

# SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

MINI DRONES  
PACK A PUNCH

HOW TO BE  
CYBER SAVVY

BLACK  
HISTORY  
- WHY IT  
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BE THE BEST

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Cover picture: Graeme Main

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## History-onics



WE thought it would be a good idea to mark black history month with a feature involving serving black soldiers. We

put out a request on our social media channels for suitable candidates to talk with, but some of the comments and rants we received were rather depressing, to say the least.

Focusing an article on black soldiers and tying in the unsung actions of African and Caribbean troops in the Second World War is not racist. Nor is it demeaning to the contributions of others. It's about adding detail and understanding to a history we already know something about.

We were lucky enough to make contact with two eloquent, well informed and distinguished serving soldiers of African descent. We put them together with a sprightly 95-year-old veteran of the Forgotten Army of Burma (page 50).

In this year of all years it feels appropriate to be exploring what the British Army means to black personnel, past and present.

Obviously, there are people out there who don't believe history is as much about the present as it is the past.

But the soul-searching around racial equality, and black people in particular, in the western world tells us that is anything but the case.

**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](http://www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine) and on Twitter (@soldiermagazine).

#### > Online

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#### > Purchase

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Pictures: Lt Dan Meheran, RA



## New dawn for Watchkeeper operations

Crews well prepared for platform's first ever deployment over British skies

**T**RAINING in Cyprus provided significant dividends for 47 Regiment, Royal Artillery following their call to action to help monitor migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats and dinghies.

"Our preparations over the winter (see the March issue) really put us in good stead for this mission," said LBdr Ben Swift, one of the groundcrew for the unit's Watchkeeper unmanned aerial vehicles, currently deployed to Lydd in Kent.

"The package in Cyprus allowed us to practise a heck of a lot in a short space of time, really focus on our skills and drills and create much more team cohesion," he told *Soldier*.

"Operating together without any other distractions meant we could set up and deploy to Lydd and be ready to fly in just a few days."

One vital advantage of training in Cyprus was the experience of changing location, providing vital preparation for both pilots and crews.

"We usually fly out of Boscombe Down but each airfield is unique – for every new one we are asked to operate from we have to do a stint of fresh training," continued the junior NCO.

"Boscombe has civilian and military, air traffic while Cyprus is a complex environment with the Royal Air Force flying out of there, so we had to adapt to their procedures quickly.

"That prepared us well for Lydd, which is operated by a civvy firm, and we had to learn to work together.

"We have three platforms here at

the moment but even in inclement conditions we've managed to fly them consistently and do our job with a great level of success.

"It's been good for everyone's morale, to fly these UAVs with real purpose and show what they are capable of."

Capt Rob Goodman (RA) added: "It has been great to see all elements of the regiment and wider force achieving operational output in such a short space of time.

"The period from initial call for civil support to first flight was less than two weeks – this, combined with the fact we were recalled from summer leave, makes it even more impressive."

He added: "This airspace is more than four times the size of SPTA and allows the freedom to manoeuvre the aircraft to best support the mission.

"We often operate alongside other aircraft, both manned and unmanned, to provide layered surveillance, which is an amazing opportunity to practise our skills and integrate with others." ■

“  
We’ve  
managed  
to fly them  
consistently  
”

IN NUMBERS

5,000

Estimated number of migrants caught crossing the Channel to enter the UK illegally during 2020

11

The number of sorties flown at the time of writing

4,500

Total distance in kilometres surveilled by 47 Regiment's Watchkeepers at the time of writing

6

Different cap badges involved in the operation – RA, REME, RAMC Int Corps, RLC (chefs) and RE

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# GLOBAL SITREP



## 1. FALKLAND ISLANDS DEEP SOUTH PILGRIMS

TROOPS from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers set aside part of their South Atlantic tour to remember the sacrifice of a

past generation and retrace the footsteps of a fallen comrade.

They were part of a 15-strong group from the Mechanical Transport Workshop who took on a punishing 90-kilometre winter tab from Port San Carlos to Stanley.

The four-day trek followed the route taken by soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment in the 1982 war as they advanced to liberate the islands from Argentine occupation.

But it was also an opportunity to remember Cfn Alex Shaw – attached to the outfit – who was killed at Mount Longdon in the final days of fighting.

Dubbed Exercise Falklands Memorial, the event saw soldiers additionally raise £1,700 for the REME Charity and RAF Benevolent Fund.

Picture: Capt Archie Selka, REME

## 2. AFGHANISTAN HERRICK HELP REPAID



MORE Afghan interpreters who put their lives on the line to help British troops at the height of ops in the mid-2000s are now eligible to settle in the UK.

In a move announced by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and Home Office counterpart Priti Patel, a scheme to help the civilian workers build a new life for themselves is being extended.

Until now, only those who had been made redundant after a year or more of service from May 2006 could apply.

However, under new criteria,

employees who resigned after being in role for a minimum of 18 months can put in their paperwork.

Spouses and children are also included in the expanded ex-gratia scheme, which was set up seven years ago to recognise interpreters' valued service.

More than 1,300 of them and their family members have so far been relocated.

The Defence Secretary said they had risked their lives, adding: "They did not leave us behind then, and we will not leave them behind now."

## 3. ESTONIA ALLIES HIT THE ROAD

PERSONNEL from the British-led Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup in Estonia provided a show of friendship to their Nato partners and local communities as they completed a 1,000-kilometre cycling challenge across the country.

A team of 30 British, Estonian and Danish athletes took to the saddle for the week-long test, which saw them travel from Tartu, in the south, across the islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, on to the capital, Tallinn, before finishing in the Russian-border town of Narva.

Battlegroup personnel staged engagement events throughout the tour, where members of the public were able to meet Nato

soldiers, see some of their kit and learn about their role.

