stems from a mental health issue not from changing behaviour with regard to diet and exercise.

However, it shouldn't be ignored so when advice is offered it's important to use the appropriate language such as "reaching a healthy BCM" rather than weight loss. This can give personnel a target to reach rather than seeking continual losses.

The Army should always use BCM rather than BMI to assess an individual's health risk and respond in accordance with the Armed Forces weight management policy.

“
It could
cause
negative
effects
”



Feeling the blues on tailoring

AFTER commissioning from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst young officers receive a grant that supposedly covers the cost of tailoring and clothing purchases before they arrive at their regiment.

But there is no loan scheme for number ones or blues tunics.

I have been in regiment for two-and-a-half years and while I have worn my mess dress (for which I did receive a loan) about eight times, I have worn my blues twice a week as orderly officer and every single day when numbers of my

colleagues are low.

There is no option to wear our multi-terrain pattern clothing or number twos.

Captains who are posted to Sandhurst as platoon commanders do receive a grant for blues, however – presumably because a lot of cap badges don't require them while at regiment.

Why then can this grant not be extended? I wear mine far more than a platoon commander at Sandhurst does but unlike them I'm left out of pocket.

I'm a cavalry officer and there is a notion that we are made of money but

“I'm left out of pocket”

£1,000 for a piece of uniform that others get a grant for feels a bit harsh. – [Name and address supplied](#)

Lt Col (ret'd) Kestrel Simson, Ceremonial and Operational and Service Awards, Army Headquarters, replies: On commissioning both Regular and Reserve officers receive an initial outfit grant (IOG) which they can use to purchase uniforms and associated accoutrements.

This is because the Army requires them to be worn when ordered but they are uneconomic to provide as issued items.

These include regimental mess dress and items to complete the number two dress uniform, such as hats, belts and shoes.

The IOG is not intended to provide a number one dress (blues) jacket to all officers.

I am aware that some regiments, particularly cavalry, do require their orderly officers to wear this outfit for their evening duties but there is nothing in Queen's Regulations or other Army policy documents that states they have to.

It is therefore a regimental requirement, not an Army one. The Service cannot provide grants or loans to cover the traditions or styles of individual regiments.

When the Army does require personnel to wear number one dress, such as officers posted to Sandhurst, military advisers to senior officers or Corps of Army Music musicians, the Service provides either an additional grant or issues the uniform.

'WHY AM I CHARGED MORE FOR THE SAME PROPERTY?'

● RANKS from private to corporal pay the same rate for single living accommodation (SLA), as do NCOs and warrant officers.

But junior and field officers pay different rates, with majors like myself (and those above) paying an extra £489 for grade one accommodation, despite often living in the same type and size of housing as those paying less.

So why are we being charged more for nothing? Effectively this extra payment amounts to a rank-specific levy on my salary. – [Name and address supplied](#)

Col Nathan Sempala-Ntege, Assistant Head of Personal Services, responds: The daily charge for accommodation and utilities is not based on rank but on the type and grade of the room you

occupy, and SLA type is determined by several factors including room size.

Service personnel are generally provided with accommodation based on their eligibility by rank.

However, if there is pressure on accommodation this housing can be allocated on availability, in which case the charge raised is that for the grade of room occupied.

If you have been allocated a junior officer's type of SLA as opposed to a senior officer's suite, then you should be paying for the room you are in – the £489 you refer to is the difference between the two.

If you believe you are being incorrectly charged, contact your unit administration staff.



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Other Schools Results		
5	QE College	85%
17	Faculty of QE	77%
68	Christ's Hospital Sch	57%
81	Monmouth School	55%
	Cheltenham College	55%
85	Bromsgrove School	54%
	Dauntsey's School	50%
	Dean Close School	49%
114	Kingswood School	48%
143	Kingham Hill School	45%
	Monkton Combe	42%
	Gordon's School	36%
	King's School Bruton	34%
	Welbeck College	34%
	King's Coll Taunton	31%
239	Stamford School	30%
	Millfield School	25%
	Barnard Castle School	21%
271	Licensed Vict Ascot	16%

If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, top ten academics a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, amazing sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects and first class confidence and self assurance. If you want the best for your child, and to stand a chance of achieving most of this list, we believe you would need to pick one of the top 10 UK Independent boarding schools as ranked by the Daily Telegraph. BUT, most importantly of all, we unashamedly also offer TLC - tender, loving care!



UK's Top 20 Independent Schools 2017 - % A*/A A-Level (Daily Telegraph)

Ranking of Schools taking boarders			
Nationally Ranking all type schools			
		% A* / A A-Level	
1	1	Cardiff Sixth Form College	91%
	2	Perse School, Cambridge	87%
2	3	Westminster School, London	86%
	4	King's College School (KCS)	86%
3	5	Queen Ethelburga's College	85%
	6	Guildford Girls High School	85%
4	7	Concord College, Shrewsbury	84%
	8	City of London Girls School	84%
	9	Haberdashers' Aske's Boys	84%
	10	St John's College, Cardiff	83%
	11	King Edward's Birmingham	82%
	12	Magdalen College, Oxford	80%
	13	North London Collegiate Sch	79%
	14	Royal Grammar, Guildford	78%
	15	Alleyn's School, Dulwich	77%
	16	Haberdashers' Aske's Girls	77%
5	17	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	77%
6	18	Brighton College, Brighton	76%
7	19	St Mary's School Ascot, Ascot	75%
	20	Hampton School, Hampton	73%



On course for eviction notice

WITH very real retention issues facing the Armed Forces, isn't it time a more informed approach is taken on housing?

As a unit welfare warrant officer I have dealt with numerous difficulties in this area, but one stands out – retaining Service family accommodation (SFA) when spouses are on educational courses.

JSP 464 states that this housing should continue to be available when there is a realistic expectation the course will be completed during their soldier's current posting, but many assignments of senior NCOs and above are set at three years or less.

So if their partners undertake a three-

year university degree where does that leave them?

Some courses are transferrable but many others are not.

A colleague of mine recently fell foul of this policy and received an aggressively written 28-day eviction notice.

After contacting Occupancy Services he was told he could stay in his SFA as "non-entitled", thus eliminating any home-to-duty expenses.

He was also told that if he did stay on he would have to do so at a continued 28-day notice to move, and would not get his removals paid for at the end.

I think we can all agree that these ultimatums are compelling and cause

“My colleague fell foul of the policy”

personnel to move, creating additional stress and unhappiness when faced with travel and child schooling issues.

– Name and address supplied

Col Nathan Sempala-Ntege, Assistant Head, Personal Services, responds: The key consideration is that the purpose of SFA, and the basis for the accommodation subsidy we receive, is to meet the need for mobile personnel rather than to provide geographic stability for spouses' education or careers.

Also, in many areas this housing is limited and every retention granted means that someone posted into that location may have to accept substitute Service family accommodation or SFA somewhere other than their new station.

This is why the criteria for retention of these properties is restricted (key stages of a child's education, another move within 11 months or on the basis of exceptional welfare need).

Allowing such a measure to also support spouses' education could lead to significant shortages in particular locations and unfairly disadvantage others.

That said, where it is possible we will try to support these aspirations.

For example, policy was amended three years ago so that where a spouse has started a course expecting to complete it during their serving partner's tour and he or she is posted early, retention of SFA can be granted.

And where availability permits, a licence to occupy this housing on a surplus basis can be granted.

Occupancy is on an eligible, not entitled, basis – meaning that a mid-assignment move at public expense would not ordinarily be covered.

However, in your colleague's case it should not lead to a loss of home-to-duty allowance; he should contact his unit administration office about this.

On receipt of an assignment order there is a requirement to submit an application for this housing, even if this is to formalise continued occupation of the same property when reassigned to the same location.

When personnel do not follow that process, they can be identified as an over-stayer, leading to receipt of a letter as your colleague did.

This is done to ensure maximum SFA availability for those posted into a given location.

'WILL I ENDANGER MY PENSION BY LEAVING EARLY?'

● I HAVE served for more than 20 years on a versatile engagement (VEng) and am thinking of putting in a notice to terminate very shortly.

On JPA I can set a leaving date so that I can start my resettlement preparations.

However, my chain of command have told me I must wait until June 2018 when I will reach my 21-year point.

Is this correct and if so why is there an option on JPA to set your own termination date?

And if I put in my notice in now would I endanger my pension? – Name and address supplied

Maj Ali Smith, SO2 Soldier Policy, Army Headquarters, replies: As you joined the Army prior to 2005 you may have pensionable service on three schemes.

Certain benefits from these are only payable after completing

22 years' pensionable service, so before applying to leave you should confirm that you will receive the pension you expect.

Go to the website www.gov.uk/armed-forces-pension-calculator to get an estimate and download a pension forecast request (form 12).

This only provides a useful estimate so obtain a full forecast.

All Service personnel are entitled to one in any 12-month period free of charge.

Further assistance is also provided by the Forces Pension Society.

Once you are content with your entitlement, you can use JPA to apply for early termination.

There is a JPA self service user guide to assist you with this.

Entitlement to resettlement depends on length of service, with the full policy detailed in JSP 534.



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Ben Moore, Oakham, Leicestershire.



DIARY

March 13-31: Soldier on, performed by the Soldiers' Arts Academy, at the Playground Theatre, London. Written by veteran Jonathan Lewis, the play covers issues affecting those leaving the Forces. Visit www.theplaygroundtheatre.london for details and further tour dates.

April 29: New memorial stone to be unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum, dedicated to those who served in The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire and its antecedents The West Yorkshire Regiment and The East Yorkshire Regiment. Tickets available via the regimental association.

