

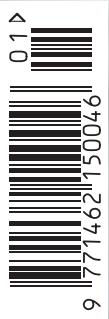
SOLIDER

uvex

COOL AS ICE

Service
sliders on
the edge

WALKER, MAP, DEEN, OLSSON



INDOOR SKYDIVING | PARAS HIT FRANCE | URBAN ARMOUR TEST

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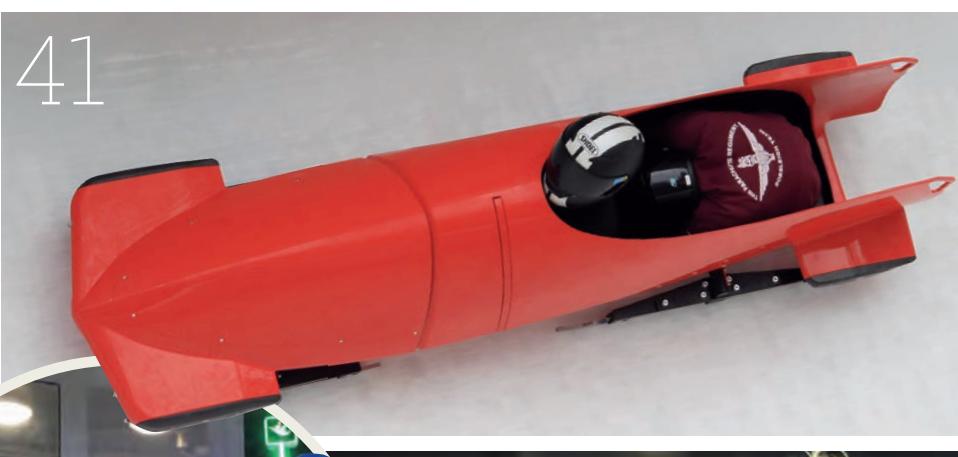
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The need for speed



I HAVEN'T had the pleasure of meeting our new chief of the general staff yet but everything I see, read and hear about Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith tells me he's probably a man who doesn't like to be kept waiting.

That's certainly the impression he conveys in his column on page 7, where he implores everybody to engage with the latest recruitment campaign, *Your Army*, in a bid to boost the numbers of people joining the Service and get it back to something like its rightful size in double-quick time.

He also has a strong desire for human and technological innovation to quickly become part of the culture and start feeding through into the way the Army thinks and fights.

The personnel at the Royal Tank Regiment should be bringing a smile to his face. They've been involved in a new project that takes ideas from troops at the coalface and uses existing technology and hardware to bring them to life (page 34).

Improving Challenger 2 for operations in tight urban streets is no mean feat, but this intriguing trial might just have achieved exactly that – and all in the space of a few weeks.

Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

Where to find *Soldier*

► Printed copies

THESE are distributed to every Army site at the start of each month.

► Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

ALONG with news and glimpses behind the scenes at *Soldier*, we publish a link to the latest magazine at www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine and on Twitter (@soldiermagazine).

► Online

A DIGITAL version of the current edition is available on the Army website at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk. Just click on the "read it now" tab.

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Picture: Sgt Steve Blake, RIC

Open to ideas:
CGS visiting
soldiers during
Exercise
Autonomous
Warrior on
Salisbury Plain

'We must be agile, fast and adaptable'

Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, says innovation is a priority in 2019

100 In 2018 the nation united to commemorate the centenary of the ending of the First World War.

Between 1914 and 1918 there was a seismic shift in the way the British Army fought; from essentially a Victorian mode of operating to elements of combined arms warfare that we would recognise today.

Our challenge in 2019 is to capitalise on that intrinsic British talent for continuous adaptation and reap the rewards of 'experimentation in contact' as our predecessors did 100 years ago – without the catalyst of an active enemy.

In a security context characterised by constant competition and regular acts of so-called 'sub-threshold' aggression, when certain nations act as assertively as they think they can get away with, our training exercises and operations must become laboratories for innovation, allowing the Army to rapidly prototype new ways of warfare that will make the difference between success and failure on tomorrow's battlefield (pages 18 and 34).

Ingenuity and resourcefulness have never been more important and only an Army that is agile, fast and adaptable will meet the demands of

this rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world.

The commemorations of the Great War have also served to underline the powerful bond that must exist between the Army and the British people, our principal recruiting base.

You will all, I hope, have seen Lt Gen Tyrone Urch's video on the new Army recruiting campaign – *Your Army 19* – and I would strongly encourage you to support these vital efforts (page 10).

I am also determined to improve the quality and frequency of our internal communications and to that end you will now receive regular Army newsletters, video blogs from senior officers, and 60-second news updates from our junior leaders, all available on your smart phones.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy new year and thank you and your families for your hard work and commitment in 2018.

Despite the inevitable uncertainty, one thing is certain; 2019 will be an enormously significant year in our nation's history.

As an organisation we must be ready and able to respond to all the challenges, as well as opportunities, it presents.

“
I encourage
you to
support these
vital efforts
”

SOLDIER

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GLOBAL SITREP

1. CANADA

PATROL PROFESSIONALISM

STAFF and newly qualified recruits from Infantry Training Centre Catterick took on the Canadian winter and top teams from other armies during a patrols competition in Alberta.

Covering 65 kilometres in around 40 hours, they completed assessments such as battle procedure, helicopter insertion and close target recce.



Their performance saw them secure a bronze medal – the highest level achieved by any unit in the event.

"It's exceptional when you consider that five of the patrol have only just finished training," said team manager Capt Jonny Taylor (R Anglian).

"They were competing against experienced cold-weather specialists from countries like Canada, Italy, America and Poland.

"I think it says something for the quality of instruction recruits receive at the ITC that they can stand next to other nations' highly trained troops as equals or better in military professionalism."



2. MEXICO

POLITICAL PROCESSES

CLOSER co-operation on defence issues could be on the cards after top-level meetings between politicians from the UK and members of the central American country's newly-formed government.



Armed Forces minister Mark Lancaster said he had held productive talks on topics including joint training initiatives during a visit to Mexico City.

He added: "We already have a strong defence relationship and my first meetings have made me confident their new regime will work effectively alongside us."

3. ATLANTIC OCEAN

ALL AT SEA

SERVING and former soldiers are participating in the the 3,000-mile Talisker Whisky Atlantic rowing challenge.

Among the contenders is Capt Nick Wright (RA), who is taking on the voyage, from the Canary Islands to Antigua, to raise money for Royal Surrey County Hospital's St Luke's

Cancer Centre after losing sister Emma to the disease.

With a combined age of 123, ex-paratroopers Neil Young and Peter Ketley are bidding to become the oldest duo to complete the feat, fundraising for charities Support our Paras and Royal British Legion Industries.

And former sapper Duncan Roy is part of a four-man, Tri-Service outfit tackling the route in aid of The Royal British Legion and Soldier On.



4. IRAQ

ROTATION STATION

MEMBERS of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles Battlegroup have been settling into their Op Shader deployment – and are playing their part in helping bring stability to the region.

The 260 troops in the outfit will be responsible for imparting their military skills to Iraqi counterparts as well as crucial force protection work during their six months in theatre.

They replace returning colleagues from 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards Battlegroup (pictured). Maj Alex Ficke, second-in-command of Edinburgh-based 3 Rifles, said: "The soldiers are enthusiastic about the tour, particularly as the task is really hands on out here."



5. SOUTH SUDAN

IT TAKES TWO

AROUND 300 soldiers from 39 Engineer Regiment and A (Norfolk) Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, have deployed on Op Trenton for six months with the United Nations in South Sudan.

Having started preparations in September 2018, they are now working to support the 17,000 UN troops in the country by building a second Level Two hospital, while providing protection for around 150,000 South Sudanese civilians as the peace process progresses.



6. KENYA AFRICAN ADVENTURES

BRITISH troops teamed up with American colleagues for a shakedown of infantry skills in tough conditions.

Exercise Askari Storm tested 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment's readiness to deploy as the UK's Air Assault Task Force. They were joined by a platoon from the US 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment during the six-week package at Archer's Post Training Area.



Picture: Sgt Luke Crisp, Para

“
The action is
really fluid
”

Reservists prove their
warfighting prowess –
page 37

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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8. ESTONIA SUPER SAPPERS

A JUNIOR NCO who instigated an innovative training programme for colleagues in Estonia was among Royal Engineers recognised at the corps' first ever awards dinner. Cpl Daniel Skinner designed a syllabus covering a range of military skills that troops from 26 Engineer Regiment volunteered for in droves during their eight-month stint on Op Cabrit.

He and 13 other personnel – who had served in countries such as the British Virgin Islands, Iraq, Somalia and South Sudan as well as the UK – received their awards during a ceremony at the Institution of Civil Engineers in London.

The categories covered individual endeavour, trade skills, academic achievement and support for operations.

7. GERMANY CADET CONCLUSION

A DEMANDING series of manoeuvres rounded off the 44-week Regular Commissioning course for aspiring commanders at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

The officer cadets were pushed to their limits in the Bavarian winter on the two-week Exercise Dynamic Victory – which assessed all they had learnt.

Taking place in Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, the 190 personnel were joined by Slovenian colleagues in the second phase of the package as they faced serials in urban and rural settings.

Maj Becks Macklin (REME), chief instructor senior term, said: "Leadership skills, military abilities and application of academic studies were tested."

The successful cadets later donned ceremonial kit as they passed out of the academy, where The Duke of Cambridge represented the Queen at the Sovereign's parade.



Picture: Tempest Photography

TV REVEALS ARMY LIFE

■ RECRUITING chiefs are hoping the broadcast of two documentary series about life in the Service will add impetus to the new *Your Army* campaign.

Channel 5 will show *Raw Recruits*, about the Army Foundation College, from Monday, January 7 at 2100.

The six instalments follow the lives of junior soldiers, their successes and failures, adventurous training in the Welsh caves and their final tactical exercise and graduation.

Meanwhile, ITV's gritty three-part documentary on the Parachute Regiment, *The Paras: Men of War*, will start on Thursday, January 10 at 2100.

Uncompromising in parts, the programmes will cover the whole para experience, from new recruits at the Infantry Training Centre to exercising with American airborne troops at Fort Bragg and a joint parachute insertion from the US into Latvia.

During the broadcasts and shortly afterwards an Army team will be available on social media channels to answer questions about the making of the shows and life in the Army. Use #RawRecruits and #MenOfWar



NUMBERS TO STAY 'SHORT'

■ THE Army will continue being under strength until 2021, the head of the Armed Forces has told the House of Commons Defence Select Committee.

Addressing MPs, Chief of the Defence Staff Gen Sir Nick Carter said the Service would "undershoot by around 3,000 recruits this year and that is fundamentally unacceptable".

The Service currently has an estimated 79,000 fully trained troops compared with a target of 82,500. It requires 10,000 new joiners every year to maintain optimum manning levels.

The top officer added that he expects the situation to improve this year and the current recruiting partnership with Capita would hit its target for the first time before its contract ends in 2022.



Service ups the recruitment ante

'Your Army' campaign targets youngsters with diverse skill sets

ARMY recruiters are standing by to launch the next phase of their "belonging" recruitment initiative, which rolls out this month.

The campaign – which has been running for two years – has so far addressed worries potential recruits might have about religion, gender and sexuality while serving.

Now a new wave of adverts will highlight skill sets the current generation of 16 to 24-year-olds could bring to the military – despite often being slapped with derogatory labels by society.

Examples include a video gamer derided by his family for being glued to his console – but championed by the Service for his stamina – and a supermarket trolley worker who is mocked by her colleagues as being a slow millennial. The Army, instead, sees a perfectionist.

It is also hoped the campaign will appeal to youngsters' desire for a meaningful career in the slogan "Your Army needs you".

Col Ben Wilde, assistant head of Army recruiting, was confident the initiative would build on past success.

He said applications to join the Service are now at a five-year high – having risen more than a quarter in recent years – and the drive was reaching new potential recruits.

The officer added: "People embarking on their professional life often do not just want a job. Their self-worth is important to them – they

want to do something that matters.

"You might not become rich in the Army, but you will be enriched – you will have experiences that people never see in civilian life."

Col Wilde also pointed out that the skills of the current generation would fit the need for operating in a changing battlespace.

"They have a level of technical know-how that my generation generally does not possess," he added.

Despite the growing number of would-be soldiers coming forward, however, the belonging campaign has been the subject of negative reporting in some quarters of the media.

Commentators have questioned whether it appeals to the Army's core target audience.

But Col Wilde shrugged off the criticism, claiming the initiative had bolstered both numbers entering the ranks and diversity of the intake.

He told *Soldier*: "The negative remarks we have had about the campaign are unjustified.

"We have had more applications year-on-year. You simply cannot argue with the facts.

"The reality that it is hard to recruit also applies to the wider public sector – with more people employed, traditional recruitment streams are not always available so we are speaking to all elements of society."

All ranks are being encouraged to support the campaign on social media using #YourArmyNeedsYou

“
They want
to do
something
that matters
”



Picture: Graeme Main

More troops head for Ukraine

ADDITIONAL soldiers are deploying to Ukraine in a move to beef up the military training being delivered by British personnel there.

An unspecified number of troops will join colleagues from across the Armed Forces in providing an enhanced presence on Op Orbital.

They will start arriving this month – joining an effort that has instructed more than 9,000 Ukrainians involved in the face-off with Russian separatists.

Following a recent meeting with his eastern European opposite number, Stepan Poltorak, Defence Secretary

Gavin Williamson said the UK remained committed to assisting.

The two ministers went on to discuss a range of other joint activities during the talks.

Among them was confirmation that the UK will be contributing numbers to joint American and Ukrainian manoeuvre, Exercise Sea Breeze, taking place in the coming months.

The uplift in training teams was first announced by Williamson in September last year. Ukrainian ministers have described the UK as being a highly valued international partner.

Dancer delivers unique take on military life

ABALLET dancer-turned-serving soldier will tread the boards again when he appears in an Army-backed show about Service life.

Tpr Alex Smith (QDG) is being released from his day job for *10 Soldiers*, which centres on the trials and tribulations troops face in their careers.

And having trained with the Northern Ballet before enlisting, he will bring a dose of real-life experience when he takes to the stage with the Rosie Kay Dance Company in three dates this year.

The soldier admitted: "When I first joined up I didn't tell anyone I was a dancer, but now they all know me I've never had more support."

"There are a lot of stereotypes around who can be a dancer and who dance is for, but I think these shows will present a strong case that anyone can

actually enjoy it."

A follow up to *5 Soldiers* – which toured the country in 2017 – the latest production explores themes such as equality and diversity as well as the changing roles of serving women.

Army arts engagement boss Lt Col Jo Young (RLC) – heading up the Service's involvement in the show – believed Tpr Smith would bring a greater level of integrity to the new outing.

"He will be very much working as an Army engager during the performances," she said.

"We will be able to give a different audience than usual a perspective on military life."

● **Performances of *10 Soldiers* take place between May and June – for further details visit www.rosiekay.co.uk**



TESTED DOWNTOWN

■ TROOPS from 4 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps used the town of Hartlepool (above) to practise defending and moving supplies to troops.

Exercise Iron Python saw hundreds of personnel practising distribution drills in an urban environment while under a mock attack.

To keep the exercise realistic, local residents and businesses allowed the Army to blend into the background of the town.

"We've really tried to innovate and put ourselves where we would expect to be operating in war," said commanding officer Lt Col Craig Hanson.

"The idea is for us to understand the scale and complexity it takes to move all of the stores and all of the requirements for our fighting soldiers to ensure that we can support them."

DIVERSITY DISTINCTIONS

■ THE Armed Forces Diversity Engagement Team fought off competition from major international companies to win a top prize at the European Diversity awards.

The three-strong outfit, which includes Army representative Cpl Hazel Colville (CAMUS), was named team of the year ahead of global brands including Adidas and American Express.

Elsewhere, the Service's commitment to workplace inclusion saw it feature in the Business in the Community's Best Employers for Race listings.

Only 70 organisations made the cut after proving they positively impact black, Asian and minority ethnic staff.

Finally, the Army also received the public sector recruitment accolade for best practice in the Community Race Equality Awards.

SERVICEWOMEN PRAISED

■ A PAIR of Army officers were among 18 winners at the Women in Defence Awards.

Maj Nics Wetherill (RAMC), who led the Ice Maiden expedition to Antarctica, and careers advocate Lt Col Deborah Taylor (RLC), received the most inspirational and STEM accolades respectively at the ceremony in London.



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

PUSHING FOR BETTER COMMS

I HAVE spoken many times about the importance of good communication between the Army and those involved with it, or who have a vested interest in Service life.

The impact of effective consultation about policies and decisions that will affect families in particular cannot be understated. This was clear in our Big Survey at the end of 2018, in which participants were asked if they had received any information about the Future Accommodation Model (FAM).

While the main focus of the study was to consider what the next allocation and maintenance contract for military housing should include, we also collated views on this consultation.

And we learned that the vast majority of respondents did not fully understand why it was being implemented.

Families want clear and regular communication on FAM, which could have huge repercussions on their lives.

Overall, our survey highlighted the need to involve them more in discussions on a range of topics, including the maintenance of Army quarters or how the new system will be compatible with the highly mobile nature of Service life.

Our networking event this month will allow us to raise concerns with decision makers about the improvements to communication and consultation we think need to be made.

www.aff.org.uk



Picture: Steve Dolk

Census may support veterans

RESIDENTS of England, Wales and Scotland may be asked whether they have served in the Armed Forces on the next census as part of a new far-reaching support programme for veterans.

Defence chiefs have suggested that including the new question in 2021 would pinpoint where former personnel live and could allow the most vulnerable to be assisted more quickly.

The suggestion was raised alongside the launch of the first national veterans' strategy – a document drawn up between the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments as well as the Northern Ireland Office.

The paper outlines six areas where support for former Service personnel will be needed in the next decade. These cover community relationships, employment, health, housing, finance, and contact with the law.

A consultation on the proposals is now open and the public are being invited to make their views known – the MoD has urged soldiers to take part

“
The strategy
is a crucial
step
”

by visiting www.gov.uk and searching for "veterans strategy".