"The equipment and heavy armour we bring to Estonia is an important part of our defensive role here," said commander Col Paul Clayton.

"But it is just as important that we go out and meet the Estonian people and do our best to earn their support."



Picture: Paul Machnicki



## 1. FALKLAND ISLANDS





## INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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Picture: Sgt Paul Shaw RLC



### 4. GERMANY

#### HEALTH CARE HANDOVER



#### IN NUMBERS 1.1 million

patients treated in German hospitals since Guy's and St Thomas' began overseeing secondary health care in 1996. The figure includes 160,000 visits to A&E, 175,000 hospital stays and 22,000 babies born

THE Defence Primary Health Care organisation has taken over responsibility for the medical needs of Sennelager-based personnel.

Until now services were provided by a partnership between forces charity SSAFA and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, which together oversaw primary, community and secondary health care.

Patients will continue to make appointments at the medical centre as normal but the way in which hospital referrals are managed has changed.

From now on, soldiers, civilian personnel and their families must register online with Healix, an international health care facilitator

used by government departments.

"Their specialists will decide where the patient should go to get the best treatment," explained Col Bruce Baker, the garrison's senior medical officer.

"That could be at a hospital in the UK or at a local provider in Germany."

The move has seen additional military staff posted to Sennelager, which is preparing to welcome more exercising troops in the future.

Those stationed elsewhere in Germany will continue to be administered by the European Joint Support Unit in Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium.

### 5. UKRAINE

#### IN THE DROP ZONE

TROOPS from 16 Air Assault Brigade paid a flying visit to Eastern Europe.

Some 250 soldiers from the Colchester-based formation made history as they dropped into Ukraine's Ternivsky training area for the first time via C-130s from Brize Norton.

Paras were joined by sappers and signallers, plus members of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Royal Horse Artillery on

Exercise Joint Endeavour.

The package involved around 8,000 multinational troops in total and was the first staged since the former Soviet state achieved enhanced opportunity partner status with Nato during the summer.

But British soldiers have already helped train approximately 18,000 of the country's military personnel as part of the ongoing Operation Orbital mission.







# Ground view

Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Gav Paton, offers his take on Service life...

**A**S I put pen to paper this month, I have just finished squaring away the actions from the RSMs' convention – the first to be held virtually.

We had 300 delegates from all over the world attending. Our guest speakers included CGS and we managed to talk through a range of Service issues.

The overarching theme was "rank is an opportunity to do more for your people". And one word was continually repeated – education.

This is a huge area covering all sorts of different topics and needs some pretty serious further exploration – to do this I'll be asking corps and command sergeant majors to help me look at the convention themes again in more depth.

We'll see where this takes us, but the aim will be to generate feedback for our senior command to

examine in detail.

While these deeper discussions are needed first, it will not be long before we cast the net more widely for opinion because, to see what education really looks like, we must hear from soldiers. And this is when our corporals – some of our most important leaders – will play their part in gathering views.

It is safe to say that generals do not have all the answers here. They are going to be relying on our input as to how we make this concept a reality.

As a starting point, we should perhaps acknowledge that we do not expect our recruits to initially know everything about our culture or values and standards.

The Army is not broken, but we need to make sure that we constantly take a good look at ourselves to ensure we are doing the best we can.

Let's work hard to make this happen.



“  
**Let's make this happen**  
”

**UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL**



**Q** What is your favourite, and least favourite, video game?

**A** I'm okay with *Call of Duty: Warzone*, but *Fortnite* is total chaos

## Kit feedback needed

**I**T IS a word that is almost guaranteed to generate a view from soldiers – Virtus.

Mention the system and you are bound to have a response – either good or bad – but you need to tell us candidly what you think through the right channels.

By the end of 2022, 90 per cent of the Army will be wearing this kit. Changes are only going to be made if you give us the heads up.

WO2 Anthony Noble (Para), a member of the

Virtus team, is happy to hear your views, so email him via [anthony.noble937@mod.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.noble937@mod.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you can go through Defence Connect and fill out a feedback form or complete an equipment failure report.

Daysacks are a prime example – these have been a real cause for concern but three alternatives are currently being trialled based on soldiers' views. We need to stop whinging and start complaining.

## Positives to the PlayStation generation

**I** I HAVE never been much of a video gamer – although this is starting to change as I'm getting genned up on virtual battlefields with my son.

So, I'm excited to have received invites to see a couple of Army esports teams.

I'm 41 and this scene has changed out of all recognition since I was young – today's titles require serious tactics, as well as skill, to master.

People have often criticised players for wasting time – but with the level of sophistication involved I don't think anything could be further from the truth. It is good to see soldiers take part on a serious level.

Games teach skills we can use.







## Medals auction provides retirement windfall

**A** PRESTIGIOUS group of medals belonging to a veteran of the Falklands War fetched an impressive sum of £130,000 when they went under the hammer.

A British collector parted with the cash for John Pettinger's collection of six awards.

They included a Distinguished Conduct Medal for the ex-Para's actions against Argentine forces in the build up to – and during – a pivotal attack on Mount Longdon.

Pettinger – who joined the Army as a teenager in 1968 and finished his career as a captain – said the cash would help fund his retirement.

"I am pleased to know my medals and the story of how I won them are safely in the hands of a collector," he added. "The money will be put to good use."

Pettinger was a sergeant in D (Patrol) Company of 3rd Battalion,

The Parachute Regiment during Op Corporate, where he led reconnaissance on Argentine positions.

His DCM citation, published in a 1982 edition of the *London Gazette*, highlights the NCO's bravery over an 11-day period culminating in the Longdon battle.

The attack, along with others to capture the heights around the capital Stanley, ultimately led to the enemy's final collapse and surrender days later.

"He displayed the highest standards of professionalism, skill, alertness, accuracy of reporting, coolness in the face of the enemy and courage," the citation adds.

