

SOilder

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



SPINELINE COMPETITION

HENNIS, STEPHENSON, TAYLOR,
WETHERILL

‘There have been
barriers along the way’

Polar Preet on her one-woman mission to conquer Antarctica

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Troops travel back
to the Great War

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SPINELINE
COMPETITION

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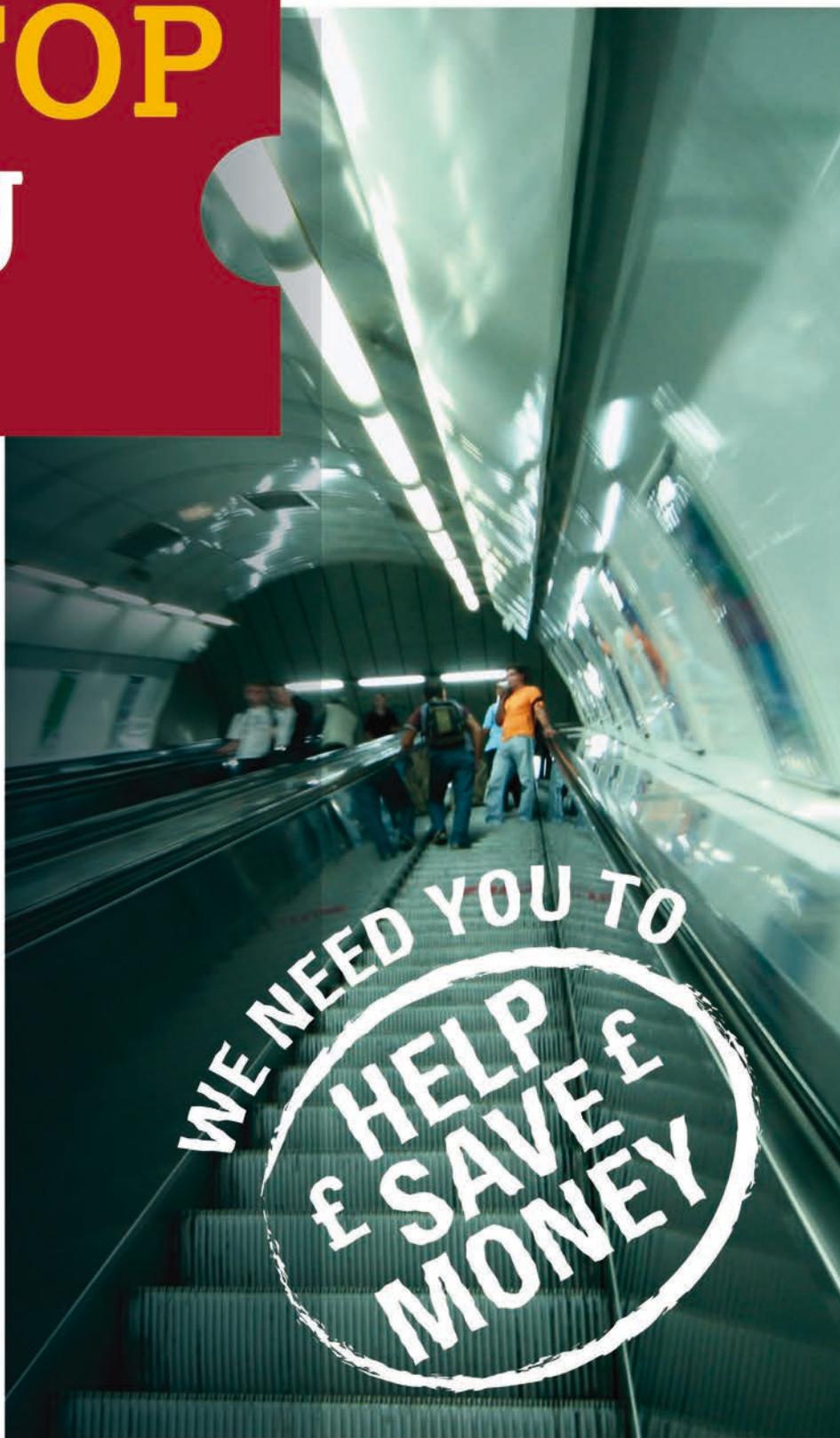


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It remains a rite
of passage for
our very best
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Committed to the cause



ONE of the things I find most fascinating about this job is the “selfless commitment” part of the

Army's values and standards that our magazine gets to showcase.

And it is a topic that certainly seems to characterise the content of this month's remembrance issue.

I'm not just talking about operational commitment, but a brilliant array of welfare, fundraising, sporting and community missions that soldiers continue to throw themselves into wholeheartedly.

It means putting your own needs below those of your teammates, charity, recruit intake or patrol – or in the case of cover star Polar Preet, those who will be inspired by your trailblazing.

In this month's *SoldierSport*, athletes persevere on the road back to normality, soldiers commit to sharpening their leadership skills on Cambrian Patrol (page 28) and Steve Davies (page 38) provides a shining example of the graft put in by veterans to ensure future generations of soldiers are better looked after.

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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Winter pay gloom

TROOPS will need to tighten their belts over the winter as a public sector pay freeze and the rising costs of living take effect.

The top brass have confirmed that most military personnel will not receive a salary rise this year as the government wrestles with financial uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

And while the majority of junior troops have been handed a £250 per year uplift, that news will likely come as cold comfort as living costs continue to rise.

In particular, accommodation charges are increasing for a number of soldiers and their families – despite longstanding concern about the condition of some military homes.

All bands of Service family accommodation will see annual rate rises of up to 1.7 per cent – with garages and carports subject to an equivalent increase as well.

Grade one single living accommodation will see the same hike, while grade two and three digs will increase by just over one per cent and 0.5 per cent respectively. Personnel living in grade four, the lowest standard, will be unaffected.

The government said in November last year that it would need to introduce a pay pause for public servants, who have seen rising salaries compared to their counterparts in the private sector suffering wage decline.

Ministers, who have been assessing the long-term economic impact of the Covid pandemic, pointed out that the temporary halt would apply to everyone

except NHS staff.

Confirmation of final awards had been due in April, but the announcement was delayed until late last month.

Defence chiefs maintain that the £250 uplift – for those earning under £24,000 per year – would apply to the "vast majority" of private soldiers. And they would notice the difference when they opened their pay packets this month as the award would be backdated to the beginning of April.

They also stressed that many of their more senior colleagues would advance a pay increment this year, providing a small wage rise.

Along with extra cash for newly-promoted personnel, these will help to offset the higher cost of living.

Maj Frazer Stark (Scots), who works in Army Remuneration Policy, said the Armed Forces Pay Review Body – the organisation that makes recommendations on salaries – would report again in the spring.

This would be another opportunity to look again at salaries and allowances.

While accepting that accommodation hikes would be unpopular, the officer said cash had to be budgeted for improvements and repairs across the military estate.

He added: "While these costs would normally be backdated, this is not happening this time – and there will be a further review of them next year.

Members of the pay review body are now conducting research to make recommendations for 2022 – including carrying out unit visits." ■



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AT A GLANCE 2021 PAY

GOOD DRILLS

£250 per year
hike for troops
earning <£24k

**Most allowances/
food costs
unchanged**

BAD DRILLS

Accommodation charges

SFA
Up 1.7% or less

**Garages and
carports**
Up 1.7% or less

**SLA
grade 1**
Up 1.7%

grade 2
Up 1.13%

grade 3
Up 0.57%

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GLOBAL SITREP

Picture: Steve Dock

1. FALKLAND ISLANDS RAPIER STANDS DOWN



THE Rapier missile system has ended its watch in the Falklands after almost 40 years' service.

First deployed to the South Atlantic during the war with Argentina in 1982, the weapon became a crucial part of the islands' air defence network.

But in 2018 the Army announced it would be replaced by Sky Sabre (page 16).

Its official retirement was marked by the presentation of a drill missile to the Falkland Islands Museum in Stanley, where it will form part of a new exhibition.

Throughout much of its tenure, the Resident Rapier Battery was provided by 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery and among the personnel bidding the asset a fond farewell was seven-tour veteran SSgt Jonathan Wheeler.

"I was a member of our first battery deployed here in 2006 and now have the privilege of also being the last," he said.

"I believe that my deployments down here have made me a better soldier and leader and have contributed to the shaping of my 19-year career in the Army so far."



2. UK SAPPERS TAKE THE PLUNGE

THE frigid waters of Scotland played host to the Royal Engineers' annual diving concentration.

Exercise Submerged Crusader saw the sappers put through a demanding two-week roster of key sub-aqua skills off the west coast near Ullapool, as well as in the Kyle of Lochalsh and Loch Ness.

Picture: Nathan Tanuku, RLC

WARM WELCOME

SOLDIERS from 1st Battalion, Scots Guards have received their campaign medals for recent stints in Kosovo and Iraq.

A parade at their Catterick base marked their return home from Operations Elgin and Shader, where they had been performing security duties.

Personnel are now enjoying spending some quality time with families and friends they have not seen in months.



Picture: Sgt Paul Shaw, RLC

1. FALKLAND ISLANDS



3. ITALY BATTLEFIELD BASICS

BRITISH troops formed up with multinational allies as they headed for the Mediterranean to learn more about how young leaders led from the front in the Second World War.

Some 33 soldiers from Nato's HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in Gloucester were joined by eight colleagues from other countries, including Italy, to study the 1943 Allied invasion of Sicily – which was dubbed Operation Husky – and how it was prosecuted by members of the non-commissioned ranks.

Organiser SSgt Tony Canavan (RE) explained that rather than being officer-centric, Exercise Arrcade Bugle 3 had been conceived "by NCOs, for our NCOs".

Lcpl Ismailah Anason (AGC ((SPS)) said the visit had underscored the importance of robust planning as well as having strong protocols for working with allies.

"Success in Sicily depended on different nationalities working together for common objectives in the same way as within Nato today," he added.

ITALY IN NUMBERS

41
Personnel involved,
33 of whom
were British

FOUR
Nato nations
represented

6
Exercise duration
in days

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

- 2. UK
- 5. GERMANY
- 3. ITALY
- 6. MOROCCO
- 4. MALI

4. MALI INSURGENTS KILLED

BRITISH soldiers deployed in Mali killed two terrorist fighters after being engaged by small-arms fire while on patrol.

Personnel from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment and 1st The Queen's Dragoons Guards, were travelling from Gao to Menaka when they repelled an attack from two armed individuals.

There were no Army or UN force casualties, and it is the first time UK troops have come under fire in Mali.

Following a search of the area, the soldiers found a cache of weapons including an AK-47, a machine gun, 100 rounds of ammunition and a radio.

Violent extremists are hindering development in Mali and UK troops are currently deployed on an operation to stabilise areas around Menaka in the east of the country.

The next rotation of British troops into Mali is imminent, with another contingent of 1st The Queen's Dragoons Guards personnel along with Royal Irish Regiment soldiers taking the reins of the Long Range Reconnaissance Group.



5. GERMANY 'INTEGRATION BENCHMARK'

BRIDGING specialists from the UK and one of its key allies have joined forces to create the first ever Anglo-German battalion.

Sennelager-based sappers from 23 Amphibious Engineer Squadron and their host nation counterparts have worked together for years, but they officially became the German-British Amphibious Engineer Battalion 130 at a parade attended by their respective Service chiefs.

Addressing the troops in German, Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, said they "set the benchmark for integration and interoperability".

His Bundeswehr equivalent Lt Gen Alfons Mais added that the soldiers – who with their M3 Rigs provide Nato's only wide

wet gap crossing capability – would help build literal and political bridges.

RECCE REFRESHER

THE Royal Lancers have deployed on their biggest training package since the regiment's inception in 2015.

Staged in and around Sennelager, Exercise Somme Lancer put 650 personnel – and 180 vehicles – through their paces as the 3 (UK)

Brief the team now:



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6. MOROCCO

DESERT ENDURANCE

A TRIO of Service personnel have completed what's known as the world's toughest footrace.

Col Lucy Giles, Lt Col Katie Hislop (RE, pictured below) and WO1 Leon Fairbrother (Cldm Gds) ran the 35th Marathon des Sables alongside 650 elite and recreational athletes.

Staged in temperatures up to 52 degrees Celsius, it saw a dropout rate of 50 per cent across the 156-mile route. Read more about their journey next month.



Division Reconnaissance Battlegroup.

They were joined in the combined arms test by counterparts from Canada, Denmark, Belgium and Germany, with the latter's Reservists also providing an opposing force.

A seven-day live-firing phase culminated in an operational shoot integrating CVRTs, dismounted troops and German air force Tornados.



Picture: Rainer Pieuss



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Picture: Graeme Main

THE British Army's world-famous patrolling event was back with a bang last month as Regular and Reserve personnel – along with a smaller-than-usual international contingent – took to the the South Wales wilderness. Read more about the challenge that greeted soldiers on Exercise Cambrian Patrol on page 28.

Hotel headaches eased

App will prevent soldiers from having to cough up

TRAVELLING troops no longer have to dip into their own pockets to settle up for official hotel room bookings – thanks to a new digital payment system.

Previously, personnel had to part with their own money for rooms secured through the defence travel system before claiming it back on expenses. But under the new scheme, most UK accommodation booked under an Army unit identification number will be paid for automatically.

The *Conferma Pay* app, which can be downloaded via Google Play or the Apple Store, then provides a digital voucher for soldiers to keep on their phones as proof of payment.

Having got the app, Servicemen and women must go through a registration



Picture: Freepik

process before selecting a personal five-digit login code.

And while they can use the method to help settle hotel bookings, extras such as food and drink will still need to be claimed back through expenses.

Conferma also provides a host of other information about overnight stays, with a helpline number for any payment problems.

“
It promises to
make life far
easier
”



SPINE LINE COMPETITION



Picture: Standart/Freepik

LAST month's spine line clues would have been guessed by the movie buffs among our readers.

(Sam) Clemmett, (Tom) Goodman-Hill, (Kris) Hitchen and (Anna) Maguire are all the names of actors who starred in the subterranean drama *The War Below* – which was given a four-star rating by this magazine.

This month, to mark Remembrance Day, we have teamed up with the Star Name Registry (star-name-registry.com) to offer four readers a prize with a difference.

We are giving you the chance to name a star in the night sky – the perfect way to remember a friend or loved one.

As well as the registration itself, winners are provided with a set of special coordinates so they can use the *Find My Star* app or a telescope and star chart to locate their twinkler in the night sky.

The package also contains an official framed certificate of your chosen name.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these truly memorable prizes, tell us what links the words on the spine of this issue.

Answers, including your daytime telephone number, to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by November 30. Good luck!

STAR NAME
REGISTRY.COM



Picture: Graeme Main

BATTLE Craft Syllabus instructors can ditch admin-heavy paperwork and instead record their sub-unit's progress on a new digital system. Named Modus, it allows staff to see at a glance how outfits are faring with skills and drills, while identifying issues with course delivery. Previously, there was no standard way to record advancement on the mandatory training package, with many units resorting to spreadsheets. The simplified, universal system makes it easier to keep tabs on troops while allowing Land Warfare Centre staff to maintain oversight. Having been drawn up by an in-house Service team and tested by several units, senior officers say the feedback has been great. Programme boss Maj Dave Beacock (AGC (ETS)) said trials had allowed the developers to add improvements along the way. "Modus promises to make life far easier," he added.



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So you think you're a good NCO?

The Centre for Army Leadership wants you to read this first

THE team behind the revamped Army leadership doctrine are urging more junior NCOs to take an interest in it.

Staff at the Centre for Army Leadership (CAL) say very few lower ranks engage with the guidelines, first published in 2017.

However, with the launch of an updated version they hope commanders at all levels will use it to better themselves.

New sections have been added on topics including trust and servant and values-based leadership. Good, bad and toxic behaviours are also identified for the first time.

Maj Ben Acton (RA), from the CAL, said the document drew on ideas proven to work through history and aimed to promote discussion among troops.

"Its purpose is not to restrict individuality or stifle imagination, but to help develop leaders, learn from the experience of others and adapt for the future," he added.

"This is not just for officers – it's as applicable to a lance corporal as it is the chief of the general staff."

- To read the Army leadership doctrine visit the CAL page of the Army website or the Army Knowledge Exchange



“
It is not just
for officers
”

Aspiring junior NCOs are put to the test on the section commanders' battle course in Brecon
Pictures: Graeme Main



Picture: Graeme Main

THE MISSION TO IMPROVE

■ PHASE one training instructors and their colleagues have been on a mission to improve at a day-long summit in Pirbright.

The Training Excellence Symposium saw civilian experts brought in to advise personnel on everything from mental resilience and health, to business strategy and communication skills.

Military staff with their own success stories to share also spoke at the event – from those working to promote better menstrual health among female recruits, to instructors focused on nutrition, new technology and PT.