Ministers hope that prompting discussion will improve coordination for organisations involved in assisting the ex-Service community as well as generating more reliable data.

"While the vast majority of veterans thrive in civilian life, we have a responsibility to ensure that any who struggle – whether finding a job, getting on the property ladder or with mental health issues – get the support they need," Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said.

"The strategy is a crucial step in efforts to support those who have protected us."

As part of the document, the government will also look at how veterans are viewed by the public amid the findings of a YouGov survey commissioned by the MoD and Forces in Mind Trust. The poll found some people erroneously believed that former personnel are more likely to suffer mental health issues.

HONOURED



■ THE Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll have been presented to the family of a soldier from The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who was killed while serving in Cyprus in 1955.

Cpl George Cassells died during an insurgent campaign by the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters.

The Elizabeth Cross was introduced in 2009 to recognise the loss and sacrifice suffered by families of those Service personnel killed on operations.



Apache packs take on armour

ARMY Air Corps crews have been rehearsing new tactics designed to pulverise enemy armoured formations during a two-week training package run out of Wattisham flying station.

The troops, from 3rd Regiment, took to the skies for a workout involving both the Apache and Wildcat platforms in a pairing that can rain down an ordnance deluge on opposition forces.

Exercise Talon Python saw formations of up to six helicopters operating simultaneously and they were backed up by ground crews providing refuelling, communications and mechanical support.

Simulated strike missions were flown from a forward point at Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore.

As previously reported (*Soldier*,

October), the introduction of Wildcat into the airborne mix last year has seen the aircraft acting as a target designator for its stablemate.

This frees up Apache to carry a greater weapons payload – and when the platforms are operated together in larger packs there is the potential to bring up to 130 Hellfire missiles to bear on targets.

As well as rehearsing tactics, Wildcat's impressive versatility was fully exploited during the exercise – it was deployed in a force protection role and used to move troops around the battle space.

Lt Col Nick English, commanding officer of 3rd Regiment, said the manoeuvres provided a "steady progression of training" that had tested the mettle of both air and ground crews alike.

“It tested the mettle of ground and air crews”

GURKHAS' NEW SIGNAL SQUADRON

■ PROUD Nepalese troops have marked the formation of the new 247 Gurkha Signal Squadron.

The soldiers took to the parade ground at Beacon Barracks in Stafford to celebrate the creation of the outfit – as well as welcoming new recruits directly from the Himalayas.

The fourth squadron of its type – it will boast two troops as well as headquarters elements from the outset. It will have around 110 personnel when up to full strength.

It falls under the remit of 16th Signal Regiment, which supports the Army's logistic formations.

Commanding officer Lt Col Ben Davenport said the



squadron – being overseen by Maj Dave Murphy and WO2 Pandu Tamang (both QGS) – continued "the rich tradition of Royal Corps of Signals personnel serving alongside their Gurkha compatriots".

SPINE LINE COMPETITION



OUR spine line clues for December all related to a huge multinational exercise in Norway. (Maj Josh) Badger, (Lt Paddy) Bernard and (Tpr Aaron) Leonard were all troops interviewed in our Trident Juncture feature, which also quoted (Nato secretary general Jens) Stoltenberg.

This month *Soldier* has teamed up with rugged smartphone maker Doogee to offer one reader a fabulous S80.

Created for extreme adventure, this hard-wearing phone is engineered with a digital walkie-talkie function.

Just by pushing the talk button on the side of the body, users can contact their colleagues, even in remote spots that lack network coverage.

The robust case protects against heavy impacts, rain, dust, sand, oil and water and extreme temperatures – it works between -30 and 60 degrees Celsius.

It comes with 6GB of RAM, three cameras and a huge battery with up to 1,380 hours standby and 136 hours of talk time to keep you in touch.

To have a chance of winning this prize tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

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

ANIMAL AWARD BASH

■ PROUD Servicemen and women joined furry friends at London's Imperial War Museum for a ceremony commemorating the 75th anniversary of the PDSA Dickin Medal for animal gallantry. The stars of the show included nine-year-old Belgian Malinois, Mali, who received the gong for actions during an assault on a Taliban position in Afghanistan.



ON STRIKE IN SCOTLAND

■ SOLDIERS belonging to Tidworth-based 1st Artillery Brigade have been training alongside the Royal Air Force and troops from the USA, Czech Republic and Estonia during Exercise Terminal Strike in Scotland.

The package included joint terminal attack controllers directing fire from fast jets plus Wildcat and Apache helicopters from the ground as well as via advanced simulators.

The exercise was extended to four weeks to optimise preparations for those due to deploy on Operation Shader in early 2019.

EXTREMISTS TAKEN TO TASK

■ THERE will be "zero tolerance" of extremists in the ranks – and they can expect to be robustly dealt with when they are exposed, the Chief of the Defence Staff has declared.

Gen Sir Nick Carter (below) told MPs that the Army had notched up recent successes in identifying individuals with far-right views. Those caught had found themselves facing the disciplinary process while their activities had been reported in the media.

He said that the Service had grasped the extremism issue and was consistently driving home the message that such views had no place in the military's culture.

Last month we reported that former Royal Anglian soldier Mikko Vehvilainen was discharged and jailed after his membership of a banned far-right group came to light.



FORMER GUNNER TRIBUTE

■ COLLEAGUES of a former soldier who died in an attack on the G4S compound in Kabul have paid tribute to a "well-liked and supportive" friend.

Luke Griffin was among six people killed when Taliban gunmen stormed the security contractor's base after a car bomb was detonated outside.

The 33-year-old served in the Royal Artillery between 2003 and 2010, leaving at the rank of bombardier.

A crowdfunding campaign to raise money for his family can be reached at: www.gofundme.com/luke-griffin-killed-in-afghanistan



Picture: Graeme Main

New Warrior stays on track

A SHAKEDOWN of the new incarnation of Warrior is continuing at Bovington – with personnel from the Armoured Trials and Development Unit now at the controls.

Staff from defence contractor Lockheed Martin UK were preparing to hand over the asset to soldiers as this issue went to press – having carried out their own assessments.

There are currently 11 demonstration versions of Warrior being put through their paces in Dorset.

On paper the platform looks impressive and offers a raft of refinements and upgrades over its long-serving predecessor.

Topping the list is the new 40mm CT cannon, which can be fired on the move, plus enhanced mechanical

underpinnings, beefed up armour and better comfort for crews.

Lt Col James Glossop (Yorks), programme manager on the Warrior Upgrade Programme, said one of the vehicles had already clocked up 1,000 miles and the new cannon had been fired on the range.

He added: "The Lockheed Martin employees first have to carry out their own series of extensive tests, ensuring the vehicle is proved to a certain level before handing it over.

"These involve conducting a physical shakedown as well as work in labs – these are now complete and they have been busy training troops who will take over the platform.

"All being well they will be ready to begin their own tests later this month."

They have been busy training troops

Senior officer appointment

A RESPECTED military heavyweight has been confirmed as the new head of Joint Forces Command.

Lt Gen Patrick Sanders (pictured right), who is promoted to general as he takes up the post, succeeds Gen Sir Christopher Deverell and brings a wealth of experience from more than three decades in the Service.

Commander Field Army since 2016, he commissioned into

the Royal Green Jackets in 1986 and has led on ops in countries including Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The later part of his career has seen him command the 20th Armoured Brigade in Germany and on Op Herrick with Task Force Helmand.

He has also served as assistant chief of the defence staff (operations) and general officer commanding with 3 (UK) Division.





FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Picture: Graeme Main

Tabbing to extreme

AN OFFICER opted for a daily dose of punishing PT in the month before Christmas. Capt Andy Lucas (Yorks) pounded out an eight-mile tab with 44lb pack from the beginning of December until Christmas Day to raise cash for veterans with mental health issues. The officer said the challenge, akin to an annual combat fitness test every 24 hours, had been memorable. He recalled: "It was great to do one of the days at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire."



“It’s about working in a smarter way”

Landie servicing overhauled

AN OVERHAUL of Army vehicle maintenance patterns has produced promising results – improving kit availability and giving personnel more chances to train.

Having previously been locked into six-monthly servicing patterns for Land Rovers, an initiative introducing 6,000-mile checks instead is being trialled by 16 Air Assault Brigade.

The switch has slashed the time the vehicles are off the road, made planning for the likes of exercises easier and is now poised for roll-out to the Army's 7,000-strong fleet.

Brigade Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Maj Darren Clarke (REME) – who helped lead the Reliability Centred Maintenance trial – said the more flexible approach meant the Colchester-based formation's 254 Land Rovers could be better used.

While the project, which started in November, had needed a rewrite of manuals and changes to software to

reflect the amendment, he is confident the effort had paid off.

Crucially, with the formation increasing its readiness to two battlegroups in April, the alteration had also reduced the strain on personnel tasked with maintenance.

The officer pointed out: "The trial – which is being led by HQ Field Army, Army HQ and Defence Equipment and Support as well as the brigade – is ongoing at the moment.

"Although we are not seeing vast sums of money saved as we have good deals on consumables, results suggest staff are far less concerned about vehicle availability for training.

"They are better able to plan – the response we have had so far has been very positive."

Maj Clarke continued: "Land Rover is the ideal candidate for this type of change because it does not have a design authority behind it – in effect the military owns the risk."

Rise will bolster sporting war chest

THE cost of a ticket in the Army Sports Lottery will increase from 75p to £1 from April 1.

It means £6 million will be ploughed into Service sport every year to facilitate activity from grass roots to elite level.

"The lottery is our primary funding stream," said Maj Gen (retd) Shaun Burley, Director Army Sport Control Board. "This move means we can provide more support to the long-term development of our various athletic disciplines."

£30,000
the lottery's weekly prize fund

£23m
in grants awarded to Army personnel

45

recognised sports that benefit



A SINGER-SONGWRITER has been raising money for serving soldiers and veterans by releasing a single about First World War troops. Jimmy Graham's *When the Whistle Blows* commemorates the pals' battalions of the 1914-18 conflict. Graham said: "While the armistice underlines a significant period in history, the song also embraces the courage of the Armed Forces today."

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Self Assessment for Landlords

Renting is great for earning extra cash while you're deployed away. Unfortunately, it can also bring on some major HMRC headaches.

The taxman wants a full account of the money you've got coming in, even if you don't end up having to pay tax on it. In most cases, that means using Self Assessment.

It can take a while to get set up for Self Assessment. You'll have to give HMRC some details, with strict paperwork and payment deadlines to hit each year. The looming deadline right now is the 31st of January for filing your return.

There's some good news, though. As a landlord, there's a range of essential expenses that bring down your tax bill. For instance:

- ✓ **Repairs, replacements and wear-and-tear expenses.**
- ✓ **Insurance and accountancy fees.**
- ✓ **General running costs and mortgage arrangement fees.**

If you're not renting out your whole property, you've got the option of the Rent a Room scheme. Under this system, you can actually earn up to £7,500 a year in rent before you have to start paying tax on it. It only counts for furnished rooms, but it's a great way to keep your tax bill down.

The rental rules change fairly often, so it's important to keep up to date. There are new rules on energy efficiency, for example, with more on the way for deposits, letting agent fees and more. The recent budget brought key changes to things like Capital Gains Tax, certain tax reliefs and the Personal Allowance.

As always, your best bet is to get professional help from RIFT. We're the UK's top tax experts, and we handle everything from Self Assessment registration to filing your returns. We've been tackling the taxman since 1999, and we specialise in keeping you and your money safe.

Get Started Now

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- ✓ **No up-front charges.**
- ✓ **No refund, no fee.**



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WALES AWARDS WINNERS

■ SOLDIERS have been recognised at the annual Armed Forces in Wales Awards. Among the winners were triathlete Cpl Ieuan Hudson (REME), who was acknowledged for his development since joining the military, and Capt Chris Evans (RLC), who was marked out for his dedication as permanent staff admin officer to 223 (West Glamorgan) Squadron, 157 (Welsh) Regiment.

TASTY PICNIC CONCERTS

■ TICKETS have gone on sale for the 2019 Battle Proms picnic concerts in aid of military charity SSAFA.

The events feature live orchestral music, Spitfire, cannon, cavalry and firework displays.

During July and August they will visit Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, Burghley House in Lincolnshire, Highclere Castle in Hampshire (below) – of *Downton Abbey* fame – and Ragley Hall in Warwickshire.

Visit www.battleproms.com to purchase tickets, which can be bought for £32.50 in advance (adults).



MILITARY AWARDS FOR SUPER SIX

■ A SIX-strong group of soldiers from the 1st Queen's Dragoon Guards – who delivered life-saving first aid during a shooting in Las Vegas – were among soldiers picking up national recognition at the *Sun* Military Awards.

LCpl Chris May, along with Tpr Stuart Finlay, Ross Woodward, James Astbury, Zak Davidson and Dean Priestley took the hero overseas category at the ceremony sponsored by the national newspaper in London.

Tpr Woodward was also awarded the Queen's Commendation for Bravery for his actions in the latest Operational Honours and Awards (see right).



Picture: Cpl Ben Beale, RLC

■ THIS is the QinetiQ Titan Strike, a large tracked unmanned vehicle with a laser rangefinder system and a machine gun – the weapon is under total human control but remotely operated. Leading industrial partners were invited by the British Army to put their equipment in the hands of soldiers during Army Warfighting Experiment 2018 – Autonomous Warrior (Land). More than 50 robotic, autonomous and supporting systems were trialled, tweaked and trialled again to display their potential to provide surveillance, resupply, command and mobility during the exercise, which also included an intriguing new battle tank project called "Streetfighter" (page 34).

Army stars in op honours

A COURAGEOUS soldier who risked his life to save others, an NCO committed to mentoring Afghan counterparts and an officer dedicated to reducing sexual violence in Africa have been recognised from the top.

Tpr Ross Woodward (QDG, pictured below), Sgt Abbi Morrow (RAPTC) and Capt Tim Graham (Scots DG) were among those rewarded for their work in the latest operational honours list.

The line-up features some 30 personnel involved in military efforts around the world.

Having been on an exercise in the USA, Tpr Woodward was on R&R with colleagues in Las Vegas during October 2017 when a lone gunman went on the rampage. He headed towards the gunfire, treating members of the public who had been wounded using his battlefield skills and drills. The soldier received the Queen's Commendation for Bravery.

The trooper's citation said: "There is no doubt that his assistance to the US first responders saved lives – his actions were

exceptional and he is fully deserving of nationwide recognition."

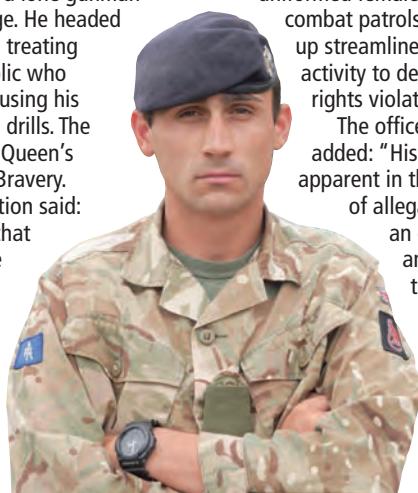
Sgt Morrow was awarded an MBE for her work in Kabul between March and September 2017 – in particular her efforts to inspire female cadets at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy.

The Servicewoman also redrafted the camp's physical training policy as well as helping those involved in mentoring develop themselves.

Capt Graham received the same award for his work in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where he took a fresh look at policy relating to gender, child protection and sexual violence.

His work included introducing uniformed female personnel on combat patrols and setting up streamlined investigation activity to deal with human rights violations.

The officer's citation added: "His sensitivity was apparent in the handling of allegations. He's an excellent ambassador for the UK, the British Army and his regiment."





Picture: Graeme Main

New attack on injury prevention

THE Army is to publish new guides aimed at helping personnel reduce their chances of suffering musculo-skeletal injuries (MSKI).

In our last issue we reported how Fitbit-style wearable technology was being used to boost Servicemen and women's health and wellbeing as well as playing a role in injury prevention.

Now the Service is writing manuals tailored specifically for the latter, with one version for individuals and another for commanders.

"The wording is still being finalised but the commander's guide would include, for example, information on how to best prepare troops before an exercise with regards to sleep, nutrition and fitness drills," explained Lt Col Stacy McQueeney (RAMC), of the Senior Health Adviser Branch.

"The individual guide, meanwhile, will include tips for different scenarios – for instance, what personnel should do and when in the run-up to their

twice-yearly conditioning review.

"The introduction of PES and the regular assessments mean that fitness and health should now be at the top of every soldier's agenda, and we will be providing them with all the tools they need to achieve their goals."

The guides are scheduled for delivery in April, and the Service's policy on the prevention, detection and treatment of musculo-skeletal injuries in Army General Administrative Instruction 74 will be updated at around the same time.

"We are brilliant at looking after soldiers when they suffer an injury and are now providing more advice on how to prevent, detect and treat them," added Lt Col McQueeney.

"This part of our MSKI programme is giving soldiers a rounded approach to help them prepare properly for the situation they face and then perform at their best while minimising the odds of getting injured."

BLUEBELL BATTLE

■ FIRED up troops from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers pitted themselves against each other and the elements as they battled for supremacy in a prestigious competition.

The Service personnel – who are with Colchester-based 16 Air Assault Brigade – went into action during the annual Exercise Pegasus Bluebell.

A test of fitness, leadership and technical skills, the contest began with a log race followed by replacing a vehicle engine with just a standard Army toolkit. A blindfolded driver then had to steer the car around a route directed by colleagues.

The competition was keenly fought – but it was members of the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment Light Aid Detachment who ultimately emerged victorious.

Team captain WO2 Aaron Disney said: "Everyone has worked really hard and we are proud to win."



Army road racing set for success in 2019 – page 70

MODEL-MAKING MAGIC

■ AN INITIATIVE encouraging veterans to counter mental health issues by making miniature military vehicles has proved particularly popular during its opening year in Northern Ireland.

Models for Heroes has seen its uptake expand since it was launched in Belfast 12 months ago – and former personnel say it has helped them meet others and deal with problems caused during service.

The UK-wide initiative organises nearly 40 of the sessions each month.