The medal collection was sold during a specialist online sale of military memorabilia.

Mark Quayle – of auction house Dix Noonan Webb – said: "We were delighted to assist Capt Pettinger achieve such a commanding price."



“  
The money  
will be put to  
good use  
”



## FUNDING BIDS WELCOME

■ GRANTS of up to £20,000 will be available for projects to develop better spaces for recreation, leisure or relaxation on military bases as part of the new NAAFI fund.

Applicants have until November 23 to submit a bid in the opening round of funding and administrators will also need a short summary of 50 words or less this month.

Visit [www.covenantfund.org.uk](http://www.covenantfund.org.uk)



## GERMAN REFLECTIONS

■ A SNAPSHOT of the lives that thousands of UK military personnel who served in post-1945 Germany led has been unveiled at the National Army Museum.

The *From Foe to Friend* exhibition charts the history of the British presence in the country, from the days when it was the interface with the Eastern Bloc to the eventual scaling down.

An array of photographs and memorabilia show a story of contrasts, ranging from huge Nato exercises to espionage, as well as the day-to-day routine of families.

Entry to the showcase, which is running until July next year, is free but a booked time slot is required. For more details see [www.nam.ac.uk](http://www.nam.ac.uk)

■ THE first trials with a British Army crew operating Ajax's CT40mm cannon and 7.62mm chain gun aboard the platform itself have taken place at MoD Pendine in South Wales.

Around 30 serials were conducted over 500- and 800-metre distances, using targets, high-speed and normal video, as well as a muzzle velocity radar and meteorological data.

Ajax is replacing the Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) platforms used by armoured cavalry regiments. Six Ares troop-carrying variants were delivered to the Household Cavalry Regiment at Bulford in July.



AJAX CREWS FIRE UP

## HELPLINE GOES LIVE

■ A NEW confidential helpline for Armed Forces personnel experiencing or witnessing acts of bullying, harassment and discrimination has been launched.

The initiative, set up by the MoD in the wake of ACM Mike Wigston's report into unacceptable behaviour published last year, aims to provide troops with a safe space to discuss their experiences and work towards a resolution.

They can also report incidences of unacceptable behaviour anonymously with the service, which is independent of the chain of command. Call the helpline free on 0800 783 0334.



## THE ROBOTS ARE COMING

■ AROUND 200 soldiers from the Royal Tank Regiment and The Yorkshire Regiment worked with industry partners during the first part of this year's Army Warfighting Experiment.

The annual series of trials tests new technology in a military context.

One exercise looked at the challenges and opportunities of robotic and artificial intelligence and how troops can achieve an advantage with such technology.

This involved an unmanned aerial vehicle working with a Wildcat helicopter to explore new methods for surveillance and target acquisition.

The two platforms were paired to increase the amount of ground that could be covered, with the ultimate aim of linking numerous assets together to multiply the data available for attack systems.



Picture: Cpl Robert Weideman, RLC

## OFSTED ENDORSES UNITS

■ RECRUITS, trainees and officer cadets in Armed Forces initial training are continuing to develop the personal skills that will prepare them for careers in the Services and beyond, says the MoD's latest Ofsted report.

Inspectors carried out 21 visits between September 2019 and February 2020 to assess the effectiveness of welfare and care for junior personnel at such establishments.

Their findings show that staff support trainees very well during training and they recognise the need for attention to detail.

Six university, nine Regular and six Reserve training units were inspected and, of the nine sites to be graded, seven were ranked good or outstanding.

## TRAINING DEVICE UPDATE

■ DESIGNATE corporals can now complete their required training from their laptops and other personal electronic devices.

Replacing part three of the classroom-based CLM course, the Army leadership development programme allows participants to save each module, completing the five-day syllabus at their own pace.

Troops must finish the package, which is on the Defence Learning Environment, within 12 months of promotion – completing research and written tasks en route.

Potential JNCOs in training on a previous Brecon cadre



Picture: Graeme Main

## Junior NCO cadre points the way

TRAINING chiefs have been examining the lessons from a pilot leadership course, which saw aspiring NCOs from across the Infantry train together for the first time.

Although this mental and physical test of command is usually carried out in regiment, the one-off change was made due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It meant troops from 22 battalions converged on Brecon for the Junior NCO cadre and the School of Infantry is now examining how the delivery could be used in any future training.

In all, 141 aspiring leaders completed the courses – a pass rate of 95 per cent – while the best performing soldiers were instantly promoted.

Chief of Staff Lt Col Mike Potter (R Irish) said the coronavirus situation had required a training rethink.

"While a number of organisations had suspended their programmes, we were open for business," he added.

"We also had some spare capacity – and with the experience we have in Brecon we felt it would be a good opportunity to help with a cadre."

Candidates were put through three

weeks of instruction before venturing onto the demanding Sennybridge training area for 14 days of exercise.

The officer continued: "Our instructors are experts in teaching infantry skills and mixing the different cap badges was also good – it meant that soldiers were able to meet their colleagues from several different Army-wide battalions."

In a move endorsed by their chain of command, the top student in each of the four platoons received promotion to lance corporal.

Col Andrew Hadfield, Commandant of the School of Infantry, was also pleased with the way the course had been rapidly assembled and delivered. A formal exercise report is being compiled for senior command, he said.

Meanwhile, the initiative also impressed senior soldiers including Army Sergeant Major WO1 Gav Paton, who went to see the troops in action.

He added: "The corporals, in particular, on the training teams really made this work and they again showed why they are one of the most important ranks in the Army."

### IN NUMBERS

95 per cent pass rate

22 battalions involved

5 week course

149 candidates took part

## Beware of the risk takers says intel chief



HOSTILE states are willing to take "huge risks" as they move to further their global influence, the chief of Defence Intelligence has warned.