May 5: Stoke-on-Trent Military Tattoo, in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity, at King's Hall, Kingsway. Doors open at 1730. Tickets are £10 from Music Mania, Hanley on 01782 206000. Information on VIP packages available on 01952 674323.

May 22 and 27: Guided walk at the National Memorial Arboretum National Forest Walking Festival. Admission £3.



DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

Armed Forces Buddhist Society: Chaplain 020 7414 3411 www.afbs-uk.org

Armed Forces Christian Union: 01252 311221; www.afcu.org.uk

Armed Forces Muslim Association: Chaplain 020 7414 3252; www.afma.org.uk

Armed Services Advice Project: 0808 800 1007; www.adviceasap.org.uk

Army Families Federation: 01264 382324; mil 94391 2324; www.aff.org.uk

Army LGBT Forum: www.armylgbt.org.uk; chair@armylgbt.org.uk

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society: www.armybirding.org.uk

Army Welfare Service: 01904 882053; www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support

Big White Wall: www.bigwhitewall.com

Blesma, The Limbless Veterans: 020 8590 1124; www.blesma.org

Blind Veterans UK: (formerly St Dunstan's) 020 7723 5021; www.blindveterans.org.uk

Care After Combat: www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership: 020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk

Combat Stress: 01372 841600; www.combatstress.org.uk

Defence Humanists: www.defencehumanists.org.uk

Erskine: 0141 814 4569; www.erskine.org.uk

Family Escort Service: 020 7463 9249

Felix Fund – the bomb disposal charity: 07713 752901 www.felixfund.org.uk

Forcesline: UK – 0800 731 4880; Germany – 0800 1827 395; Cyprus – 080 91065; Falklands – #6111; from operational theatres – Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) – 0044 1980 630854

Forces Pension Society: 020 7820 9988

Help for Heroes: 0845 673 1760 or 01980 846 459; www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Heroes Welcome: www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround: www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01252 787574

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group): www.mutualsupport.org.uk

National Ex-Services Association: www.nesa.org.uk

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office: 24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853; www.ngvfa.org.uk

Poppyscotland: 0131 557 2782; www.poppyscotland.org.uk

Regular Forces' Employment Association: 0121 236 0058; www.rfea.org.uk

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

Royal British Legion: 0808 802 8080; www.britishlegion.org.uk

Royal British Legion Scotland: 0131 550 1583; www.legionscotland.org.uk

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre: 01622 795900; www.rbli.co.uk

Scottish Veterans' Residences: 0131 556 0091; www.svronline.org

Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services: 01748 833797; www.spaces.org.uk

SSAFA: 0845 1300 975; www.ssafa.org.uk

Stoll: 020 7385 2110; info@stoll.org.uk; www.stoll.org.uk

The Not Forgotten Association: 020 7730 2400 www.nfassociation.org

The Poppy Factory: 020 8940 3305; www.poppyfactory.org

The Royal Star & Garter Homes: 020 8481 7676; www.starandgarter.org

The Veterans Charity: 01753 653772; info@veteranscharity.org.uk

Troop Aid: 0121 711 7215 or 07734 384260

uk4u Thanks!: 01798 812081; www.uk4u.org

Veterans Welfare Service: 0808 1914 218 (from the UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas) www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service



INTELLIGENCE

The following Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs and Defence Information

Notices can be found online at www.armynet.mod.uk

ABN 24/18: All arms and services late entry applications

ABN 23/18: Continuity of education allowance sixth form reapplication

ABN 22/18: Changes to Field Army C2 structures as a result of Broadway phase one

ABN 21/18: Flexible service available from 2019

ABN 20/18: The Army Dependents' Trust

ABN 19/18: The Army brand

ABN 18/18: Potential officer development programme

ABN 17/18: Grand Military Gold Cup Day 2018

ABN 16/18: Mediation advice in bullying, harassment and discrimination Service complaints

ABN 15/18: Patrouille Des Glaciers

DIN 2018DIN01-026: MoD ex-gratia payments in lieu of maternity allowance

DIN 2018DIN01-024: Increase in lifetime allowance – budget 2017

DIN 2018DIN01-023: 60th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes

DIN 2018DIN01-022: Application for late entry commission – all arms and services

DIN 2018DIN01-021: The 67th International Military Protestant Convention, June 21-24 – Mejanne-le-Clap Gard, France

DIN 2018DIN01-020: Armed Forces continuity of education allowance – sixth form reapplication

DIN 2018DIN01-019: Armed Forces pension scheme 2005 medical officer and dental officer bonus payments

DIN 2018DIN01-018: The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Championships – Wimbledon 2018

DIN 2018DIN01-017: Universal infant free school meals

DIN 2018DIN03-003: The handling of flying complaints from members of the public in the UK

DIN 2018DIN04-025: Standardisation of unit operational medical holdings – 300 Module

DIN 2018DIN04-024: Phased replacement of Wedge Bellows spirometer NSN 6515-99-513-1961 with Vitalograph Alpha NSN 6515-99-667-8773

DIN 2018DIN04-022: Procedures for requesting a visit to Queen Elizabeth

class aircraft carriers

DIN 2018DIN04-021: Operational infrastructure programme 60-day demand lead times

DIN 2018DIN04-019: Nato functional area services software

DIN 2018DIN04-018: BATCIS declaration of obsolete – bag, individual equipment NSN 8465-99-425-5754, DMC EZPRR

DIN 2018DIN04-017: Front-line command actions and the impact on surveillance and target acquisition support

DIN 2018DIN04-016: SA80 inventory rebalancing

DIN 2018DIN04-015: Deletion and disposal of obsolete NSNs on the heavy and littoral platforms. Specific to DMCs 9ETS, 4ETSA, BRV

DIN 2018DIN04-014: Planned withdrawal of support and disposal of obsolete items from Artillery System project team

DIN 2018DIN04-013: Self-help infrastructure work

DIN 2018DIN05-005: Rebrand of the ACDS (Log Ops) directorate to Defence Logistics (Def Log)

DIN 2018DIN06-014: Defence Safety Authority generic duty holder course

DIN 2018DIN06-013: Firemark fire extinguishers to replace current Chubb

fire extinguishers

DIN 2018DIN06-012: Publication of JSP 800 Vol 4a *Dangerous Goods by Air Regulations*, version 4

DIN 2018DIN06-011: The Defence Accident Investigation Branch

DIN 2018DIN06-009: Defence Annual Road Safety Award

DIN 2018DIN06-008: Defence infrastructure fire standards – relating to asset and property protection

DIN 2018DIN07-031: Courses at the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre in 2018

DIN 2018DIN07-029: Royal Navy Warfare Training Group air defence, ASW, EW, IW and Sky Siren courses open to a joint audience 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN07-028: Defence Centre of Training Support courses April 2018 to March 2019

DIN 2018DIN07-026: The operational shooting policy (formerly Army operational shooting policy, volume four – AFV live firing)

DIN 2018DIN07-025: Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2018, October 12-21

DIN 2018DIN07-024: Unit recovery officer courses for Army personnel, 2018 onwards

DIN 2018DIN07-022: 2018 Inter-Services cyber network defence challenge

DIN 2018DIN07-020: Defence foreign language training courses for training year 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN07-019: Applications for evaluator aircrew courses at the Empire Test Pilots' School

DIN 2018DIN07-018: Number 49 aerosystems course applications

DIN 2018DIN08-002: Insurance arrangements for unit-organised community engagement events, open days, families days and other functions

DIN 2018DIN09-002: Armed Forces Day – June 30

DIN 2018DIN10-009: British Army Motorsports Association – navigation events 2018

DIN 2018DIN10-008: Ex Solent Venture (Army Sailing Association Regatta) 2018

DIN 2018DIN10-006: Services Offshore Regatta 2018 – notice of race

REUNIONS

The Army Dog Unit NI (RAVC) Association will hold its annual general meeting and reunion in Burton-on-Trent on May 26-27. For further information and to register contact John Tucker on johnatucker70@yahoo.com or 07734 113077.

The 16 Regiment RA old comrades association will hold a reunion – including two-course meal and entertainment – at the Wortley House Hotel, Rowland Road, Scunthorpe. Cost £25 per head. Payment must be made in advance, either directly to the HSBC 16 Regt OCA bank account (number 82118726, sort code 40-40-24) or by sending a cheque to treasurer Guss Goodall at 18 Dunstan Hill, Kirton in Lindsey, DN22 4DU.

ROADSHOWS

The Army Engagement Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a reception, is followed by a presentation, questions and culminates with refreshments.

There will be a range of military personnel on hand to answer any of your queries. Call 01276 412880 or email your name and address to armymediacomm-aeg-mailbox@mod.uk with the event you are interested in attending.

March: 1, Milton Keynes; 8, Bridgend; 13, Medway; 22, Bournemouth

April: 17, Inverness; 18, Aberdeen; 19, Dunfermline; 26, Brighton

NO. 916 JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?



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ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY

From 1 April 2018 weekly prize money will be increasing from £25,000 to £30,000

6 January 2018

1st Prize (£10,000): WO2 C Wilson, 250 Sqn, 2 Med Regt, Kingston upon Hull. 2nd Prize (£5,000): Cpl H Trevor, ATDU, Wareham. 3rd Prize (£4,000): Capt L Sumner, 174 Pro Coy, 3 RMP, Telford. 4th Prize (£2,000): Cpl D Sinnott, 26 Engr Regt, Tidworth. 5th Prize (£1,000): WO2 J Mayoh, HQ RSA, Larkhill. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): WO2 K Murphy, 1 ITB, ITC, Catterick Garrison; SSgt M O'Brien Jones, ASLS, Pirbright; SSgt C Cutter, RDG LAD REME, Catterick Garrison; SSgt J Miller, 22 Engr Regt, Tidworth; Sgt A Usher, 258 Sqn, 30 Signal Regt, Nuneaton; Cpl E Langston, D Sqn, QRH, BFPO 16; Sgt N Hodson, 34 Bty, 14 Regt RA, Salisbury; Fus D Miller, C Coy, 1 R Welsh, Tidworth; LCpl J Colbeck, 228 Sqn, 3 Signal Regt, Bulford Camp; LBdr A Keville, 10 Bty, 47 Regt RA, Larkhill; Pte J Batterbee, B Coy, 1 R Anglian, London; LCpl

K Jacobs, 219 Sqn, 2 Signal Regt, York; LCpl T Ingham, 110 Pro Coy, 1 RMP, BFPO 16; Maj C Lethbridge, 127 Sqn, 16 Med Regt, Colchester; Maj T Badham, 1 Dev, D Pers, Andover.