Maj Gen Sharon Nesmith (pictured) told members of Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command that their efforts during the Covid crisis had been "nothing short of remarkable". But she challenged them to consider what more could be done to improve the Army training experience.



HARROGATE HITS HEIGHTS

■ EDUCATION inspectors have awarded the Army Foundation College Harrogate a top rating for the second time in a row.

An Ofsted team judged the organisation as outstanding – highlighting the standards of training and emphasising student welfare as standout points.

They also noted the well-equipped classrooms plus the strict cleanliness and maintenance regime employed at the site in Yorkshire.

IN NUMBERS

Percentage of youngsters unaware that science, technology, engineering and maths roles exist in the military – according to a recent survey of 18- to 25-year-olds by the Forces media outlet BFBS



FOR the third time in 12 months, a British Army officer has been prosecuted for fraudulently claiming the continuity of education allowance to pay for his children's boarding school fees.

Maj Marcus Heslop (RTR) was dismissed from service and given a 15-month prison sentence, suspended for 22 months, after it was revealed that he had claimed £39,493 while his wife was living in the UK and not with him in Germany.

Bulford Military Court heard how the tankie's two sons were boarding at Gordon's School in Surrey at the time.

The officer said he had applied for the allowance in good faith, but

failed to disclose that his wife had not joined him abroad because their marriage was in difficulty.

He told the court he felt his sons needed to be protected from their relationship problems by remaining at boarding school.

Last March Maj Gen Nick Welch became the most senior officer to be court-martialled since 1815 after claiming nearly £48,000 in continuity of education allowance to cover school fees.

He was sentenced to 21 months in prison after it was proved his wife had broken allowance rules by spending more than 90 days in one year at their home, near to their children's schools.

In the same month, Maj Lloyd Hamilton (RE) received a three-month jail sentence, suspended for 18 months, after being convicted of illegally claiming £13,000 to send his two children to Queen Ethelburga's near York.

He was stationed in Cyprus at the time but his wife was living in the UK.



VC FOOTAGE FIND

■ RARE footage of a First World War soldier receiving his Victoria Cross from King George V has been donated to a military museum to benefit future generations.

Pte Jack Cunningham – of 12th (Service) Battalion (The Hull Sportsmen's Pals Battalion), East Yorkshire Regiment – was presented with the decoration for carrying out an attack during the Battle of the Somme.



Pictured left, he hurled bombs taken from fallen comrades into enemy trenches during the ferocious fighting on November 13, 1916.

Film of the presentation in London's Hyde Park – donated to York Army Museum by his nephew John Moore – has now been copied and cleaned.

Curator Wg Cdr Alan Bartlett said it would have pride of place in the museum's collection alongside the soldier's medal.

WREATHS TAKE JOURNEY

■ THE Veterans Charity is planning a poignant and unique event that will see wreaths and tributes travelling across the UK to honour those who fell while serving in the Armed Forces.

Known as Routes of Remembrance, the initiative involves rail and transport companies, military units, former personnel, community groups and other charities – all of which will combine to lay wreaths at train stations across the country in time for Armistice Day.

For more details visit veteranscharity.org.uk/remembrance



Picture: RBL and PA Images



Commander-in-chief attends RBL thanksgiving event

THE Queen joined a 1,200-strong congregation at Westminster Abbey for a service of thanksgiving to mark the centenary of The Royal British Legion.

The monarch – who is the charity's patron – was accompanied by the Princess Royal for the event, which reflected on the last 100 years while looking to the future.

Johnson Beharry (pictured below right), who received the Victoria Cross serving with The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment in Iraq, was among those reading prayers at the event. He was joined by Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Sir Nick Carter.

Leading the service, the Dean of Westminster, the Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle, praised the organisation's steadfast commitment to the military.

He added: "We give thanks for the tireless, dedicated and distinguished work of all those who have lived out the Legion's motto of 'service not self'.

"With them we renew our commitment to the faithful

remembrance of those who gave their lives for this country and the thousands of others who have served alongside them in Her Majesty's Armed Forces."



■ POPPY collectors have returned to the streets after the Covid pandemic put paid to fundraising efforts last year. The 40,000 Royal British Legion volunteers – a familiar sight during remembrance season – are back to mark the 100th anniversary of the poppy, raising much-needed cash for the Armed Forces family in the process. The charity has appealed to the public for particularly generous giving after funds took a plunge in 2020. Last year was the first time the collectors had been absent since the appeal was launched by the organisation's founder Earl Haig. Visit britishlegion.org.uk to get involved in this month's fundraising drive.

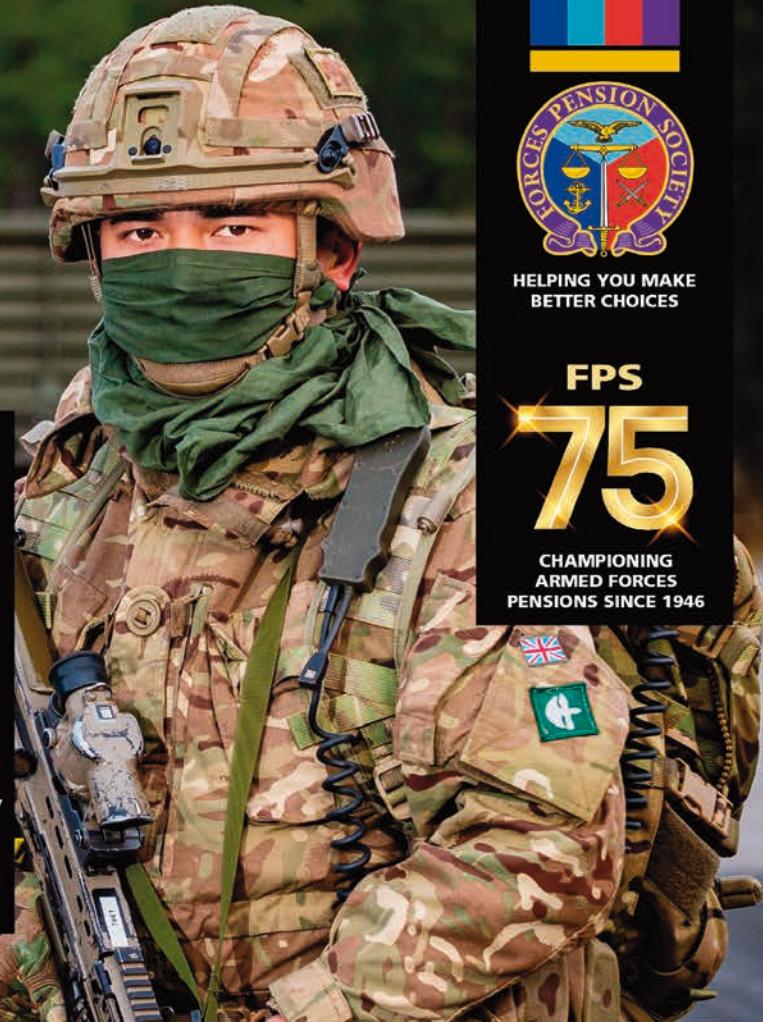


Picture: Charlie Clift / RBL

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”

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TRAINING TRAGEDY

■ THE military community is mourning the loss of a young soldier from 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, who was killed while operating a CVRT armoured platform.

Pte Jethro Watson-Pickering, 23, from Boosbeck, near Redcar, was part of a vehicle crew participating in Exercise Iron Storm on Salisbury Plain when the tragedy occurred near the village of Enford in Wiltshire.

Local police said a joint investigation with the Health and Safety Executive and Army had been launched.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMP OPEN

■ THE Army Film and Photographic Competition is now open and will run until February 10, 2022.

All the usual categories for stills and video feature, plus a new one for highlighting teamwork that provides numerous opportunities to capture Army activity.

To enter visit army.mod.uk/news-and-events/events/army-film-and-photographic-competition



RATION RIGMAROLE

■ MOVES to address a recent ration pack shortage were under way and should be fully resolved as this issue hit desks, top brass have told *Soldier*.

Commanders confirmed there had been supply issues but said any exercise needs had been served by moving stock from reserves, ensuring that training had gone as planned.



BAME RENAME

■ THE Army's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (Bame) Network has rebranded after members decided the old name was no longer appropriate. Leaders said the new **Multicultural Network** title better reflected the make-up of the organisation – with troops and civilian staff from many backgrounds. A statement recently issued by the group added: "The term has been a useful tool for our community as it has served as a recognisable brand for those who identify as part of an ethnic minority to campaign under. However, language and its meanings always evolve – we are committed that our new name will better celebrate our important undertaking to lobby for bold changes." The announcement follows a national debate around the unpopularity of the term, and whether it is fit for purpose any more.



Picture: MBDA

“
It’s a step
change over
the Rapier
”

GUNNERS are being put through their paces in training on a state-of-the-art missile system – which will give the Army a potent new air defence capability.

The first soldiers from 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery have now been signed onto the Sky Sabre equipment, which delivers a step change over the Rapier system it replaces.

Personnel with Minden Battery achieved a clean bill of health with the kit during a recent exercise on Salisbury Plain Training Area.

All three of the regiment's other sub-units will be ready on the system in the coming months.

Full operating capability will be reached in October 2022.

Training on Sky Sabre is more complex than Rapier – in addition to the technical differences, troops must be qualified on larger vehicles to move the kit around.

But the weapon suite – which is built around a radar, launcher unit and electronics hub – packs a punch and

can rapidly engage the enemy.

Able to bring down aircraft or projectiles well beyond visual range, it can also work with other systems across the battlespace to deliver a lethal blow to attackers.

Multiple targets can be engaged even with trees, buildings and other landscape features blocking the way – with the Camm missiles hitting both hard and fast.

Lt Col Chris Lane, CO of Thorney Island-based 16 Regiment, said the unit had been adapting well to the fearsome new platform.

He told *Soldier*. "Our personnel are really taking to the system and rising to the challenge – they are now looking forward to taking it out on operations.

"Sky Sabre is complex and a step change over the Rapier we have been operating – it has three times the range as well as a far more advanced radar.

"This equipment also moves us into the information age as it can be easily integrated with land, air and maritime assets across the battlespace."



Soldiers fill in and fill up

THE Army is continuing to showcase its flexibility and willingness to help on home soil as part of the military aid to civil authorities arrangement.

Around 50 soldiers from 4 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps will drive ambulances across Wales this month as they support NHS colleagues at the start of a busy winter.

They will be joined by a further 50 Royal Air Force and Royal Navy colleagues, with a support team taking the total number of personnel deployed to 129. It is the third time the military has supported NHS Wales during the pandemic.

Trust Director of Operations Lee Brooks said: "Having our Armed Forces colleagues back on board will help us put more ambulances on duty so we can get to more patients, more quickly, while the extreme pressure continues.

"Essentially, they'll work with one of our clinicians on an emergency

ambulance responding to the full range of calls."

Elsewhere, Op Escalin – the military's effort to deploy drivers to maintain deliveries during the fuel crisis – was drawing to a close as this issue went to press.

More than 200 personnel were trained for the task – of which around 170 were from the Army, with more than 70 units involved.



It will help put more ambulances on duty

“ ”

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING

Winning walkers

A TEAM of former and ex personnel – each with mental or physical injuries – completed the 300-kilometre Grenadier Walk of Oman as this issue went to press. The challenge started at Pen-Y-Fan and ended at the Anglo-Omani Society in London. It formed an alternative to the initial desert challenge, which had to be rearranged due to Covid. Capt Ben McComb (RA), plus veterans Brian O'Neill, Sean Gane and Ben Gallagher, were the Army contingent. Visit [justgiving.com/campaign/walkofoman](https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/walkofoman)



Target: **£100,000**
For Walking with the Wounded

Battling bikers

SOLDIERS and veterans in need are set to benefit from the efforts of cyclists who tackled demanding routes in Wiltshire. More than two-dozen energetic participants saddled up for SSAFA's first Ride the Plain event, embarking on a 30- or 70-mile journey across the Salisbury training estate. The bikers, including charity chief exec Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory, took in the likes of Larkhill and Bulford camps before enjoying the west of England's scenic hills and lanes.

Money raised: **£12,000**
For SSAFA



JUMP FOR JOY



HORSES and riders from The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery enjoyed a break from ceremonial duties at the Defence Animal Training Regiment in Melton Mowbray. Showjumping, hacking and cross-country riding were among the activities undertaken by the 25 members of the British Army's smallest unit.

Ground view

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

WHEN I wrote my first *Soldier* column three months ago, I said action was needed to address a number of issues we've been talking about for some time – among them ensuring our NCOs are properly empowered and able to better themselves and others.

They will, after all, be a key component in shaping the Army of tomorrow.

Their leadership is not only critical at the sharp end of operations, it has a very serious influence over the personnel they command.

I was pleased, then, to see the trial of a course that will help to prepare a new generation of instructors responsible for helping recruits on phase one training.

From all I have seen, the pilot of the all-arms initial trainer cadre looks promising.

Held at Pirbright, the 12-week package is bringing NCOs from different cap badges together on this type of experience for the first time.

Currently, different branches of the Army have their own way of preparing instructors.

As a minimum, those heading for these roles must do two weeks of mandatory preparation. But if the trial is fully

implemented this process will be formalised and NCOs from across the military will all follow the same syllabus.

It is a far more holistic way of doing business.

As well as teaching a common set of skills, a single course would allow our values and standards to be better embedded in troops from the outset.

This will also help create the challenge culture we want – where soldiers are unafraid to call out inappropriate behaviours.

There are some 20 NCOs on the current pilot and while it might be a tough ask to take people out of circulation and put them into training for the best part of three months, my feeling is that the end product will be better.

Having a common training standard for instructors would mean we are all starting on the same page – and our people will be better equipped for all they face in future.

The course trial is a real eye-opener and I'll be very interested to see the results.



“
The trial is a real eye-opener
”

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



Q What have been the high and low points of your job so far?

A Getting out and meeting soldiers is great... but there is never quite enough time to do everything you'd like



Deployment demands

THE pace of operations shows no sign of slowing down – and as we continue to train the new generation of troops in the UK, the current crop is doing us proud overseas.

Having recently visited The Light Dragoons in Catterick, I heard first-hand about their deployment to Mali (shown above), where the soldiers were involved in

long-range patrols. These outings have been particularly demanding, with personnel spending nearly three weeks at a time in a tough environment and austere conditions.

I was struck by the troops' professionalism and pride at their part in this UN operation.

Congratulations on a job well done.

Home-front force

IT IS not only the soldiers on overseas tours who are proving impressive. Those in rear parties back in the UK are also stepping up to the plate.

These troops play a key role in ensuring loved ones are looked after while a unit is deployed.

The value of this work should never be underestimated – it is crucial in keeping people informed and maintaining morale.

But recently it was great for me to see our young leaders on the home front step up in helping soldiers who had recently arrived from training.

I saw the new arrivals on the ranges doing live-firing packages, among other activities, as their NCOs assisted them with settling into unit life. Keep up the great work.