Lt Gen Jim Hockenhull (left) said they were finding new ways to operate while acquiring the latest kit, including cyber and space technology.

The senior officer added: "We have

seen our adversaries invest in artificial intelligence, machine learning and other technologies.

"As we saw in Salisbury, hostile states are willing to take incredible risks. We must make sure we have the intent and capability to ensure such wanton acts of irresponsibility will not go unpunished."



# WELCOME

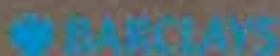
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LAST month's clues would have painted an obvious picture for those with a love of art. (Paul) Nash, (Graham) Sutherland, (Edward) Bawden and (Edward) Ardizzone are all celebrated Second World War artists. This month, we have teamed up with men's grooming brand The Bluebeards Revenge ([www.bluebeards-revenge.co.uk](http://www.bluebeards-revenge.co.uk)) to offer you the chance of winning a head-to-toe bundle.

Filled with essential hair, beard, shave and skincare products, this hefty prize features everything a man needs to keep himself looking and feeling fresh.

It includes razors, a post-shave balm kit, moisturiser, a towel and wash bag among its many items.

To have a chance of winning simply tell us what links the clues on the spine of this month's magazine. Answers – including daytime phone number – to [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) by October 30.

# WIN

Grooming bundle worth £250



“Thankfully we haven't lost a veteran to Covid”



## African adventure

■ RESOLUTE members of Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps put themselves through a punishing fitness programme – flagging their outfit's battle honour in the process.

Around 50 cadets tabbed, cycled and ran the distance from their seat of education to Cape Town – clocking up an impressive 8,500 miles and raising £5,500 for health professionals in the process.

South Africa was chosen as the target as past alumni members fought during the Second Boer War.

● Summer at Stanta – pages 35-41



Picture: OAB Photography

## Veteran's Commonwealth care

A FORMER Royal Logistic Corps NCO is helping distribute UK aid to vulnerable veterans in Africa during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Derrick Cobbinah works with the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League (RCEL) in his native Ghana and several other countries to ensure government cash reaches elderly ex-soldiers living in poverty.

In 2018, the then Department for International Development allocated £11.8 million towards funding two meals per day for an estimated 7,000 former Commonwealth troops and their widows worldwide.

With many facing additional hardship due to the coronavirus, the grants have been increased by around £100 per individual, per year.

"The veterans are spread across the country and they don't all have bank accounts, so it takes time to find ways to pay them," explained Cobbinah.

"We were touring around delivering bags of rice or oil funded by the government and giving them their grants at the same time – as well as checking they were okay."

Cobbinah said Ghana acted quickly to impose lockdown and compulsory

face masks, which had limited the spread of the virus. Other African countries were able to implement lessons learnt during Ebola epidemics.

"It was very tough but thankfully we haven't lost a veteran due to Covid here," he continued.

"Most of them are based in rural areas, not crowded cities, so they were isolated anyway. The issue was more about access to food."

The RCEL is also putting to good use an extra £10,000 it received thanks to the efforts of 95-year-old Ghanaian veteran Joseph Hammond, who walked two miles per day for a week after hearing of Capt Sir Tom Moore's charity effort in the UK.

The rest of the £43,500 he raised went towards protective equipment for front-line health workers in Ghana.

Cobbinah, who started working with the RCEL through his own charity – Forces Help Africa – said supporting Hammond and his fellow veterans had become his passion.

"After leaving the Army I decided I had to make a difference," he said.

● 'We would have become their slaves' – pages 50-54



Picture: SSgt K Dunscombe, RE

# Specialists put the train into training

**A**ROUND 100 soldiers forming a hybrid force of Regulars and Reservists are set to conduct a unique railway training stint.

Exercise Turnout 20 will be led by 507 Specialist Team, Royal Engineers, part of 170 (Infrastructure Support) Engineer Group – the Army's only railway infrastructure formation.

The Reserve sub-unit is mainly filled with people who work in the industry and includes two troops with military engineer platelayers – personnel who construct and lay railway lines – arguably one of the most specialist trades in the entire Service.

The two-week package will kick off with the soldiers honing and refining niche engineering and construction skills needed to build lines and infrastructure, as well as actually operating a network simulated over a 22-mile stretch of the Wensleydale Heritage Railway near Catterick.

The second phase will mirror an

enemy attack and the management of damage caused by sabotage and bomb strikes to lines and bridges.

The troops will practise repair drills and deploy kit such as heavy hydraulic jacks to re-rail stricken locomotives.

"We will be simulating a move across Europe in response to a mobilisation order to the Baltic region," Maj Alex Hamilton (RE) told *Soldier*.

"It has taken us six months to put this together and it's been a complex task with Network Rail providing materiel support such as 800 tonnes of ballast, 1,000 yards of rail and more than 700 sleepers.

"That was enabled by one of the Reservists, Maj Martin Frobisher (RE) of the Engineer and Logistic Staff Corps, who is one of their board members.

"I can't see us repeating this exercise in the near future, but next year we will be practising our skills again when we carry out track renewal work at Moenchengladbach."

## APPLICATIONS SOUGHT AS ACADEMY RESUMES

■ A PROGRAMME to help veterans get jobs in the rail construction sector has resumed after the coronavirus pandemic halted activity.

The Break Point Academy, which was set up by *SAS: Who Dares Wins* star Ollie Ollerton, runs free training packages in conjunction with Orion Rail, a contractor of Network Rail.

"We're taking the lads and lasses and putting them into key roles across the industry," he told *Soldier*. "It doesn't cost them a penny, and then they're into a job where they're earning £30k a year."