13 January 2018

1st Prize (£10,000): Capt J Eaves, 3 Rifles, Edinburgh; 2nd Prize (£5,000): Cpl G Boycott, 280 Sqn, 162 Regt RLC, Swindon; 3rd Prize (£4,000): Name withheld, RAF St Athan, Vale of Glamorgan. 4th Prize (£2,000): Tpr J Ward, ARTD, Stafford. 5th Prize (£1,000): Pte K Maniak, Army Foundation College, Harrogate. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): LCpl K Gurung, Sp Coy, 1 RGR, Folkstone; WO1 J Rhodes, HQ 8 Engr Bde, Camberley; WO2 G Weatherston, 124 Sqn, 71 Engr Regt, Cumbernauld; Cpl A Pearson, 1 MI Bn, Catterick Garrison; Cpl I Gurung, 23 Bty, 29 Cdo Regt RA, Plymouth; Cpl A Stephen, 202 Sqn, 3 Signal Regt, Salisbury; Cpl M Bramley, MPGS, Lichfield; Capt P Rummung, 1 R Welsh, Tidworth; LCpl M Hodgkinson, HQ Coy, 2 R Anglian, BFPO 58; Capt E Walker, B Coy, 5 Rifles, Salisbury; 2nd Lt G Usher, T Bty, 12 Regt RA, Emsworth; Pte O Pearce, Sp Coy, 2 R Anglian, BFPO 58; Pte S Hughes, B Coy, 2

PWRR, Cottesmore; Pte S Carrick, 26 Engr Regt, Tidworth; OCdt S Hayes, RMAS, Camberley.

20 January 2018

1st Prize (£10,000): Sgt L Reid, DBS Secretariat, London. 2nd Prize (£5,000): Pte J Turnbull, 8 Bn REME, DSEME, Chippenham. 3rd Prize (£4,000): Capt P Batley, 39 Engr Regt, Forres. 4th Prize (£2,000): Capt D Wall, HQ 29 EOD and Search Gp, Aldershot. 5th Prize (£1,000): LCpl S Browning, MPGS, RM Poole, Hamworthy. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): Maj M Woodward, JSCSC, ICSC(L), Shrivvenham; Cpl S Knight, Sp Coy, 5 Rifles, Salisbury; Capt V Sutherland, 54 AEC, HQ ETS, BFPO 58; Sgt G Smith, A Coy, 2 Lancs, Preston; Sgt M Hill, G Bty, 7 Para RHA, Colchester; Sgt M Bennett, 1 WG, Pirbright; Gdsm P Clements, A Coy, 1 IG, Hounslow; Capt S Jones, M Bty, 3 RHA, Newcastle upon Tyne; Gnr M Wookey, 16 Bty, 26 Regt RA, BFPO 113; Cpl S Dewan, B Coy, 1 RGR, Folkstone; Pte M Purvis, RR (N), ARTD, RG, Strensall; Pte C Coleman, Sp Coy, 2 Yorks, Catterick; Pte S Mason, 9 Sqn, 7 Regt RLC, Cottesmore; Maj S Hempsey, RCDM, Edgbaston; Maj G Brocklehurst,

Inf Battle School, Brecon.

27 January 2018

1st Prize (£10,000): Pte H Thapa, 2 Sqn, 1 Regt RLC, Bicester. 2nd Prize (£5,000): Pte A Bailey, Sp Coy, 2 Para, Colchester. 3rd Prize (£4,000): LSgt T Bates, C Coy, 1 Coldm Gds, Windsor. 4th Prize (£2,000): Maj J Cartwright-Terry, Army Foundation College, Harrogate. 5th Prize (£1,000): Sgt G Loveridge, Sp Sqn, 14 Signal Regt (EW), Haverfordwest. 15 Consolation prizes (£200 each): LCpl T Hallett, 95 Sqn, 9 Regt RLC, Chippenham; Cpl M Chadwick, 2 Sqn, 11(RSS) Signal Regt, Blandford Forum; LSgt L Humphries, C Coy, 1 Gren Gds, Aldershot; LCpl M Hughes, B Coy, 1 IG, Hounslow; LCpl A Woollam, Outreach Team, Beaconside; Cpl P Howell, Sp Coy, 1 R Welsh, Tidworth; Lt R McGrath, 2 ITB, Catterick Garrison; Spr B Doolan, 1 Sqn, 21 Engr Regt, Ripon; OCdt H Ziegler, RMAS, Camberley; LCpl N D'Rosario, 1 Coy, 1 CS Bn REME, Catterick Garrison; Pte K McClean, 31 Sqn, 3 Regt RLC, Abingdon; Lt Col A Craig, DES ComLand, VST, Bristol; Maj C Griffiths, Whitchurch, Hampshire; Maj M Morrissey, A Sqn, RL, Catterick; LCpl R Keeler, MPGS Manston, Ramsgate.

REVIEWS

TOP GEAR

SMOOTH OPERATOR

The Velar is striking... but is its beauty just skin deep?

> THERE aren't many cars that look as at home in a country club car park as they do traversing a muddy mountain trail, but the Range Rover Velar is one of them.

Designed to fill the gap between the compact Range Rover Evoque and imposing Range Rover Sport, this is undoubtedly one of the most elegant looking sport utility vehicles on the market – even the door handles retract when the car is locked to make the bodywork's lines look as clean as possible.



P60

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TECH SPEC

Price:

Base from £44,575
S from £50,165
R-Dynamic from £52,585

Dimensions:

Length – 4,803mm;
Width – 1,930mm;
Height – 1,685mm.

Towing capacity:

2,400 to 2,500kg

CO2 emissions:

142-214g/km

Economy (combined):

30.1–52.5mpg

Most people will fork out for one of these smooth operators simply because of its image and looks.

But in typical Range Rover style there's a good dose of practicality on offer, too.

The Velar can comfortably seat five people and the rear bench splits three ways to accommodate awkwardly shaped loads.

The boot offers an impressive 1,731 litres of space when the back seats are folded down and a useful 558 litres (632 litres without a spare wheel) when they're up.

The cabin is also as plush as a gentleman's club but features a splash of high-tech gadgetry up front where two ten-inch touchscreens are used to direct most of the major controls.

These screens have replaced most of the traditional buttons and switches, with the exception of the headlights and windows.

As a result, you'll need the skills of an Apache pilot to find your way around the bewildering variety of entertainment functions and driving modes such as the terrain response system – unless you've taken time out to read the phone directory-sized user's manual.

The upper screen primarily handles audio, navigation and vehicle settings while the lower display swaps between climate controls and driving mode, which you can alter for sand, mud, grass, gravel and snow.

You even use the touchscreens to alter the sharpness of the steering, throttle and gearshift.

The Dynamic-R model we tried was

equipped with enough gadgets to put the Batmobile to shame – it even had adjustable air suspension so at a flick of a switch you could hunker it down for racing around on a track or provide plenty of ground clearance to wade through floodwater.

But regardless of how wild it looks out there, you'll always feel cosy and cosseted by the leather-clad interior – our model even had seats that massage your back.

Not everything was perfect, though. The turning circle was akin to a Royal Navy aircraft carrier's and the rear parcel shelf seemed to have been transplanted from a budget hatchback.

And while most buyers will probably opt for one of the efficient diesel versions, David Attenborough certainly wouldn't have approved of the model we drove: a top-of-the-range, 380-horsepower petrol version, which barely managed 20mpg while driven sedately on B roads.

There's no denying, however, that if you want a luxurious ride with ample room for the whole family, enough performance to entertain, and something that makes you feel special whether you're off for golf at Carnoustie or climbing in the Cairngorms, the Velar fits the bill. ■

REVIEW: GRAEME MAIN, SOLDIER

VERDICT:

Elegant and practical –
a vehicle to remember

★★★★★

PICK OF THE MONTH:

THE LAST BATTLE

Endgame on the Western Front

► THE tumultuous last weeks of the Great War have all too often been glossed over and summarised in a few pages at the end of heavyweight tomes about the Verdun, Somme or Passchendaele campaigns.

If the reader is lucky there may be a chink of light in the form of a commentary on the air war or perhaps the clash of naval leviathans at Jutland.

This has been a source of personal frustration for many years. Even if you find a dedicated history that is entirely focused on the final year of the conflict, the dramatic chronology of the closing weeks are unlikely to be given the scrutiny they deserve.

At last, though, we have a book that really does these events justice.

In *The Last Battle*, Peter Hart skilfully navigates the reader through the rival national narratives that each claim credit as architects of the final victory.

Making sense of the overlapping Allied offensives, he presents a clear timeline that highlights the cumulative weight of military force imposed on the Germans on the Western Front.

It challenges the accepted view that the British and Commonwealth, French and US armies were playing the long game, holding on for the blockade-induced collapse of the German state.

The Kaiser's army was not undone by revolution or the stab in the back, but convincingly defeated in the field.