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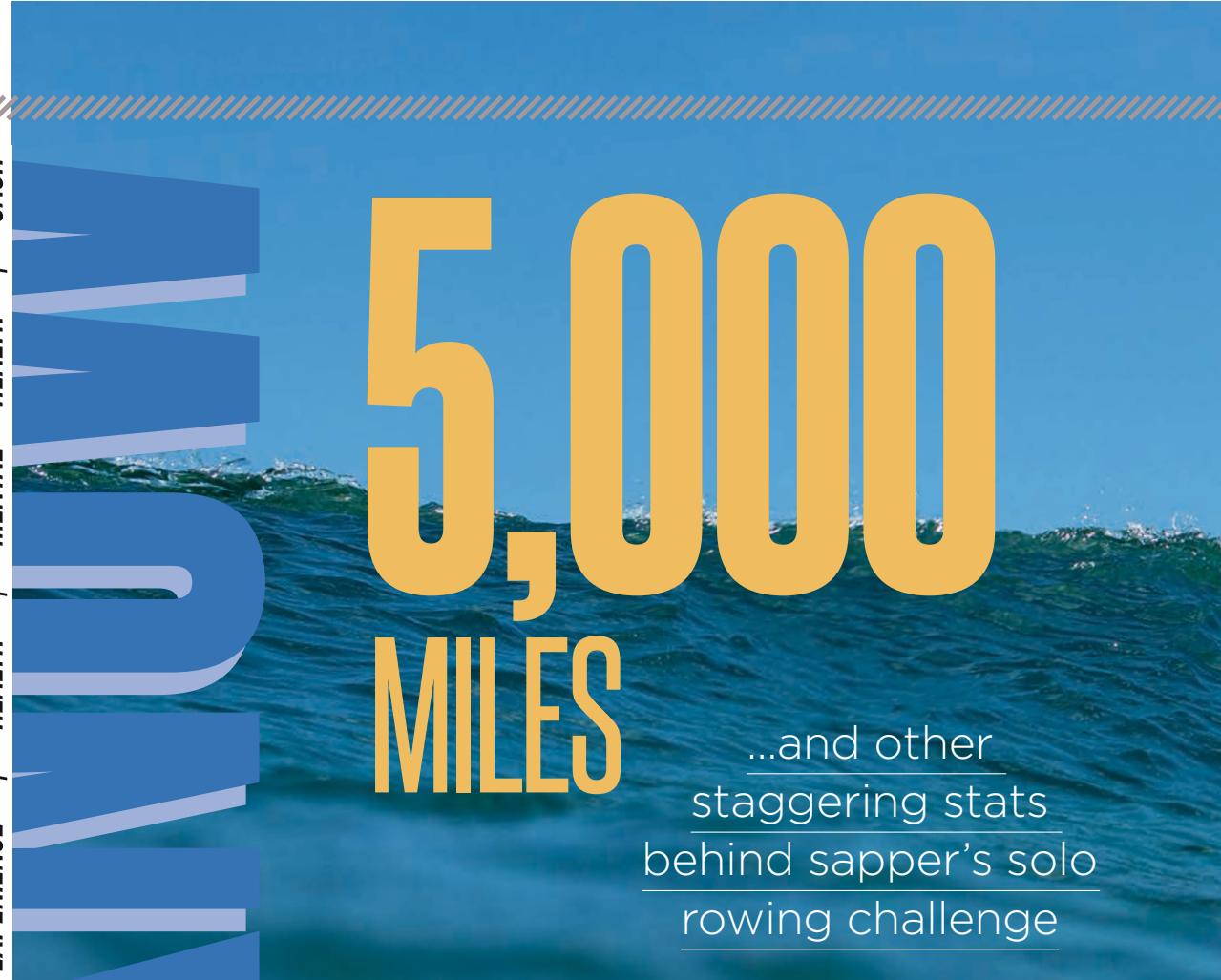
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NEED TO KNOW

NEED TO KNOW / CASH / MENTAL HEALTH / HEALTH / FITNESS / EXPERIENCE / FITNESS



► LATER this month Cpl Jack Jarvis (RE) will launch his bid to become the first person in history to row from Lagos in Portugal to Miami, Florida, solo and unsupported.

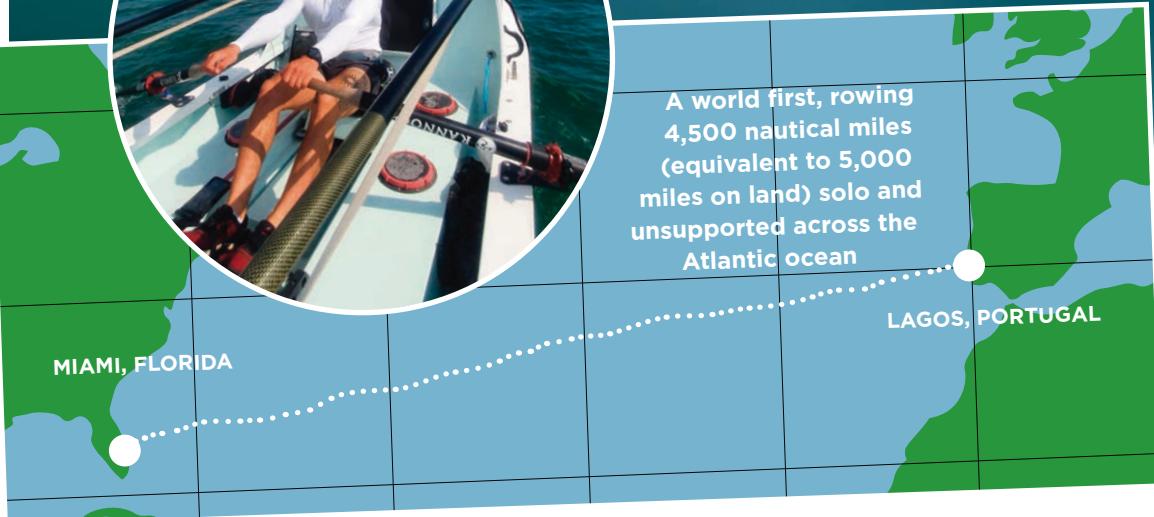
The daunting voyage is the culmination of 18 months' careful planning for the 27-year-old, who serves with 3 Royal School of Military Engineering.

"There are lots of things out of my control," he told *Soldier*. "But worrying about that won't help – all I can do is prepare as well as I can for the elements I can control."

"I want to turn up in Miami in the shortest time possible, in the best possible condition."

From his daily calorie requirement to the rate at which his muscles process lactic acid, nothing is being left to chance in the dangerous world record attempt – as these figures reveal...

Main picture: Freepik



A world first, rowing 4,500 nautical miles (equivalent to 5,000 miles on land) solo and unsupported across the Atlantic ocean

1

- speed, in knots per hour, lost if the hull is not kept clean during the crossing

"It doesn't sound much but over 19 days that extra drag could cost me 90 miles. So when it's calm I'll have to get under the boat and clear any barnacles and other debris."

2

- hours of daily training in preparation for the feat

"I've been training six days a week pretty much since June. My unit have been great at giving me the time to devote to it and I'm so grateful to my team who have picked up the slack."

3

- hours of rowing followed by one hour's rest

"My daily routine on the voyage will be three hours on, one hour off up until midnight. Then I'll sleep for five hours before starting again at 0500. You deploy a parachute anchor to keep the boat from drifting too far off course in the night. I hope my body will get used to catnapping after the first couple of weeks."

6

- litres of water per day he will drink, produced by a solar-powered desalination unit

7

- length, in metres, of his boat

"It's called Budgie, after my grandad, who died in 2007. Once it's fully laden it should weigh about 800kg. I don't need much personal kit - most of it will be food, but there's also medical supplies, GPS devices, spare parts and so on."

1.5

- Cpl Jarvis's so-called lactate score during fitness testing

"I've been working with the University of Southampton, who have been measuring how well my body processes lactic acid. They take blood while you work out in the lab and it basically shows you what condition you are in. I want to know I'm in the best shape I can be before setting off."



Mental muscle

"I believe everyone has a trip like this in them, physically, if they can overcome the mental side. But I wasn't born mentally tough - it's come through my military training, including the all-arms commando course, and tasting hardship. You need some challenges in life - not just instant gratification and this trip is about as far away from that as it's possible to get. I've always had a sense of adventure. Plus I'm too stubborn to quit. I can't wait to get started - it's been my sole focus for the past year-and-a-half."

£70,000

- money raised to fund the trip alone

"I've spent about £15,000 of my own money and the rest has come from corporate sponsors and charity events - including running a marathon carrying a rowing machine. Finding that financial support is really hard and is a side I don't think many people think about."

48

- length, in hours, of his longest training run prior to the event

"I won the Army indoor rowing championships with 24 Commando Royal Engineers in 2019, but I had no experience of actual rowing before this, so I've had to learn everything as I go. But that doesn't faze me. I've always loved anything physically challenging."

50

- nautical miles he aims to cover per day

2,500

- distance, in miles, from land at the halfway point

"In the middle of the Atlantic I'll be closer to the International Space Station than I will be to land. I don't mind my own company, but I'm not sure how the isolation is going to affect me. I will have various audiobooks, podcasts and music to keep me going, though, and hopefully I'll be able to talk to someone via sat phone most days."

6,000

- predicted calories per day he will burn

"I'm taking freeze-dried rations because they weigh less and contain more calories. I'm hoping the journey will take 90 days, but I've got enough food for 140."

Cpl Jarvis is fundraising for the Brainstrust brain tumour charity in memory of his grandfather and other friends lost to the disease.

Search **United We Conquer** on gofundme.com to support him, or follow his progress on Instagram and Twitter using the same handle

'I shall never forget'

To mark Remembrance Day this month, two Second World War veterans tell us their extraordinary tales of courage

A call to arms

RICHARD STYAN was one of thousands of young men who commissioned and took on the responsibilities of leadership in the Second World War. It was a conflict that saw the gunner fight his way through the major battles of Europe – before he was deployed to the Far East as the Japanese imperialists refused to give in...

“ IT WAS the awful smell that I remember as we began our journey through the French countryside after disembarking at Gold Beach in Normandy.

As a second lieutenant I had arrived a few days after the largest military invasion the world had ever seen on June 6, 1944 – one of several officers to cross the Channel when replacements were needed to take command.

Along with other troops, I waded waist deep through the sea water as we left our vessel.

Then we found ourselves heading inland and that was when the stench appeared – the shelling and bombing had killed cattle, and their carcasses lay everywhere.

I was 21 years old and part of the 91st Anti-Tank Regiment (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders).

We were useful to have around as our troops carried a 17-pound gun capable of taking on the large German Tiger tanks.

It had already been a long war for me by then and seems strange to think now that I had led a sheltered life until the conflict started.

I lived in Hounslow, Middlesex and before being called up I served in the Home Guard. You could say I was a bit like Pte Frank Pike from the TV series *Dad's Army* – a boy alongside men who had been in the First World War.

My time in the Army began in June 1942 as a soldier in the Royal Artillery, but after initially going to North Wales the War Officer Selection Board wanted to see me.

I commissioned and trained with the 97th Anti-Tank Regiment, which was tasked with destroying enemy armour.

I was with some very courageous men. While we all knew the area around the turret was the weak spot on a Tiger, facing down one of them was an experience in itself and could be frightening.

And we saw our share of fighting, first taking part in Operation Epsom around Caen, where we helped



the Americans encircle the enemy.

I returned to the UK after Arnhem in September 1944 and started preparing for the Far East.

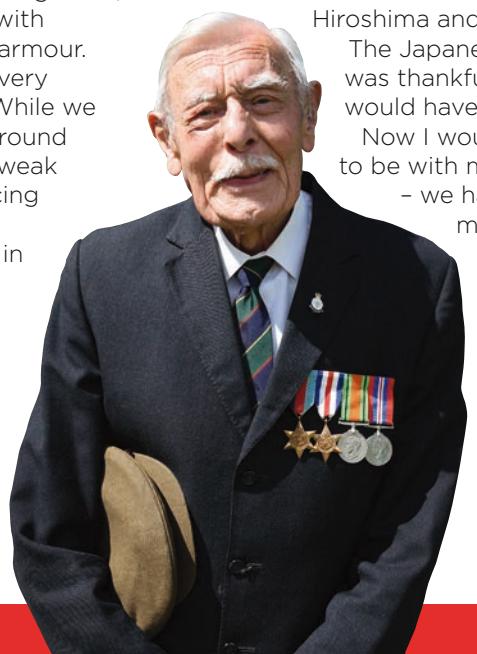
Having later boarded a troop ship heading for Burma, we had docked in India when we were told about the atomic bombs dropping on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Japanese had given up. I was thankful as fighting them would have meant trouble.

Now I would have a chance to be with my new wife Barbara – we had not long been married but I had barely seen her since our wedding day.

The respect for the men alongside whom I served never diminishes.

I fought with some extremely





skilled and courageous people; they came from all walks of life, taught me a great deal and I shall never forget them.

I have tremendous admiration, too, for those who serve today, particularly with all we have seen in Afghanistan – our soldiers continue to do us proud. **”**

After finishing his service as a captain in 1946, Styman and his wife settled in Skipton and were married for 56 years until she passed away in 2001.

Civilian life saw him working in the print industry and up until recently he was a standard bearer for The Royal British Legion's Bradford branch.

Now aged 98, he counts himself fortunate to have a large and supportive family, including grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Long walk to freedom

FORMER Royal Engineer Norman Lewis joined the Territorial Army in May 1939. After hostilities broke out in September, he deployed to France with the British Expeditionary Force. In June 1940 he was taken prisoner and spent the next five years in captivity, before escaping in the last months of the war and embarking on a 10,000-mile journey home via the Black Sea and Mediterranean...

“ I FELT a sharp jab in the back of my neck and someone said in perfect English 'stand up, for you the war is over'.

We had been ordered to demolish a bridge about ten miles from Rouen – we didn't know anything about what had happened at Dunkirk. No one had told us.

Every time we went to blow the bridge an officer kept telling us to

wait – and all the time the front was getting closer. In my opinion that officer was a German spy.

We were just sat there waiting for the Jerries. Eventually we came under fire and blew it up, but then we walked into the ambush.

They marched us to a ditch and lined us up, ready to be shot, but a German officer coming along the road saw what was about to **”**



It happen and stopped it – I swear it was the same man who stopped us blowing the bridge.

We were told to walk, so we marched from Saturday to Wednesday with no food or water. Eventually I collapsed in the hot sun and my friends carried me.

It just so happened that that night we stopped outside a hospital and the staff came out, saw I was sick and said I should be taken inside.

I never saw my friends again after that, apart from one who I saw after the war. They were taken to Germany and I ended up in Poland, between Danzig and Warsaw in a place called Torun.

There were 23,500 prisoners in the camp. We had no breakfast, just a bowl of turnip soup at dinner time and one round of bread – that was it.

We were lousy, our heads were shaved, we had no shoes, only wooden clogs. The sleeping area was a platform of three tiers, with 20 men to a tier.

Those on the top bunk were the lucky ones, because all the lice, dirt and urine fell through the boards onto the men below.

After two-and-a-half years I was sent on a working party at a sugar beet factory and later to a farm.

That I didn't mind so much because we had a bit more freedom and more food. I was there for another two-and-a-half years.

One day we heard gunfire and knew that the Russians were coming. All the Germans in the area packed up their belongings and left.

The guards were going to kill us, however, one of them talked the others out of it, so they locked us up and threw the key away.

It was January and cold. We didn't

know how we were going to get out, but after a few hours some Poles came and broke the door down.

We went into hiding for three days while a battle went on around us and when we came out the Russians were in charge.

They told us to make our way to Warsaw, 75 miles away, through deep snow. The first day we covered four miles, but eventually we managed to thumb a lift.

From there they put us on a train for six days and six nights. When it stopped, we were in Odessa on the Black Sea.

After a week a boat arrived and set sail for Istanbul – from there we went to Port Said in Egypt, then to Naples, Gibraltar and Liverpool.

I'd covered 10,000 miles in three months by the time I got home.

I knocked on my father's door and he called out, 'Who's there?'. I said, 'It's me, dad, Norman'. It was the first time I'd seen him break down.

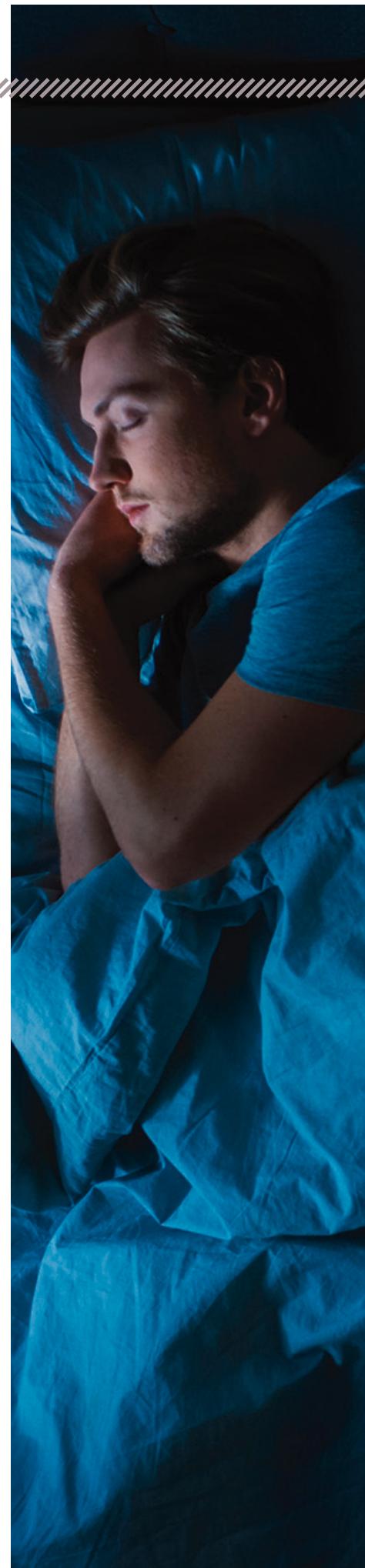
I think I survived because I accepted early on that I was a prisoner of war. I just carried on hoping that one day I would be free.

Some lads didn't accept it and they died.

I shall never forget the war. It never goes away. I talk about it because people should know what we went through.

The week after arriving home Lewis met his future wife and the two were married for 70 years until her death five years ago.

The 102-year-old still lives in the house he bought with the back pay he received after the war, and is helped by SSAFA and the Tri-Service and Veterans Support Centre.



Nightmare scenarios?

Why your bad dreams might actually be a force for good

► IF you find your slumber is regularly disturbed by nightmares, take heart – it's only a sign that your brain is trying to process negative events.

So says sleep guru Charlie Morley, who has spent the past 20 years learning everything there is to know about sleep and its close relationship with trauma.