The courses initially focus on the mindset required to successfully transition to civilian life, as well as fitness tests to ensure applicants can cope with the physically demanding nature of the job. Visit [break-point.co.uk/theacademy](http://break-point.co.uk/theacademy)

“It has been a complex task”



Picture: ITV

## DUO'S DATE WITH DESTINY

■ A SINGING Royal Signals duo are standing by to see if they can hit the right notes and progress to the last round of *Britain's Got Talent*.

Cpl Lee Day and Sgt Vince Fountain have already booked their place in the semi-finals, which were due to be held soon after this issue went to press.

Called the Soldiers of Swing, the Reservist recruiters from 37 Signal Regiment have proved a TV favourite with their big band-style performances.

Army Arts boss Lt Col Wendy Faux (RA) said the soldiers' supporters in the military community were looking to assist the troops in any way possible.

"Everything is crossed as they prepare for this key performance", she added.

IN NUMBERS

100

Projects that brought military communities together during the Covid-19 crisis received more than £895,000 in grants from The Armed Forces Covenant Fund



## CASH FOR KEY RESULTS

■ TROOPS and their loved ones giving their views on the Future Accommodation Model could be in line for some cash to spend on the high street.

The Army Families' Federation is asking for general feedback on the initiative – and specifically whether it has influenced those involved in the Aldershot pilot with their choice of housing.

There are prizes of £100 in John Lewis vouchers up for grabs for three lucky winners who complete the survey by October 19. Visit [www.aff.org.uk](http://www.aff.org.uk)



# FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



## Bold bid for borehole

VETERAN William Stewart is cycling the distance from his home in Southampton to Australia to raise money for a borehole at the charity's resource centre in northern Malawi. The 93-year-old, who served in the Royal Army Medical Corps for 20 years, started his challenge in February 2016 and has already covered more than 6,000 miles of the 10,571-mile route. Visit [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/clean-water-in-ibuluma-1](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/clean-water-in-ibuluma-1)

Fundraising target:  
**£5,000**  
For: The William Stewart  
Foundation

## Barefoot inspiration

INSPIRED by the fundraising exploits of the barefoot soldier (Maj Chris Brannigan (AGC (SPS)), LCpl Jack Kewley (REME) completed a 24-hour non-stop walk around Ripon, covering 49.7 miles. He said: "The first 12 hours were okay, but for the last 12 I was in constant pain from my feet and legs and the walk eventually turned into a waddle."

Amount raised:  
**£1,560**  
For: Mental Health  
Foundation



# Divers in at the deep

“  
We kept the  
risk as low  
as possible  
”

GIVEN recent events in Beirut, it was fitting that enabling a port area was the major theme for this year's Exercise Submerged Crusader, which took place across Scotland and was hosted by 39 Engineer Regiment, based in Kinloss.

"The content was a coincidence but the explosion was a devastating example of how critical a port can be to the survival of an entire nation," Maj Mick Stewart (RE), the formation's 2iC, told *Soldier*.

"We were almost deployed there – our job would have been to provide critical engineering assessments and clearance, inspecting for damage and repairing as necessary to quickly get the port back open for business."

There are 12 Army dive teams embedded in Royal Engineers and

Royal Logistic Corps units who are trained to deliver world-class skills in underwater engineering, search and recovery, bridge inspection and reconnaissance, demolitions, construction and fast water operations.

The exercise provided a valuable opportunity for personnel to work and hone their skills together.

"It was great to integrate with the other teams," said LCpl Dave Maitland, a class one diver and dive technician with 39 Engineer Regiment.

"I was introduced to the skills and planning procedures needed to become a dive supervisor and gathered experience of boat handling in open water and learnt about overcoming the equipment issues that come with a fast paced exercise."

Around 90 divers refined their

■ CAPT Sir Tom Moore, acting in his role as honorary colonel of the Army Foundation College, Harrogate, praised the high standard of turnout of junior soldiers from Cambrai Company during their recent passing out parade. The national hero was shown around the college for the first time before inspecting the 294 graduates.



SIR TOM'S SEAL OF APPROVAL

Pictures: Cpl Sam Jenkins, RLC



Pictures: Cpl Nathan Tanuku, RLC and Maj Mick Stewart, RE

# end in Scottish trip

procedures on five separate task sites over a two-week period.

They completed more than 500 dives which amounted to 20,000 minutes under water.

"Diving in unfamiliar locations with the local knowledge provided by 39 Engineer Regiment meant we were able to train more realistically and practise our enabling skills," added Capt Jamie Jochimsen (RE), a class one diver with 26 Engineer Regiment.

"This allowed us to train in harbour survey and body recovery, drawing on additional experience from the police and fire service techniques to improve our SOPs."

A deep diving element was delivered in Skye by 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, RLC and tested engineering skills to a depth of 42

IN NUMBERS  
20,000

The number, in minutes, that the 90 divers spent under water during the two-week exercise

metres – although the divers are in fact qualified to work at 50 metres.

The package also served as a refresh for those personnel who had experienced a long lay-off due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Strict distancing and hygiene procedures coupled with reduced team manning allowed us to operate safely, while keeping the risk as low as possible," explained Maj Stewart.

“It was great to integrate with other teams”



## MEMORIAL RECOGNISED

THE National Memorial Arboretum has been elevated into the top ten per cent of worldwide visitor attractions after winning a 2020 Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Award.

The multiple award-winning 150-acre woodland and garden site in Staffordshire has been recognised by the world's largest travel platform for its collection of some 25,000 trees and nearly 400 memorials and tributes to the fallen.

Kanika Soni, chief commercial officer at Tripadvisor, said: "Award winners are beloved for their exceptional service and quality and they should be proud of this distinguished recognition."

"Not only are they well deserving, they are also a great source of inspiration for travellers as they begin to venture out again."

## ARMY'S CHARITY BOOST

SSAFA has been awarded grants worth £335,000 to be spent on projects to help serving personnel, veterans and their families over the next two years.