In terms of narrative, the book is easy to follow, effortlessly taking the reader from the highest political and strategic thinking down to the operational level of command, and then onto the battlefields at tactical



The Last Battle by Peter Hart is published by Profile Books and priced £25

level by means of a well-chosen thread of anecdotal accounts.

This is a fast-moving and wide-ranging period of the war that contrasts totally with the trench-bound deadlock that preceded it. And the dynamic tempo of those last weeks is conveyed through the eyes of combatants of every nationality.

The battles of Meuse-Argonne, the Canal du Nord, the Hindenburg Line, the return to Flanders and the epic struggle for the Selle, the Sambre and Mons are all described in a readable style and well illustrated with clear maps and a good collection of photographs.

If I could suggest one improvement to an otherwise exceptional book I would ask for some extra German source material and a little more from all sides at battalion and company level.

But Hart has delivered a well balanced, enlightening history that enables the reader to make sense of an exciting but potentially confusing chapter of the war. ■

REVIEW: MIKE PETERS, EX-AAC

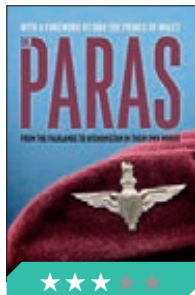
VERDICT:

A welcome examination of an oft-overlooked period

★★★★★

Picture: Imperial War Museum

BOOK RELEASES



The Paras
by Max Arthur

FROM the Falklands War through to modern day operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, more than 100 contributors

reveal what it's like to be at the tip of the British Army's spear. Major generals and private soldiers alike describe each battle in detail. If anything could have improved the book it would be the inclusion of experiences in Northern Ireland but the accounts of the lesser-known conflicts are interesting. It avoids bombastic self-indulgence and is simply each man's perception of his own personal war. Together with the *Mr Men* set, this is a must-have for any airborne bookshelf.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

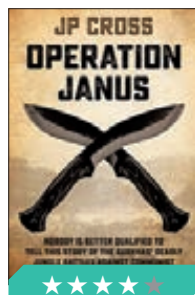


Nightfall Berlin
by Jack Grimwood

THIS novel harks back to Germany in the mid-1980s when the Cold War was intense. Maj

Tom Fox has to battle the KGB, elements of the British establishment and his own demons in a fast-paced thriller that mixes storylines and timeframes in a complex pattern. The action carries on from the author's earlier novel, *Moskva* – where leading man Fox was first introduced – adding another layer to an already multifaceted plot. It is a great read but it does demand a degree of concentration from the reader to keep up with the twists and turns.

Mark Hainge, ex-RE



Operation Janus
by JP Cross

BASED on real events witnessed by the author as a Gurkha colonel during the Malayan Emergency in

the 1950s, this novel concerns the defection of a British officer and a Gurkha battalion's operation to track him through the jungle to the HQ of the communist guerrillas. The tale has the authenticity you might expect given Cross's first-hand experience, especially when you consider the number of non-fiction works he has also penned. Though another twist or two would have been welcome, overall it delivers intrigue and suspense and ticks a lot of boxes for those interested in the legendary exploits of Nepalese troops.

Capt Henry Lidgley, AGC (SPS)



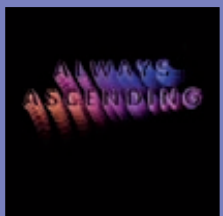
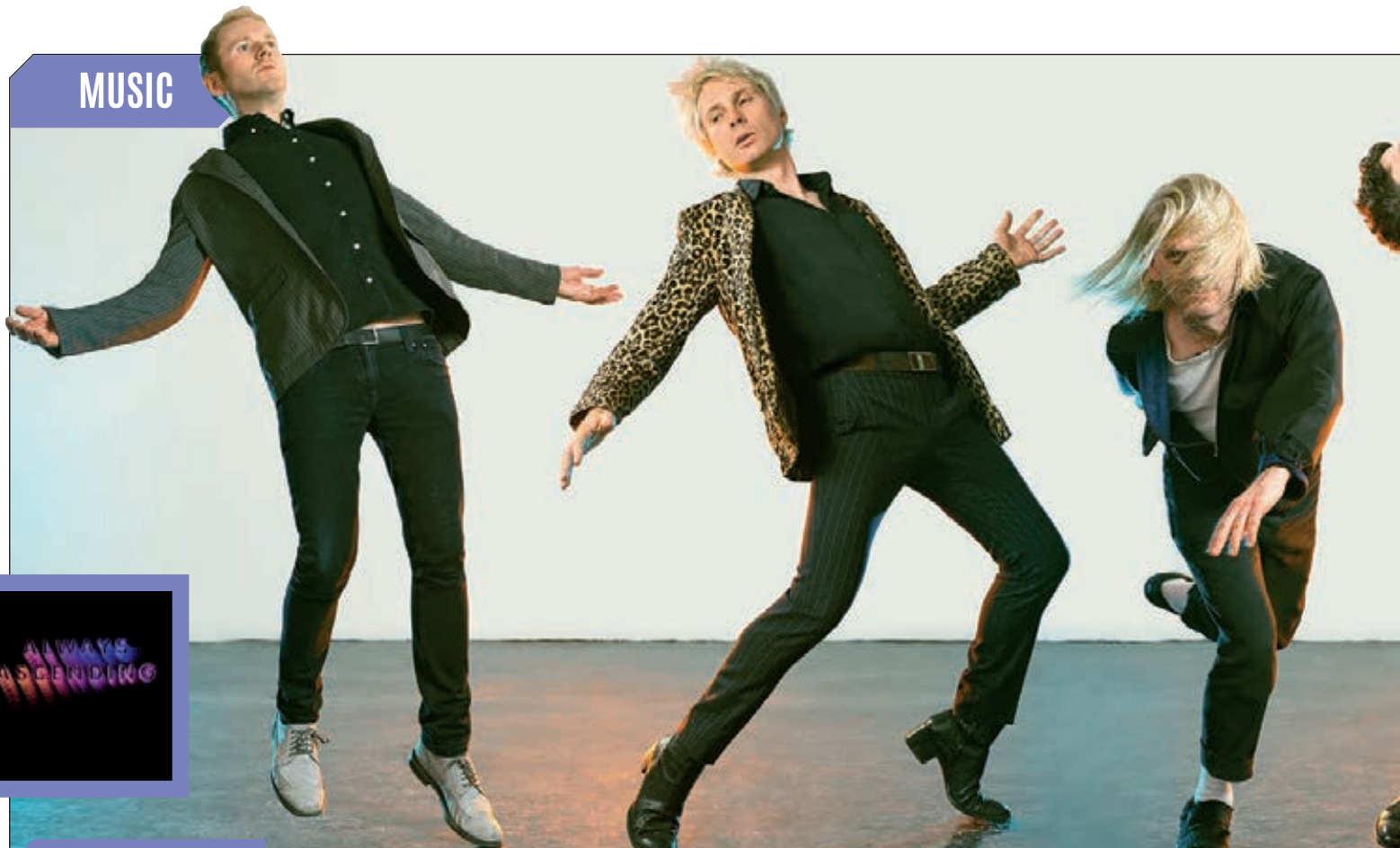
Young Hitler
by Paul Ham

THIS is a concise biographical study about one of the most fascinating and evil men in

history. It examines Adolf Hitler's childhood, formative years and his move into politics after the First World War, revealing which key events shaped him and helped to cement his extremist views. Paul Ham offers an unbiased view of the Fuehrer and the propaganda coming from the Nazi regime both before and during the war, as well as from the Allies afterwards. This is a straightforward, informative read, essential for anyone interested in military history in general and Hitler in particular.

Robert Shaw, ex-RLC

MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH:

A BAND REBORN

Scottish indie outfit chart new path

› IT has been almost 15 years since **Franz Ferdinand** burst onto the music scene with the colossal single *Take Me Out*.

The track, and the record it stemmed from, cemented their status as one of the UK's most exciting bands. But when founding member **Nick McCarthy** walked away in 2016 it seemed as though an impressive run of critically acclaimed albums and sold-out tours would be coming to an end.

But instead of calling time on their endeavours the group is embarking on a second coming, with two new members joining the fold ahead of the release of *Always Ascending*.

Working alongside producer **Philippe Zdar** they set about creating a fresh sound inspired by electro-pop and dance music, and it was a process that proved to be reinvigorating.

"We loved working with Philippe," said frontman **Alex Kapranos**. "He

understands that what is essential is the emotion; the emotion that inspired the song and the emotion that the song inspires in you on hearing it.

"It's all that matters. Everything comes from that: the sound, performance, tempo, instrumentation, even how far you stand from the microphone – everything."

The album was recorded in just a couple of weeks but had been written over the course of the preceding year somewhere in the west of Scotland.

"We all lived in the one place together," Kapranos explained. "It's remote and that's what we needed."

"We weren't just writing an LP but were creating a band, a sound, a universe. We started from zero with no expectations. It was liberating."

"From nothing, we created this new universe to inhabit, something nebulous at first that gradually took form until it felt like it had always existed."

VERDICT:
Reinvention sparks interesting new path
★★★★★

Hints of a rebirth are obvious from the outset and this is an album that leans firmly in the electro direction, although Franz Ferdinand's trademark guitars can be heard simmering away in the background.

While the sound may be slightly different the lyrics remain as thoughtful as ever, with *The Academy Award* mocking the world of celebrity and obsessions with selfies, and *Lois Lane* pondering the grim reality of middle age.

The album's title track oozes energy and vigour and further highlights can be found on *Huck and Jim* and the disco-inspired *Glimpse of Love*.