There is also a group hosted in Sennelager, Germany. See www.modelsforheroes.co.uk for details.



NEW VETERAN SUPPORT

■ THE NHS is to spend £10 million on expanding its Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service, which helps those leaving the Armed Forces, and finds them housing and support if necessary.

The new money will extend the service to 24 hours a day. The NHS already gives veterans priority care for conditions stemming from an individual's time in service.

TOP TRILOGY FOR TACTICS

■ A TRIO of new Army doctrine publications have just rolled off the presses.

The *Stability Tactics Handbook* captures hard-fought lessons of recent ops, the *Ground Reconnaissance Tactics Handbook* is aimed at reconnaissance practitioners while *AFM Warfighting Tactics Part 5B* looks at mechanised infantry sub-units.

Soft copies are available via the British Army's Electronic Battle Box on the Army Knowledge Exchange or Defence Gateway.

SAFETY HEROES SOUGHT

■ NOMINATIONS are now open for this year's Army Safety and Environment Awards, for teams and individuals who contributed significantly to safety management and environmental protection in the last 12 months.

The winners will be announced at Tidworth Garrison Theatre on March 21 during the annual conference of the Army Safety Centre – previously the Chief Environment and Safety Officer (Army). To nominate an award candidate or attend the event email: sharon.foster474@mod.gov.uk





THE BIG PICTURE

Salisbury Plain Training Area

LINE OF SIGHT

COOL heads were needed in fire support teams from 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery as shells rained down at "danger close" range. Personnel on Exercise Cypher Strike called in attacks at distances of just 200 metres from where ordnance was landing – from the safety of a bunker. Capt David Brame is shown checking the target though his binoculars after a bombardment from the 105mm gun line, while Gnr Stephen Bagshaw gives colleagues the heads up on comms.

Picture: Graeme Main

WED TO SOLDIERING



Upskilling - Himalayan style

A high-altitude expedition boosts more than just your fitness and mountaineering know-how, as these soldiers discovered...

► NEPAL'S Annapurna circuit is a magnet for serious trekkers – a gruelling test of endurance that rewards determined visitors with awe-inspiring views and memories to last a lifetime.

For Service personnel, however, there's the added bonus of developing skills they will call on in their day jobs.

Only ten Army teams are granted diplomatic clearance to conduct adventurous training in the country every year and among the latest to secure a slot were 14 permanent staff members from 2nd Army Training Regiment, Pirbright.

Soldier caught up with some of them to find out what they took away from the experience... apart from Insta-worthy snaps that is.



GOOD JUDGEMENT

Cpl Robert Crook, QRH

"The weather system in the Himalayan region is incredibly uncertain and that is something you can easily misjudge, to your cost. We only had limited meteorological data available to us daily but we had to use what we had to make key deductions to plan and prepare for each leg."



FORTITUDE

Capt Peter McElroy, RE – expedition leader

“Due to the high altitude and remote nature of the expedition, the trek really tested our resilience. Mentally, the team were continuously battling with potential symptoms of acute mountain sickness in addition to the physical demands each day brought. I believe each of us returned with a better understanding of our own limitations when deployed under such austere and highly unpredictable conditions.”

TEAMBUILDING

Cpl Daniel Barron, R Signals

“We were reliant on local guides and porters throughout the trip so for the trek to succeed it was really important to quickly build a good rapport. Luckily some members of the team speak Nepalese and they were completely integral to us being able to establish a constructive, lasting relationship with them. That’s a crucial skill that anyone who’s been on multinational operations will recognise the value of.”

NAVIGATION

LSgt Nathan Truman, Gren Gds

“Although the team had local guides to hand, we each took the opportunity to negotiate a leg of the journey. It gave us valuable experience and the chance to build on the key skills required to navigate through such a chaotic, unfamiliar environment.”

Overall length of the route

152.5
km

Total height climbed

5,520
m

Maximum distance trekked in one day

22
km

Highest altitude reached

5,416
m

Approximate daily food intake for team members

4,000
kcal

Ski maintenance made easy

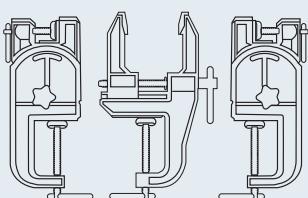
We asked Royal Engineers Winter Sports' chief instructor Maj 'Fitzy' Fitzsimons for his top tips

► WHETHER you're heading for the slopes with your regiment or on holiday it's important to know how to look after your equipment.

Skis are expensive and you want them to last. If you're hiring kit the maintenance is done for you but if you progress onto ski touring or racing you will need to learn how to do it yourself.

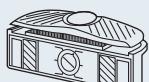
The Joint Services Adventurous Training Scheme teaches ski maintenance at various levels. For a complete beginner an understanding of the process and where to get help is all that is required. It's not actually that hard to do – with a bit of guidance, some safety tips and a few tools anyone can do it.

You will need the following kit:



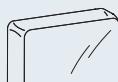
Ski clamps

To hold them in place on the workbench



Edging tool

This helps guide the file on the edges



Wax

The type will vary depending on snow conditions



Iron

It will get messy so not the same one you do your clothes with!



Plastic scraper
To remove excess wax



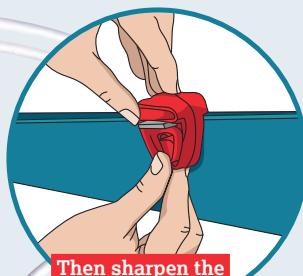
Metal scraper
For the bases



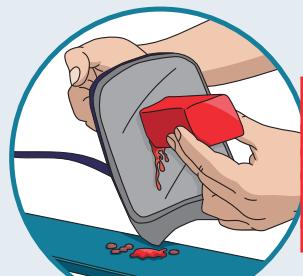
Nylon brush
To finely polish the bases



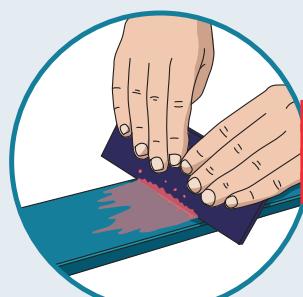
First, you need to prepare the bases and remove any minor damage with a file and scraper



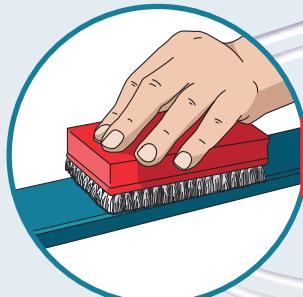
Then sharpen the edges using a fine file



Next apply the wax. The aim is not to have wax all over the base of your ski but get it into the pores. The best method for doing this is using a hot iron



Once the coating has dried – normally after about 20 minutes – scrape off any excess



Finish by polishing the bases with a nylon brush

WAX WISDOM

Wax creates a lubricant on the base of your ski and provides a better sliding surface so it can glide more smoothly over the snow. Additionally it can help prolong the life of your skis by preventing them from drying out when you are not using them. The edges are what helps skis turn. The sharper they are, the easier this will be.

TOP TIP

If your skis haven't been serviced in a while, drop them off at a ski shop for professional tuning. All the wax in the world won't make much difference if your bases are gouged and your edges are dull.



Claiming questions

► IT CAN feel like an anti-climax after the Christmas period – when the nights are dark, the weather is dire and the spectre of the post-festive credit card bills loom large.

But if you happen to find yourself leaving the Army at this time of year the future may seem even more intimidating. The Service will assist your journey to civvy street with the Career Transition Process but making sure you know about your State entitlements is vital – particularly if you find yourself with a gap in employment.

This means getting to grips with Universal Credit...

What is it?

Universal Credit is a monthly payment for those on low income or who are unemployed. It replaces several old benefits and how much you'll get will depend on your circumstances.

How do I claim?

The application process is online at www.gov.uk/universal-credit. You'll have your own profile but you can also link this with your partner's to see what you're eligible for as a couple. You can save your application along the way and don't have to complete it all in one go.

What about looking for a job?

If you're searching for employment, you'll have a "work coach" to help with your application and generally support you. As well as assisting you in finding something, they'll point you towards training and courses. When you start earning, your Universal Credit payment will gradually reduce, meaning you can take short-term and seasonal contracts without losing benefits.

Is there any special help for troops?

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, there are initiatives that help former soldiers and their families access Jobcentre Plus services. Your work coach will also have access to a local Armed Forces champion to help you get the support you need throughout your Universal Credit journey and let you know what support is available in your area. See www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk

Will I be eligible if I have served abroad?

You, your partner and your children – aged up to 21 – are exempt from the three-month residence requirement for Universal Credit claims on arrival in the UK.

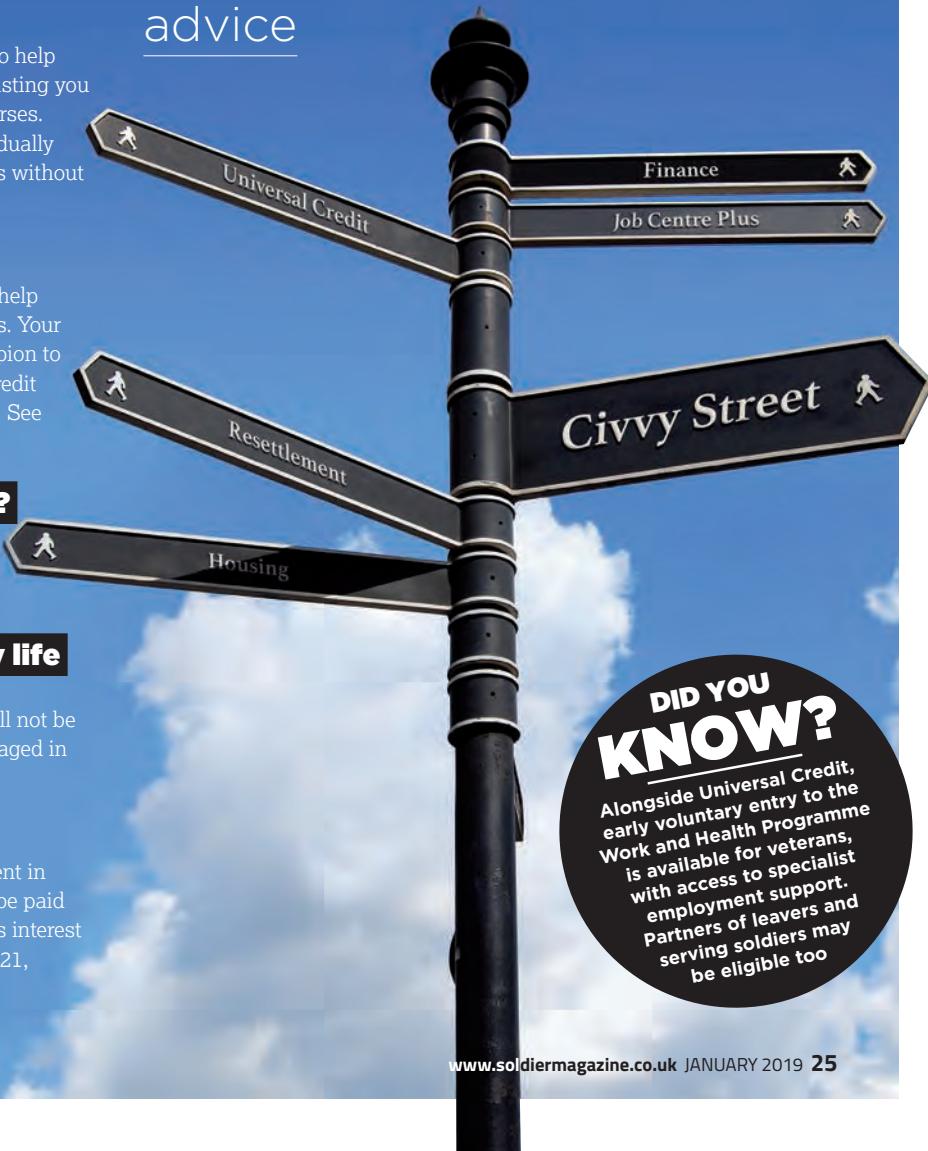
I am a Reservist. How do I balance Army life with job seeking?

If you are a Reservist and claiming Universal Credit then you will not be required to search – or be available – for work while you are engaged in military duties.

Can the benefit be paid early?

You can request to receive up to 100 per cent of your first payment in advance. This is usually available within five days but can also be paid on day one of your claim if you're in urgent need. The advance is interest free and you'll have up to a year to pay it back. As of October 2021, advances can be repaid over 16 months.

How should Service leavers go about navigating the benefits system? Work and pensions minister Baroness Buscombe has some useful advice



“It was disturbing to see the aftermath”

When Maj Andy Furmidge-Owen (SASC) from the Army's Speak Out helpline visited a centre for rape victims, it stopped him in his tracks...

“

YOU never know what you're going to get when you answer the phone on Speak Out.

It might be someone calling about bullying or harassment, but it could be something else.

As part of our team's efforts to improve how we deal with sexual harassment and violence, we decided to speak to the experts at Swindon's sexual assault referral centre (Sarc).

These centres support survivors of rape or sexual assault.

They can be found across the UK, and are a comfortable space where interviews, forensic examination and counselling can take place.

Initially when we walked through the door of the Sarc it was all fine, and I was looking forward to the education.

We were shown around the ground



floor with its clinically-cleaned consulting rooms and zip ties across the doorways.

We couldn't go in but when I glanced inside one of them, with all its various bits of medical equipment, it triggered an uneasy feeling.

There were some toys lying around the centre, and I asked what they were for.

The ones downstairs were to keep children occupied while their parents were being examined.

But the ones upstairs were “tools of the trade”. Basically, if a child is exposed to abuse the staff will use toys like a doll's house to get them to explain where mummy was when it happened, where they were, what daddy did, and so on.

It was awful.

I have three kids and to think that any child has to go through anything like that.... well, it was really hard-hitting.

The Sarcs aren't there because

incidents are happening now and again; these things are happening every day.

And it just really brought home the severity of it all.

Happily, I've not had a case like this to deal with on Speak Out.

But it can take years for male victims in particular to come forward, and it takes real courage to phone the helpline. So our team needs to be equipped to give the right advice if they do.

Whether you are talking about sexual

assault or harassment, it all comes back to respect for others.

Banter is only banter while everyone is happy with it. And if things like offensive language aren't dealt with in units, that can escalate into the physical because certain behaviours become normalised.

The fact the Army has a team of people like us dedicated to addressing unacceptable behaviours is a real credit to this organisation.

Any troops on the receiving end should feel reassured that if the subject is anything of a sexual nature, we are trained to deal with it.

Speak Out is absolutely confidential: callers don't have to tell us anything they don't want to, name, location, anything.

I like to think I was empathetic anyway, but the Sarc visit definitely gave me massive empathy for anyone who's been through this sort of thing.

It was disturbing to see the aftermath.

Now when I take a call like this, I'll think of it much more personally.

If it was my son in this situation, how would I want him to be advised? With dignity, respect and the right information.

I never thought I would end up doing a job like this when I was an apprentice vehicle mechanic in the 1990s.

But I think it's great the Army is actively addressing this stuff.

How many other employers can honestly say the same? ■

”

Want to talk?

Speak Out is the Army's confidential bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline.

Trained staff are available to assist serving soldiers on 0306 7704656 or military 96770 4656 from 0830-1730 Monday-Friday.

You can also email army-speakout@mod.uk

KNOWING ME,

British and French
troops cement
working
relationship

Words: Becky Clark and Gareth Palmer Pictures: Cpl Jamie Hart, RLC

ACTIONS speak louder than words when it comes to building international alliances.

The term interoperability may be bandied around at the strategic level but without the sheer hard graft of troops on the ground it would all be hot air.

British and French personnel from the Airborne Combined Joint Expeditionary Force know this all too well... ➤



KNOWING YOU





Since 2013 they have been ready to deploy at short notice to potential crises around the world if required.

And maintaining the skills and mutual familiarity to operate seamlessly together is an ongoing effort, as their latest training package showed.

Exercise Falcon Amarante took place over two weeks in southwest France and saw 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment and 3e Regiment de Parachutistes d'Infanterie de Marine working alongside troops from the US Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade.

After mission planning and reconnaissance, the 2,300-strong force was set the familiar challenge of restoring stability in a fictional country facing the dual threats of insurgency and a hostile neighbour – the kind of situation they could conceivably find themselves deploying to for real.

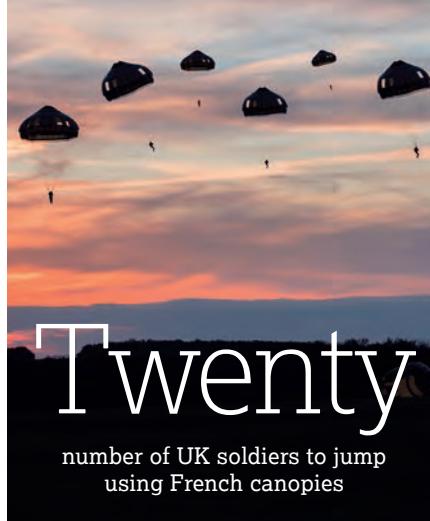
One participant, LCpl Craig Vessey (Para), summed up the experience neatly.

"It's very unlikely that we would ever go on an operation without allies, so it's best to get to know each other beforehand," he said.

"Also, as soldiers, we all do the same job but everyone has their own quirks.

"Working with other armies and looking at how they operate gives us a wider perspective and helps make us better."

To some extent, marriages of convenience among partner nations have become a necessity in an uncertain world, but thanks to the shared ethos of paratroopers and a commitment to working out their differences, this particular intercultural relationship looks set to go the distance. ■



In numbers

Location:

Caylus training area near Toulouse

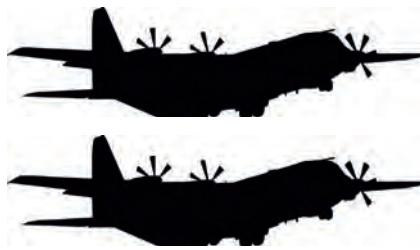
Main players:

16 Air Assault Brigade and 11e Brigade Parachutiste



170

British Army vehicles involved



2 Royal Air Force Hercules dropping paratroopers, materiel and heavy equipment

2,580

number of multinational troops taking part



600

total number of parachute jumps carried out by UK, French and US personnel



650

strength of the 3 Para Battlegroup



GREEN WARRIORS

Training staff boost conservation efforts in Belize

HUNDREDS of soldiers using precious rainforest as a place to test out military skills and drills doesn't appear, at first glance, to be a particularly environmentally friendly activity – but in Belize, UK troops are looked upon as green warriors in more ways than one.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of staff at British Army Training Support Unit Belize (Batsub), a close working relationship has been developed with many of the country's environmental agencies and local land owners keen to prevent illegal logging and wildlife poaching.