Provided by the Army Central Fund, the money will be allocated to various activities including Short Breaks, a service for military children with disabilities, and the charity's Norton House, which provides accommodation for families of those undergoing treatment at DMRC. It also helps support people living on camp reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

## EQUIPMENT EXPO CANNED

ORGANISERS of the military vehicle showcase, DVD, have announced that this year's event has been cancelled due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The annual gathering, which is jointly sponsored by Defence Equipment and Support and the British Army, was due to go ahead in early November after its summer dates had been rearranged.



## SERVICE DIGS NEW DEAL

■ PERSONNEL on operations and exercises may feel the earth move more decisively after a new deal was struck for the Army's construction vehicle fleet.

In a £240 million contract, AmeyBiggs will be looking after the maintenance of the Service's bulldozer, crane and forklift line-up for the next seven years.

Known as Miter, the diverse mix of kit is an invaluable addition to the UK's military capability, having been deployed on ops including the Covid-19 crisis.

The company will maintain, manage and support the fleet under the deal, which defence chiefs have said will save £136 million in the next decade.



Picture: Graeme Main

## DARING DOG ACCOLADE

■ A COURAGEOUS canine who was seriously injured when tipping the balance of a battle with insurgents is to receive the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross.

Retired military working dog Kuno will be awarded the PDSA Dickin medal next month following his actions under contact with al Qaeda fighters last year.

The three-year-old Belgian shepherd malinois braved withering fire to attack an insurgent gunman pinning down specialist personnel raiding a compound in an undisclosed nation.

Kuno was wounded in both hind legs and required extensive surgery. He later became the first UK military working dog to receive prosthetic limbs.

The successful assault was described by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace as "one of the most significant achievements against al Qaeda in years".

Jan McLoughlin – PDSA director general – said: "He took on the enemy without fear or hesitation."



Picture: PDSA

“  
It can help  
with decision  
making  
”

### IN NUMBERS

60,000

NHS personnel using  
the app

300

Number of hospitals  
with Pando



Picture: Steve Dock

## App connects medical experts

TRIALS of a specialist communications app allowing the Army's front-line health professionals to stay in touch with top-level support have been showing promising results.

Combat medical technicians say Pando – which can be downloaded onto mobile devices – gives them rapid access to back-up from anywhere in the world.

Underpinned by industrial grade security, the specialist app allows sensitive files such as X-rays or patient notes to be transferred between clinicians. Specialists can then offer a view on the course of action required.

Designed by civilian doctors, it is now used by more than 60,000 NHS staff at 300 hospitals.

Combat medical technician Cpl Tom Skelton (RAMC) said Pando had proved impressive when he trialled it for the first time on a counter-poaching deployment to Malawi.

The NCO told *Soldier*: "Essentially it gives you an opportunity to ask for help from your base or further afield.

"It can help with decision making, such as determining if a patient needs a medical evacuation or whether they can be better treated on location.

"It proved to be an asset during the tour with 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles as some of the areas in which we found ourselves operating were very remote."

Senior officers are equally impressed with Pando and the system is being trialled as part of Project Lara, which is investigating a wide range of so-called telemedicine technologies.

Clinicians are also examining how vital signs can be monitored remotely – such as en route to hospital – and even augmented reality kit for surgeons.

Anaesthetist Lt Col Oli Bartels (RAMC) – who has been leading the project – said the advances in communications technology could prove to be game changing.

"There is a US military phrase – 'chasing the sun' – which means you can go to whichever expert in the world that is awake and available," he said.



## Lockdown takes its toll on personnel

■ SSAFA'S Forcesline saw an 80 per cent increase in requests for befriending and support with loneliness from those feeling isolated during lockdown.

The free and confidential helpline, which is accessible to anyone in the Armed Forces community, received 322 calls in relation to these issues between April and June – which

represented a significant rise compared to the same period last year. Other pressing matters included urgent help with food, emergency housing due to financial difficulties and relationship breakdowns.

"We urge personnel to reach out to us," said Forcesline manager Bill Grant. Call 0800 7314880 or go to [ssafa.org.uk/forcesline](https://ssafa.org.uk/forcesline)

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Model shown is a Focus ST-3 5-Door 2.3L Ford EcoBoost 280PS with a 6-Speed Manual Petrol transmission with optional Full LED Headlamps. Fuel economy mpg (l/100km): Combined 35.8 (7.9). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 187g/km.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real-life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted, variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.



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# ALL IN THE MIND

The path to true fitness starts upstairs, says elite soldier-turned reality TV tough guy Ollie Ollerton

► **CHANNEL 4's *SAS: Who Dares Wins*** established Ollie Ollerton and his fellow directing staff as the personification of physical fortitude and mental composure.

The 49-year-old has since teamed up with co-presenter Jason Fox to develop an app that distils their special brand of military grit into a programme anyone can follow to overhaul their fitness and nutrition.

But as Ollerton tells *Soldier*, the key to success is developing the right mentality first.

## Why the focus on mindset?

In any aspect of your life – relationships, work or fitness – if you're not mentally prepared, you're never physically ready. We look at this as a pyramid and at the very top, the most important part, is the mind – so that's where we start, before moving on to body and nutrition. Unless you cover all three elements, you'll forever be on the rollercoaster of feeling good, losing weight, then putting it on and feeling bad. You'll be the fad diet industry's best customer.

## So, where do you actually start?

We use a mind mapping tool called Prism. You do the questionnaire within the app and it tells you what your dominant character is – whether that's empathetic, analytical, driven or creative – and then the journey is tailored for each individual. A lot of other apps talk about mindset, but what does that actually mean? Unless you have a process to address it, it's just words.