At the age of 17, a drug-induced near-death experience sent him into a spiral of panic attacks, flashbacks and reoccurring nightmares that made him scared to close his eyes.

His personal quest for healing led him to so-called lucid-dreaming – in which the dreamer becomes aware of the dream and is able to control it.

Twenty years on he teaches the practice – along with mindfulness and breathing techniques – to a growing group of devotees, including MoD personnel and veterans with PTSD.

Far from being something to shy away from, he believes bad dreams are a crucial step in the healing process. *Soldier* asked him more...

How can nightmares be a good thing?

They are what I call a bitter medicine. They're never going to be fun – you wake up and it's uncomfortable, but a lot of that comes from the way we regard them as abnormal. However, it lessens the blow when you know they are merely a part of the brain's response to trauma

How so?

If we didn't have nightmares, we wouldn't be able to integrate bad experiences. There's been lots of research on this just in the last ten years. They happen during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and we know that the role of that phase of sleep is about memory reconsolidation. In fact, psychologists say it's actually a red flag if people aren't having them. It's a bit like when we cut ourselves and a scab forms to protect the skin healing underneath – that's what nightmares are doing for the mind

What's the difference between nightmares and anxiety dreams?

It's very subjective. An anxiety dream is any dream where you wake up feeling anxious – you can't find your car keys or you're late for work, but it's not especially scary. A nightmare is generally a terrifying situation in which we are either fighting off or fleeing from something, or replaying emotional trauma caused by a real-life event. They are also likely to wake us up

So are anxiety dreams useful too?

Yes, because the mind uses them like a fire drill. If you dream something is going terribly – like a big date or a presentation at work – you're more likely to do well. Studies at France's Sorbonne University showed that students who dreamt about failing an exam performed

much better in the actual test. It's an evolutionary trait – our ancestors might have dreamt about a hunt not going well, and would have woken up and thought "oh, I'd better bring more arrows"

What's your advice for those nightmares?

Give the nightmare attention. It is simply a dream that is shouting, "Hey, look at this! Deal with this fear!". So the best thing we can do is let them know we're listening. Tell someone about them, write them down, draw pictures. You can even try and rescript the ending. It seems paradoxical because our usual reaction is to try and forget about nightmares but all the science points towards acknowledging them being the best approach



● Charlie Morley is a bestselling author and lucid-dream teacher, who in 2018 was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship grant to research PTSD treatment in military veterans. His new book adapted from this work – *Wake Up to Sleep* – is out now. For more information visit charliemorley.com

'Not just for hipsters'

The Headspace app is now free for all MoD personnel.

Here's how it's already helped some of them...

SOLDIERS now have a potent piece of kit that can be taken anywhere in the world to help them look after their mental health and well-being.

After a two-year trial, all Regular and Reserve personnel can get a free annual subscription to the Headspace app (see details of how below).

Acting as a personal guide to good sleep, stress management and mindfulness, the tool normally costs £50 per year to download and is available for both Apple and Android phones as well as tablet devices.

Here, troops involved in testing it out reveal what they made of it...



With a busy work schedule and home life, I was losing touch with who I am and being who everybody else expected me to be. It was exhausting and led to burnout. Headspace has helped me put aside time for myself, to sit and quiet my mind of all the to-do lists, future tasks and past events. The benefits have spread into other areas such as my productivity, concentration, relationships with family and friends, calming myself in times of stress or fear and even controlling my breath on PT.

Sgt Nick Cole, RE

I think everyone has been through a challenging time during the last 18 months or so. For me, there were periods when I would have lots going on in my head – thinking about the projects I was working on and how my family and in-laws were. This would stop me sleeping and leave me feeling drained and tired during the day. The app provided me with a tool to relax and take my mind to a peaceful place – it has been a "go to" for me throughout the Covid pandemic and will remain so going forward.

Lt Col Barry Russell, RE



I often wake up during the night and my brain instantly starts working on tasks for the next day, preventing me falling back to sleep. This would result in me being tired, especially if I had a busy week. Headspace resolves this within minutes as I can turn on a sleep session, which helps me switch off my thoughts of work and quickly return to a peaceful state of sleeping.

Maj Pauline Murray-Knight, AGC (SPS)



Getting the right balance between work and family is challenging. Headspace has enabled me to create room, time, and space to think – to take a step back and see the bigger picture. It's now a cornerstone of my daily routine. I wish I had discovered it years ago. Give it a try – it's not just for hipsters and yogis.

Maj Richard Grimsdell, RA

IN NUMBERS Headspace trial

91

Percentage of testers who reported better sleep

96

Proportion who reported lower stress levels



Living in the block, you can get anxiety thinking about your workload. Using the app has helped me relax and clear my head. Approach it with an open mind, even if you don't notice changes straight away.

Cpl Christopher Tredray, AGC (RMP)



I used the pain tutorials after a significant accident in March. They have helped me to understand my body and focus on recovery. This, coupled with the sleep SOS sessions, has been a critical part of my rehab, especially when I could barely walk. The app is one of the best investments the MoD could have made to support Service personnel.

Maj Emma Allen, R Signals

- To get your free Headspace licence visit work.headspace.com/britisharmy/member-enroll. Users will need to use their Defence Gateway account ending @armymail.mod.uk





Cyber Monday safety

Don't get scammed in your hunt for an online bargain

► WE all love a good deal, especially if we can find one from the comfort of our sofas. And with this year's Cyber Monday fast approaching, there are likely to be all sorts of tempting offers about.

But according to Maj Chris Mason (Int Corps) – Army lead for all-arms security training, education and awareness – it's important to know exactly what you're buying, and from whom, before you dive in...

Choose where you shop carefully

As well as doing your research to find the lowest price, it's important to check the retailer is legitimate. Read feedback from people or organisations that you trust, such as consumer websites.

Be wary of emails or texts you receive about amazing offers – they may contain links to fake web pages. If you're unsure, don't click on the link, and instead use a reputable search tool to find the company's official site

Look for the padlock

At all stages check that sites have **https://** and a closed padlock icon in the browser's address bar. But beware – these do not guarantee that the retailer itself is legitimate or that their website is secure. It just means that the *connection* is secure. If the padlock icon is not there, or the browser says not secure, then don't use the site

Avoid setting up an account

You can usually complete your purchase without having to create an account, but if you must, only fill in the mandatory details. You shouldn't have to provide security information – such as your mother's maiden name, or the name of your first pet. Pick a new strong password, never using the same one for multiple online accounts



Use a credit card if you have one

Most major credit card providers protect online purchases and are obliged to refund you in certain circumstances. Using a credit card, rather than a debit card, also means that if your payment details are stolen, your main bank account won't be directly affected. The store may ask you if they can save your payment details for a quicker check-out next time. But this is not recommended

If things go wrong

If you think your credit or debit card has been used by someone else, let your bank know straight away so they can block anyone using it. Always contact your bank using the official website or phone number. Don't use links or contact details in messages you have been sent or given over the phone.

If you've lost money, tell your bank and report it as a crime to **Action Fraud** for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, or **Police Scotland** for Scotland. By doing this, you'll be helping to prevent others becoming victims of cyber crime

● For further details visit Get Safe Online – getsafeonline.org

Did you know?

This year's **Cyber Monday** – one of the busiest shopping events of the year – is **November 29**. It comes three days after Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, where many Americans are off work and shops start their Christmas sales. The trend started in the US but has now spread globally

WILD WILD WEST

Cambrian Patrol is back and the Welsh countryside proves ever-demanding

Report: Cliff Caswell. Pictures: Graeme Main and Cpl Adam Wakefield RLC

HARDENED soldiers turned out in their hundreds to test their mental and physical resolve as a world-renowned military competition returned with bite. The 85 teams that entered converged on the countryside around Brecon and the Black Mountains for the reboot of Cambrian Patrol, which last year fell victim to the Covid-19 pandemic.

And the troops soon found the 12-month pause had done nothing to blunt the scale of the challenge as they were pushed to their limits in some demanding conditions.

Organised by 160th (Welsh) Brigade and now in its 62nd year, the event saw patrols tackle military serials mirroring a range of

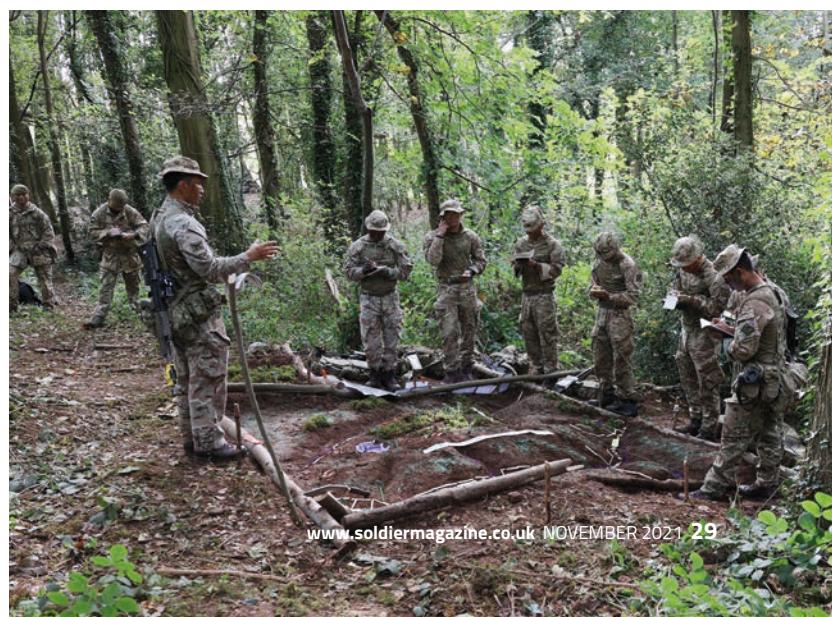
real-world situations.

Taking a cue from the Battle Craft Syllabus, the tasks included dealing with mock IEDs, plus casualty evacuation and water crossing scenarios.

All the while, the teams of eight had to navigate a 37-mile route over two days and undergo a debrief after their time in the field. Each one then received a gold, silver, bronze or certificate finish based on overall performance.

Exercise director and brigade commander Brig Andrew Dawes said it was pleasing to see the event – which has only ever been cancelled on one other occasion, during the 2001 foot and mouth crisis – return to the military calendar. ▶

“
Widely recognised as
the toughest patrolling
exercise in the world
”



BLACK MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN

DID YOU KNOW?

Cambrian Patrol began life as a far smaller event – when a group of Welsh Territorial Army Reservists met for a weekend of fitness and rifle discipline

WEATHER WIN

Conditions were the kindest they have been for years – with temperatures topping 18 degrees Celsius

IN NUMBERS

Cambrian Patrol 2021

EIGHT members per team
17 international entrants
85 teams that took part

“

Having completed it, I think everyone realises now how much further they are able to push themselves.

The water crossing in particular was hard – hitting the river at last light when temperatures were plunging.

Leading when I was cold and tired was a good experience. You feel the pressure in that environment.

”

Lt Nelson Bacon (shown near right)
QRH team leader
– silver winners



THE ROUTE

36 miles
TWO Days in the field

ADAPT & OVERCOME

- A team from 6 Rifles achieved a silver medal – despite losing their leader and 2iC to injury
- The patrol from 216 (Para) Signal Squadron included four members that deployed on Op Pitting in Kabul

MEDAL TALLIES

Teams are awarded points after being assessed at each stage of the competition. They are then awarded a **gold**, **silver** or **bronze** medal, or presented a **certificate of achievement**

This year's event saw **11 gold**, **26 silver**, **14 bronze** and **18 certificate finishes**. A total of 15 teams failed to finish

GOLD MEDALLISTS

Gurkha Wing (Mandalay), Infantry Battle School (Brecon)
Gurkha Company (Sittang)
Gurkha Company (Taveleto)
10th Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, RLC
3rd Battalion, The Rifles
4 Regiment, RLC (Plt 1)
4 Regiment, RLC (Plt 2)
9 Theatre Logistic Regiment, RLC
France
India
Ireland

» While team numbers were scaled back by around a fifth this year, organisers used the pandemic pause to fine tune the challenge with input from Field Army bosses.

“We've taken time to work out what they want from the exercise while putting more structure around the training objectives and assessment,” he continued.

“Cambrian Patrol is an opportunity – it acts as a barometer to test both the fitness and resilience of our soldiers, as well as some of their tactical skills.”

Widely recognised as the toughest patrolling exercise in the world, the senior officer added that it remained “a rite of passage” for the Army's best. ■





EYES ON THE PRIZE

These **battlefield super-specs** are just one example of the data devices that could change the face of Army training. **Soldier** visited the **Warfighting Experiment** to find out more...

SENIOR officers are full of claims about robotics and electrification of the battlefield right now. But when extra investment in cutting-edge technology arrives, it's in the training realm where the quickest wins arguably lie.

Little surprise, then, that the focus of this year's Army Warfighting Experiment (AWE) at Copehill Down was collective training – and industry had supplied some exciting innovations for troops to test.

For the Infantry, perhaps the most significant technology being evaluated was a range of body and equipment sensors that provide multiple strands of real-time data on different aspects of a soldier's performance.

These not only allow commanders to track an individual's location, but exactly where he or she is looking, thanks to a pair of glasses fitted with tiny inward-looking cameras that detect eye movement and pupil dilation.

This information is instantly fed into a data bank, where it is combined with feedback from other sensors – including the now-familiar Android Tactical Assault Kit, a chest-mounted situation awareness tool, and R Shots, which shows the

orientation of a soldier's rifle and whether targets were hit.

During urban battle scenarios played out by members of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles at Copehill Down this data was combined with that generated by body pads monitoring stress levels.

As Steve Penver, group head of digital integration for defence manufacturer Babcock International, pointed out, combining so many streams of information can provide instructors with vital insights about deployability.

"It gives them an all-seeing eye, if you like, providing information that observer-mentors might find hard to spot during an exercise," he said.

"For example, we found that some of the newer soldiers tended to spend a lot of time looking down at their weapons when they shouldn't.

"Through a combination of the eye trackers and body sensors you can also detect when tiredness sets in or attention spans start to wane, which is especially useful if a unit is going over the same drills time and again.

"It helps the instructors establish what the optimum training time or number of repetitions is.

"The technology can also identify areas of weakness that





need to be focused on by different teams."

Maj Peter Guo (RA), from the Infantry Trials and Development Unit, was one of the officers coordinating the AWE.

He believes advances in turning around data could be one of the most significant outcomes this year.

"Currently, soldiers perform in the field under the watchful eye of instructors and data is then taken back to fixed infrastructure and run through an analytical tool," he explained.

"Then, several hours later, or even the next day, the troops are all brought back to go over the information and see what they can learn.

"However, the latest systems allow that to be done with a tablet on the fly, at the point of delivery.

"It means soldiers get a far more immediate learning experience and it gives more control to instructors.

"They can fine tune the exercise as they go along and say 'hey people, we can do this particular part better, let's go again'.

"That's the efficiency we are making – by removing the human element from the data aggregation process you are buying back some valuable training time."

Here is a flavour of some other innovations on show to personnel on Salisbury Plain...

ARMOURED ASSETS

Virtual reality headsets are nothing new, but one that was trialled by Challenger crews this year could simulate not only the interior of the platform but a consistent exterior landscape when viewed through periscopes, windows and the top hatch.

There was also a replica BMP-1 tracked fighting vehicle (pictured left) on trial. Made from a metal frame covered with a thin metal skin and canvas, it was fitted to an off-the-shelf pick-up truck.

With further refinements, this could prove a useful and cost-effective training aid, according to Challenger tank commander Sgt Kyle Macready (QRH, pictured right).

"This is a better, more realistic opfor than we usually face – we often use Land Rovers in the UK or CVRTs in Canada.

"The heat signature obviously needs working on and we would, ideally, also have a range of different types and a mass of them to train with to replicate the sort of a recce group we'd be contacting in real life."



TUNNEL TALK

A simulated tunnel complex created quite a stir this year.

With troops limited to this type of training at Corsham Mines or in Gibraltar, the thought of being able to use a highly mobile system (pictured below) was a tantalising prospect.

It can be packed into an ISO container and set up to provide a network up to a kilometre in length.

Different conditions can be created inside it, too, such as running water or different smells.



"Quite a few of us experienced the sim tunnel and came to a few conclusions," LCpl Selby Fairmington (Rifles, pictured left) told *Soldier*.

"The main one was that when moving around spaces as tight as this our SA80 is too cumbersome. We had to ditch it or heavily modify it just to fit through – the only useful weapons in there would be our sidearms.

"So this could be a really useful training aid for finding stuff out like that, as well as honing drills – especially if we can have a long and complex system that can be modified to create unfamiliarity and help the lads get over their claustrophobia."