Many areas of Belize are rich in mahogany and cedar trees which are usually sustainably logged under licence. Some also have sites of archaeological interest and are home to endangered and protected species of animals and birds.

Batsub personnel have not only taken on-board new practices to help preserve the environments where British soldiers train, they're also working proactively with the government and conservation groups to protect the forests and creatures living there.

"Every six months we hold meetings with a multitude of agencies who are each involved in monitoring, ➤

Words: Steve Muncey Pictures: Batsub, FCD, FreePik, Shutterstock



protecting, sustaining and improving the culture, land and conservation," says Maj Alan Jeal (Scots), Batsub's safety training officer.

The personnel arrange for local trackers to embed with exercising units on their deployment into the jungle, where they provide advice on routes, survival skills, water sources, flora and fauna and identifying animal tracks.

They also offer guidance on how to repair damage to tracks and other areas by planting saplings, re-seeding grass and tidying up any damage that may have been caused.

The Belizean Department of Environment is invited to inspect each training estate regularly and examine the level of care taken in each zone.

The British unit also conducts joint patrols with Panthera, a local wildlife monitoring organisation, to identify camera trap locations and assist with checking animal movements around the training estates, contributing to wider studies of the region.

It's important work; areas that Batsub uses, such as Gallon Jug and Laguna Seca, contain pristine forest and are home to the country's largest populations of jaguars, one of the most endangered wild cat species in the world.

The land itself is vast and covers nearly 400,000 hectares consisting of 13 separate training zones.

According to commanding officer Lt Col Simon Walton (Lancs), as more areas are made available, Batsub staff have become increasingly aware of their role as custodians of the land they train on.

"This terrain allows troops and units to be tested to the full, learning skills that are transferable and prepares them for operations in many other parts of the world," he told *Soldier*.

"It is critical that we do our part to protect the natural assets of Belize; not only so we can continue to train and operate in the jungle, but to educate our personnel on how important it is to protect the environment of this beautiful country for generations to come." ■



Organisations

Batsub regularly works with

- + Belize Bird Rescue
- + Belize Zoo
- + Friends for Conservation and Development
- + Belize Wildlife and Referral Clinic
- + Panthera Wildlife Monitoring Organisation
- + Private forest management

What the locals say...



Rafael Manzanero, Director, Friends for Conservation and Development:

"The British understand the fragility of this ecosystem. We were honoured to receive training from the Army this year, enabling our rangers to better protect wildlife and improve their confidence and leadership. We look forward to forging stronger ties with Batsub to maintain the unique biodiversity of this region." ■



Alan Jeal, General Manager, Gallon Jug Agroindustry Ltd:

"As a former Royal Engineer with tours in Belize under my belt, it is great to see the lads back in country. Managing a private protected forest where the guys train, one of the best things I've seen is the deeper sense of responsibility for the environment that wasn't such a big deal back in my day. Poor waste disposal, lack of knowledge and a don't-care attitude damages the environment." ■





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STREET FIGHTER

Panoramic camera sends images to screen inside turret and eliminates blindspots for the commander, who is normally reliant on periscopes

50 calibre machine gun added and 7.62mm gun relocated. Both are fitted with mounts that allow rearward fire – vital in narrow streets where the main gun can't be rotated – and have a 70-degree elevation to engage targets on high buildings

Cradle for carrying infantry soldiers' breaching tools. A modified oil drum (above) holds items such as ammunition, medical equipment and explosives

Tablet linked to hull cameras allows troops using the tank as cover to see what's ahead and plan assaults more effectively

Words: Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main

THE Challenger 2 was originally designed to fight on open countryside but the battlefields of the future will almost certainly include tight, congested and hotly contested urban areas.

With this in mind, a small team from the Royal Tank Regiment, backed by 1 Armoured Infantry Brigade's Innovation Fund, are conducting a new long-term trial to make the vehicle a more



flexible weapon.

The group have adapted and designed equipment that could, theoretically, be easily added to the platform to make it more usable in built-up locations and improve integration with dismounted infantry troops fighting alongside.

The results of the first stage of this research were on display during

the Army Warfighting Experiment at Copehill Down.

"We have taken ideas from everyone in the chain," explained project team member 2nd Lt Nick Warren-Miller (RTR, pictured left).

"That includes troopers at the coalface, experienced NCOs who have used Challengers in places like Basra and understand about operating heavy armour in that kind of environment, and even the regiment's commanding officer, Lt Col James Howard."

Another team member, Lt Tom Quant

STARTS UP

Improving the urban combat capabilities of the Challenger 2



(RTR), added: "Industry has lent us a lot of equipment and in return they find out what needs to be changed or modified to make it suitable for military use.

"The Armoured Trials and Development Unit will then consider the ideas and for those that are taken forward the testing time should be shorter because of the work done here."

With so many factors at play when it comes to introducing new hardware, it's impossible to say at this stage how many of these ideas will eventually find

“We've taken ideas from everyone in the chain”

their way on to an operational Challenger 2 or when, but soldiers on the ground are being listened to and provided with the opportunity to have a say in what could be introduced next.

The project has already shown enough merit for a "Streetfighter 2" version of a Challenger to be scheduled for production later this year, which will feature a wave of fresh ideas.

"We'll probably include kit for protecting optics from lasers and UAV attacks," said Lt Quant.

"We can't wait to get started." ■

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PACK HUNTERS

British infantry play the enemy in latest Baltic outing

IT WAS a fitting sign-off to a busy 12 months – as troops returned from Norway and the largest Nato manoeuvres in years, Reservists were busy travelling east in another alliance adventure.

In an unusual outing to Lithuania, a British contingent led by personnel from 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment moved into the field to play the mock enemy force – where they found themselves squaring up to formidably armed German opponents equipped with Leopard 2 main battle tanks.

But the soldiers proved more than a match for them on Exercise Iron Wolf – a two-week shakedown of dismounted infantry skills held near the capital Vilnius.

Their presence – along with troops from other Nato countries including Canada, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Italy – also formed part of the alliance's enhanced forward presence in the Baltic states.

In the words of the organisation's secretary general Jens Stoltenberg, "such exercises are an important part of our strengthened defence and deterrence".

Capt Andy Lucas, adjutant at 4 Yorks, was certainly enthusiastic about the package.

Report: Cliff Coswell Pictures: Cpl Becky Brown, RLC



66

We are facing a free-thinking enemy – the action is really fluid

99





Engaging the enemy: Troops from 4 Yorks and other units rehearsed a full suite of warfighting skills, ranging from urban drills to woodland clearance



"It's been an interesting couple of weeks," the officer told *Soldier*. "This is a battlegroup-level exercise and we are facing a free-thinking enemy – the action is really fluid.

"We have to make sure that every decision matters, and this has been a great opportunity for the troops – particularly as we are additionally operating in a multinational environment."

Backed by colleagues from other Regular and Reserve outfits including the Queen's Own Yeomanry and 37 Signal Regiment, the British soldiers were being overseen by the Lithuanian senior officers in the mock battle on the Pabrade exercise area.

But in this gritty scenario, designed to test the allies' ability to conduct defensive ops, the success of the mission also rested on the low-level decisions made by junior commanders on the ground as they engaged the enemy at close range.

"The Germans we're facing are a highly capable opposition, both in terms of tactics and the impressive speed at which they carry them out," said 2nd Lt Nick Davison, one of the platoon commanders with 4 Yorks.

"Physically it has been a tough period out in the field: there have been hard days but we have had a fantastic time and performed well."

"During the exercise our troops accounted for 14 vehicles destroyed – among them two of the Leopard 2 main battle tanks."

A biomedical science student at Sheffield University in civvy life, 2nd Lt Davison said a number of lessons had been learnt during the dismounted close contacts, which included use of the next generation light anti-tank weapon (NLAW).

Although the learning curve on Iron Wolf was steep, colleague Sgt Karl Flowitt was also impressed with the quality of the training – as well as the scale of the manoeuvres.

"This is a type of exercise that we don't always have back in the UK," said the veteran Reservist, who has been on ops in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It is large scale and there is more to think about – you must consider the wider picture."

"This is also the first time I have had the opportunity to be involved with anti-armour operations alongside Regular soldiers in a Javelin section, as well as working with NLAW."

"We've done well against the tanks, although sneaking up on them has been a challenge."

In addition to putting infantry to the test, the exercise proved a demanding outing for troops from a range of other cap badges – providing strong support to those at the sharp end.

"It has been a good test of my knowledge and abilities," admitted medic LCpl Emily Dearden





(RAMC). "In particular, we have had to work on our casualty extraction drills and ensuring we triage those who have been injured during the mock contacts effectively.

"I served as a Regular and am soon returning to the Army full-time, so this exercise has been really useful. But to be honest, one of the hardest parts has been dealing with the weather."

Communications operator Cpl Lee Copeland (R Signals) highlighted that keeping soldiers connected had presented a challenge – but it had been an opportunity to rehearse some core disciplines.

"Quite a lot of issues needed shaking out," the civvy street telecoms technician continued. "The terrain out here can be quite demanding for comms but we managed to keep the troops on their feet.

"We've been able to create work around fixes locally and a link back to the UK."

Iron Wolf was certainly a demanding training package for the soldiers – but it was also a valuable opportunity to rehearse peer-on-peer warfighting skills.

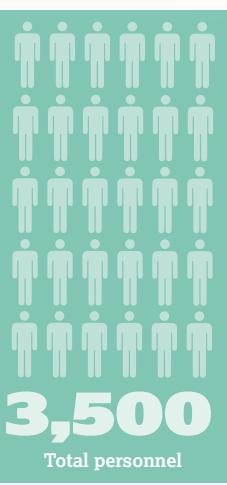
And it clearly showed the Reservists matching up to the standards of their Regular colleagues.

Well prepared, formidably equipped with the latest kit and with a professionalism to match, they continue to demonstrate their importance to both the Army and its multinational allies. ■



IN NUMBERS: IRON WOLF

0
British troops taking part



13
Nato member states involved



ice

Novice sliders tested to the limit on Austrian escape

Report: Richard Long Pictures: Graeme Main



“IT IS such a rush,” beams LCpl Jack Hudson (AAC) as he prepares to take to the ice for a bobsleigh run on the iconic Olympic track at Innsbruck-Igls.

Set among the stunning backdrop of The Alps, the venue played host to the 1964 and 1976 Winter Games but is now the setting for 39 novice soldiers who are experiencing the adrenalin-fuelled disciplines of bobsleigh, skeleton and luge for the first time. →



Known as Exercise Raging Ice I, the week-long camp is a mainstay of the Army's winter sports programme and allows personnel to sample pursuits that would be barely accessible if it wasn't for the military.

And the appeal for these thrill-seekers is easy to see.

Sliders can hit speeds of up to 75mph as they hurtle down the 1,200-metre long track and with 14 challenging twists, turns and corners to negotiate the risk factor is high – meaning crashes are a distinct possibility.

"I was petrified at the start of the week and we crashed in three of our first four runs," LCpl Hudson tells *Soldier*.

"But it's the biggest kick I've had from any sport or adventurous training – it is the best thing out there.

"Bobsleigh is something I've always wanted to try but I didn't know how to apply. When this opportunity came up I said yes straight away."

The junior NCO was partnered with Cpl Luke Taylor (REME) and the duo rotated between the roles of pilot and brakeman as their Austrian adventure continued.

Like many who have gone before him, Cpl Taylor is now a convert to the sport and is hoping to return to action at this month's Army Championships – Exercise Raging Ice II – in Germany.

"I've done paragliding and sailing, and played rugby league, but nothing compares to this, adrenalin-wise," he explains.

"It will push a soldier out of their comfort zone and is totally different to anything else.

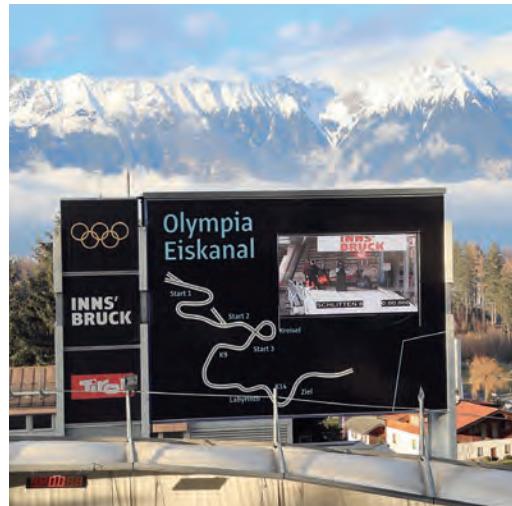
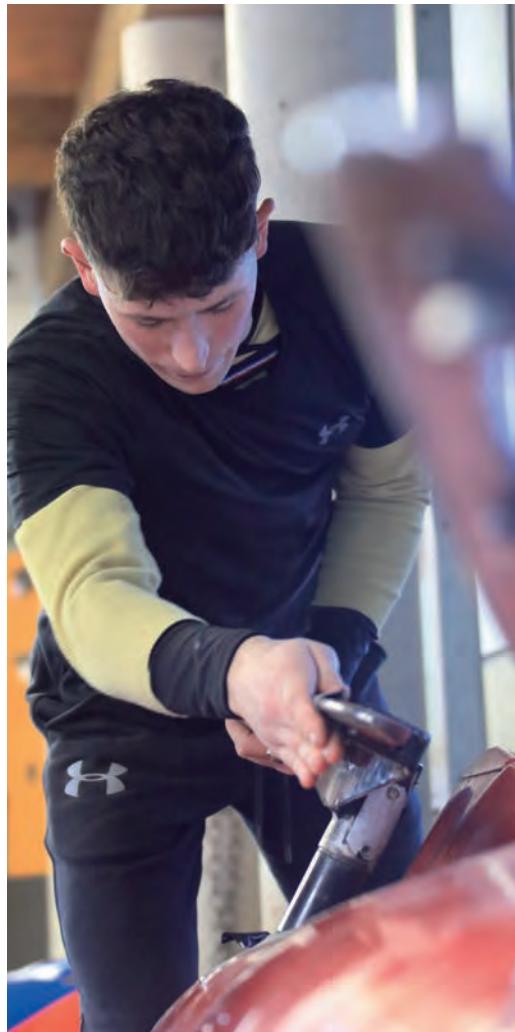
"We started the week by familiarising ourselves with the track and bobsleigh and then learnt how to handle the corners. From there it was case of suck it and see – I was completely naive about what was to come.

"It's a lot more physical than I thought it would be and mentally you are so tired at the end of the day. That is down to the adrenalin and amount of information you have to take in; you can't switch off.

"I didn't think I would be so scared on every run – it's horrendous – but it is such a good feeling when you reach the end."

The two-man team were part of a 16-strong cohort to benefit from expert guidance from coaching duo Sean Olsson and Maj Rob Hinton (RAMC).

Olsson, a former colour sergeant in The Parachute Regiment, won a bronze medal at the 1998 Winter Olympics and Maj Hinton represented Great Britain at Europa Cup level – so their experience proved to be a



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It's the biggest
kick I've had
from any sport

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valuable resource.

“I did one of these courses 30 years ago,” Olsson says. “This is a breeding ground for potential Army, GB and Olympic athletes.

“But this week is all about introducing them to the sport. We are not looking for record times or perfect lines, we want to send them down the track safely.”

Olsson’s progression is a familiar path for Service personnel.

Pte Nick Gleeson (Para) and LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) became the latest graduates from the novice camp to compete at the top level when they represented Team GB at the 2018 Winter Games and it is hoped that more will follow.

But Olympic pedigree is not just limited

to the bobsleigh.

Mike Howard – a veteran of the 1984 Games – was on hand to guide the aspiring luge stars in what is considered to be the hardest of the three sports as competitors lie on their backs and steer using their calf and shoulder muscles.

“There is no easy way to break people in,” adds fellow coach and athlete Capt Lucy Wyatt (RE), who doubles as the chair of Army luge.

“You stick them on a sled and they are doing 50mph on their first run.

“In luge there is less margin for error. If you hit the wall in skeleton you can flip to the other side and maybe finish; if we hit the wall we are coming off.” →





→ But after seeing the skeleton sliders in action the thrills and risks seem equally high to the untrained eye.

On their initial outings the personnel were hitting speeds of 35mph but as their confidence and skill levels rose they doubled that effort as they confidently completed full runs from the top.

"They have volunteered for this," coach SSgt Nicky Moxon (R Signals, pictured below) says. "They've seen videos on YouTube, they've done their homework and that has helped make this a really progressive week.

"It is a challenge, and it requires focus and the ability to make quick decisions – when they go back to work they will be completely different.

"It is so important the Army offers these opportunities; it is a different type of training but it mixes well with what we do in the military."

With the week complete the soldiers returned home fuelled by an experience that may remain unrivalled throughout their careers in uniform.

Some will now pursue the disciplines in a competitive environment but for all involved the lessons will last a lifetime.

"This is all about building confidence and promoting self-belief," exercise OIC Maj Gillian Cooke (RLC) concludes.

"That is one of the reasons why we do it.

"By pushing people out of their comfort zones they learn about themselves and what they can do." ■





TRACK TALK

Raging Ice rookies share their thoughts on the Innsbruck escape...



Financially, you couldn't afford to do this on civvy street – it's something you can only really do through the Army. A lot of guys have said this is one of the best things they have done in the Service and I think winter sports and adventurous training are great for retention.

Lt Barney Grant, RE

There is more to skeleton than just lying on a sled and coming down the track. The speed and G-force certainly get the heart going. The very first run is like a blur and you think 'what has just happened?' But once you have done it a few times everything seems to slow down.