However, it would be difficult to call this a full reinvention for the band as there are elements that have been heard before and while the music hints at an exciting new dawn it fails to fully follow through on its promise. ■

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, SOLDIER

MUSIC RELEASES



Man of the Woods
by Justin Timberlake



HAVING been named as the headline act for this year's famed Super Bowl half-time show, **Justin Timberlake** was handed the ideal platform from which to launch his return to the musical spotlight. But his comeback proved far from spectacular as complaints of poor sound quality and a lack of excitement hampered what should have been a triumphant performance. Unfortunately, the underwhelming theme continues on *Man of the Woods*. This is a collection that fails to tread any new ground and proves to be rather dull as it relies on the pop, soul and gospel combination so often seen in the past. It also veers in a sickly direction, with wife **Jessica Biel** contributing to a number of tracks. One to avoid.

Richard Long, Soldier



The Time Is Now
by Craig David



HAVING seen his career as the poster boy of UK garage derailed by the brutal mocking of comedy series *Bo Selecta!*, **Craig David** is now basking in the glow of an impressive rebirth. Comeback album *Following My Intuition*, released in 2016, was his first number one since his 2000 debut and latest offering *The Time Is Now* builds on the growing momentum. The record covers a wide array of dance genres and with eight different producers on-board there is no shortage of input from those who know what it takes to create a polished pop offering. But such variety proves to be David's undoing as the singer comes across as a guest vocalist on a collaboration project, instead of being the star of his own show. There are a number highlights to enjoy but this album fails to fully deliver.

Sarah Goldthorpe, Soldier



Little Dark Age
by MGMT



US duo **MGMT** seemed destined for greatness following the release of standout singles *Time to Pretend* and *Kids* in 2008. So it was surprising to see them take a distinct backwards step on the albums that have followed since, where their detours and experimentations were not well received. Fans will be relieved to hear they have made a welcome return to form on *Little Dark Age*, a record littered with infectious pop anthems that ticks all the boxes. Opener *She Works Out Too Much* sets the tone and this impressive formula continues on the likes of *One Thing Left to Try* and *Hand it Over*. There's also great fun to be had, none more so than on the track *TSLMP*—an abbreviation for time spent looking at my phone—which delivers a gentle dig at today's screen-obsessed generation.

Richard Long, Soldier



PICK OF THE MONTH:

REX

Tale of canine IED king packs bite

➤ IT was a career move that pushed her to the limits, put her on the front line in the terrifying battle against the IED, and demanded that she place the ultimate trust in a canine companion.

But Megan Leavey would not change anything. The former corporal maintains her decision to join the US Marine Corps changed her life for the better – and the relationship the handler forged with her explosives search dog Rex during two back-to-back tours in Iraq was its high point.

Now the focus of a film based on her experiences during some of the most volatile years in the Middle Eastern country, she is delighted with the way she has been captured in celluloid.

"It was really surreal when I first saw the movie," Leavey told *Soldier*. "But I am pleased with how it has turned out and the fact that it raises awareness of working dogs."

"Rex was one of the best but you had to trust him and let him work his way."

"He was amazing at his job and as a handler he was exactly the partner you would want by your side."

Released on DVD this month and having already received critical acclaim, **Gabriela Cowperthwaite's** film



adaptation of Leavey's story is set against the backdrop of the concerted IED campaign that faced US troops in the insurgency of the mid-2000s.

Tracking her Service career from 2003-07, which followed dead-end civvy jobs and strained relationships with her parents, the plot charts her success in the dog section after a difficult start to military life.

Partnered with German Shepherd Rex, who had sunk his jaws into the arm of a previous handler and put him in hospital, the pair deploy out into the full force of a terrorist campaign.

When Leavey and her canine partner are split up after both being wounded in a harrowing contact with insurgents, the handler later embarks on a new fight to adopt him after he is retired from service – and recommended as unsuitable for re-homing.

"The movie is not a documentary and some liberties have been taken in the story's transfer to Hollywood," the 34-year-old New Yorker admitted.

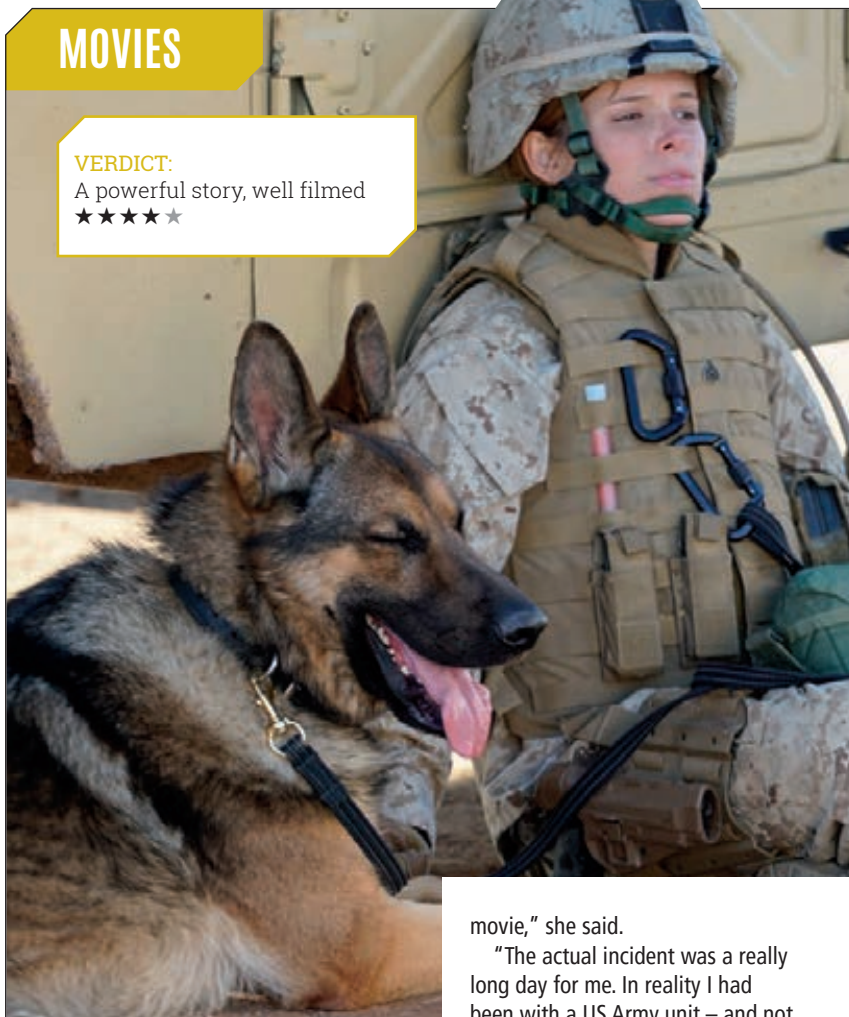


MOVIES

VERDICT:

A powerful story, well filmed

★★★★★



"I am an animal lover and there has never been a time in my life when I did not have a dog or cats around.

"When I enlisted I heard about the K9 programme in the military police – it piqued my interest but getting on it meant that I would ultimately have to finish at the top of my class."

Despite the changes made to the cinematic rendering, Leavey said it had accurately conveyed the feeling of life during her two seven-month deployments to Fallujah in 2005 and Ramadi the following year – and the atmosphere in Iraq at the time.

In particular, the scenes set in the Middle East – shot in Spain – provided an insight into the threat of IEDs and ambush as well as the daily battle against the searing summer heat.

Leavey said the sequence depicting the high-intensity contact in which she and Rex were wounded had proved suitably emotive.

"They did a good job with this in the

movie," she said.

"The actual incident was a really long day for me. In reality I had been with a US Army unit – and not the Marines – on this occasion and everything was pretty intense."

The on-screen battle is certainly tense and is one of the moments that make *Rex* stand out with a combination of a worthy story and a depiction of the Iraq campaign at its height.

A strong cast fronted by **Kate Mara** as Leavey puts in some convincing performances, and the action is well paced throughout.

At its heart, however, *Rex* is an extraordinary tale of trust between dog and handler as well as the faith placed in them by the soldiers who depended on their expertise and courage to detect lethal threats.

For Leavey, the film is also about the bonds forged in service.

"I am an only child," she concluded. "But by the time I left in 2007 I had so many brothers and sisters.

"Joining the United States Marine Corps was absolutely the best decision I ever made." ■

INTERVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, *SOLDIER*



DVD/DIGITAL RELEASES



Wings of Eagles

Out now

★★★★★

A COMPANION piece of sorts to *Chariots of Fire*, this title tells the continuing story of Eric Liddell (**Joseph Fiennes**) – he who refused to run on the sabbath. Interestingly, he spent much of his life as a missionary in China and

was placed in an internment camp by the Japanese during the Second World War. This movie chronicles Liddell's experiences at that time through the eyes of his Chinese driver. Fiennes is fine, but the rest of the film just doesn't really click and is hard to engage with emotionally.

Maj Alex Janaway, RAMC



Jigsaw

Out now

★★★★★

ONE of the highest grossing franchises of all time is back, taking Jigsaw's signature brand of twisted scenarios to the next level. Will it never end? You'd be forgiven for thinking this offering is some sort of prequel to the *Saw* films, but it certainly isn't. In fact, quite the opposite because this movie is too busy jumping around trying to tie in as many people and plots as possible to produce anything resembling a storyline. The traps are nowhere near the *Saw* standard, which will disappoint ardent fans.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

WIN



RELEASED at the start of this year, *The Man*

With the Iron Heart tells the story of of the real-life Second World War mission to kill top-ranking Nazi Reinhard Heydrich.

Based on international bestseller *HHhH* by **Laurent Binet**,

its cast includes **Jason Clarke, Rosamund Pike, Jack O'Connell, Stephen Graham, Jack Reynor** and **Mia Wasikowska**. *Soldier* has teamed up with Lionsgate Films

to offer three readers a Blu-ray film and book combination set. To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us what year *HHhH* was released. Answers to the usual address

or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by March 30.