POLAR PUSH

Explorer looks to prove that nothing is impossible in epic Antarctic quest



“I WANTED to do something that so far out of my comfort zone, that will hopefully inspire others to do something similar,” Capt Preet Chandi (RAMC) tells *Soldier* on the eve of her 700-mile expedition to the Antarctic.

Pushing boundaries has been a lifelong mantra for the 32-year-old and should she reach her destination in the early days of 2022 she will be proud to become the first woman of colour to complete the excruciating polar feat solo.

However, success will not come easy. The officer hopes to complete her epic journey in 45 days, but to do so she faces the prospect of pulling a 92kg pulk for at least ten hours on each of those days.

And she must also conquer the challenge of operating in one of the coldest continents on the planet, where temperatures drop as low as -50 degrees Celsius and wind speeds can hit 60 miles per hour.

Polar Preet, as she calls herself, is no stranger to physical exertion. She ran her first half-marathon aged 20, before progressing to the full distance and then the Dusk 'til Dawn ultra-marathon in the Peak District.

Interview: Richard Long Pictures: Graeme Main



Her endeavours peaked with entry into an event billed as the toughest footrace on Earth – the Marathon des Sables – just weeks after returning from a six-month tour in South Sudan.

The exact opposite of what lies in wait, the race sees athletes run more than 250 kilometres across the sand dunes and rocky landscapes of the Sahara Desert and it was here that thoughts of a South Pole quest first came to mind.

“I used to set myself a challenge each year, but it got to the point where I didn’t want to restrict it to just one,” Capt Chandi continues. “I’d read about the Marathon de Sables – it sounded crazy, but it eventually got to the stage where I thought I’d enter it. I knew after that I would go on to do something really big.

“Antarctica came into my head, although I didn’t know anything about it. The great thing about the internet is the fact you have so much information at your fingertips, so it grew from there.

“I wanted to do something different and asked, ‘who has done this before?’ and ‘how many



Asians have done it?" – I want people to realise these opportunities are out there and that it's okay to step outside the box."

Two years in the making, the expedition has not come cheaply, and she has had to raise £70,000 in funding – with Team Army, BFBS, Amey and Fujitsu among her many supporters.

Capt Chandi also sunk her life savings into a trip to Greenland, where she gained valuable experience of life in sub-zero extremes.

"For a start, the country was difficult to get to – I took three flights, a boat trip and helicopter ride, and it was very expensive," she explains.

"It was the hardest thing I have ever done. We faced all sorts of conditions, starting with pulling the pulk on foot in the rain and then onto skis with several days of storms.

"Plus, there was the risk of polar bears and we had to »

“
As an Asian woman when you step out of the norm it is not always applauded
”

■ build snow walls to protect us from the elements.

"We then had five or six days when we were stuck in our tents not knowing when we would go again because the storms were so bad.

"They call Greenland the university of the Antarctic and it was great preparation. The conditions were something else, but it was good to come out the other side.

"I'm now really excited. It will be about pacing myself and finding the motivation to get up in the morning and go again.

"There have been barriers along the way – from getting the required funding in place to Covid-19 – but I'm so glad I have got to this point."

Overcoming adversity is nothing new for the explorer. She moved away from home at the age of 14 to pursue a tennis career, a path that took her to Jiri Novak's academy in the Czech Republic two years later.

But when she fell out of love with the sport, she returned to the UK to pursue new opportunities. She completed an access course that gave her A level-equivalent qualifications and found volunteer work at a hospital, a role she combined with a job at Burger King, before eventually going on to study physiotherapy at university.

"I joined the Reserve at 19 with minimum GCSEs and no A Levels – I didn't think I would go on to get a degree," Capt Chandi says.

"Before that I played tennis, but the norm for people from my cultural background is to become a doctor, dentist or lawyer.

"I saw the Army Reserve advertised in the city centre and it looked great, but I didn't tell my family I was joining, and I didn't invite them to my commissioning parade.

"They have since seen the breadth of opportunities I've had in the Army and it is much easier to talk about some ten years on, but as a 19-year-old I was really worried about telling people what I was doing.

"Older generations come from different backgrounds and the opportunities I have had from being born in the UK are far greater than those my parents had – my mum had an arranged marriage at 17.

"As an Asian woman when you step out of the norm it is not always applauded. People ask, 'why are you doing something so different?' and 'why are you not married?' but I have built a career for myself."

That career developed further when the officer joined the Regular Army in 2016 – and she has not looked back.

"I held a senior musculoskeletal position in the NHS and had a sense of stability that I had not really had in my life," she says as she reflects on her decision to become a full-time soldier.

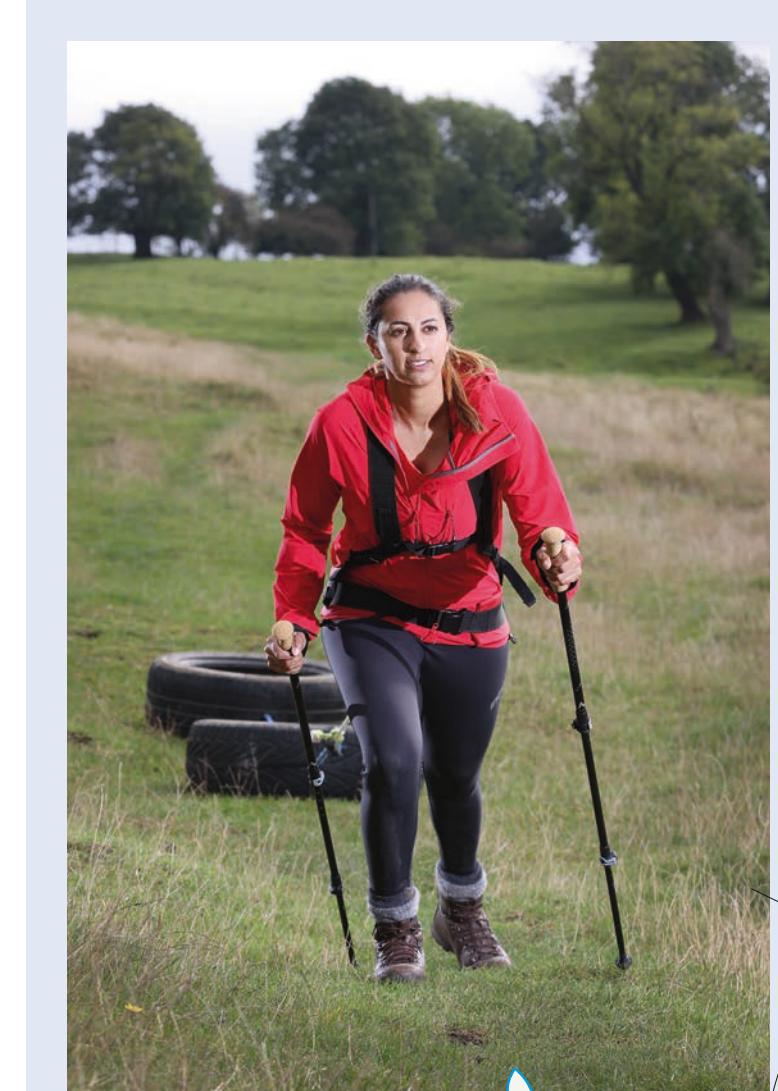
"I had a great job and a brilliant group of friends, but something was missing.

"I was taking every bit of my annual leave to do things with the Reserve, but I wanted to do more – whether that was an extra course or additional training.

"So I decided to fully immerse myself in the Army and handed my notice in – just a month or two after taking the job.

"Getting into the Regulars was something I never thought I'd achieve, but it just feels normal now.

"My family were really proud. When it comes to doing things outside the ordinary there was a time when I would not make a



Capt Chandi has followed a **six-days-a-week training programme** in preparation for the expedition and will consume **5,000 calories a day** to fuel her efforts



Bellingshausen Sea



The challenge ahead

Capt Chandi hopes to start her quest later this month – the exact start date will be determined by Covid quarantine regulations



Her progress will be followed by polar specialists Antarctic Logistics and Expeditions, who will follow her via GPS and check-in with the soldier every 24 hours

The course climbs to more than **9,300ft** and she will have to deal with **24 hours of daylight**

Weddell Sea



Travelling for **ten hours a day**, the officer will face challenging conditions including constant winds, fields of sastrugi (features formed by erosion of snow by wind) and white-outs

Hercules Inlet

She starts at Hercules Inlet, on the edge of the frozen Antarctic continent, and will head to the Geographic South Pole – 702 miles away

Antarctica

Ross Ice Shelf

big deal of it – I didn't want all the comments, so I kept it quiet. But that has really changed over the past couple of years."

And now, just weeks from stepping out from Hercules Inlet at the start her latest test, she hopes her achievements can inspire others – no matter what walk of life they come from – to believe in themselves and push boundaries.

"I want challenges such as this to be the norm," she concludes. "I'm a woman of colour doing something a woman of colour has never done before – it is about showing people what you can achieve."

"The more you do, the more you realise what you are capable of – I wish I had the confidence I have now ten years ago." ■

“
The more you do, the more you realise what you're capable of
”



Explorers are expected to have the mental stamina to continue in extreme conditions when physically tired. Technical skill, and a high level of strength and aerobic fitness, are also required



● Regular updates will be posted at polarpreet.com, with reports also featuring on the [@polarpreet](https://www.instagram.com/polarpreet) Insta page

SCRUBBING THE PAST

**When remembrance means
rolling up your sleeves...**

AS THE afternoon sun beats down over St Andrew's parish church in Fairlight, the unmistakable stench of cleaning fluid drifts across the grounds outside. It's an unlikely – and somewhat unsettling – smell to be confronted with at a place of rest.

But there is little peace to be had in this sleepy corner of East Sussex today – as Army veteran Steve Davies makes clear when his head pops up from behind an algae-covered headstone.

Armed with a toothbrush, a bottle of D2 cleaner and a smile, the 63-year-old former member of the Royal Green Jackets takes us on a tour of what is now his regular place of work.

Showing *Soldier* around, he explains how he came to spend his days cleaning up inscriptions to forgotten war heroes.

And it all began when he attended a family christening in Sandhurst – spotting the overgrown headstone of an 18-year-old rifleman who served during the First World War.

"This boy had died just weeks before

the Armistice," Davies, who served in Northern Ireland at the height of The Troubles, recalls.

"His grave was dirty and overgrown and it made me angry.

"It was the fact it was my regiment too – I said I was coming back tomorrow to clean it. And the rest is history."

Since that day – and with the support of family, friends, Facebook followers, church wardens, volunteers and a committed historian – Davies has made it his mission to roll up his sleeves at non-Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries across the South East.

And the stories he has uncovered along the way have knocked him sideways.

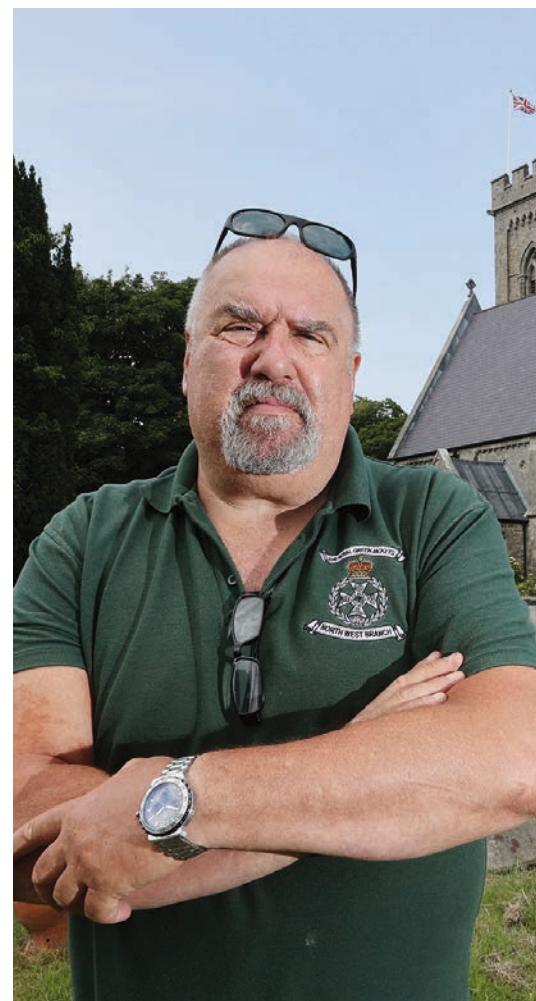
"There are some unbelievable people in here," the father-of-three says of the churchyard of St Andrew's.

"I clean the inscriptions and put them on Facebook to explain what I've done.

"An amazing researcher, Jane Robinson, works with me and uncovers the soldiers' stories.

"After taking a photo, I send it to her, and she looks up the service record and does some research.

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures: Graeme Main





"We then try to contact surviving family members, who often have no idea the guys are here, and send them some before and after pictures."

To help fund the cost of his endeavours, the former corporal charges a fee to clean civilian stones that he discovers along the way.

His notable finds at St Andrew's have included the sap-covered grave of Richard D'Oyly Carte – the Victorian composer and hotelier responsible for building a London business empire that included the famous Savoy.

Davies reveals a military discovery that also sticks in his mind.

"This will blow your socks off," he says, recounting the story of Royal Air Force officer Sir William Garthwaite, a Fairey Swordfish biplane pilot involved in the torpedoing of the German battleship Bismarck in 1941. The attack incapacitated the vessel and allowed the British to close in on the pride of Hitler's navy. ▀

“I was asked by a family member if I could clean his plot at Matfield, and as part of our research we found some Imperial War Museum audio footage of him talking about the battle.

“Two of his grandchildren had never heard his voice before then.

“They said ‘we can’t believe what you have done’.

“That sort of thing makes it worthwhile.”

To date, Davies has cleaned up the graves of 12 Victoria Cross recipients. But he is keen to honour the memory of all personnel, regardless of rank or recognition, and he has even helped fund a headstone for a forgotten First World War soldier who did not qualify for a CWGC one.

He continues: “The biggest problem is that you can get information on the generals and medal-winners, but the other guys you can’t.

“There are junior soldiers I cannot find any information about – it’s sad.

“But I will never stop; I absolutely love doing this.

“And every time I find someone a little different, it drives me forward.”

It is easy to see why Davies feels this way – remembrance is clearly a theme that resonates strongly with the ex-Serviceman, who was medically discharged from the Army after developing asthma.

A local organiser of one of the Armed Forces breakfast clubs – an initiative to combat loneliness among veterans – he is very concerned by the notion of lost sacrifice.

“I was in love with the Army from the age of two until the day I handed in my MoD90,” he explains.

“But leaving the military is a bit like a messy divorce: you’re still in love with them but they don’t love you.

“There’s no real system of aftercare, and when you leave you feel bereft.”

With persistence, a little humour and a lot of elbow grease, Davies is determined to turn the tide on military heroes being lost to history.

“I phone up everyone to get things done; I am a huge pain in the arse,” he laughs. “But why should these people be forgotten? And they absolutely are forgotten.”