LCpl Tom Ludovico, RE



I just wanted to try something new. I thought luge sounded exciting and it is fun to sample what is considered to be a niche sport. It is incredible how quickly your mind adapts to the fast pace. I guess opportunities such as this are always in danger of being cut but it has been one of the most incredible experiences.

2nd Lt Tom Groom, RAMC



SKIN DEEP

Interviews: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Meet the man using cosmetic surgery to erase the scars of war...

IT IS perhaps the most unlikely setting for a tale of wounded soldiers – the cosmetic surgery mecca of Harley Street, usually the preserve of high society's wealthy elite.

Here, among the weathered buildings of Marylebone district, the pace of life drops a notch from central London's unending melee.

This place has long been the haunt of rich celebrities who are able to transform any bodily feature they want – albeit for a price.

The waiting room in Dr Aamer Kahn's clinic is immaculate.

With the milky light of sun streaming through the windows, it is a quiet haven of sofas and lifestyle magazines.

Tea for waiting patients is served from a china teapot into ornate cups and saucers.

But such serenity belies the dramatic impact that this establishment's work is having on some of the UK's most severely injured soldiers.

Khan recalls how his mission started back in 2012 when he treated ex-Serviceman Mark Allen.

He had lost both legs and fingers from his left and right hands as well as suffering severe damage to his face and neck.

"I was approached by Mark's girlfriend to do some work on his scarring," the surgeon explains.

"His injuries were significant – we ended up carrying out a number of sessions with him."

The transformation in the young soldier was noticeable. "As a result of what we were able to do with his skin, it improved his movement significantly," Khan adds.

"We repaired his nose too – but it was his confidence more than anything that we bolstered.

"Psychologically he was already managing quite well, but I think the work we did really assisted him. I actually believe the experience changed all of us involved – me as well as Mark and his girlfriend."

This encounter inspired the skin specialist – whose great grandfather Khudadad Khan was a Victoria Cross recipient during fierce fighting in the First World War – to quietly provide his expertise free to several more injured troops over the ensuing years.

Demand would ultimately become so great that Khan decided to form the charity Back on Track with wife and fellow specialist Lesley Reynolds.

Not only does the set-up help injured veterans access cosmetic surgery, along with other physical and psychological treatment through the health professional's medical contacts, it supports them with the overall transition back to civvy street as well.

"I thought about the type of care that former soldiers needed after being put back together by the military medical services and NHS," Khan continues.

"There's a point at which they are discharged and have to start all over again."

The health professional points out that – although they have often suffered more severe injuries than other patients on his books – personnel derive similar benefits to civilians from cosmetic surgery.

"Whoever you are treating, the basics are still the same – you are looking at functionality, such as improving skin or tendons, as well boosting their confidence," he says.

So the charity does not just help them cosmetically.

But although Back on Track – which was last year recognised with a Soldiering On award – now has a far broader remit in helping veterans, Khan's Harley Street Skin Clinic continues to play a front-line role, with six former military patients currently on the books.

So what has Khan's time in the operating theatre with ex-personnel taught him?

For a start, the surgeon believes the risks and realities of soldiering must be better grasped by wider society. He hopes his charity's efforts, which include working with other good causes, fundraising and organising social events, will help to do that. →

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The troops
that we
assist are
incredible
people

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V1
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→ Acknowledging the MoD's commitment to rehabilitating personnel, he is adamant that the civilian sector must similarly embrace their care in the future.

"The troops that we assist are incredible people," Khan points out. "They are very focused as well as being trained, to a degree, to deal with trauma they experience."

"When you talk to them about the injuries, a lot will say they were just doing their job."

"But for me, there were a number of different reasons why I wanted to help them."

"The first is that I have children of my own – and the injured soldiers I see are often very young."

"The second is that I am a medic. Like my colleagues I took the Hippocratic Oath and became a doctor to help people."

Although high-intensity ops such as the Telic and Herrick campaigns are, for now, consigned to history, Khan stresses that the nature of a soldier's job will inevitably mean injuries.

"As long as there are people serving, this will be the reality," he adds. "We must recognise what they do, and the risks they face."

"We do not yet know about the long-term implications of wounds soldiers have suffered while in conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq."

"These injuries are both physical and psychological."

Simon Weston – a former Welsh guardsman who suffered burns to nearly half his body when the ship he was on was bombed during the 1982 Falklands War – agrees that casualties left disfigured can suffer significant mental strain and surgery can help to improve life.

But he emphasises that psychological damage can run far deeper than appearance – and points out that any condition needs to be properly identified and treated in its own right.

"If you have been disfigured you can have a tendency to focus on your injuries," the veteran says. "But you need to get to the point where you are not thinking about what you look like every time you go out."

"I was wounded 36 years ago – and my life literally changed in a flash. When you are unsettled in such a dramatic way it is inevitable that you are going to suffer some mental fallout – for me at least recovering, and acceptance, has been something of a gradual process."

During his recovery Weston had the added dimension of media focus brought about by the BBC documentary *Simon's War* – he recognises he has changed significantly from the soldier who was injured but has long been comfortable with life.

"There are elements of the old me, but a lot has changed too – in many respects I consider myself very fortunate, in no small part thanks to the medical staff that have treated me along the way," he adds.

Khan has certainly been deeply moved by the veterans he has assisted. "The charity we have created will be a lifelong project – I am emotionally committed to it," the surgeon concludes.

"The military was all around me growing up and I was always inspired by my great grandfather – it will always be under my skin." ■



CV:

Dr Aamer Khan

- Graduated University of Birmingham: 1986
- Became full-time cosmetic doctor: 2004
- Interests include: Dermatology, surgery, human psychology

CASE STUDY



Name: Pete Hobbs (pictured left) **Age:** 32

Army career: Royal Engineers, 2005-2012

Notes: Discharged after accident in pre-deployment training for Afghanistan – developed complications after surgery on his shoulder.

Although I haven't had cosmetic surgery with Dr Kahn yet, I know veterans who have had procedures and it **has definitely helped them psychologically as much as physically.**

There is a friend of mine who had some very serious facial burns – looking at photos of him before his treatment you really notice the difference now. **The change has been incredible.**

Everyone who has been through surgery has spoken about the **uplift in their self-confidence**.

The difference it has made has improved both their appearance and wider quality of life.

There is a scar from the operations I have already had on my shoulder, which I am hoping can be treated by Dr Kahn, but I am having a total joint operation first. Having been diagnosed with PTSD I am also seeing a psychiatrist – both are being funded by Back on Track.

The charity has done so much more than focusing on my physical and mental health though – it has helped me with financial issues I had with my accommodation and rent arrears after a road accident last year.

For me, this has lifted a weight.

I would not be in my new home had the organisation not stepped in to help – and Dr Kahn has also been assisting me with my career – and business aspirations – in catering.



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TAKE FLIGHT

The world of pro skydiving just got more accessible thanks to an Army funding scheme and virtual reality

AS EXTREME sports go, they don't come much more adrenalin-fuelled than wingsuit flying.

Streaking across the sky at some 140mph, swooping through Alpine valleys inches from the rock face – let's face it, it all looks pretty awesome if that's your bag.

Unfortunately, you need at least 200 free-fall flights under your belt to even think of giving this notoriously dangerous discipline a go.

But the good news is that you can experience something very similar through virtual reality and the relative safety of a wind tunnel.

And even better, soldiers can now use their standard learning credits (SLC) to get into the high-octane world of indoor skydiving.

A recent taster day staged by the Red Devils at Basingstoke's iFly centre gave Reservist Rfn Tom Page (Rifles) an insight into the sport, as well as the chance to do a virtual jump.

Describing the simulation



playing out on his headset the 31-year-old said: "It was fantastic – you had a wingsuit and were flying through a gorge. With the sensation of the fan underneath it was very lifelike.

"I've never done anything quite like that before. I'd be a bit nervous to jump out of a plane so doing it in this kind of facility is the best way."

A sport in its own right, indoor skydiving has even been mooted as a possible addition to the Olympic roster.

But it also lays the groundwork for the real thing, which has benefits for the Service. As a result, the Army foots some of the cost, so

personnel can gain a basic wind tunnel qualification at a fraction of the usual price.

A personal contribution of £75 plus a £175 grant from the SLC scheme translates to ten two-minute flights in the wind tunnel.

Soldiers can use this platform to go on and eventually gain International Bodyflight Association coaching qualifications and then deliver back to defence by training other personnel taking up skydiving.

Capt Joseph Palmer (Para), the Red Devils' outgoing officer





commanding, commented: "It's a great training tool; it allows people to accelerate their learning in a controlled environment.

"Accuracy and safety is paramount for my guys in their day-to-day roles and this is a fantastic way of us bolstering their skills.

"For those starting out, 20 minutes is enough time to reach class A indoor flyer standard, which means you're safe in the tunnel, can fly solo and you might even be able to make turns.

"So if you've already done some static line jumps and you want to progress to free fall, or you're going on an

exped with your unit or want to get involved with your corps team, this is a good precursor.

"And at the end of the day it's great fun." ■

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you're interested in using your standard learning credits for a wind tunnel course speak to your regiment's skydiving rep, education officer or contact the Red Devils directly on rd@reddevils.com.

You can also get in touch to arrange unit teambuilding.

ASK THE EXPERT



Sgt Dean Walton, Red Devils team sergeant major, is the first soldier in defence to qualify as an International Bodyflight Association indoor skydiving instructor. These are his tops tips for nailing the wind tunnel...



Stay straight in both the body and legs with an arch in the hips, a slight bend at the knee and your toes pointed.

You want to be nice and symmetrical to the wind flow. Even the slightest movement will create a reaction and you'll move around.

Most importantly, relax. Sometimes people are so focused on what they want to achieve that they go blank and tense up. Remember you're doing it for fun.

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

✉ mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk
Twitter @soldiermagazine

'Reservists deserve better'

SERVING in the Reserves is an honour and a privilege, but it does come at a cost to family and career.

Juggling what seems, at times, to be two full-time jobs is a real balancing act and I have had to make sacrifices over the years to do both.

At normal retirement age Reservists don't benefit from a highly managed exit strategy or receive the levels of information that our Regular counterparts do, which is understandable as the majority of us are already in full-time employment.

However, neither do we get a final medical, or "red book" as proof and acknowledgement of our service – and there is no formal "thank you" from higher up the chain of command.

After 36 years of service and four operational tours, the last words to me from the Army were, "make sure you return your kit".

Reservists deserve better. – [Name and address supplied](#)

Lt Col Tracy Wright, Directorate of Manning (Army), responds: Firstly, I would like to thank you for your 36 years of valuable service.

Your contribution and commitment is greatly appreciated.

You have stated that you have concerns that no final medical is afforded the Army Reservist on discharge; this is incorrect.

PULHHEEMS administrative pamphlet, chapter six, clearly states that commanding officers are responsible for referring personnel to a medical officer for a pre-release examination.

ARE YOU THE RETIRING RESERVIST? WELL JUST MAKE SURE YOU TURN THE LIGHTS OUT WHEN YOU'RE DONE!



This is to be completed no later than eight weeks prior to the date the individual is due to leave the unit, to allow newly declared medical conditions to be investigated and/or treated.

This is then followed by a final medical immediately before departure on terminal leave – if this has been authorised – or discharge.

Secondly, with regards to the lack of acknowledgement of service, Reserve Land Force Regulations, part one, chapter five, section six, paragraph 01.05.216 covers eligibility prior to discharge for the Volunteer Reserve Medal, stating that all commanding officers should check eligibility for this award.

Furthermore, paragraph 01.05.216a covers the subject of valedictory letters and states that any soldier who has completed six years of unbroken voluntary service in the Army Reserve is, subject to their commanding officer's recommendation, eligible for this form of recognition.

Paragraph 01.05.217 of the same set of regulations states that all part-time soldiers are to be furnished with a discharge certificate by their unit.

This will generally be carried out at the same time as the individual de-kits and is always a chain of command responsibility.

I hope this demonstrates the Army does value its Reserve personnel and that all efforts are made to acknowledge the valuable contribution they make.



Arduous journey: There are no shortcuts for claiming the mileage allowance

Looking for the right road on tax

I HAVE proudly served in the Army Reserve for more than 30 years and although I never joined it for the money every little bit helps as the cost of living continues to rise.

For the past six years I've been posted to jobs that have required a significant amount of commuting (at least 100 miles each way from home to duty) and I have had to insure my car for business purposes for undertaking those journeys.

I am entitled to 25 pence per mile but have heard from various sources that I can claim the difference between that rate and 40 pence per mile against tax.

When I started seeking clarification on this I hit a wall – everyone seems to have a different view and I could not find a single point of contact who could advise me on what expenses I was permitted to claim as work-related.

Many accountants do not know where to look for guidance and nor do they understand how the Army Reserve works.

– **Col Anthony Lamb, Col Reserves, Army Officer Selection Board**

Col Phil Bassingham-Searle, Army Pay Colonel, responds: The allowance in your particular case is home to duty travel (HDT) which provides a contribution towards the costs incurred when you travel from home to a place of duty.

HDT is ordinarily capped at 50 miles, but to recognise the need to employ certain specialist Reservists further away from home, a commanding officer can authorise these individuals to claim for distances greater than that limit.

These should be entered manually on JPA and are payable at the motor mileage allowance (MMA) rate.

HDT, as well as another allowance called get you home travel (GYH(T)), are tax-free to reflect the special circumstances of employment of Armed Forces personnel.

Despite their status, an individual may still be able to claim tax relief on the difference between the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) entitled rate – which is currently 45 pence per mile – and the MoD rate of 25 pence per mile.

This is called mileage allowance relief (MAR).

Claims for this are only valid if the individual is at that workplace for 24 months or less because the appointment must be considered temporary to meet all HMRC's qualifying criteria.

If your assignment is more than 24 months there is no entitlement to claim tax relief on HDT and/or GYH(T).

Additionally, there is a total claim restriction for the temporary duty period of 10,000 miles.

Tax liability is a personal matter with HMRC. A claim can be submitted by either applying for income tax relief for your employment expenses to HMRC (using form P87), by including it in your annual tax self-assessment, or by using a third party/adviser.

Comprehensive advice on MAR, including how to claim tax relief for HDT and GYH(T), is contained in 2015DIN01-005.

“Everyone has a different view”

‘WHY AM I NOT DUE THE PAY AWARD?’

● I AM serving on a full-time Reserve service (FTRS) home commitment contract after spending 22 years in the Regular Army.

When I took up my post I was told that I couldn't be paid more than the salary I received previously.

So even with the recent pay award I will, like others on this type of posting, not receive an increase.

Our pension will be abated to swallow this rise. Can you explain why this is and don't you think it's unfair?

– **Name and address supplied**

Col Phil Bassingham-Searle, Army Pay Colonel, responds: All personnel on an FTRS commitment will receive the annual pay award, have their pay uplifted by two per cent for 2018/19 and receive the 0.9 per cent bonus.

Those individuals on an FTRS commitment and in receipt of the Armed Forces Pension 75 or early departure payment (EDP) 05 will have their pension or EDP abated to ensure that they do not earn more, by way of pay and pension, than their previous military salary.

This is government policy and applies to all public servants who are re-employed in public service.

Ex-Service personnel are made aware of this prior to joining the FTRS or Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS).

Once a pension has been abated, it will not be reassessed again unless the individual concerned starts a new commitment.

This will result in a change in pension benefits received.

If a commitment is extended the abated pension will not be reassessed. The issue was recognised during the development of Armed Forces Pension Scheme 15 (AFPS 15).

It was designed to allow ex-Regular Service troops who join the Reserve or MPGS to retain both their AFPS 15 EDP income stream and lump sum.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to change abatement policy for AFPS 75 and 05 as both are closed schemes and therefore cannot be subjected to further change.

APPOINTMENTS

Lt Gen Patrick Sanders is to be promoted general and appointed Commander Joint Forces Command, in succession to **Gen Sir Christopher Deverell**.

DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity:
020 7901 8900;
www.soldierscharity.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

Army Libraries:
01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

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

Care After Combat:
www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service:
01980 618244;

dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk

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

Defence Humanists:
www.defencehumanists.org.uk

Erskine:
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www.erskine.org.uk

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

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

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

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01252 787574

Medal Office:
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Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group):
www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

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

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

Regular Forces' Employment Association:
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www.rfea.org.uk

Remount: 01451 850 341;
www.remount.net

Royal British Legion:
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www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Poppy Factory:
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www.poppyfactory.org

The Royal Star and Garter Homes:
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www.starandgarter.org

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

Troop Aid:
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uk4u Thanks!:
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www.uk4u.org

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

INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 14/18: Definition for Army Regular and Reserve trained strength

ABN 13/18: The Army higher education pathway update 2 – registration of interest

ABN 12/18: Launch of the *Defence Security Handbook*

ABN 11/18: JPA preference flags

ABN 10/18: Army Parents' Network launch

ABN 09/18: Armed Forces weight management policy

DIN 2018DIN01-151: Introduction of a board and offer policy for the conversion of Army Officers from IRC/IRC (LE)/MC to Reg C/Reg C (LE)

DIN 2018DIN01-150: Application for late entry commission – all arms and Services

DIN 2018DIN01-149: Amendment to the Armed Forces pension schemes – AFPS 75, AFPS 05 and AFPS 15

DIN 2018DIN01-147: Defence Fire and Rescue Service fire officers and brigade managers 2018 pay award

DIN 2018DIN01-146: MoD firefighters 2018 pay award

DIN 2018DIN01-145: Selection for the attendance on the Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Land Reserves) in 2019

DIN 2018DIN01-144: World Faith Moral Leadership and Development conferences

DIN 2018DIN01-143: Royal Ascot race meeting Armed Forces charities day – June 21, 2019

DIN 2018DIN01-141: NHS pensions – scheme pays election guidance

DIN 2018DIN01-140: Welsh rates of income tax

DIN 2018DIN01-138: Removal of the requirement for EOD operators and ATO candidates to attend psychometric aptitude assessment

DIN 2018DIN01-137: British Airways managed path scheme

DIN 2018DIN01-135: Army Reserve – Group A specialist Reserve officers and other ranks: Entry process and career management

DIN 2018DIN01-134: Army Reserve Group D specialists – special terms of service

DIN 2018DIN01-133: Homelessness Reduction Act: Legal duty to refer –

England only

DIN 2018DIN01-132: Short-term sickness absence management trial

DIN 2018DIN01-131: MoD/NHS agenda for change grades pay award 2018

DIN 2018DIN01-130: Adoption and fostering

DIN 2018DIN01-129: Launch of finance competence framework v5

DIN 2018DIN01-128: Forces Mutual respite breaks – pilot scheme

DIN 2018DIN01-127: Army officer terms of service – tier 1 command sergeant major career structure

DIN 2018DIN01-124: The Defence Humanist Network presents: Remembrance, a secular reflection

DIN 2018DIN01-122: Introduction of a Joint Personnel Administration system competence framework to reflect knowledge and experience of military planning at the joint operational level

DIN 2018DIN01-121: 2018/19 fees for

officiating chaplains to the military

DIN 2018DIN01-120: Branch transfer to medical technician (radiographer) student entry criteria

DIN 2018DIN01-119: Branch transfer to medical technician (operating department practitioner) student entry criteria

DIN 2018DIN01-118: Branch transfer to medical technician (biomedical scientist) student entry criteria

DIN 2018DIN01-115: Special terms of service for University Officer Training Corps chaplain cadets' pilot scheme

DIN 2018DIN01-114: Army Reserve senior soldier entry commissioning – devolved selection trial terms of reference 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN01-113: Revised mess and single accommodation charges for MoD civilians temporarily residing in Service messes in the UK

DIN 2018DIN01-112: Regular flexible duties – trial (transitional)

DIN 2018DIN01-111: Continuity

of education allowance eligibility certificate – discrepancy between the automated JPA CEA EC and the CEA regulations detailed in JSP752

DIN 2018DIN02-013: Army national security vetting clearance requirements

DIN 2018DIN02-012: Policy for Operation Plunder – Service Police searches of military freight and personal baggage

DIN 2018DIN03-028: Military aid to the civil authorities – immediate assistance

DIN 2018DIN03-027: Implementation of the Cabinet Office's consolidated guidance

DIN 2018DIN03-026: Launch of new FMed portal

DIN 2018DIN03-025: Requirement for all units to re-apply for the use of blue light vehicles

DIN 2018DIN03-024: Publication of JSP 800 volume 2 – *passenger travel instructions V7.0 (phase 1 – refresh)*

DIN 2018DIN03-023: Defence

diving policy

DIN 2018DIN03-022: The provision of temporary landing zone safety officer training

DIN 2018DIN03-021: Defence policy for modelling and simulation

DIN 2018DIN03-020: Publication of JSP 800 volume 5 – *road transport policy V6.0 (phase 1 – refresh)*

DIN 2018DIN04-210: Deletion of various obsolete NSNs, within fire fighting vehicles; DM C 7FF, 7RIV, and KG OS

DIN 2018DIN04-209: Declaration of obsolete: DMC 7WHG OS

DIN 2018DIN04-208: Out of service notification – Talon lightweight, unmanned, tracked military robot

DIN 2018DIN04-207: Out of service notification – Panama remotely operated vehicle

Continued on page 56

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Intelligence continued

DIN 2018DIN04-206: Out of service notification – Buffalo mine-protected clearance vehicle

DIN 2018DIN04-205: Out of service notification – Abacot purpose-built remotely controlled platform

DIN 2018DIN04-204: Neuromuscular electrical stimulator for defence rehabilitation

DIN 2018DIN04-201: Supply of helmet and cuirass outsize and refurbishment

DIN 2018DIN04-200: Obsolete – ADAC 51677-01 – cartridge bird scaring 12 bore No5 Mk1 NSN 1305-99-328-4385

DIN 2018DIN04-199: Direct supply of nurses badges and police shoulder slides

DIN 2018DIN04-198: The use of C238 (all variants) ammunition container for return of range ammunition scrap is to cease with immediate effect

DIN 2018DIN04-197: Obsolete – ADAC 50510-01 – Fuze Electric N4 Mk1 NSN 1375-99-963-5718

DIN 2018DIN05-027: Governance and endorsement of Defence Medical

Services applied concepts and joint tactics, techniques and procedures

DIN 2018DIN05-026: SIPRNet Rel UK support

DIN 2018DIN05-025: Enterprise identity and access management

DIN 2018DIN06-040: Move of DGAC codes for class 1 dangerous goods from DOME to JSMCR

DIN 2018DIN06-039: Radioactive substances annual holdings return for 2018

DIN 2018DIN06-038: Publication of JSP 800 volume 6 – *container management regulations (v4.0) (phase 1 – refresh)*

DIN 2018DIN06-036: Release of JSP 319 – v4.3 – *joint Service safety regulations for the storage, handling of gases*

DIN 2018DIN06-035: Dstl radiation protection services and advice – contact details

DIN 2018DIN07-130: AIR 440: Class 1(b) remotely piloted air systems (multi-rotor) remote pilot course

DIN 2018DIN07-129: Tactical Medical Wing course schedule training year 2019/2020

DIN 2018DIN07-128: Biathlon rifle security, administration and training

DIN 2018DIN07-127: Joining instructions and training requirements for the Specialised Infantry assessment cadre

DIN 2018DIN07-126: Aeronautical meteorological personnel enclosure 1 to annex A: FOST HM continuous professional development log

DIN 2018DIN07-125: Expedition slots at the Joint Service Sub-Aqua Diving Centre in 2019

DIN 2018DIN07-124: Use of the Defence Simulation Centre

DIN 2018DIN08-009: Joint Services Command and Staff College international student charging regime and allowances

DIN 2018DIN10-040: The Army Indoor Tennis Championships 2019



SEARCHLINE

Deepcut – Royal Logistic Corps Headquarters and Central Sergeants' Mess closure. Anyone wishing to reclaim presentation items should contact brian.hinton373@mod.gov.uk before March 1, 2019.

Former Reservist Scott Irvine – who joined 243 Provost Company, Royal Military Police in July 1989 after completing basic training at Brownhills, Gosport – has lost his passing out photo and is trying to track down a new copy. Anyone who can help is asked to call him on 07593 576463.

The Centre for Air and Space Power Studies is seeking any descendants of Brig Gen Gordon Shephard, who gave his name to the Gordon Shephard Memorial Prize, to inform them of its success throughout the last century and invite them to the 2019 prize ceremony. Contact the centre via enquiries.dds@da.mod.uk

REUNIONS

13 (Martinique) Battery reunion

on April 13, 2019 at the Copthorne Hotel, The Waterfront, Brierley Hill, Dudley, DY5 1UR. For further details of the event contact Kevin Brooks-Usher on 07834 287426.

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November's winner: Wendy Ann Sparrow, Andover.

NO. 926 JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed in this image taken to commemorate 75 years of the Dickin Medal, which honours animals that serve in the uniformed services.

Circle all the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 926, Soldier,**



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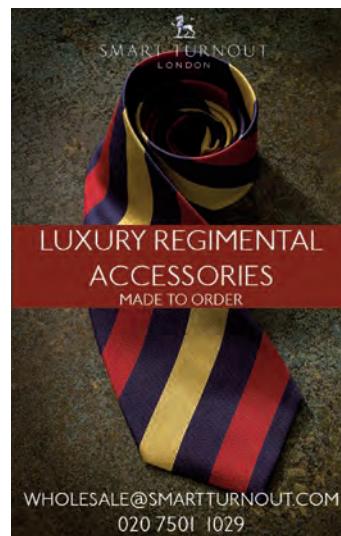
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Spotlight on...

Antony Training Area & Tregantle Ranges



This unique training area spans the Rame Head Peninsular from Longsands Beach to Whacker Quay on the River Lynher. There are three small arms gallery ranges and two large Napoleonic forts, providing excellent amphibious landing and assault facilities, helo ops opportunities and exceptional OBUA facilities.



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Scraesdon Fort:

has a labyrinth of rooms, underground spaces and passageways offering demanding objectives for troops to 'attack.' It can also be used as a bivouac site and abseiling facility.



Tregantle Fort:

is due for an accommodation update in the near future. The backdrop of sandy beaches and rolling surf mark out the Tregantle ranges themselves as a unique experience for visiting troops.



Longsands beach:

can be used for amphibious landings.



“The facilities at Tregantle are unique to the area and offer fantastic opportunities for amphibious landings and vertical assaults onto objectives.
Ops Officer CTW, CTCRM

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REVIEWS

MOVIES

THE UPSIDE

Paroled prisoner and disabled tycoon form unlikely bond

ADMINISTRATIVE hiccups can lead to all kinds of dramas – from bank payments made to the wrong accounts to data mishaps, there is plenty of potential on which to base a comedy.

Allowing a job application to find its way from the janitor pile into the sift for a live-in carer might seem a more far-fetched situation – especially when the candidate is an unqualified criminal with form for dishonesty and the client is an affluent quadriplegic business tycoon.



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GAMES

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MOVIES



But this is nonetheless the basis for this tale of an unlikely friendship between two men at the polar opposites of society – **Bryan Cranston** assuming the role of influential yet broken billionaire Phillip Lacasse and comedian **Kevin Hart** playing dodgy Dell Scott.

Apparently based on French film *Les Intouchables*, the story charts Hart's catalogue of misfortunes – including being thrown out by his partner after his release from jail – while his parole conditions force him to feign interest in job hunting.

In tandem, we learn more about widower Lacasse. Left unable to do anything for himself after a paragliding accident, he is out of love with life despite his wealth and largely despises the combination of lackeys and two-dimensional associates that populate his life.

As the clerical mix up brings the pair together, the tycoon is taken with Hart's down-to-earth manner despite his criminal background and lack of qualifications. The paroled prisoner – who also uses his impromptu interview to steal a much-loved book from his future employer – is equally interested in the salary and lavish lifestyle that accompanies the position.

Their unfolding friendship sees Lacasse helped to discover new forms of pain control as a result of Hart's

VERDICT:
A strong cast lifts a mediocre film
★★★★★

cannabis dealer contacts – the carer also uses his technical acumen to pimp up his boss's electric wheelchair for high-speed mayhem.

In return the tycoon amusingly shows his horrified counterpart how to insert a catheter – as well as other biologically sensitive areas of his role – while giving him the opportunity to find his way uncomfortably through the worlds of opera, fine art and other pastimes of high society.

The cast are undoubtedly the strength of this film. Performances are solid throughout with Cranston – best known for his portrayal of renegade chemist Walter White in *Breaking Bad* – and Hart excelling in their respective roles as they trade witty one-liners with each other.

Nicole Kidman also puts in a strong showing as Lacasse's personal assistant Yvonne – whose love for the businessman is matched only by her suspicion of his new carer.

But the plot is *The Upside*'s prime downside. Although the story holds together as a succession of amusing events are underpinned by decent dialogue, there is little that challenges either the comic elements or the fledgling relationship between the two lead characters.

Any production of this type needs to have a dose of strain to test the protagonists and hold interest. In this

case, when the stressful event finally arrives it is too late in the film and it does not have any meaningful impact as the plot tails off to its conclusion.

The Upside is by no means a poor effort, but this flaw reduces what could have been an excellent movie into an offering that is as mediocre as it is lacking in depth.

Nonetheless, it will happily fill a couple of hours as an antidote to the winter blues on the performances alone. Just don't expect any more than a feelgood vibe from what is an overall average outing. ■

REVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, SOLDIER



WIN

● We have five copies of *They Shall not Grow Old* to give away. Widely acclaimed by critics and the public alike following its limited cinema release last year, the DVD features a special 30-minute question-and-answer session with producer **Peter Jackson**. To stand a chance of winning, name one film he has directed. Answers to the usual address or via email to **comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk** by January 31. Good luck!

DIGITAL/DVD RELEASES

**Blindsight**

Out now

IS IT a comedy or a serious film? I still can't quite work this one out. We follow released

prisoner Colin through his last few days of probation, trying to stay clear of trouble in the form of best friend Miles, who is a loose cannon to say the least. Making ends meet as a removal man, he's torn between old loyalties and the reality of his situation. On one hand, the film could represent modern America with divisions between the haves and have nots. On the other, it's a bit of a nothing movie.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

**Undisputed: Fight for Freedom**

Out now

STARRING legendary martial artist **Scott Adkins** and **Martyn**

Ford – dubbed the scariest man on the planet – the fourth instalment of this franchise packs a big punch. Adkins plays Russian mixed martial arts fighter Yuri Boyka, who is using a new freedom to battle to the top of his game. But after the death of a ring opponent he questions his decisions. Seeking forgiveness from the dead man's widow he risks a return to his homeland and the violent world he tried to escape from. The fight scenes make this a winner.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

**The Secret of Marrowbone**

Out now

A CREEPY house, noises in the attic and four motherless children on the run from their sadistic father – this offering has all the ingredients of a decent supernatural chiller. But the promised scares don't materialise. Respectable performances from the young cast ease the tedium slightly. But hints of *The Others* remind the viewer of everything this film isn't.

Becky Clark, Soldier



PICK OF THE MONTH:

RED DEAD REDEMPTION 2

For PS4 and Xbox One

► UBIISOFT titles are famed for their sublime visuals but rivals Rockstar Games have proved they are more than capable of crafting superb scenery with the release of *Red Dead Redemption 2*.

The backdrop for this Western-themed action adventure is incredibly detailed and full of life and this stunning environment is simply a pleasure to explore.

Whether you are trotting around town on your horse or galloping through rolling hills and woodlands, the scenery continues to impress.

As in the developers' *Grand Theft Auto* series, there are small encounters and events taking place all the time. From heated arguments that develop into violence to couples feeling romantic, the world constantly serves up small, almost intimate encounters that ensure you don't feel like a one-man band in the middle of nowhere.

On the subject of places to explore the map is enormous so obtaining a trusty steed is a must. It spans five fictitious American states,

VERDICT:
The wild west never looked so good

★★★★★

each presenting their own unique characteristics that range from dense woodland to swamps and mountains.

So there are plenty of places to visit and a plethora of other things to keep you busy, even when you're not in the midst of a mission.

As for the story, you fill the boots of outlaw Arthur Morgan, a member of the Van der Linde gang who carry out a series of robberies against a wealthy oil magnate.

This sets in motion a series of events and encounters that evolve into shootouts with rival villains, agents and pretty much anyone who crosses their path.

Some of your actions have a direct effect on the final outcome but play honourably and the ending follows suit. However, if you act aggressively and maliciously you'll experience something else.

Rockstar Games have crafted an amazing title here, though it's not without its flaws.

Occasional bugs and awkward controls hamper the experience from time to time – especially when the trigger buttons initiate both conversation and fire at the same time.

This often results in a simple greeting of 'hello' becoming more deadly than intended, attracting unwanted attention in the process.

All in all, this is a game that you should definitely get your hands on. ■

REVIEW: DAVID McDougall, CIVVY



BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH:

THE JOY OF WORK

Twitter boss reveals how to rediscover your mojo

► AH, THE dreaded January blues. Memories of the festive season are fading fast and millions of us resume the daily grind lighter in wallet, larger in girth and distinctly lacking in motivation.

But what if some simple steps could counteract the annual slump and fill us with joy and enthusiasm about returning to work?

Over at Twitter HQ, for example, employees might shake off the doldrums by staging a "hack week" – a period in which regular duties are put on hold and teams focus instead on coming up with new ideas and innovations.

The concept is just one of the many small changes the organisation's European Vice-President, Bruce Daisley, believes can make our workplaces more productive, fulfilling environments.

His new book *The Joy of Work* offers up 30 ways to help you #LoveWhereYouWork again – strategies picked up during stints at major platforms such as Google and YouTube, and backed up by research.

"I've tried to explore some of the science behind how we interact with each other, form bonds and how we are motivated," Daisley told *Soldier*.

"The critical thing is that a lot of this came from places where things weren't quite right.

"I was seeing employees exhausted and overwhelmed, so it's about looking into that and understanding what reenergises individuals.

"Those things are universal and they extend beyond the office. I spoke to people working in supermarkets, or in the military – anywhere groups

of human beings come together – to find out how they can feel more positive in their jobs."

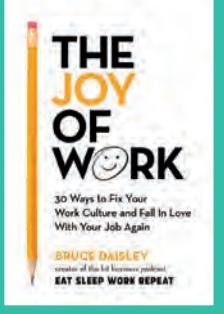
The three sections of the book reveal how "recharging" can boost performance; how to promote "sync" between colleagues; and how to create "buzz" among teams.

It may sound a bit like cringey management speak, but each chapter comes with useful tips that even the most jaded employee ought be able to get on board with.

Boost creativity by going for a walking meeting, move the kettle to encourage mingling, and – best of all – shorten the working week because quality is more important than quantity.

As it happens, the Army is already naturally high in "sync". Things like common values and a shared sense of humour – even the act of marching in time – are said to contribute to a feeling of "belonging" (the latest recruiting ads might be on to something after all).

● *The Joy of Work* by Bruce Daisley is published on January 17 by Penguin Random House in hardback and eBook



And yet, surveys consistently reveal low morale among Service personnel.

Daisley has a theory as to why this should be.

"This isn't just relevant to soldiers but studies have found that people can only work at maximum capacity for around 55 hours a week," he proffered.

"After that productivity goes down and as soon as you recognise that you realise it's about working in concentrated bursts.

"I always think of the quotation by Sir Chris Hoy who said 'never stand when you can sit, never sit when you can lie down' and what he means is that you should preserve your strength.

"When you have a job that requires you to put your utmost energy into it you need to be ready to deploy that energy.

"And that's relevant to the world of a soldier. Resting is as vital a component of work as the work itself.

"This isn't a nice-to-have – ensuring someone's mental and physical wellbeing is in a good place correlates directly to how well they do their jobs."