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- FACEBOOK - Army Cycling Union (Members Only)
- MOSS - Army Cycling Union



Sports Editor: Richard Long
Photographers: Graeme Main and Peter Davies

SOLDIER SPORT



PISTE PERFORMERS >>

THE Army's winter sports stars faced their Forces rivals on the slopes of Meribel. Read about their Inter-Services successes on page 70...

Picture: Cpl Rebecca Brown, RLC



TRAIL RUNNER PRIMED FOR WORLD STAGE

ENDURANCE runner Capt Tom Evans (WG) has seen his remarkable rise in the sport rewarded with a call-up to the Team GB squad for the World Trail Running Championships.

Having claimed third spot at last year's Marathon des Sables – an event billed as the world's toughest footrace – the officer secured a place on the Ultra Trail World Tour, where he has continued his impressive run of recent form.

Evans finished fourth at the Eiger 101-kilometre race and repeated the feat at the CCC event – a 100-kilometre challenge that features a 6,500-metre climb along a route from Courmayeur in the Italian Alps to Chamonix in France, via the Swiss resort of Champex.

Such consistent performances caught the eye of the national selectors and the officer will now line up for his country at Penyalgosa, in Spain, on May 12.

"I've always wanted to be an athlete and getting selected for my country is a huge opportunity," Evans told *SoldierSport*. "I'm incredibly proud to get the call.

"We have a really strong team and want to do ourselves justice. My focus is on the process, not the outcome – if my training is right in the build-up the race will take care of itself."

Individual and collective honours will be up for grabs and the athlete is eyeing success on both fronts as his training regime continues.

"We run as individuals but it is a team event," he added. "I have goals I hope to achieve and I want to do Great Britain, the Army and Welsh Guards proud.

"If I finish fifth so be it but I'd love to be on that podium. I'll give 100 per cent and will leave no stone unturned."

At 80 kilometres in length, the World Championships boast a



**"THE
ARMY
ALLOWS
YOU TO
DO THE
BEST
YOU
CAN"**

slightly shorter distance for the Serviceman and he is predicting a swift pace once the action gets under way.

"The exact course has yet to be confirmed but it will be 50 miles with a climb of around 4,000 metres, so the ratios are fairly similar to the other races I have done," he explained.

"It will be very quick and that will suit my style of running, I'm really looking forward to the start of the race."

With such an important fixture on the horizon it would be safe to assume that Evans will be concentrating fully on the task.

But before he heads to the Iberian Peninsula he faces the small matter of The Coastal Challenge – a gruelling 230-kilometre multi-stage race across the beaches and mountains of Costa Rica.

Jungle and rainforest trails await, along with routes down highland and coastal ranges, and

the country's climate will also add to the difficulty.

"The heat and humidity will be the biggest challenge," Evans said. "I've been training in the heat chamber at St Mary's University in Twickenham (pictured) to help my body acclimatise to the conditions.

"I'm looking at this race as a really big training week. I will then come back to the UK to continue my build-up to the World Championships."

Such opportunities have been fully backed by the chain of command and Evans believes the Army forms the ideal backdrop for those looking to reach sport's elite stage.

"This is all a complete surprise to me," he added.

"I have come to the sport relatively late on but I've got another ten years of being able to run at the level I'm at now.

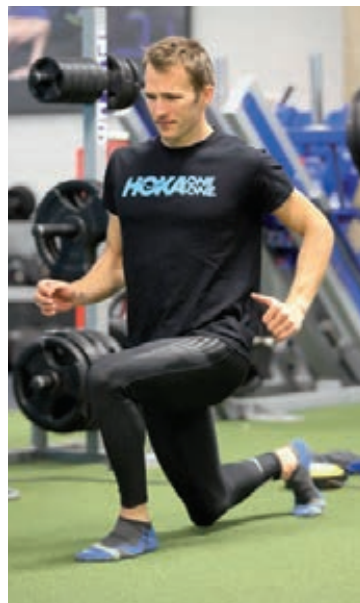
"But I could not have done it without the support of my unit and the Service, who have given me the time off I need to train and compete.

"For aspiring athletes the British Army is the place to be. It allows you to do the best you can both physically and mentally.

"A lot of results come down to mental preparation.

"Being an officer gives me the discipline and state of mind to complete incredibly difficult challenges and look after myself and my teammates.

"There are so many transferable skills." ■



COSTA RICA IN NUMBERS

LENGTH OF
THE MULTI-
STAGE
RACE IN
KILOMETRES

230

DAYS
NEEDED TO
COMPLETE
THE
GRUELLING
EVENT

6

DEGREES
CELSIUS
HEAT
AWAITING
ATHLETES
ON THE
TROPICAL
COURSE

35

HOURS, 29
MINUTES, 45
SECONDS
- THE TIME
POSTED
BY MEN'S
CHAMPION
TOM OWENS
IN THE 2017
CHALLENGE

22



MIXED FORTUNES AT MINLEY

THE absence of key athletes failed to scupper the Army women's hopes at the Inter-Services Cross-Country Championships as an inspired team effort saw them seal the collective honours.

With leading lights Capt Lauren Hall (REME) and Cpl Dani Hodgkinson (QARANC) missing, the Reds relied on their strength in depth to get the job done on a windswept wintry course at Minley.

The Royal Air Force claimed top spot in the individual standings but with debutant Lt Rosie Wilde (RA) leading the charge the Service secured the next four places to take the overall title.

"We are well practised on this course as the Army and Inter-Corps Championships were both held here," team manager WO1 Kelly Haniver (RAPTC) told *SoldierSport*.

"So we knew the girls could run well.

"Rosie is new to the team and did really well to finish

second. She came here on the back of being on exercise overnight. If that had not been the case she could have pushed harder.

"The RAF were strong this year so I was a little concerned beforehand but the girls worked well as a team to pack the top positions.

"We have massive depth in the squad. We can lose two or three athletes and still get the job done.

"Our junior runners and Reservists are now coming to the fore."

Success for the women proved to be the Army's only victory on the day as the RAF dominated proceedings in the other three races.

Their runners finished first and second in the men's senior event, with the Army claiming third spot, and strong performances throughout the field cemented the team prize.

The airmen also scooped the honours in the masters and under-23 races. ■



Pictures: Cpl/Rebecca Brown, RLC

MEDALS SHARED AT MERIBEL MEET

A RMY athletes shared the spoils with their Forces rivals during a highly competitive Inter-Services Snow Sports Championships on the slopes of Meribel.

The Alpine disciplines proved a happy hunting ground for the men's skiers, with the dynamic duo of Spr Euan Kick and Spr Duncan Kuwall (both RE) spearheading the charge toward team glory.

Kick won both the slalom and super giant slalom, as well as claiming second in the downhill and third in the giant slalom, as he was crowned the overall individual champion ahead of teammate Kuwall.

In the female competition, debutant Capt Lauren Barr (REME) found herself in a fierce battle with Royal Air Force rival Cpl Rachel Hughes but it was the latter who prevailed with

victories in the individual and team standings.

Barr secured the downhill title and was named the competition's best newcomer.

"The men's team had a bit of a fright on the second practice day when Capt Joe Williamson (KRH) broke his leg," Lt Col (ret'd) Martyn Allen, secretary of the Army Winter Sports Association, told *SoldierSport*.

"But we have real strength in depth and that showed out on the slopes.

"The ladies competition went down to the wire but Rachel Hughes was just that little bit ahead and that pushed her team to the title."

The snowboarding drew further success for the RAF as they won both the men's and women's team competitions, as well as the individual prizes.

Sgt Kris Looker (R Signals)

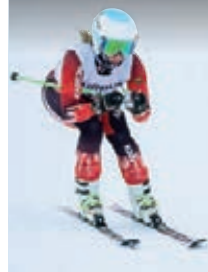
INTER-SERVICES ALPINE SKIING

MEN

ARMY

WOMEN

RAF



and Maj Jessica Drew (RE) were the runners-up, while Lt Jo Szczglowska (RE) was named best newcomer.

The Royal Navy claimed the telemark team crown, with 2nd Lt Robbie Houston (Scots DG) securing the individual title.

"We were slightly disappointed to only win one of the five team prizes on offer," Allen added.

"We probably had some of the best conditions for ten to 15 years and the snow was fantastic.

"The weather over the last three or four seasons hasn't been great so it was good to get back on track."

The Army reigned supreme in the Nordic events as they defeated the Senior Service to win all five team trophies.

The Inter-Services action continues this month at the Ice Sports Championships in the Austrian resort of Igls. ■



Pictures: Dominic King



SLIDERS HIT THE ICE

THE increasing popularity of skeleton, luge and bobsleigh within Service circles was further highlighted at last month's Army Ice Championships.

Staged in the German resort town of Winterberg, the event featured a week of training for personnel in all three disciplines ahead of the opening race.

The track proved difficult to master but the athletes produced some impressive performances in a series of hard-fought battles.

The pairing of LCpl Ivan Londal and LCpl Rick Ray, of 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, claimed the men's bobsleigh title with WO2 Sarah Smith and 2nd Lt Jess Elkington (both RA) reigning supreme in the women's event.

A total of 24 soldiers took to the track in the skeleton, where LCpl Nathan Jackson (RLC) secured the honours in the men's race ahead of novice champion Sig Arran Holmes (R Signals). Capt Rhianon Graham (AGC (SPS)) won the women's competition.

Gdsm Ray Thompson (IG) topped the podium in the men's luge, with Sgt Danielle Scott (QARANC) matching the feat in the women's showdown.