## Why is getting fit or losing weight so damn hard?

Through evolution we are naturally wired to approach things negatively. Exertion creates discomfort and our minds find excuses to steer away from that. You may do okay to begin with but before you know it, the honeymoon period has worn off and you're back to square one. Having the strength of mind to embrace short-term pain, while knowing there's a long-term goal, changes everything.

## What other common mistakes do you see?

There are those who try to look good rather than feel good. But looking good is just a by-product of how you feel. So many people are addicted to Instagram and they want to achieve that fake idea of perfection, but that is so the wrong way to go because they are just chasing an image. It has to be about feeling.

## What are your top tips for actually sticking to a programme?

Accountability. It's very easy to let yourself down, but it helps if you have a partner. In the military we were used to working in small teams and we wanted to adopt that community feeling in the app. You might join with a friend or meet someone via the programme and that gives you extra motivation. Sometimes people invest a lot more in others than they do in themselves.

## What impact has the pandemic had on people's health, do you think?

The danger of lockdown was that people had no structure, were closer to the fridge and eating too much or drinking more alcohol. Furlough might be great to start with, but when you have no framework for your week it quickly has a detrimental effect on your self worth. One of the gifts of the last few months, though, is that we've realised we don't really need to go to the gym – we can save time and work out at home or embrace the outdoors. People are starting to see alternatives and I think old-style gyms will struggle to get back to where they were before all of this.

## Competition time...

*Soldier* is giving away a BR360 Battle Box, worth £120. Packed with home workout gear and protein snacks, the kit is designed to be used alongside the app and can be yours if you tell us who won this year's *Celebrity SAS: Who Dares Wins*. Answers to **comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk** by October 30.

The deadline for the Army Film and Photographic Competition 2020 is **December 2**. For full details on categories and entry requirements go to [army.mod.uk/news-and-events/events](http://army.mod.uk/news-and-events/events)

# Cream *of the* crop

Army professional photographer of the year, Cpl Rebecca Brown (RLC), shares her step-by-step guide to creating an award-winning portfolio



**Name:** Cpl Rebecca Brown

**Age:** 29

**Military service:** Joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 2012, transferring to become a Royal Logistic Corps photographer in 2017. Since then she has covered Operations Cabrit and Toral, flood relief efforts in Doncaster and the military's Covid-19 response,

as well as deploying on exercises to the Falklands, USA, France and Lithuania

**Accolades:** Won the professional portfolio category in the 2019 Army Film and Photographic Competition







“ The poppy image is probably my favourite. I love everything about it – what it symbolises – and everyone’s reaction to it was great ”

1 Start the selection process by creating a folder on your computer for all your favourite images from the year. I also copy over the original file in case I want to re-edit a photo. Then, I use tags to label them into categories – portrait, sports and so on

2 Next, group the pictures together so that they complement each other, one from each category. For example, a photograph of soldiering, another of equipment, a black and white one and a portrait

3 Now view them as a body of work. Look to see if they fit well together. Are the styles similar and the colours complementary? Even though they may have been taken on totally different days, the way in which you edit your photos can help make them feel cohesive. Swap them around to see what works best

4 Print them out. I find this a really helpful part of the process. Physically moving each picture into different groups and viewing them laid on a table makes it easier to work out if they feel good together. If you don’t have access to a printer try to view them on your computer with the thumbnails as large as possible

5 Think about the layout. When I am happy with a group of pictures, I then look at how I would present them in the best way. Generally speaking, an image can be left-dominant, right-dominant or neutral. Laying them out accordingly helps the collection feel balanced. Also, consider the orientation of your photos – portrait or landscape. My winning portfolio consisted of three of each, with a mixture of left, right and neutral

6 Finally, get a second or third opinion. When I am happy with my selection I show it to two or three other people and listen to their views. Naturally, there will be some conflicting thoughts – someone will love one image, while someone else hates it. In these situations, I trust my gut ”

“ It was a wonderful feeling being named as the Army photographer of the year. It really did come as a great surprise. I think winning the portfolio category has helped me realise my style in photography ”



## ► SKILLS & DRILLS



### Expert opinion

*Soldier* photographer Graeme Main is on this year's judging panel – here's what he'll be looking out for...

"For me, your images must evoke an emotion, have an impact and show a striking, creative style with a fresh perspective. Look at works from previous winners, photographers, videographers, painters or graphic designers for inspiration. Every picture must tell a story so be mindful of the message you want to convey. But chances are, if you like the image, others will too.

"Always remember if you don't enter, you'll never know how successful you could have been. So the most important thing is to just give it a go. The competition isn't only for elite photographers with the most expensive cameras – it's for everyone."



# Returning fire

How a well-known broadcaster finally scratched the Army itch...





▶ **WHEN TV presenter Jules Hudson arrived for the second time at the gates of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, it dawned on him how much the world had changed since his first tenure.**

Back in the early 1990s, peacekeeping ops were becoming the international focus, while British troops were still on the streets of Northern Ireland.

Now, 30 years later, the global situation had been transformed – as had Army life, he was about to discover.

In his early 20s, Hudson had been going through officer training as the Services reshaped in the post-Cold War era.

Government decisions soon sent the trajectory of his career on a return to civvy street – and the world of broadcasting and presenting.

“Back in 1993 I’d hoped to join the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment but the unit was struck from the list soon after my arrival as part of restructuring,” the host of BBC show *Escape to the Country*, who has just published a book on the series, recalled.

“I decided to leave and follow a different path, much to the dismay of my family,” he added. “Standing outside the academy for a second time was special; I had never expected to be back.”

An archaeology graduate, Hudson

has enjoyed a successful civilian career since his first flirtation with the Armed Forces – as well as shows such as *Countyfile*, his earlier role in TV production saw him work on several military history series with the late Prof Richard Holmes.