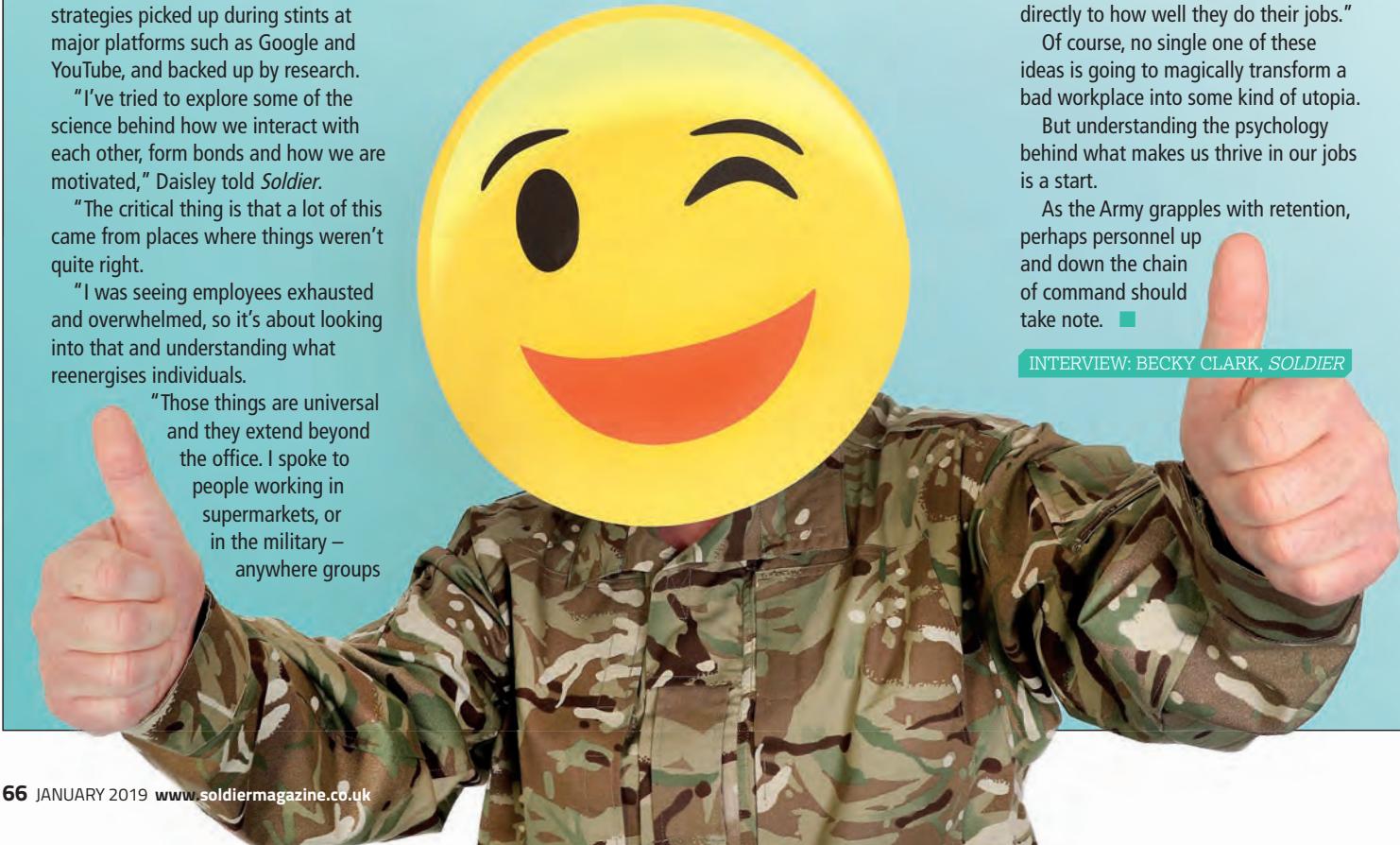
Of course, no single one of these ideas is going to magically transform a bad workplace into some kind of utopia.

But understanding the psychology behind what makes us thrive in our jobs is a start.

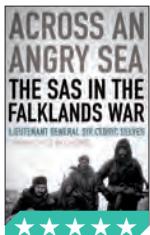
As the Army grapples with retention, perhaps personnel up and down the chain of command should take note. ■

VERDICT:
An engaging, non-corporate take on the route to workplace bliss
★★★★★

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, SOLDIER



BOOK RELEASES



Across an Angry Sea
by Lt Gen Sir Cedric Delves

AS A

major, the author commanded D Squadron, 22 Special Air Service Regiment during the Falklands War. In this cracking book he reveals the frustrations and successes of leading an elite unit in a new environment. The squadron took part in the retaking of South Georgia in horrendous conditions before being part of the attack on Pebble Island and the campaign to secure Stanley. It is a well-written, detailed account of a busy war. If I have one issue it is the writer highlighting the mistakes he may have made – decisions taken with the information available at the time always look different in hindsight.

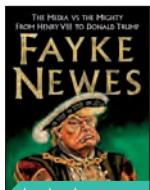
Andy Kay, ex-RS



Siege
by Geraint Jones

THIS is the follow-up to the author's previous work, *Blood Forest*, and picks up the story of Felix, a Roman Legionary defending the empire's last outpost beyond the Rhine. The writing demonstrates extensive historic research but Jones is an ex-soldier who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and this experience makes his characters ring true. The result is an exciting blood and guts thriller as well as a story of substance. The hero has to deal with both the enemy outside the walls and the psychological damage a lifetime of war has inflicted on him and his section. Thoroughly recommended whether or not you have read the first instalment.

Capt Matt Ixer, R Welsh



Fayke Newes
by Derek J. Taylor

THIS is a timely

reflection on a hot topic, presenting historical discussion without the drudgery of many titles. The author works through numerous past events from Henry VIII's controversies with his wives, to the current Trump administration and its use of social media. The overarching theme is that fake news is not a modern phenomenon. Each chapter explores the evolution of media and the authors of the time, identifying that there are multiple ways in which the truth can be presented to audiences. Overall, an interesting, thought provoking and engaging read.

Cpl Samantha Lumb, Int Corps



The First Bridge too Far
by Mark Saliger

PARATROOPERS cut off behind enemy lines, trying to hold a key bridge and waiting for the cavalry to come and relieve them. Sound familiar? This is not Arnhem, but Sicily. A year before the famous battle, the "Red Devils" of the 1st Parachute Brigade were embroiled in a fight to the death over the Primosole Bridge against the fanatical Fallschirmjaeger. What struck me most was the lessons learnt in Italy could have significantly altered the later battle in Holland. However, these were ignored. Thoroughly gripping from start to finish, you'll struggle to put it down.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH:

SIMULATION THEORY

Muse tread synth-heavy path

► BILLED as one of the best live acts on the planet, **Muse** return with a fresh collection of stadium anthems to fuel their impending world tour.

News of the band's eighth studio album, *Simulation Theory*, was met with great expectation following the success of previous offering *Drones* but it ultimately fails to hit the same highs as its predecessor.

The 2015 release saw the trio make a triumphant return to the guitar-driven sound that underpinned their early glory and while that formula is repeated at times here there are too many diversions along the way to make it a truly great record.

Synth-heavy opener *Algorithm* feels like the soundtrack to a low-budget 80s sci-fi movie and the underwhelming electronic approach is maintained on *The Dark Side*, which fails to hit top gear.

However, the tempo picks up on *Pressure* thanks to its pounding drums and screeching guitars, while *Propaganda* boasts a surprisingly enjoyable blend of rapid-fire beats and Prince-like vocals.

Other highlights include *Break It*

To Me, which has hints of nu metal pioneers **Korn**, and *Get Up and Fight*, a more mainstream affair that incorporates a succession of sweeping, powerful choruses – making it an obvious choice for a single.

Proceedings then come to an end on *The Void*, where the synths return for a rousing cinematic closer.

On the whole, *Simulation Theory* falls slightly short of the peaks found in the band's impressive back catalogue.

However, in a career spanning more than two decades the Devon natives have earned the right to experiment and their efforts here should not be entirely dismissed.

The material will undoubtedly feature heavily in the upcoming live shows and the spectacular nature of their stage performances will see it delivered with gusto.

But cranking up the guitars and stripping back the frills could be a better path to tread next time out. ■

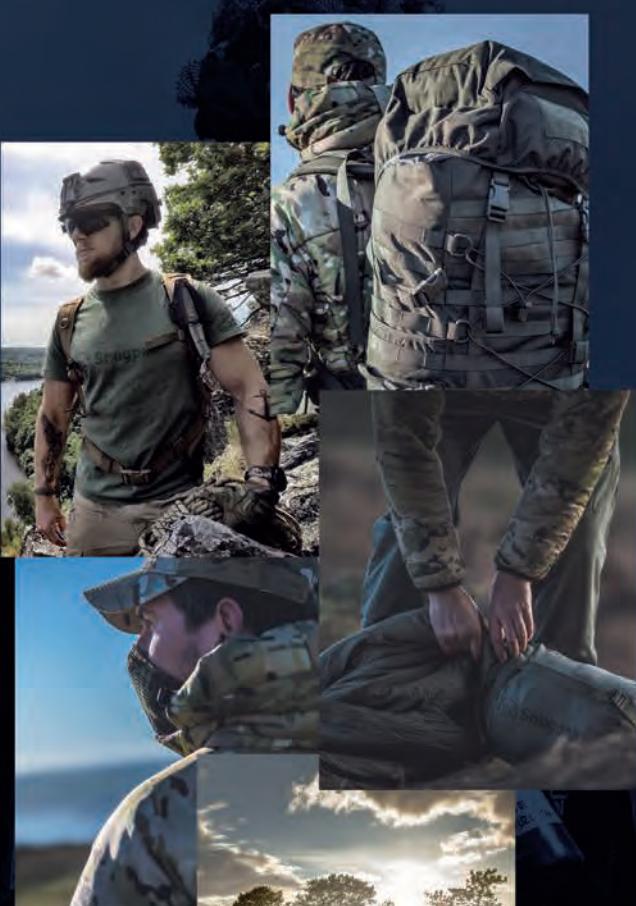
REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, SOLDIER

VERDICT:

Highs and lows but worth a listen

★★★★★

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Picture: Camilla Temple-Court

PODIUM PUSH

WITH a successful season in terms of rider development behind them, the Army road racing team is looking to claim silverware in the sprint and endurance disciplines in 2019. Read about their hopes for the upcoming campaign on pages 70-71...



RACERS EYE GRID GAINS AS NEW SEASON LOOMS

WITH an encouraging track campaign signed off, the Army Road Racing set-up is looking to build on its growing momentum when the riders return to the grid in the coming months.

Podium finishes in the various classes of the ACU Endurance Championship gave the soldiers cause to celebrate, although secretary Capt Pep Brown (REME) believes their achievements in 2018 could have been greater.

Reflecting on last season's efforts, the officer told *SoldierSport* he and his riding partner had hoped to top the standings as the National 1,000 category neared its conclusion but ultimately fell short.

"I wanted the victory," he added. "We had wins at Anglesey and Cadwell Park but had some disasters as well."

"We were in contention going into the final race and the title

was decided by just nine points at the end of eight rounds.

"We finished third overall, which was our target at the start of the year, but we will be looking to step up next season."

The endurance team also recorded a second-place finish in the Rookie class and third in the Clubman 1,000 ranks – results that saw success spread across the board.

The sport boasts a talent pathway for aspiring riders, who usually join as support staff before progressing to the bike in a race scenario.

A number of those who performed so well in 2018 have followed this path and the trend is set to continue this year.

"Quite a few guys from our support crew will be racing this season," said team manager WO1 Andy Day (REME).

"Coming in at that level allows them to see the bigger picture as they don't always understand



"OUR RIDERS CAN PUSH FOR THE TITLE"

the race world. They can see the hard work and passion involved, and then build themselves up through track days.

"We are very team orientated; we are representing the Army and have that military ethos."

A number of potential pit crew members have shown an interest in joining the organisation ahead of the new campaign – which is greatly appreciated by those on the track.

"This year we've had up to 30 people in the support crew," Brown added. "We could not do this without them."

"We want our riders to focus on what they have to do on the bike and let the staff do the other work. When it all comes together it is so rewarding."

Developing riders was also a key theme for the Army sprint team in 2018.

With two key performers stepping down at the end of the previous season the set-up



looked to its support crew to bolster the ranks and they did not disappoint in a campaign that saw them finish second in the Inter-Services standings – trailing the Royal Air Force by 16 points.

"Our development riders excelled massively," explained team manager CSgt Danny Williams (Mercian).

"That comes from the effort they have made in learning the tracks and their race craft, as well as from setting up the bikes, while part of the support crew.

"We want to take that championship back from the RAF next season and our riders are now in a good position to push for that title.

"Injuries and deployments used to take their toll but our development guys have come in and shown enough promise to finish second overall so the future is looking bright."

With the performance pathway reaping dividends the management structure has decided to allocate two additional development slots for 2019 so the conveyor belt of talent can continue to flourish.

"We've had a couple of people in that role this year and it meant they could come into the team with no pressure on them," Brown explained.

"They have excelled and we believe this is the way forward.

"Those slots are quite fluid; they give people an idea of what a race weekend costs and entails and also shows what opportunities are available through the Army." ■



TRI OPTIONS IN NUMBERS

ROUNDS SCHEDULED FOR THIS YEAR'S SERIES - WHICH CONCLUDES IN OCTOBER

8

TOP SPEED, IN MPH, OF THE DUCATI 959 PANIGALE BIKES THAT RACE IN THE EVENT

165

THE HIGHEST POSITION ACHIEVED BY SGT RICHARD SPENCER-FLEET IN THE 2018 CAMPAIGN

18

SUCCESSION SEASONS OF THE DUCATI TRI OPTIONS CUP

10

RIDERS ON THE GRID FOR 2019

37



Picture: Camilla Temple-Court

PUSHING FOR POINTS IN 2019

HAVING overcome a catalogue of injuries including a broken back and neck, Sgt Richard Spencer-Fleet (REME) returned to action in last season's Ducati Tri Options Cup.

The competition, which forms part of the British Superbikes Championship, marked a significant step up for the Serviceman, who had been a star of the Army endurance team before his setbacks saw him sidelined for more than 11 months.

But after holding his own Spencer-Fleet will take to the grid once more in 2019 on a quest to claim points in a challenging field.

"The start of the series was a real eye-opener," he told *SoldierSport*. "I had not ridden for a year due to my injuries and I was up against rivals who were a notch above."

"But my results got better over the course of the campaign and I ended with an 18th place finish.

"The aim for the season was to get into the points – to claim just one point would have been a real achievement.

"It has been really hard but we have come away with a lot of statistics, ideas about settings and experience that we can now use as we start to move forward."

Mechanical issues also took their toll and an engine re-build saw Spencer-Fleet miss races at Snetterton, Brands Hatch and Cadwell Park.

With the work complete he made his return at Silverstone before posting his best results of the year at the Assen circuit in Holland.

"Having missed three rounds, to be only three places away from a point in the final race was quite pleasing," Spencer-Fleet added.

"We tried our best. This is a series with professional riders and if you give them an inch they take a foot. But as you build experience it helps you through the season." ■



DOMINANT REDS PUSH FOR POSITION OF STRENGTH

HAVING dominated the Inter-Services scene for 16 years the Army women's team is taking steps to ensure it remains the premier outfit in Forces rugby union.

A host of potential new players were identified at a recent two-day training camp in Aldershot and with the set-up gaining funding for academy and sevens sides the sport is going from strength to strength.

Head coach Maj Gemma Stonebridge-Smith (AGC (ETS), pictured right) believes the new-look structure will deliver long-term benefits as it offers a bridge between the grass-roots corps game and the senior Army team.

"At corps level you have those who have not really played before through to full internationals," she told *SoldierSport*. "There was nothing in between that."

"The academy will fill that void. We want to give people an opportunity to push for a red

shirt and hopefully it can be a springboard to the full side.

"The training camp created a level playing field to choose both squads from.

"We had 37 players down and the vast majority were uncapped and had not played Army rugby at senior level.

"Between them they produced a really good trials fixture (pictured above) and there was a lot of fresh talent on display.

"That has given me a real headache in terms of selection as we move forward."

Wing Pte Rae Deane, prop Pte Lauren Slape (both RAMC) and flanker Pte Dee Fay (RLC) drew particular praise and the trio excelled alongside established stars Cpl Lou Dodd (QARANC), Sgt Jade Mullen (AGC (SPS)), Bdr Beth Dainton (RA), Sgt Sarah Mimmagh (AGC (RMP)) and LCpl Heidi Silcox (RAMC) – who all play at the elite level of the civilian game.



**"WE
WANT
PEOPLE
TO PUSH
FOR
A RED
SHIRT"**

They will be handed a further chance to impress as the Servicewomen embark on a hectic run of fixtures in the coming months.

The Reds face international opposition in the shape of Sweden, Spain and the England and Scotland under-20s, while the academy players take on Germany and Belgium.

The Inter-Services campaign then gets under way in April.

"We've had a couple of international fixtures over the past few years," Stonebridge-Smith added.

"Our senior team would probably sit sixteenth if we had a world ranking.

"We are now looking to play sides who are ranked slightly higher as those games can help take us forward.

"Winning another Inter-Services title is our goal for the season but we want to stretch ourselves as well."



GAME BRIEF

DATE: November 28, 2018

COMPETITION: Royal Air Force under-23s v Army under-23s, Inter-Services rugby union

VENUE: RAF Halton

VICTORY in this year's Inter-Services tournament ended a four-year trophy drought for the Army under-23s.

Head coach Capt Mal Roberts (RLC), who is also part of the senior coaching set-up, conducted an extensive search for talent at unit and corps level before assembling his squad and while the process proved challenging he believes the future is bright.

"There are a couple of players who will now look to progress to the Army A team," he explained. "Others will have to wait a year or two."

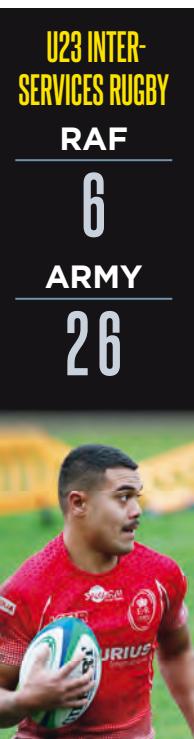
"On the flip side it means I will be able to work with them for a while longer and there is some good quality out there."