Pictures: Paralympics GB

BOUND FOR PYEONGCHANG



"WE WANT TO GIVE IT OUR BEST SHOT"

WITH the Winter Olympics now over, attention switches to the upcoming Paralympic campaign and the Army will be well represented on the slopes.

Capt Jen Kehoe (RE, pictured left) will act as the guide for Menna Fitzpatrick in the visually impaired Alpine skiing and the duo have jetted out to Pyeongchang in confident mood following their recent medal haul at the World Cup final.

Selection comes after Kehoe missed out on a place in the Team GB squad at Sochi 2014 through injury and she is excited by the prospect of facing the world's best athletes in what is the pinnacle of her sport.

"It's all a bit surreal to be honest," the officer told *SoldierSport*. "We have worked hard over the last two-and-a-half years and it is incredible to be named in the team.

"We are taking it one step at a time. This is our first Paralympics and we want to give it our best shot. Our performances this season mean we are in good shape.

"There is so much for me to think about as a guide. I have to

get Menna in the right place to get round the gates and make it down the hill in the fastest time possible, so there is lots of teamwork involved."

The conditions in Pyeongchang made life difficult for athletes at last month's Winter Olympics but Kehoe is confident they can conquer the challenges ahead.

She added: "We are fully prepared for whatever the weather throws at us.

"We were out there for a test event last year and the piste is quite technical and you have to think from top to bottom, there's no cruising."

Double amputee and former paratrooper Scott Meenagh (pictured above) will compete in the para Nordic skiing events after progressing to the Team GB ranks via the Paralympic Inspiration Programme.

"It's an incredible feeling to know my name is on the team sheet," Meenagh said.

"I'm determined to give my very best performance."

Snowboarder Owen Pick, formerly of 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, completes the line-up. ■

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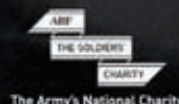
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MAN OF THE MOMENT: CFN SEAN THOMSON (REME) WAS THE ARMY'S HERO AGAINST THE RAF, NETTING THE EQUALISER IN A 1-1 DRAW

SPORT SHORTS

Picture: Hoycubed Photography



Disney at the double

FORMER soldier Guy Disney rode to victory at the Castel Royal Artillery Gold Cup for the second successive year.

The jockey, who served as a captain in The Light Dragoons, made history last year by becoming the first amputee to win a race at a professional racecourse in Britain.

He will be looking to add to his tally when he competes at the Grand Military Gold Cup at Sandown on March 9.

"I was quite nervous today," Disney said after his latest triumph. "The feeling of winning is like a drug, it's completely addictive."



Road race set to return

THE dates and venues for this season's Army Cycling Road Race Series have been announced.

Featuring 12 rounds, the competition gets under way at Upavon on April 25 and reaches its conclusion at the Brownlee Centre in Leeds on July 25.

Open to all serving personnel, the races are aimed at athletes of all abilities – from beginners to seasoned riders – and there will be prizes for the best individuals, units and corps.

For more details on how to get involved email ian.tosh450@mod.uk



YOUNG GUNS SEAL SERVICES CROWN

INTER-SERVICES
UNDER-23
FOOTBALL

NAVY

0

ARMY

3



A STUNNING 20-yard strike from Cpl Darren Humphries (AGC) was the highlight of a commanding 3-0 win for the Army Under-23s in the opening match of their Inter-Services campaign.

The midfielder's goal gave the Reds a 2-0 lead against the Royal Navy and a late effort from substitute LCpl Rob Shaw (RLC) sealed a comprehensive victory for the visitors.

The players then sealed the title thanks to a 1-1 draw with the Royal Air Force in the tournament's deciding fixture.

Having suffered a 4-2 defeat to the Senior Service during a disappointing 2017 campaign, the soldiers held firm during a cagey opening to their latest contest in Portsmouth.

Endeavour and commitment overshadowed quality of play and clear-cut chances were at a premium until the Army opened their account on the stroke of half-time.

A free kick from skipper LCpl Sean Woolley (RLC, pictured left) was floated into the area and when the Navy failed to clear their lines the ball dropped to the unmarked Cfn Sean Thomson

(REME), who calmly found the bottom corner.

Humphries' wonder goal effectively settled the contest during the early stages of the second half and with their rivals lacking a cutting edge it proved to be a comfortable afternoon.

Further chances followed as LCpl Dan Tewkesbury (AAC) blasted over from close range and Humphries came within inches of a second as his shot across goal drifted narrowly wide of the far post.

Woolley then fired into the side netting from a free kick before a perfectly weighted low cross found Shaw in the area and the wide man clinically drilled the ball into the bottom corner.

"It was a competitive game," head coach Capt Paul Dale (RAMC) told *SoldierSport* afterwards. "We decided to go with three at the back knowing that if we put pressure on their defence we might get something."

"It was a scrappy contest but we controlled it."

"The first goal is massive in any Inter-Services match and the second gave us confidence to move the ball around and play a bit more football." ■



SEASON SIGNED OFF

STEEP hill climbs and energy-sapping mud formed the backdrop to a highly competitive Army Cyclocross Championships in Chilwell.

The event marked the end of another tough season for the riders, who will now move on to the various road and mountain biking disciplines.

In the veterans' race, WO1 Jason Marriott (Rifles) rapidly moved to the front of the field and by the halfway stage had opened a 45-second lead over his nearest rival. He maintained his dominance and secured a comfortable win.

Defending champion Cpl Danny Preece (RE) was the rider to beat in the the men's senior race and he finished more than a minute clear of the field as he claimed back-to-back titles.

LCpl Alex Farquhar (RAVC) proved to be in a class of her own in the women's event and a storming display saw her seize the top prize in style.

"It was a fantastic day," Marriott (pictured below) told *SoldierSport*.

"The route was set on the side of a hill and the rain meant the climb was a swampy, wheel-sucking slog."



LEARNING FROM THE BEST



SOME of Team GB's finest up-and-coming boxers were tested in the ring during an intensive week of training with the Army squad in Aldershot.

The camp also featured fighters from Wales and was staged as part of the Service's bid to create a closer working relationship with the heralded set-up, which polishes the country's premier talent at its Sheffield base.

"We are trying to recruit a new head coach," Nathan Pearce, secretary of the Army Boxing Association, told *SoldierSport*.

"We are in the process of organising that through the GB podium team and their performance manager. We want to establish better links with them, so the idea of a training camp came about.

"It has been a learning curve for the Army guys and it is also good for the GB boxers to come in and spar with different people in a different setting.

"This is a fantastic shop window for our fighters. They are in the ring with the best in the country in front of the GB coaches.

"It is a great confidence boost and they can see the step up is not that far away." ■

"THEY CAN SEE THE STEP UP IS NOT THAT FAR AWAY"



● FORCES cricketers return to Lord's on Thursday, June 14 for this year's Inter-Services Twenty20 Championships.

The Army won a fifth successive title at the prestigious venue in 2017 and will be hoping for more of the same this season.

Tickets will be available to purchase on the gate. For more information visit www.lords.org

MONTH IN SPORT

March's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services Hockey Championships
WHEN: March 6 and 7
WHERE: Aldershot
NEED TO

KNOW: The Army women have been the team to beat in recent years and they will start as firm favourites, while the men will be hoping to hit top gear



WHAT: Inter-Services Football Championships – Army v Navy
WHEN: March 7
WHERE: Aldershot
NEED TO KNOW: After falling short last season the women's team will look to kick-start their 2018 campaign with victory at the Aldershot Military Stadium (1430) before the men's side take to the pitch at the town's EBB Stadium (1900)



WHAT: Inter-Services Netball Championships
WHEN: March 7 to 9
WHERE: Portsmouth
NEED TO KNOW: A hectic week of sport

comes to a close on the south coast, where the Reds will be looking to retain the title they won with victories over the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force last year

CUP RUN IN NUMBERS

YEARS OF CUP ACTION – WITH THE FIRST TIE PLAYED IN 1896

122

TOTAL POINTS SCORED BY THE ARMY IN TWO MATCHES IN 2018

74

TRIES FROM PTE MICKY HOYLE (YORKS), WHO ALSO KICKED THREE GOALS AGAINST THE CHARGERS

3

RED CARDS SHOWN IN THE MILFORD MARLINS GAME

3



REDS EYE LEAGUE GLORY

A PLACE in the fourth round of the Challenge Cup is the prize on offer to the Army rugby league team as they travel to Cumbria to face amateur outfit Kells in their latest tie.

The Servicemen have already recorded two home wins in their 2018 campaign and victory over the Whitehaven-based side would see them qualify for the latter round for the first time in their 24-year history.

A 48-10 defeat of the Milford Marlins was followed by a hard-fought 26-14 triumph against the London Chargers (pictured) and head coach WO2 Ben Taylor (REME) is predicting another tough test when the Reds head north.

"This is a great opportunity to progress further," he told *SoldierSport*. "It is the first time we have drawn an amateur team in the third round and that will make it a fair game."

"We don't know a lot about them but it will be a hard match. They have the home advantage and it all depends on how well we travel and train in the days beforehand."

Taylor is planning to keep preparations for the clash as simple as possible, believing the team cohesion that exists within the group will serve them in good stead.

"We have a squad full of captains and that really helps," he added. "We're going back to basics so everyone is aware of what their job is."

"It is all about the players. They are getting the experience of playing in a famous competition that has been running for more than 100 years."

"They have the chance to achieve something that we would have never thought was possible ten years ago."

The Army were in action against Kells as this issue went to press. ■



SERIES KICKS OFF

THE opening leg of the 2018 Army Cross Country Mountain Bike Series will be held at the valley course of Erlestoke, near Devizes, on March 28.

Comprised of five rounds, the competition runs throughout the spring and summer and feeds into the full Army Championships on July 18.