As the country comes together to remember the fallen this month, this is a powerful message for the Army community to heed. ■

“
I will never stop – I
absolutely love
doing this
”



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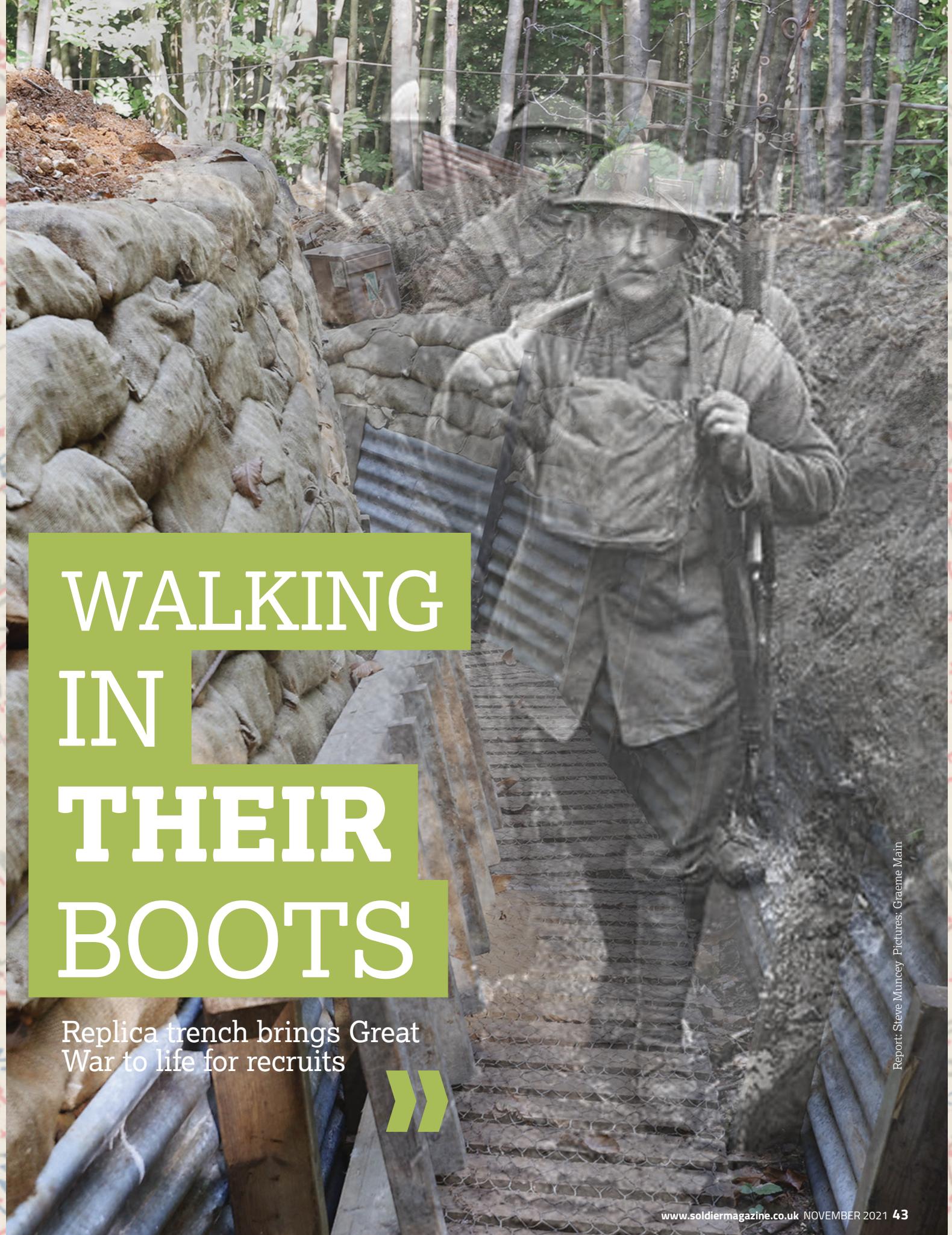


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WALKING IN THEIR BOOTS

Replica trench brings Great War to life for recruits



Report: Steve Muncy Pictures: Graeme Main

France, January 7, 1915: Poured with rain all day and night. Water rose steadily till knee deep, when we had the order to retire. Dropped blanket and fur coat in the water. Slipped down while getting up on parapet and got soaked up to my waist.

Went sandbag filling and then sewer guard for two hours. Had no dug-out to sleep in, so had to chop and change about. Roache got shot while getting water and Tibbs was hit while going to his aid (in the mouth). He laid in open all day, was brought in in the evening, unconscious but still alive. Passed away soon after.

THIS grim extract from the diary of Rfn William Eve of The London Regiment provides a stark view of the realities of life, and death, in the trenches of the First World War.

But it is difficult for anyone – even serving personnel and veterans of recent conflicts – to fully appreciate the conditions that were endured by millions of troops just over a century ago.

How close were the enemy lines? How easy was it to be picked off by a sniper? How did you wash or cook?

However, a new initiative by acclaimed historian Andy Robertshaw (pictured top right, centre) is helping to illustrate how soldiers on the Western Front lived, as well as fought.

A former head of education at the National Army Museum who has worked with Steven Spielberg and Sam Mendes on films *War Horse* and *1917*, the expert now runs the Centre for Experimental Military Archaeology.

Using British Army trench building manuals from the era, along with his huge reservoir of personal knowledge, the civilian has constructed a trench network that accurately replicates the defences at Railway Wood near Ypres during the First World War.

It's a location noted for the proximity of the British and German lines – at some points they were as close as 15 metres apart.

And the mock-up has even been embellished with paraphernalia of the era to bring it to life, including periscopes, sandbags, ammo boxes, firing steps, mess tins, boards and authentically constructed barbed wire posts.

"Nothing can replace visiting the actual battlefields in northern France and Belgium, of course," Robertshaw tells *Soldier* when we visit the facility at Kent Event Centre near Maidstone. "But they don't look quite how they looked during the war, and it requires a leap of imagination to go from lumps and bumps in the ground to appreciating what the trenches were actually like to live in and fight from."

The site has already been used for filming and has now been opened up to the Army's training schools.

With Covid-related travel restrictions making trips to mainland Europe more problematic than usual, and this place offering an attractive, cost-effective alternative, ATR Pirbright and Winchester have seized the opportunity to add a large dose of experience-based colour to their "realities of war" course module.

"The pandemic has had a big impact on our battlefield tours," explains Bdr Simon Green (RA, pictured right), an instructor from Pirbright.

"Obviously, the trips to Belgium and France should resume in time."

“

I couldn't quite believe how close the German positions were

”

WOOD TRENCH





Trench life in numbers

25,000

Length, in miles, of
all the trenches on
the Western Front



75,000

Estimated number of British casualties due to trench-foot, a condition that results when the feet are exposed to excessively wet and dirty conditions

450

Number of soldiers
it took to build 250
metres of trench in
six hours

900

Estimated number of
offspring in one year from
one Western Front rat
nourished by human flesh



“

Phase one soldiers need to understand the history behind what they are joining

”



“But coming here to see how the trenches were built, by whom and learning why they were designed the way they were, puts a practical spin on it and brings it to life for the recruits.

“Phase one soldiers also need to understand the history behind what they are joining, and that we are a family and have a responsibility to remember who came before us.

“This experience provides that, but also helps them understand some of the basics of combat, and that could be important for their careers.

“For example, we have quite a few recruits here destined for the Royal Engineers and they will be involved in trench building in future so learning about the legacy of that requirement can be hugely beneficial.”

Bdr Green is helping to oversee a group of 90 recruits visiting the facility, where they are receiving lectures from historians from the battlefield tour specialist Anglia Tours.

The discussions – describing equipment and clothing of the era, how gas attacks and defences against them evolved, and how troops lived and fought for years in the dirt and mud of the Western Front – prove eye-opening for many of the youngsters.

“I feel very fortunate to be a soldier in today’s era,” says Rct Ross Mitchell (pictured right).

“The conditions back then were basic to say the least, living spaces were incredibly small and today we obviously have better technology to help us – and the food is vastly better.

“Also, I couldn’t quite believe how close the German positions were – it was nothing. To fight your enemy at that short distance seems quite surreal, you must have

been able to see the whites of their eyes.”

Rct Peter Penman, who is hoping to join the Royal Logistic Corps, is equally astonished.

“Seeing this has made the conflict all-the-more real to me and made me wonder what my role would have been if I’d been charged with supplying the front line in 1914,” he adds.

“If someone mentions the First World War to me now I won’t immediately think of a movie, I’ll think of this trench.

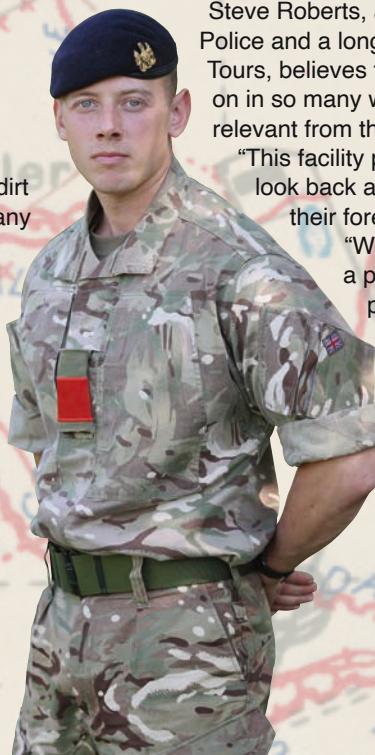
“All the details that are here bring it to life and when you move around the tight spaces, see the basic nature of the defences and the closeness of the enemy you realise how vulnerable the troops were.”

Steve Roberts, a former soldier with the Royal Military Police and a long-serving subject matter expert with Anglia Tours, believes that while the military may have moved on in so many ways since 1918, there is still much that’s relevant from the First World War.

“This facility provides a great opportunity for troops to look back at the Army’s history and appreciate what their forebears have done,” he explains.

“What did they utilise back then to solve a problem? And is that something these personnel can learn from?

“One major part of the recruits’ training is learning the importance of gallantry, respect for others and courage, and the experience on offer here certainly brings home to them why those values and standards are so important.”



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LANDMARC

RESERVE SERVICE NOT RECOGNISED

● I RECENTLY discovered I am not going to be awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct (LSGC) medal despite having more than the required minimum of 15 years' unblemished service to my name.

I joined the Army Reserve in 2005 and deployed on Op Herrick 9 in September 2008. While on tour I took the opportunity to transfer to Regular Army service.

After 12 happy years as a full-time soldier I have now decided to transition back to civilian life.

I made an enquiry about eligibility for the LSGC medal as JPA said I had served 16 years and one month, but my unit staff support assistant advised me that my Reserve service would not count towards this decoration.

So, after committing all this time to serving my country, I am not going to receive any recognition for it, unless I complete another ten years of Reserve service in order to be eligible for their equivalent award – something that I find very unfair.

The system and its criteria need to be looked at again in order to make it more achievable, especially for those moving from Reserve to Regular service. We are supposedly one Army, after all. – **Cpl Chris Jackson, REME**

Col Leigh Drummond, Assistant Head Personnel Services, replies: The LSGC medal is given to those who have given long service with good conduct in the Regular Army.

The nature of this award necessitates the need for strict eligibility and qualifying criteria in order to maintain its prestige – part of which is the requirement for 15 years of Regular service.

While the counterpart to the LSGC for the Army Reserve is the equally prestigious Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (VRSM), the different criteria and context for these two awards mean qualifying service for them must be distinct.

The only exception to this is for those who leave the Regulars and continue to serve with the Reserve. They can transfer up to five years of Regular service as qualifying at half rate (i.e. a maximum of 2.5 years) towards the VRSM.



“We'd benefit from a rule change”

'Hair policy cutting recruiting'

PART of my role involves recruiting and I reckon more than 90 per cent of our target market sport facial hair.

So when individuals are told they will have to lose their beard if they sign up, it has a very detrimental effect on our recruiting efforts.

The Royal Air Force, including the RAF Regiment, has recently declared that facial hair is permitted and, while acknowledging the CBRN equipment aspects, I cannot see why the policy on this for British Army personnel has not been changed too.

I know it was being looked at some time ago but all seems to have gone quiet recently.

Personally, I am always pleased to see change happening – that's how we get better isn't it? A prime example is the recent rule revision on how hair can be worn (*Soldier*, August 2021).

Many might consider me a bit of a dinosaur after 36 years of service, but I am actually down with all the young dudes when it comes to the issue of facial hair. When I was a sergeant major – albeit a few years ago – I engaged with my successor on the matter and was surprised to hear that his views were the same as mine: we should allow facial hair (within reason).

We are clearly a forward-leaning organisation and I believe we would benefit from a rule change on this.

– **Name and address supplied**

Lt Col Rebecca Macklin, Diversity and Inclusion Team, Army Headquarters, replies: As you recognise, we must ensure the Army

attracts as many potential applicants as possible, but it must also maintain the correct appearance policies to protect the culture and ethos from which we derive much of our operational effectiveness.

As such, we routinely review appearance regulations, including the facial hair element.

The last review was in early 2020 and it was decided to retain the current policy, which falls within AGAI 59.

This continues to only allow beards in certain prescribed circumstances.

Also, it does highlight that operational effectiveness must not be jeopardised and facial hair must be modified if necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any protective equipment that's required.

Despite the change to Royal Air Force policy, the British Army's remains extant and recognises the diversity of our serving officers and soldiers by allowing individuals to express their religion or beliefs through a variety of recognised symbols, including the wearing of facial hair for certain faiths.

However, the policy may be reviewed again in the future.

**GOT A GRIPE?
THEN WHY NOT GET IT
OFF YOUR CHEST ASAP?**

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Displaced people from the conflict with Boko Haram at a camp in Maiduguri

Nigeria effort needs reappraisal

HAVE seen the issue of medallic recognition raised on an almost monthly basis in *Soldier* so I shall try to avoid previously trodden ground.

I served under the British military advisory training team (BMATT) in Nigeria and while I was based outside of the joint operations area (JOA), and therefore not eligible for the West Africa Medal, I was lucky enough to visit the Op Turus team in Maiduguri on multiple occasions.

The difference in the work done by the two teams was striking, with perhaps two or three personnel on Op Turus serving in advisory roles and the rest employed in force protection, while the BMATT team were almost all employed as advisers.

The operational input from them was enormous and not dissimilar to the role that medal-earning teams have fulfilled in other theatres.

Having deployed on a number of other operations, I can confirm, first-hand, that the conditions endured by those BMATT personnel are just as austere, hostile and grim as anything experienced by their colleagues on Op Toral and Op Shader, and in many cases much worse.

Not only that, but the work put in by them and Op Turus staff in the capital of Abuja is on a par with any other deployed headquarters – with the team there frequently consisting of junior officers wearing a rank up and fulfilling a vast array of complex tasks outside of their usual expertise.

Having read previous responses and having consulted the DIN, I have just one question: will your expert, when he next addresses the medals board, float the suggestion that those serving in Nigeria outside of the JOA (you must serve inside the area for 30 days to claim the medal) have their service recognised too by being

required to serve for 90 days? This would continue to honour the credibility of the JOA but also acknowledge the sacrifices and commitments of those contributing to the effort in the JOA from elsewhere in the country. – **Name and address supplied**

Col Leigh Drummond, Assistant Head, Personnel Services, Army Headquarters, replies: As you point out, this issue has been raised on several occasions in recent months.

The assessment metric for operational medallic recognition includes four key areas; scale, risk of kinetic engagement, a designated enemy, and the rigours experienced when deployed on the operation.

While operational impact is not part of the metric, it is taken into account during the process by the operations recognition board.

The qualifying period for an activity is decided only after it has been deemed to meet the requirements for operational medallic recognition.

This is based primarily upon the risk and rigour experienced by the personnel and forms part of any recommendations submitted by the board for subsequent approval.

BMATT activity in Nigeria will be reviewed by the board this month. If the award of a medal is supported, the Army SME will discuss all of the options for the qualifying period with the board – one of which could be 90 days of continuous service.

Further information on the outcome of the assessment will be promulgated via the chain of command in due course.

“
The difference was striking
”

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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CAREERS

The Recruit for Spouses Career Academy has joined forces with Virgin Red to offer a free mentoring programme to military spouses. Mentors from the company will include employees from areas such as business development and portfolio management. For more information about the initiative visit recruitforspouses.co.uk/spouses-career-academy

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

Forces Families Jobs is a platform designed to help partners into meaningful employment. Visit forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk



COMPETITIONS

September Spinelines winner:
Jayne Hawkes, Worcester

September HOAY winner: Abi Moore, York



DIARY

November 6: Militia fair and auction in association with Duke's Auctioneers at The Tank Museum in Bovington, Dorset. Lots go on display November 3-6. The auction will also be live-streamed on the museum's YouTube channel.

November 14: Remembrance Sunday – including the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph, London. For more details visit britishlegion.org.uk

November 19: Contact Zones of the First World War. Join Dr Anna Maguire at the National Army Museum as she explores the social and cultural encounters experienced by soldiers of the British Empire during the First World War.

November 24-25: Scarlet and Gold. The bands of the Household Division return to the stage for the renowned concert series over two

nights at Cadogan Hall, London. Visit householddivision.org.uk or call 020 7730 4500 for tickets.

Until December 31: Foe to Friend. National Army Museum exhibition showing how more than one million British soldiers have lived and served in Germany over the past 75 years. Immerse yourself in their stories and follow their evolution from conquerors and occupiers to allies and friends.

Until January 9, 2022: **Generations: Portraits of Holocaust Survivors.** In partnership with the Royal Photographic Society, Jewish News, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and Dangoor Education, this exhibition at the Imperial War Museum showcases works from 12 contemporary photographers. The images capture the special connections between Holocaust survivors and the younger generations of their families.



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020 7901 8900;
soldierscharity.org

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

Armed Forces Christian Union:
01793 783123;
afcu.org.uk

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

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

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

Army LGBT Forum:
armylgbt.org.uk

Army Libraries:
01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall, now **Togetherall**:
togetherall.com

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

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

Care After Combat:
careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

Centre for Veterans Health, King Edward VII Hospital:
020 7467 4370;
cdunne@kingedwardvii.co.uk

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

Combat Stress:
0800 323 4444;
combatstress.org.uk

Defence Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination 24/7 Helpline:
0800 783 0334

Erskine:
0141 814 4569;
erskine.org.uk

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

Felix Fund – the bomb disposal charity:
07713 752901;
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
forcespensionsociety.org

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

Heroes Welcome:
heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
highground-uk.org.uk
07951 495 272

Humanist, Atheist and Non-religious in Defence Network:
defencehumanists.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01252 787574

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or
0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group):
mutual-support.org.uk

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

PoppyScotland:
0131 557 2782;
poppyScotland.org.uk

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

Remount:
01451 850 341;
remount.net

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

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

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

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

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

Speak Out – the Army's confidential bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline:
0306 7704656

SSAFA:
0845 1300 975;
ssafa.org.uk

Stoll: 020 7385 2110; stoll.org.uk

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

The Poppy Factory:
020 8940 3305;
poppyfactory.org

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

The Veterans Charity:
01753 653772;
[info@veteranscharity.org.uk](http://veteranscharity.org.uk)

Troop Aid:
0121 711 7215 or 07734 384260;
troopaid@icloud.com; troopaid.info

uk4u Thanks!:
01798 812081;
uk4u.org

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

WVRS: 02920 232 668



REUNIONS

The Cheshire Yeomanry Association is planning a dinner in Chester on April 23, 2022 to mark the outfit's formation 225 years ago. Email kingsbr@gmail.com for info.