"There are players in the current senior side who have come through the under-23 system. We are generating future stars and that can only be good for Army rugby."



Pictures: Align Photography

UNDERDOGS SEAL SERVICES CROWN



HEAD coach Capt Mal Roberts (RLC) said his Army under-23 side "exceeded expectations" by winning this season's Inter-Services showdown.

The young guns opened their campaign with a 37-24 victory over defending champions the Royal Navy and then sealed the silverware by defeating the Royal Air Force 26-6.

The tournament decider was played against a backdrop of howling wind and driving rain at RAF Halton but the Reds successfully battled the elements to cross for four tries on their way to an emphatic win.

Roberts told *SoldierSport* that, with just six players returning from last season, the team was very much an unknown quantity as it took to the field.

"This is a totally new side," the officer added.

"So to lift that trophy is really pleasing – they have totally exceeded my expectations."

"For me, coming into the job, it was all about building a team ethos and making sure the boys wanted to play for the under-23s."

"It was a team of unknowns and I didn't know what level they were at or what their individual qualities were."

"My standards have always been quite high and I tried to impart that on the players."

"I knew we could be competitive but I didn't think we'd go on to win the Inter-Services trophy."

The Army made a storming start to their opening fixture in Aldershot as they raced into a 20-7 lead over the Senior Service at the break.

Second-half scores from Cpl Joe Mills (Yorks) and LCpl Scott Kilbey (R Signals) extended the Reds' advantage and some excellent kicking from the outstanding Fus Aaron James (R Welsh) ensured the final outcome was never in doubt.

James struck the first blow in the soldiers' clash with the RAF a week later and skipper Sig Josh Raqio (R Signals, pictured left) added a crucial second try shortly after the break.

Two further efforts then followed as the champions-elect pulled clear of their rivals. ■

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FORCES FIXTURE: THE ARMY'S TOP SQUASH PLAYERS WILL BE IN INTER-SERVICES ACTION IN PORTSMOUTH FROM FEBRUARY 7 TO 8

» BOXING



SQUASH ON THE UP

THE Service squash season is now in full swing and a final call for entries has been made ahead of this month's annual Army Individual Championships.

The event, which runs from January 15 to 17 at the Winchester Racquets and Fitness Club, features men's, women's, under-25s' and masters' draws.

See www.armysquash.org for more details – entries close on January 9.

The competition follows hot on the heels of the Inter-Corps Championships, where the Royal Artillery topped the standings in division one.

The Infantry also had cause to celebrate, winning 116 points from a possible 120 to seal the division two title, while their B team was promoted from division three.

Such success served as a reward for the efforts made to grow the sport in recent years and those at the helm will be looking to unearth more talent at the Infantry Squash Championships.

Open to individuals as well as major and minor unit teams, the contest will be held at the Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre from February 19 to 21.

For more information email paul.searle824@mod.gov.uk



BOXERS HIT FORM IN HOME SHOW



**"THE
RESULTS
WERE
A REAL
BONUS
FOR US"**

THE Army's boxers produced a stunning statement of intent ahead of this season's Inter-Services showdown as they dominated proceedings at a high-profile round-robin tournament at their Aldershot gym.

Fighters from the Ukraine, Southern Counties and Merseyside and Cheshire all tested themselves against the soldiers but they proved to be no match for the hosts – who claimed 19 wins from a possible 22 during a triumphant weekend.

LCpl Shamim Khan (RLC, pictured above) set the tone with three victories from three bouts – a feat that was matched by Gdsm Josh Plummer (Coldm Gds) on his return from a wrist injury.

Newcomers Rfn John Henderson (Rifles) and Tpr Jordan Bracken (RL) also impressed as they defeated heavily-fancied opponents, while international stars Cpl Alanna Nihell and LCpl Megan Reid (both RLC) recorded back-to-back successes in their fights.

"John and Jordan gave away more than 50 bouts in terms of

experience so for them to both emerge victorious was brilliant to see," Nathan Pearce, secretary of the Army Boxing Association, told *SoldierSport*.

"They were not expected to win so those results were a real bonus for us."

Lead performance coach Ben Stewart said the tournament was devised to push the fighters at the end of the second training block of the season.

Their attention will now turn to preparing for the Inter-Services and the elite national championships that follow.

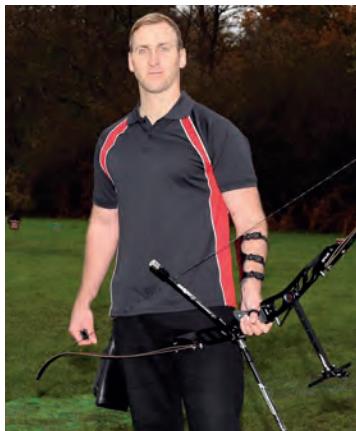
"Having three bouts in three days will condition them mentally and physically for what lies ahead," civilian Stewart said.

"It was more about performances than results but to win in the style we have is a fantastic achievement."

"Our goal is to reclaim the Inter-Services title. We have a good relationship with Ukraine and are looking to hold a camp at their Olympic training facility as part of our build-up."

"That will be great preparation for us."

SPORT SHORTS



Archers hit the mark

THE Army archery squad scored a notable victory over their Forces rivals as they topped the standings at this season's Inter-Services Indoor Championships in Warwickshire.

Staged in conjunction with the Archery GB national finals, the event saw the soldiers finish ahead of the Royal Air Force in second and Royal Navy in third.

The team has enjoyed an influx of new talent in recent times and will be looking to secure a famous double at this year's outdoor event.

"It is a brilliant achievement," said incoming captain SSgt Craig Cherrie (RLC, pictured). "It was an early shoot-off and a bit intimidating as we were competing next to some of the best archers in the country but we pulled it off with some outstanding shooting."



Changes to court dates

THE dates for this year's Army Indoor Tennis Championships have been changed.

Originally scheduled for February 6 to 8, the event will now run from February 27 to March 1.

For more details and to enter email greig.taylor193@mod.gov.uk

CREW'S OFFSHORE DELIGHT

THE Army's sailors capped an unprecedented season of success by becoming the first team of Service personnel to win the Royal Ocean Racing Club Championship.

Competing against a fleet of 395 civilian rivals from across Europe, the *British Soldier* crew delivered consistent podium places across 11 challenging races to clinch the prestigious trophy.

The result was sealed in the final fixture of the season – the Rolex Middle Sea event in Malta – where the troops finished eighth in their class.

After some light gusts at the start the conditions built over the five days and finished with the team deploying storm

sails to battle 40-knot winds.

"The 40 minutes I actually enjoyed were great," crew member Capt Henry Foster (KRH) said afterwards.

The Army acquired their Danish X-41 yacht in late 2016 and it has proven to be a great platform for success.

Bucking offshore sailing's trend for smaller crews, the team enjoyed a high participation rate last season with nine to ten soldiers – from junior ranks to officers – boarding the vessel in each race.

Regular stalwarts such as Sgt Andy Pritchard (REME) formed the mainstay of the effort but openness to new members and the wider squad was a key factor in their title win.



● WHILE his immediate focus is on a deployment to Kenya, motorcycle ace Cpl Stephen Thomas (AGC (RMP)) is plotting a grid return in the latter part of the upcoming season.

The 26-year-old enjoyed a stellar campaign in 2018, in which he won the A&R Racing Pre-National 600 Championship.

Thomas secured 13 victories over the course of the eight-month season, which also featured a class lap record at Snetterton. He will now move up to the Elite 600 Championship.



Picture: Colin Port Images

MONTH IN SPORT

January's key fixtures...



WHAT: Winter Sports
WHEN: January 12 to 24
WHERE: France
NEED TO KNOW: The ski season gets into full swing with the Alpine and Nordic Divisional Championships being staged at the resorts of Les Contamines and Monetiers. Pralognan La Vanoise is the setting for Ex Telemark Titan



WHAT: Woolwich Cup semi-finals
WHEN: January 14
WHERE: Venues TBC
NEED TO KNOW: Football's corps knock-out competition reaches the latter stages as the leading teams square-off for a place in the final. The Royal Engineers celebrated a convincing win in last season's showpiece but who will be the contenders in 2019?



prizes will be up for grabs in men's, women's, under-23s and masters' categories – with the top performers hoping to earn a place in the Army squad

WHAT: Army Inter-Unit Cross Country
WHEN: January 30
WHERE: Gibraltar Barracks, Minley
NEED TO KNOW: Team and individual

WALKER IN NUMBERS

WEIGHT, IN KILOGRAMS, LOST BY THE SOLDIER AHEAD OF HIS 2018 CAMPAIGN

15

THOUSAND CALORIES CONSUMED BY WALKER EACH DAY DURING TRAINING

4.5

CARDIO SESSIONS IN HIS WEEKLY SCHEDULE, AS WELL AS SIX TO SEVEN RESISTANCE SESSIONS

3

ATHLETES IN THE UK SQUAD FOR THE WORLD FINALS. THEY FACED MORE THAN 280 RIVALS FROM 27 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

20

» BODYBUILDING



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

BODYBUILDER Pte Levi Walker (RLC) is facing a gruelling ten-month training schedule as he prepares to make his debut in the sport's professional ranks.

The 30-year-old enjoyed a memorable campaign in 2018 as he tasted victory against international rivals at home and abroad and his achievements as an amateur mean he is now ready to test himself at a higher level.

Walker's fine run of form started at the Danish Open Championships in September and he went on to top the rankings at both the UK and World Championships.

"It has been a surprise," he told *SoldierSport*.

"After my success in Denmark a few people said I had a chance of winning the other tournaments.

"My main aim for the UK Championships was to defend my title from the previous year and I managed to achieve that.

"I then went to the Worlds with no expectations of doing

well, I just wanted to place in the top five. To win that title was a total shock."

Walker, who also gained his Royal Logistic Corps sporting colours in 2018, competes in drug-free and natural bodybuilding federations, which means urine and lie-detector tests are commonplace at events.

Having achieved professional status the soldier can no longer compete in the UK as he is the only athlete in the country to gain such a standing. This means his 2019 schedule is focused on the World Natural Bodybuilding Federation Pro Cup in Italy in October, followed by the annual World Championships.

"My plan is to really focus on my weaknesses," Walker added. "I've got a strategy in place and in the early part of this year I will be training to improve my physique.

"Competing as a professional is a whole different game but I am motivated to do well." ■

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SPORT SHORTS



Sappers in dominant form

THE Royal Engineers judo squad have been reflecting on a successful year on the mat in which they proved to be the team to beat in Service circles.

A seventh successive senior title at the Army Championships – in which they recorded unanimous victories over each of their rivals – proved to be the highlight of the Sappers' campaign and they added further medals to their haul in the individual weight categories.

Elsewhere, Cpl Scott Pursey (AGC (MPGS)) achieved a career high when he claimed a silver medal in the 85kg class at karate's world championships.

Organised by the World United Martial Arts Association, the event provided a stern test for the soldier, who only started training in the sport four years ago.



Reds braced for Bentley

THE Army rugby league team will make a trip to Yorkshire to face Bentley ARLFC in the first round of this season's Challenge Cup.

Having progressed to the third round last season the Reds will be looking to start their campaign in style when the match is played on the weekend of January 26 and 27.

The soldiers will go into the fixture in confident mood after winning their first Inter-Services title in five years in 2018.

BUSINESS AS USUAL AT CORPS CLASH

HERE was a familiar feel to this season's Inter-Corps Swimming Championships as the Infantry and Army Medical Services retained their respective titles.

A dominant display across a hectic afternoon of finals saw the AMS surge to a total of 146 points in the women's event, with the Royal Logistic Corps their nearest challengers on 127.

The swimmers added another prize to their haul in the relay competition.

It was a similar story in the men's draw as the Infantry's score of 140 points proved too much for their rivals. They also enjoyed success in the relays.

LCpl Cat Green (Int Corps) proved to be the standout individual performer as she shattered the 50-metre butterfly

record she set last year with a time of 29.81sec. The athlete then repeated the achievement over 100 metres – smashing her previous best by three seconds.

OCdt Jasmine Holmes (Exeter UOTC) clocked 2min 15.25sec to win the 200-metre freestyle in record time and Cpl Jack Newton (AGC) set a new milestone in the 100-metre breaststroke.

In the water polo there were wins for the Royal Signals and AMS in the men's and women's tournament, while the Royal Armoured Corps won the inaugural Mike Gibson Trophy.

"From here people will be invited to various Army training camps which is the whole point of the competition – it is a chance to scout for new talent," said organiser WO2 Emma Argue (REME).

**"IT IS A
CHANCE
TO
SCOUT
FOR
NEW
TALENT"**



» RUGBY union ace Capt Will Reeve (RGR) became the latest Service player to receive international recognition when he was capped by Kenya in the recent World Cup qualification repechage.

The officer, who serves as the adjutant at British Army Training Unit Kenya, made his debut in a 65-19 defeat to Canada in Marseille.

Unfortunately, the Simbas also suffered losses to Hong Kong and Germany in the tournament, meaning they have missed out on a place at this year's World Cup.

Reeve is also part of the Kenyan sevens set-up and is eyeing a place at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

"To represent Kenya, a country where the British Army is doing such great work in the communities, is a huge privilege for me," the officer said. "I'm especially lucky to be involved in both the 15-man and sevens teams."

EXPLOIT YOUR RESILIENCE WITH ARMY ADVENTUROUS TRAINING

A large photograph of two climbers in a snowy mountain environment. The climber in the foreground is wearing a yellow jacket and black pants, and is holding a long green rope. The climber in the background is wearing a red jacket and black pants, and is also holding a green rope. They are both wearing helmets and safety gear. The background shows snow-covered peaks and ridges.

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SEMINAR SETS TONE FOR EURO TEST

EN-TIME world champion Roger Gracie offered some expert guidance to the Army's Brazilian jiu-jitsu stars during an intensive training seminar in Aldershot.

The 37-year-old shared some of the secrets of his trademark submission moves with an enthusiastic audience, many of whom were in the infancy of their sporting careers.

"Roger is one of the greatest grapplers of all time," Lt Col Shamus Kelly (RRF), the Service team's 2IC, told *SoldierSport*.

"He has won so many fights by applying the basics and that is what this session is all about – it is back to basics."

"Our guys are working on the finer details and that can benefit everyone from a novice white belt through to an elite-level black belt."

Kelly is hoping this attention to detail will pay dividends later this month, when the squad travels to Portugal for the European Championships.

"We want to come away with at least one gold medal," the

officer added. "We are taking an 18-strong team and are targeting a minimum of five medals."

"That is achievable; we have some competitive guys who are at the top of their game and as long as they fight the right way they can be successful."

"The technical skills learnt at this seminar could prove to be the difference between submitting an opponent and losing a fight."

Brazilian jiu-jitsu is one of the most popular martial arts in the Armed Forces community, with more than 500 personnel training on a regular basis.

Organisers build on this level of interest by hosting seminars and competitions throughout the year and the inclusive nature of the sport means it is open to all – including veterans and adaptive athletes.

"It not just about the elite level," Kelly explained.

"Absolutely anyone can do this."

"And because we are always learning new techniques and skills the level of enthusiasm continues to grow." ■



**"THE
FINER
DETAILS
CAN BE
A REAL
BENEFIT"**



MAN ON A MISSION

VETERAN Rob Long is one of the shining lights of the Army's Brazilian jiu-jitsu set-up.

The former lance bombardier lost the sight in both eyes after he was caught in a bomb blast in Afghanistan in 2010 and turned to martial arts as a way of pursuing a sport that was not the exclusive realm of blind athletes.

This determination paid off as he won a gold medal while competing against able-bodied rivals at a competition for personnel from the Armed Forces and emergency services.

Since then Long, who was presented with the overcoming adversity award at last month's Millies, has claimed medals at national and international level and now wants other wounded soldiers to follow his path.

"This is a family community and hopefully they'll reach out to us," he said. "It would be amazing if we could get enough veterans involved to form a full team."

"In the future there might be opportunities at the Paralympics and Invictus Games, which means medals will be up for grabs."

"This is far more adaptive than other sports – you don't need specialist equipment and can compete against anyone."



Final Word

Interviews: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Graeme Main

I have a few goals – not least to stay fit and keep the weight off after the Christmas festivities!

Rfn Dan Norton, Rifles



I want to join the Royal Army Physical Training Corps. You can't get into this outfit from outside the Service – you have to be selected. But I love fitness and hope to be successful.

Rfn Scott Smith, Rifles



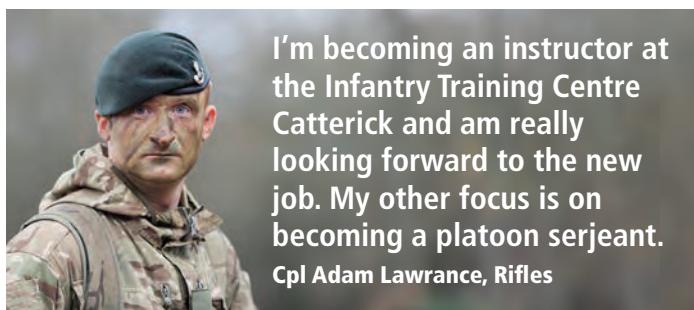
I should be promoted in time for the beginning of my upcoming Afghanistan tour. When I return I'll be looking at courses and new training opportunities as I want to keep developing myself.

Rfn Jack Wood, Rifles



I am all set to move to the Rifles training team in 2019. It will put me in a good position to help shape our future leaders.

WO2 Mark Holloway, Rifles



I'm becoming an instructor at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick and am really looking forward to the new job. My other focus is on becoming a platoon serjeant.

Cpl Adam Lawrence, Rifles

I am turning my attention to the last part of my preparations for Op Toral. I'm off to Afghanistan in March so my focus is on a successful tour.

Sjt Ben Egerton, Rifles



Careering ahead

We asked troops on a junior NCO cadre about their professional goals for 2019

Having really enjoyed life as a section commander, I'm looking to move on to the next stage of my career as a platoon serjeant in 2019.

Cpl Mitch Springer, Rifles



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