The event regularly attracted between 150 and 200 soldiers last season and those at the helm are hoping to build on these impressive numbers during the upcoming campaign.

"We really want to hit the ground running," WO2 Graham McConaghy (REME), part of the organising team, told *SoldierSport*. "Mountain biking has become such a strong adventurous training sport and the amount of people getting involved is growing.

"Our courses are tailored for riders of all abilities. There will be an option to follow a more technical route but the challenge comes from riding at speed."

For more details on how to get involved and other rounds in the series visit the Army MTB XC Team Facebook page or email graham.mcconaghy630@mod.uk



SIGHTS SET DOWN UNDER



"WE ARE GOING OUT TO BEAT EACH OTHER"

RIFLE shooter Spr Michael Bamsey (RE) became the latest Army marksman to receive a Commonwealth Games call after he was named in the Wales squad ahead of next month's showpiece.

The 24-year-old will join fellow soldiers Cpl Stuart Hill (R Irish) and Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) on the journey down under and is hoping to fire his way into the medal places in what will be his second Games campaign.

Bamsey only joined the Army in August last year but has an impressive record in the sport which includes a three-year spell with the West Virginia University rifle team that yielded three national titles.

With his stateside adventure complete he signed up for a military career and was fast-tracked into the Service's elite sporting programme.

He will face competition from Northern Ireland's Hill in the prone and three-position disciplines and will also take part in the air rifle event.

"It's always a privilege to represent Wales as it is something I do not get to do that often," Bamsey told *SoldierSport*.

"Some of the guys here have also been selected. We usually compete on the same team but now we are going out to beat each other."

Bamsey will be looking to improve on his showing four years ago, when a seventh-place finish in the air rifle and a failure to make the three-position final fell well short of his pre-Games target.

"I went there with the expectation of winning a medal in a blaze of glory," the soldier added. "But I didn't manage those expectations and went in thinking it would be easy.

"Now I just want to execute my own plan and if that works out and I win something it will be fantastic.

"If I come away knowing I did everything I could I will have no arguments with that."

Bamsey's long-term goal is to represent Team GB at the 2020 Olympics and while his performance in Australia cannot help his bid to qualify it will serve as an indication of his progress.

"If I can shoot well in this competition I know I can do it when the quota places come round," he said. ■

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ON TRACK: LSGT LAMIN DEAN WAS IN WINTER OLYMPIC ACTION IN BOBSLEIGH'S FOUR-MAN EVENT AS THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS

SPORT SHORTS

Picture: Align Photography



Build-up gathers pace

PREPARATIONS for this season's Inter-Services rugby union campaign have continued at pace with three challenging fixtures for the men's side in the space of two weeks.

The Reds recorded a 26-17 win over Oxford University, a result that was followed by a slender 33-31 defeat at the hands of Nottingham.

A 19-5 victory against the British Police got the soldiers back on track and they will travel to Portugal later this month for a warm weather training camp before facing the Royal Air Force on April 11.



Reds prevail on title trail

ARMY players dominated the action on the court as they claimed three of the four team prizes on offer at the Inter-Services Squash Championships.

A 5-0 win over the Royal Air Force gave the men's senior side an ideal start but they had to dig deep on their way to a 3-2 victory over the Royal Navy.

The women downed the Senior Service 5-0 and the RAF 3-2 to capture further collective honours, while the masters squad added a third title.

However, the under-25s missed out to the airmen as hopes of a clean sweep were ended.



Pictures: Andy J Ryan

MISSED SHOTS PROVE FATAL



"I KNOW I'M AS STRONG AS THE GIRLS MAKING THE TOP TEN"

BIATHLON ace Sgt Amanda Lightfoot (AGC (SPS)) suffered mixed emotions in her latest Winter Olympic campaign as she equalled the best-ever British result in the 7.5-kilometre sprint but then struggled on the range in the longer discipline.

The 31-year-old picked up three shooting penalties in windy conditions on the sprint and went on to clock a time of 24min 15.3sec to finish in 67th place – matching the achievement of Emma Fowler at the 2006 Games.

"It was a pretty tough race with the wind," Lightfoot said afterwards. "It was like I was having to fight against the conditions all the time and I got quite unlucky with my shooting in the prone position, where I missed two shots. I then dropped one in the standing.

"It is still good to equal the best ever Olympic result for a British female biathlete.

"I'm often so focused on trying to be world class that I sometimes forget about the little milestones.

"It is a good achievement and I have to give myself credit."

Her performance meant she missed out on qualification for the 10-kilometre pursuit as only the top 60 athletes progressed, meaning her focus switched to the sport's 15-kilometre event.

The soldier made an encouraging start in the competition and was hovering around the top 20 after firing her way to a clear round on the third of four visits to the range.

But three misses in the last round scuppered her chances and she went on to finish 73rd – more than eight minutes behind champion Hanna Oeberg.

"I messed up on my last shoot," Lightfoot said.

"The nerves just kicked in and I couldn't pull it together; that's really disappointing.

"This year has been up and down and I'm just happy to be here. I know I'm as strong as the girls getting top tens and places on the podium.

"I just need the support to make my results consistent." ■



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FINAL FIXTURE: THE ARMY WOMEN PLAY THEIR LAST GAME BEFORE THE INTER-SERVICES WHEN THEY FACE THE BARBARIANS ON MARCH 17

GAME BRIEF

DATE: February 14, 2018
COMPETITION: Army women v England Under-20s – rugby union friendly
VENUE: Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot

ARMY

Wilson 1	Carbutt 2	Athawes 3
Gattlin 4	Snead 5	Szczyglowska 6
Silcox 7	Binskin-Barnes 8	Rowland (c) 9
Gilbert 10	Dodd 11	Mullen 12
Miller 13	Parker 14	McAuley 15

SUBS: Lewis, Smith, McCormick, Claasens, Whitecross, Lloyd, Harrison-Wolff, Stonebridge-Smith

CAPTAIN'S COMMENTS:

"WE STICK TOGETHER AS A SQUAD. THERE WERE MISTAKES BUT THERE WERE POSITIVES AS WELL. WE'LL FOCUS ON MOVING FORWARD AND BUILD FROM HERE"



Pictures: Alligin Photography and Roger Thompson

PAIN INFLICTED IN THE RAIN

RUGBY UNION FRIENDLY FIXTURE
ARMY WOMEN

0

ENG U20S

44



A FIRST-HALF hat-trick from wing Brooke Clarke helped fire the England Under-20s side to an emphatic 44-0 win over the Army on a miserable night in Aldershot.

Driving rain, howling winds and freezing temperatures posed an extra challenge for the players but it was the visitors who adapted to the conditions better – running in six tries before the break as they took firm control of the game.

The Reds showed greater determination as they steadied the ship after the interval but two further converted scores underlined the gulf between the two teams.

The match has become a regular fixture in recent times and the Army have traditionally provided a stern test for the nation's finest young talent so it was disappointing to see them fall short this season.

Clarke started the rout in the sixth minute as England quickly moved the ball out wide to allow the speedster to cross in the corner and they doubled their

lead moments later as Phoebe Murray collected an offload from centre partner Lucy Attwood to sprint home.

Clarke notched her second as the Army failed to find touch with a clearance from their 22 and prop forward Ellena Perry added to the misery as she powered her way to the line midway through the half.

Some smart play from fly half Helena Rowland created the platform for Lilian Stoeger-Goddard to score England's fifth try as she pounced on an expertly-judged kick along the ground and Clarke completed her personal milestone on the stroke of half-time as the visitors found time and space out wide once more.

Murray and replacement Michaela Roberts both touched down in the second period to complete a comprehensive victory for the junior Red Roses.

The result leaves the Army with much to ponder as they failed to fire in attack, while their defensive frailties were ruthlessly exposed. ■

Final Word



I thought I wasn't going to be able to cope with the cold but actually it hasn't been too bad and I think I've acclimatised. It took about two months but after a while I could tell I was getting used to it.

LCpl Sophie Goss, RAMC



I expected the camp to be very basic, but the facilities aren't bad at all.

LCpl Nacanieli Mate, R Welsh



As a chef I was expecting just to be cooking with ten-man ration packs in the field, but I had £4,000 to spend on the lads for one ten-day serial, so I went loose on it and produced a different menu for every day. When the guys are working out in the cold they need something warming to keep them going.

LCpl Lee Prince, RLC



In terms of my role as a joint terminal attack controller (JTAC) it's been a lot busier than I expected, which makes the time fly. There are a lot of different Nato airframes that want to play with the British and Estonian JTACs out here. That gives us the chance to work with aircraft we don't normally deal with.

Sgt Rob Bingham, RA



I don't think there have been any surprises, really. When I heard we were going to the Baltic states I just accepted I was going to be the coldest I'd ever been. For anyone else coming out here – bring your warm kit!

Fus Jonathon Hamill, R Welsh



I thought we'd be doing more sitting around but we've been doing lots of integration with the Estonians to make sure we're in a good place.

Bdr Julian Perreira, RA

Expect the unexpected

Soldier asked troops in Estonia whether Operation Cabrit had thrown up any surprises

I've been surprised by the contrast between the cities and the rural areas. We've been to Tallinn and Tartu and they're really modern and populated, but in the countryside it's a bit like stepping back in time.

Cfn Gareth Carter, REME



An Officer asked us for a forecast of benefits on his proposed PVR date and we told him he would receive more if he served just a few days longer.



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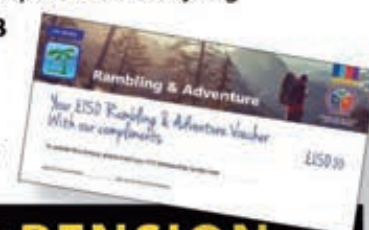
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