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

membership funded organisation that acts as a pension watchdog – is staging a number of roadshows. See forcespensionsociety.org/news-events/events for dates.

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

Nov 1 – Leeds
Nov 18 – Scottish Borders
Nov 22 – Gloucestershire

WIN

High performance Streamlight Wedge torch

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JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU? No. 955

TEN details have been changed in this picture of soldiers from 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry, US Army with personnel from 5th Battalion, The Rifles at the recent Army Warfighting Experiment, where they were demonstrating how technology can improve collective training.

Circle all the differences on the left image and send the panel to HOAY 955, *Soldier*, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU with your full contact details, including email address, by no later than November 30. A photocopy is acceptable but only one entry per person may be submitted.

Alternatively, email a photograph of the image highlighting the

differences to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

The first correct entry drawn after the closing date will win a **Streamlight Wedge compact flashlight** worth £110.

The Wedge is a USB-C rechargeable torch with a thin, compact design and includes an intuitive rotatable thumb switch that provides two modes – a 300 lumen for extended use and 1,000 lumen momentary mode for maximum brightness. It is made from rugged anodised aluminium, features a tempered glass lens and is grooved for a sure grip.

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





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For further details visit our web at: www.armysportlottery.com



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Ex RACING

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ICE 1

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Week two: 30/01/2022 - 05/02/2022

2-man Bobsleigh 16 places

Skeleton 15 places

Luge 12 places



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and individual (R)
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Candidates will be informed by the 14th December 2021 via email

www.awsaweb.org.uk

REVIEWS



PICK OF THE MONTH:

Rims Racing

Console bike action goes hell-for-leathers

➤ BIKING experience is confined to a single theatre of operations for this reviewer – the autobahn near the former British Forces Germany town of Bielefeld.

Straddling the back of a Ducati 999 and gripping the former editor responsible for road testing it tighter than any girlfriend, a terrifying rate of acceleration ensued from the moment he twitched the throttle.

As the scenery blurred, and a realisation that only a layer of thin air separated the road of life from the tarmac of oblivion sunk in, a vow of "never again" was rapidly taken.

This general lack of aptitude for real-life riding forged nearly 20 years ago translates to digital bike outings such as *Rims Racing*, where messy performances tend to be the order of the day.

A mix of unfamiliar vehicle dynamics and general misjudgement culminates in some spectacular dismounts.



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BOOKS

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PODCASTS

GAMES



But if donning a helmet and charging hell-for-leather is your passion, this new two-wheeled console jaunt really does have plenty to offer.

Boxing off pretty much every element of competitive motorcycling – from setting up the mount through to taking on opponents – the racing sim is one of the deepest *Soldier* has seen.

It should be stressed, however, that *Rims* is not a sensible option for the casual racer.

Anyone attempting to play arcade-style will find themselves in trouble within seconds.

And while the physics model can be adjusted to be more forgiving, there is still little compromise on realism, with the easier settings only affording novices the opportunity to complete their circuits in one piece.

The most committed, however, will find that persistence pays off – pursuing the right racing lines and mastering the machine's handling characteristics are the order of the day.

A broad choice of views, ranging from an in-helmet camera to a behind-the-bike perspective, are useful while honing these fundamentals and perfecting them in competition.

Away from the track, setting up and guaranteeing that the bike is in good shape is important to any racing career.

Having been given the opportunity to choose their mount from a line-up of top marques, riders will need to ensure it is maintained to a race-worthy condition.

This means dealing with everything technical – from checking the brakes work as advertised to the amount of preload on the suspension.

We sampled both the Xbox Series S and Nintendo Switch versions of the game and

were suitably impressed with the overall look, accurate dynamics and depth of play.

Graphics and sound – particularly the evocative music by Italian dance group *The Bloody Beetroots* – are excellent on both formats, while the ability to adjust player details such as helmet and rider leathers add to the overall atmosphere.

But its emphasis on replicating the full racing career experience perversely works against the title in some areas.

Pit stops are a case in point – pulling in from an adrenalin-pumping track outing, players then face complex combinations of button bashing as they direct their crew to take required action.

While attention to detail is commendable, there are repetitive, admin-heavy elements in all professional endeavours. And a game that exists for entertainment would probably do best to mitigate these diversions, particularly when they end up detracting from the core business on the track.

These misgivings aside, however, the developers at Raceward Studios clearly understand their audience and have tailored the product to them.

Diehard bikers will not be left wanting. Maybe it is time to forget the autobahn outing and dust off the L plates... ■

VERDICT:

Bikers will enjoy – casual customers avoid



REVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, *SOLDIER*

GAMES RELEASES

Dariusburst: Another Chronicle Ex+

For Switch



AN INTENSE side-scrolling shoot 'em up, this Japanese market coin-op title translates well to

Nintendo's console. Players, who can link up in teams of four, are charged with blasting their way through alien invaders while doing their best to avoid a constant parade of enemy hardware and endless incoming fire. Visuals and audio are both superb – but while this game delivers an authentic arcade experience, the price tag of around £30 is too steep. Snap up if it appears in a sale.

Cliff Caswell, *Soldier*

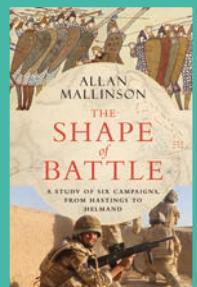
WRC 10

Xbox Series S, PS5 and PC: Switch version soon



THE established rally series marks its annual refresh with an impressive outing on the next generation of consoles. *Soldier* sampled the Xbox Series S version and found the expected high-octane product, with options ranging from a free drive in iconic cars to a full-on career mode with team management elements. The package is rounded off with top-notch graphics and immersive environments. But be warned – this not a typical pedal-to-the-metal arcade racer, so expect to be tested from the outset.

Sgt Ben Maher, RLC



● *The Shape of Battle*, by Allan Mallinson, is published by Bantam Press and priced £25



Pictures: WO1 Dan Harmer, RLC; Steve Dock and Harriet Mallinson

PICK OF THE MONTH:

The Shape of Battle

Army officer turned author Allan Mallinson tells *Soldier* about his latest non-fiction title, a study of six crucial campaigns from Hastings to Helmand

Q&A

Where did the idea come from?

Of late, books about war have tended to focus on the "face of battle" (the title of John Keegan's well known 1976 book) and what it was like to be there. I thought it was time to look again at why and how battles take place, what shapes them: the people, the politics, the strategy and campaign. All my experience and study during 35 years' service and 15 writing about war and defence matters tell me that while the face of battle changes, what actually shapes it remains remarkably constant, even over a thousand years.





How did you decide which six battles to include?

They are campaigns that have long interested me. Helmand and Operation Panther's Claw – the most recent – because my own descendant regiment, The Light Dragoons, was closely involved. Hastings is the earliest because it's the first battle in England that we really know much about, and because the events of 1066 were so dramatic. Towton was the battlefield nearest my boyhood home, and I've walked it many times. The field of Waterloo, likewise, I've trodden length and breadth and indeed ridden, which offers a different perspective. As for Sword Beach, the first regiment to land – the 13th/18th Hussars – was one I had the privilege to command 45 years later. And Imjin River, a defensive battle against the odds, was of great professional interest to so many of us in the British Army of the Rhine during the Cold War.

Which others nearly made the cut?

Mons, 1914. But it was a 20th century battle, and I had two already.

Did anything unexpected crop up in your research?

All sorts, but what really stood out in every one

of the examples was the commander's decision-making dilemmas, which were essentially the same whether they were Harold's in 1066 or Eisenhower's in 1944.

Who do you hope the book will appeal to?

Those who know that war is the most complex activity known to man and want to understand it a little more.

You also write the long-running Matthew Hervey historical fiction series – do you prefer writing novels or non-fiction?

I like alternating between the two.

What are you reading at the moment?

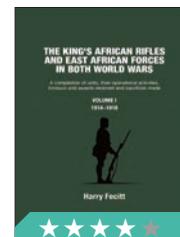
Field Marshal Lord Guthrie's memoirs.

Any other projects on the go?

Helping my 17-year-old grandson with his ambition to join the Army. ■

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, SOLDIER

BOOKS RELEASES



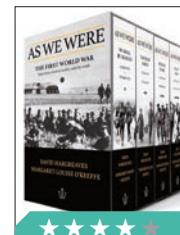
The King's African Rifles and East African Forces in Both World Wars

by Harry Fecitt

AT some 730 pages, these two volumes represent an exhaustive and timely project to duly recognise the contributions of African troops

in the First and Second World Wars. They are not campaign histories, but instead tell the story by diligently listing the many hundreds of honours – from Victoria Crosses to Mentions in Dispatches – awarded to the askari in different theatres. A vast amount of work has gone into this tribute, which will no doubt prove invaluable as a research text. But even for the more casual reader, an occasional flick through will reveal fascinating glimpses of individual courage on every page.

Becky Clark, *Soldier*



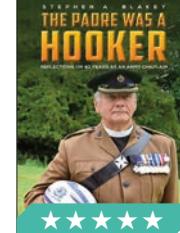
As We Were

by David Hargreaves and Margaret Louise O'Keefe

THIS is a mammoth four volume narrative history of the Great War. It is unflinching in its view of how this devastating conflict ripped through British society, and the impact it

had on those involved. While not a light read, the week-by-week account is exceptionally crafted, with seamlessly linked anecdotes making for an engrossing read. Sadly, in more than 2,000 pages, I could not find a single map from which to orientate myself, or to place the witnesses. That aside, if you have an appetite for First World War history, and the human experience, this is a serious investment that is worth making.

Mike Peters, *ex-AAC*



The Padre Was a Hooker

by Revd Stephen Blakey

RARELY do we hear the stories of Army padres, and this is an excellent example. The author is a Church of Scotland minister who served in the Regulars and TA for 40 years – completing stints with all the Scottish battalions in Germany, Hong Kong, the Gulf War and Bosnia, as well as on home soil. This is not just about one man though – the book also gives a good history of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department and its evolution. I thoroughly enjoyed this account of the spiritual side of the Scottish infantry in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Easy to read and told with humour, it also shows the more difficult side of serving three masters: God, the Army and the soldiers.

Andy Kay, *ex-RS*



PICK OF THE MONTH:

Fighting on Film

Movie buffs offer new examination of cinema's war genre

IT STARTED as an idea during lockdown, but with more than 40 episodes now in the can the *Fighting on Film* podcast is generating some serious momentum.

The brainchild of YouTuber Robbie McGuire, and military historian Matthew Moss, the series offers a deep dive into some of cinema's most famous war movies, while also shining a light on the more obscure titles that fall within the genre.

But instead of simply assessing each offering on face value, the duo employ a varied approach to their work, with an analysis of the weapons and kit shown on screen and comment from an array of expert guests among their wide repertoire.

It is a formula that has proved successful, with nearly 40,000 downloads completed since the first episode debuted in October last year.

"We are over the moon with the way things have gone," McGuire told *Soldier*. "A few people immediately picked up on what we were doing



Matthew Moss

but we have worked hard to grow it and get things right for our audience.

"We're thrilled with the response so far and that's what keeps us going – we are always looking at ways to improve.

"We want to do right by the films, and the genre as a whole."

Fighting on Film's debut offering covered the 1946 release *Theirs is the Glory*, which focuses on the battle at Arnhem during the Second World War.

Not only do they examine the plot of the film, but they explore how several cast members were soldiers who fought in the real-life offensive.

Other, less well-known, titles include the *Channel Incident*, which was the first movie made about the evacuation at Dunkirk.

But there's also blockbusters aplenty and when it came to assessing *A Bridge Too Far* the duo called on some star support in the shape of comedian and military history buff Al Murray.

Elsewhere, there are contributions from historical adviser Taff Gillingham, Emmy award-winning sound designer Charles Maynes and director Stuart Urban, all of whom offer industry insights in what is an impressive and well-rounded series to date.

"*Theirs is the Glory* is obscure, but it is one we really love," McGuire continued. "We want

to cover all the known stuff, but also the titles people are not really aware of.

"There are lots of films we still have to do, including big releases such as *Saving Private Ryan* and *Apocalypse Now*. It is a genre that is not dying out and we'll keep chipping away.

"One of my favourite episodes so far was the one we did on *Objective Burma*, with James Holland. He is a personal hero of mine and it was great to have him involved.

"But I also enjoyed the one we did on a recent release, *The Outpost* (pictured above), which tells the story of a 2009 battle that was fought in Afghanistan.

"When I listen to the episodes back, they all become favourites and we are really proud of what we have achieved." ■

● *Fighting on Film* is available for download on all major podcast providers. For more details visit fightingonfilm.com



INTERVIEW: RICHARD LONG, SOLDIER

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SOLDIER SPORT



« REDS ON TRIAL

HAVING not played a match since 2019, the Army men's rugby union team have taken the first steps towards a return to action. More than 100 hopefuls were involved in a successful trials week and plans for the new season are gathering pace. Read more on page 69...





PILOT PUSH TAKES OFF

PARAGLIDERS SEEK FRESH TALENT AS POST-PANDEMIC PLANNING GATHERS PACE

After the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Army Paragliding Association (APA) is on a mission to attract a new breed of pilots ahead of what it hopes will be a return to normality in 2022.

With elementary and club pilot courses now up and running again at adventurous training centres in Crickhowell and Bavaria, the opportunity is very much there for those wanting to sample the thrill of the simplest, and most accessible, form of free flight.

On completion of the programmes personnel become qualified novice pilots and from there they can join the APA and benefit from one-to-one coaching and development courses, while representing the Service in competitions and on overseas tours.

"Covid has had a huge impact on us," team member Lt Col Mike Luedicke (RLC) told *SoldierSport*. "Now it is all about making sure people understand the two training schools are open for business.

"It was a really frustrating period as the British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association pretty much closed down the hillsides every time a lockdown occurred as they didn't want to overrun the emergency services.

"But we've recently held our AGM and are looking to flesh out plans for 2022. We are trying to see if we can have a UK-based concentration in May, followed by a sequence of events throughout the summer culminating with the Inter-Services Championships.

"It has been a challenging 18 months and, unless we get

stung by Covid again, we now have a great opportunity to get the schools open and welcome more pilots into the system."

As well as receiving expert guidance, newcomers to the fold can borrow the wings, harnesses and other equipment needed to fly, meaning they can build experience without committing to an initial financial outlay.

"The APA now has something like 50 wings that can be loaned to our Service personnel," Luedicke continued.

"We have a very healthy core of more mature pilots, but we need to engage the young private soldiers and NCOs who are looking to try something that is different and adventurous but have not yet had the opportunity."

The elementary and club pilot route was taken by one of the set-up's newest recruits, Lt Danielle Ashton (QARANC).

Before joining the Army Medical Services, she was a Reservist in the Royal Logistic Corps, where she sampled various adventurous training pursuits, but nothing compared to paragliding.

"Sometimes you are so far from the ground, travelling over telegraph wires, roads, and rivers and there is no one to physically help you if something goes wrong," the officer explained.

"Although there will be someone on the end of a radio who can try and coach you out of a sticky situation, you need to trust in your ability and be able to stay calm if the unexpected happens.

"Despite this, I find paragliding to be paradoxically both terrifying and peaceful.



**"YOU
NEED TO
TRUST
IN YOUR
ABILITY
AND BE
ABLE
TO STAY
CALM"**

Floating around in the air with only the birds and maybe a few other paragliders is an extraordinary feeling."

Launching by foot from a range of accessible hills and mountains, pilots can remain in the skies for hours on end as they use wind and thermal power to climb, soar and travel.

The UK record flight sits at 320km, with the world record at a staggering 610km.

Being able to explore by foot and air was one of the factors that attracted club secretary and Army team member Maj Nick Lloyd (RGR) to the sport.

Like Ashton, he completed the elementary and club pilot courses but said his flying ability really developed when he started competing around four years ago.

The officer added: "It is the most full-on, cognitive experience that I have had, and it is highly addictive with plenty of frustration and reward.

"Your attention needs to rapidly switch between monitoring awareness of your surroundings and what other pilots are doing, navigation, wing control and weather analysis – and all with a steady feed of adrenalin.

"While races usually take two to three hours, big cross-country flights can last six or seven hours, when you can fly up to 13,000 feet depending upon the conditions.

"It can be the most gentle and relaxing experience, or you can ramp up the adrenalin as far as you want to take it." ■



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Dr Tom O'Leary (Thomas.OLeary100@mod.gov.uk) or
Dr Charlotte Coombs (Charlotte.Coombs102@mod.gov.uk)
01264 886795

What do I need to do?

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- 8 laboratory visits including 6 sessions of load carriage exercise
- Blood samples will be taken during laboratory visits
- You will be compensated for your time

MONTH IN SPORT

November's key fixtures...



WHAT: Army cycling, athletics and duathlon events

WHEN: November 3

WHERE: Castle Combe

NEED TO KNOW: The

Wiltshire venue hosts a triple-header of sport that features a cycling time-trial, the Army 10km Championships and a bike/run duathlon



WHAT: Inter-Services Indoor Hockey Championships

WHEN: November 4

WHERE: Aldershot

NEED TO KNOW: The Army women will be firm favourites as they look to continue an impressive winning run, with tough tests looming for the men's and under-25's teams



WHAT: Army v RAF Inter-Services U23 Rugby Union

WHEN: November 17

WHERE: Aldershot

NEED TO KNOW: A new-look Reds

squad faces a stern examination in the final fixture of their 2021 campaign. The soldiers take on the Royal Navy in Portsmouth a week earlier

NETBALL IN NUMBERS

CORPS TEAMS INVOLVED IN THE DIVISION ONE CONTEST

9

SIDES COMPETING IN DIVISION TWO

11

PLAYERS ON COURT OVER THE TWO-DAY CONTEST

250

MATCHES BEING PLAYED BY THE ARMY WOMEN'S TEAM AGAINST IRELAND IN A WEEKEND SHOWDOWN AT WORTHY DOWN AS THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS

4

DATE, IN MARCH, OF THIS SEASON'S OPENING INTER-SERVICES MATCH

2

NETBALL



UPWARD TREND CONTINUES

THE Army netball set-up showcased its continuing growth at a keenly contested Inter-Corps Championships in Aldershot.

A total of 20 teams took to the court to compete in the tournament's two-league structure, with the Adjutant General's Corps defeating the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers 12-7 in the final of the main draw.

The Royal Logistic Corps' B team triumphed over the AGC's equivalent side in the division two showpiece.

Col Andrea Zanchi, Chair of the Army Netball Association, told *SoldierSport* the event has gone from strength to strength in recent times and, with players returning to the discipline after Covid, it proved to be an attractive proposition this year.

"It is possibly the biggest turnout I have seen during my time as chair, with most corps bringing more than one team,"

the officer added.

"Historically, corps such as the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers and REME have perhaps struggled to field one team, but now they are coming with two or three."

"We have those who have played here before and gone back to their corps thinking they could have brought more people along, which has helped with numbers."

"And because we don't just recognise the winners – we have prizes for team spirit, for example – it makes it much more inclusive."

"The competition was played in a really good atmosphere and there was a will for everyone to do well."

"There was a good mix in terms of standards, and we had some great young players involved for the first time."

The season continues at the Inter-Unit Championships in Aldershot from November 16 to 17. ■

SPORT SHORTS

Picture: Align Photography



Forces floor French rivals

ARMY rugby union stars Capt Fionidi Parker (REME) and Lt Sally Stott (RAVC) were among the scorers as the UK Armed Forces' women's team secured a convincing win over their French rivals in Portsmouth.

Parker's counter-attack try helped the Servicewomen to a 12-7 interval lead in Portsmouth and fellow debutant Stott crossed in the second half as the hosts ran out 27-14 winners.

"I'm absolutely thrilled," Stott (pictured) said afterwards. "I couldn't have asked for a better stage, or a better set of girls to earn my first cap with."

Elsewhere, Bdr Beth Dainton (RA) and Sgt Jade Mullen (AGC (SPS)) have been named in the Wales squad for the autumn internationals.



Vulikijapani signs on

OUTSIDE back Gnr Mitieli Vulikijapani (RA) has signed a one-year contract extension with Super League outfit Hull FC.

The soldier crossed from rugby union to league to join the Black and Whites in April and went on to make six appearances for the club, scoring twice against Huddersfield and picking up two man-of-the-match awards.

"I've loved my first season here and feel like I've still got plenty to give as I continue to develop my game," he said.



Picture: Viesturs Lacs

DEEN SETS SIGHTS ON OLYMPIC TREBLE



"WE HAVE A VERY STRONG TEAM"

ACKNOWLEDGING the fact he will be 44 when the 2026 Winter Olympics come round, bobsleigh pilot LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) told *SoldierSport* his latest Games push will be his last.

The soldier returns to action this month in the opening round of the World Cup in Innsbruck, an event that marks the start of what he hopes will be a successful qualification bid for a third appearance in his sport's flagship competition.

Seven further rounds follow over the course of the season and Deen believes a busy summer has left his crew well placed for the tests to come.

"We have a very strong team at the moment," he added. "We are always trying to get better. We have new members who need all the training they can get but I think we have enough to be among the upper echelons.

"The summer was very hectic, and we hardly had any time off, but it is an Olympic year and that is not really an option. If you put your feet

up for a month you then have to put a month in just to get back to where you were."

The most high-profile new recruit is Olympic long jump champion Greg Rutherford.

"He is a really nice bloke and a phenomenal athlete," Deen said. "Bobsleigh is not just about running and pushing – there is a lot of skill involved. In four months, he has done what other people would take two years to learn.

"He brings an attitude of excellence, and we all want to get out and win together."

While the Olympics remain the key target Deen admitted he is not looking too far ahead at this stage.

"We have to execute our plans at different places and on different tracks," he continued. "I have worked with individuals on our team over the years, but now we must come together as a four.

"These Games will definitely be my last. I'm hopeful we can come away with some silverware, if not it will still be a huge achievement to compete in three Olympics." ■



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TRIALS TEST TICKED OFF AS NEW SEASON RAMPS UP

AFTER waiting almost two years to start work on the pitch, the new head coach of the Army rugby union men's team has finally taken the first steps in what he hopes will be a triumphant debut campaign at the helm.

Capt Mal Roberts (RLC) welcomed a raft of potential players to an intensive trial in Aldershot that culminated with a match against the Reds' under-23 squad – a clash that meant the officer was able to cast his eye over 100 hopefuls during the three-day gathering.

From that group, he will mould a squad for two development games ahead of his first senior fixture, with the soldiers taking on Oxford University in February.

“It has been really pleasing,” Roberts told *SoldierSport* as he reflected on the success of the trials. “There were some great performances in the group, as well as from those who have been

involved with the under-23s.

“To see 100 people in a red shirt, post-pandemic, is amazing.

“I would like to think they will be challenging for a place in the full squad – we need to have fresh talent coming through and trials like this offer that opportunity.

“There can be a perception that the Army team is almost a closed shop and I wanted to dispel that myth – an open trial is the best way to do it.”

Roberts will have a host of top-flight performers to call upon when the Inter-Services Championships come round in the spring, and he has challenged the wider talent pool to taste regular competitive action to prepare them for the sterner tests to come.

“Club rugby is really important,” he added. “Over the past few days, we have seen people who are not match fit.

“Rugby was one of the last sports to get going again after



**"WE
NEED
FRESH
TALENT"**

the pandemic, especially in the Army. Now, it is about them getting out and building that sharpness.

“They have cardiovascular fitness, but it is about understanding the intricacies needed for a game of rugby.”

One trialist hoping to make a good impression was 2Lt Matt Smart (Yorks), who admitted the prospect of playing Army rugby was a “big pull”.

The aspiring flyhalf commissioned in April and said the opportunity to step on a pitch with those who have tasted success on the Inter-Services stage has been a huge bonus.

“I want to push myself,” the young officer added. “Training alongside these players has been such a good experience.

“They set the standards; you can see they have been there and done it in an Inter-Services sense and that’s the level you want to try and hit.” ■



NEW FACES ENSURE REDS STAY TOP OF THE LEAGUE

HEAD coach WO2 Woz Broadley (RLC) admitted he faces a headache when it comes to selecting his Army women's rugby league squad for next year after a successful 2021 campaign drew to a close.

Speaking after his side secured back-to-back victories over a joint Royal Air Force and Royal Navy team to end the season on a high, the senior NCO said the sport is now the strongest it has been during his four years at the helm.

Broadley cited the Reds' continued achievements on the pitch – the latest of which saw them reach the final of the inaugural Super League South competition – as the key motivating factor in seeing more soldiers join the fold and revealed he now has in the region of 100 personnel on his books.

This strength in depth was showcased in two convincing Inter-Services wins, where a host of fringe players were given the

chance to shine.

"We called up some of those who had not had many minutes over the course of the season, or had not played at all," he told *SoldierSport*. "To run away with both games with a development team is fantastic and shows how far we have come."

"Looking ahead, those players have given me a headache in terms of selection, which is a brilliant position to be in."

Broadley said the Army's triumph in the 2019 Challenge Shield provided a huge boost to the team's profile, while the decision to live-stream games on Twitch, combined with a growing presence on social media, has added to the exposure.

Some inspired individual displays have also helped the cause, with LCpl Kaiya Glynn (RAMC), Pte Jenna Greeming (RLC) and Bdr Beth Dainton (RA) acknowledged for their efforts in the end-of-season awards.



**"WE
KNEW
THEY
WOULD
COME
AT US
HARD"**

"Kaiya came to us in 2019 having never played rugby before," Broadley said. "She had a handful of games at the back end of the year and was fantastic.

"She has been phenomenal this season and we now have the top teams in Super League asking if she's available.

"Jenna had five years away from the sport but thought she would give it a go this season and was named coaches' player of the year.

"Beth stepped up as vice-captain and has helped mentor some of our junior players; she is someone who is always willing to make an extra carry or get a tackle in – she is amazing."

New faces also delivered for the men's team as they completed a shortened season with three wins from three games.

A 38-16 triumph over the British Police provided the ideal springboard for the Inter-Services, where they had back-

to-back victories in two bruising encounters with the RAF.

It was the team's first taste of competitive action in two years and formed a long-awaited debut for WO2 Mike Thompson (RE) as head coach following his appointment in August 2020.

"Everyone bought into what we were trying to achieve," he said.

"Going into that first game with the RAF, we didn't really know what to expect. Everything we did against the Police was undone in the first ten-to-15 minutes, so we had to steady the ship, calm down and play the Army way."

"It was a case of being sensible, before our fitness came to the fore in the final 20 minutes.

"We knew they would come at us hard in the second game – they went over for the first try and we had our backs to the wall.

"There were some high shots and penalties towards the end, but that happens. The players deserve huge credit for coming through as winners – they worked hard for each other and the coaching staff."

Bobsleigh convert Pte Olly Butterworth (Para) was among a handful of newcomers to shine and Thompson hopes they can continue to progress in the early rounds of the Challenge Cup in the new year.

"We are itching to get back out on the pitch – it's the most prestigious competition in the game," he added. ■



LEAGUE IN NUMBERS

COMBINED POINTS SCORED BY THE ARMY MEN IN THEIR TWO WINS OVER THE RAF

58

RED CARDS IN THE TEAMS' SECOND MATCH FOLLOWING A SECOND-HALF BRAWL

2

TRIES FROM THE ARMY WOMEN AS THEY RAN OUT 32-6 WINNERS IN THEIR SECOND CLASH WITH THE RAF/RN

6

POINTS SCORED BY CARDIFF DEMONS AS THEY CLAIMED AN INJURY-TIME VICTORY OVER THE REDS IN THE SUPER LEAGUE SOUTH FINAL

30



Picture: Bernard Platt

TROPHY TREBLE TICKED OFF

SAINt Helens star SSgt Carrie Roberts (REME) ended the season on a high as she helped her club seal a domestic treble with victory over Leeds Rhinos in the Women's Super League Grand Final.

Having already won the Challenge Cup and League Leaders' Shield, the champions-elect ran in six tries on their way to a 28-0 win in front of a record crowd of 4,235 fans.

"It's been a fantastic year," Roberts said. "The team has been in great spirits, and we've had the right people in the right places to really make a big difference."

"The final was not as comfortable as the score suggests. The first half was difficult, and Leeds really brought it to us – as defending champions they didn't want to make it easy."

"We managed to pull away in the second half, which was mainly down to our fitness. We took some risks, played out

wide and came away with a few tries."

Roberts was hoping to complete her campaign by lining up for England in a home World Cup, but the tournament was postponed following the withdrawal of Australia and New Zealand due to Covid concerns.

Instead, England were locking horns with France as this issue went to press and she is now waiting for a decision from the Service on whether she can continue as a full-time athlete for a further 12 months and build towards the rearranged tournament.

"The Army has played a huge part in the success I've had," the soldier continued. "The postponement was disappointing because, as a team, we were ready."

"I wanted to finish the season as a treble winner and head into the tournament in top form. I'm hoping for another year at Saints and that I will play in the World Cup, with the goal of winning it." ■



ROAD TO RECOVERY

THE Army Archery Association has celebrated a successful return to action following the setbacks caused by Covid-19.

Working closely with governing body Archery GB, the set-up created a detailed recovery plan that allowed personnel to compete again as quickly as possible.

Initially this was via the virtual summer league, an event that allowed archers to use local facilities and enter scores into a centrally managed database.

The first face-to-face meeting followed at a summer training camp in July, which laid the foundations for a strong showing at the Army and Inter-Services Outdoor Championships.

WO2 Devon Barwood (RAMC), WO2 Jason McCoubrey (AGC (RMP)) and Sgt Dan Everest (REME) dominated the podium positions as the soldiers claimed the Forces crown in style.

The team has also introduced unit "have a go" sessions, where members travel to unit locations to deliver introductory courses.

For more details email devon.barwood476@mod.gov.uk or craig.cherrie702@mod.gov.uk



UKAF head to Gloucester

THE UK Armed Forces rugby union men's team face a Rugby for Heroes Barbarians side at Gloucester's Kingsholm Stadium on November 17.

The annual remembrance fixture kicks off at 1945.

LEAGUE LEADS NOMINEE LIST



Picture: Phil Mingo

**"THIS
SEASON
WILL BE
SPECIAL"**

DEFENSIVE star LCpl Dee Bolakoro (RE) has re-signed with the Severn Stars ahead of the new Netball Superleague season. The former Celtic Dragons player, who was part of the Fiji squad at the 2019 World Cup, joined the Worcester and Gloucester based outfit ahead of the 2021 season, when they finished ninth in the league standings. "This season will be special," the soldier said on the announcement of the deal.



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Final Word



My great-grandfather was shot during D-Day. It was that classic case of his metal hip flask stopping the enemy's bullet and saving his life. I'd love to be able to talk to him about that now, and his time fighting on the beaches

Rfn James Gotard, Rifles



My great-grandfather, James, who was killed while serving with the artillery in the First World War, is always on my mind during remembrance. I was the first member of my family to visit his grave in Arras. When I arrived, there was only one red poppy growing on the whole site – and it was on his grave.

WO1 Andrew Preston, RHG/D



My grandfather served in Northern Ireland, where the opponent could melt away very quickly. I wish I could talk to him about how they operated in that unusual theatre, but he passed away when I was young.

Rfn John Jarvis, Rifles

Pictures: Graeme Main

Interviews: Steve Muncey



My great-uncle, Sydney Vincent Sippe (pictured below), was a Royal Navy Air Service pilot in the First World War. He was one of the "flat-pack bombers" – so called because their aircraft were shipped over to France in parts. In 1914 they conducted the first low-level air raid in history on the Zeppelin factories at Friedrichshafen. He was Mentioned in Dispatches six times and received the

DSO, Croix de Guerre, Legion d'Honneur and Belgian Order of Leopold.

Maj George Tyson, KRH



I'm really proud of my dad, who served on a Royal Navy supply ship during the Falklands War. He doesn't like to talk about it much, but I know he and his colleagues all felt a lot of anxiety knowing they were a potential target for Argentinian Exocet missiles.

Pte Hayley Cockcroft, RAMC

My great-uncle, also called Selby, served in the Far East during the Second World War. His platoon was being transported by an American vessel, the USS Orizaba, when they were attacked by a swarm of Japanese Kamikaze aircraft. He volunteered to man one of the anti-aircraft guns to help shoot down the enemy planes as they attempted to hit the ship.

LCpl Selby Fairnington, Rifles



Pride in the past

With remembrance upon us, we asked troops to recall an inspirational relative who fought in a past conflict...

My grandfather, Gordon, who has passed away now, fought in Burma during the Second World War with the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment. I deployed to Afghanistan twice but I've never experienced operating somewhere like that, so I wish I'd asked him more about fighting against the Japanese at close range in those hot, humid and claustrophobic jungle conditions.

Sjt Ashley Thomson, Rifles



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