But the 50-year-old is also an example that early career choices or age need not be a barrier to soldiering ambition. After setting his sights on the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers, he is now a second lieutenant, has worked in the military media team on *Op Cabrit* and recently assisted with the Covid-19 outbreak response.

“More than two decades had gone by when I decided to try again for selection and Sandhurst, but the Army was an itch I wanted to scratch,” he admitted.

“Some things do not change – officer training is demanding and even tougher when you’re 47 years old,” he said with a smile. “But it helped that there were a number of older people alongside me and we had a real sense of camaraderie.

“Our self-styled ‘Saga section’ has become an invaluable and much cherished group of friends.”

The Colchester-born broadcaster also said he was struck by how the Army had moved on over the years with a more

progressive approach to training and developing individuals.

“The whole ethos is much more supportive these days,” he explained. “Back when I was last at Sandhurst the culture was negative, but now it is more about helping people succeed.

“It’s a 180-degree turn in approach – train in, not select out.

“There was such a diverse group of us on the eight-week course. At the beginning few had any military skills and it was amazing how everyone had developed by the final exercise in Norfolk – we were acting, and thinking, as soldiers.”

While his full-time schedule remains hectic, Hudson admitted that he is thriving in the Service lifestyle.

“I chose the Sappers because I had always been interested in their work and generally building things,” he added. “My father was a mechanical engineer, too.

“But clearly being in comms was a good fit and I’m glad to help wherever I can.”

There is certainly room for this seasoned media professional in the modern Army. With the battlespace now featuring an array of physical and cyber-based threats, the use of specialists such as Hudson – who bring in new thinking and niche skills – is becoming increasingly important.



**Name:** 2Lt Jules Hudson, RE

**Education:** Degree in Field Archaeology, Lampeter University; Masters in Archaeology, University of Durham

**TV career:** Includes *Escape to the Country*, *How We Won the War*, *Dig 1940*, *Dive WW2*, and *Countryfile*

**Operational experience:** Cabrit; Rescript

**Years of service:** 2016-present

*The Escape to the Country Handbook* is published by Pavilion Books and available now priced at £16.99



# Be cyber



## Service chief urges troops to protect themselves from data crime

► **ONLINE** security has been in the news a lot recently, from Covid phishing scams to Twitter hacks, alleged Russian attempts to steal vaccine research and politicians having emails accessed.

Most of these cases have one thing in common – they involved people being manipulated or not following proper protocols.

With cyber awareness month upon us, the Army's director of information, Maj Gen Jon Cole (pictured above), wants to remind soldiers that while they are no more vulnerable than the average person, they do have access to information that could be damaging in the wrong hands.

"Our adversaries are trying to steal our data and spread disinformation to undermine our morale and effectiveness," said the officer.

"Smartphones and devices, computers and the internet form a fundamental part of modern life, but they all present a potential gateway

into this valuable info.

"The threat is growing, so it's more important than ever to take steps that can prevent cyber criminals accessing our information."

With all MoD employees – and their families – at risk, Maj Gen Cole gives this advice for staying secure online, whether you're banking, shopping, using email or on social media...

### Six steps to staying safe in cyber space

**1 Create a separate password for your email.** Your personal email contains lots of important information about you and is the gateway to all your other online accounts.

If your email is hacked all your other passwords can be reset, so use one that is different to all your others

**2 Make sure your password is strong.** Weak ones can be hacked in seconds. The longer and more unusual

your password is, the harder it is for criminals to crack. The best way to do this is by using a sequence of three random words you'll remember.

Starting with your most important accounts – such as email, banking and social media – replace your old passwords with new ones. Just connect three random, but memorable, words together. You can make it even stronger with special characters

**3 Save your passwords in your browser.** Using the same passwords for all of your accounts makes you vulnerable, but remembering lots of different passwords can be difficult, so save them in your browser and you won't have to.

Online service providers are constantly updating their software to keep sensitive personal data secure, so store your passwords when prompted; it's quick, convenient and a safer option

**4 Turn on two-factor authentication.** This is a free security feature that gives you an extra



# Be savvy

layer of protection online and stops cyber criminals gaining access to your accounts – even if they have obtained your password.

If the online service you are using offers it, turn it on. You will receive a code to a telephone number or alternative email address to check you are who you say you are

## 5 **Keep your devices up to date.**

Providers are continually working to fix weaknesses and glitches in software and apps which cyber criminals could potentially exploit to access your sensitive personal data.

Make sure you are using the latest operating system and remember to install updates regularly, or set your phone, tablet or smart device to do so automatically so you don't have to think about it

**6 Turn on backup.** If your phone, tablet or laptop is hacked, your sensitive personal data could be stolen. Make sure you keep a copy of all your important information by backing it up

## **Security slip-ups**

**These recent examples show how easy it can be for cyber criminals to exploit bad practice...**

– A defence employee reported that their personal email account had been hacked. Their civvy email address was based on their MoD person unique identifier – or Puid as it is commonly known – and they used the same password for that account as for ModNet, as well as for online banking. The hacker now not only had the ability to access the user's bank accounts, but potentially the MoD IT system if they had also managed to get their hands on a terminal or poorly secured laptop.

– A number of personnel received phishing emails from a colleague's personal email address that had been compromised. The fact that the MoD email addresses had been saved in the contacts of an insecure personal email account put the MoD system at risk.

## **How to report an incident**

If you receive a suspicious email to your MoD account you should attach it to a new email (don't forward it) and send it to **spoc-spam@mod.gov.uk**

If you've clicked on any links in the email, or opened any attachments, you should also report the incident to the Army Warning, Advice and Reporting Point (WARP) using the security incident form available on the intranet. Contact **armywarp-mailbox@mod.gov.uk** for a link if you can't find it.

Army WARP also want to know if you've experienced any other suspicious activity on ModNet, or on any personal accounts that you believe can be linked to your military work. If in doubt, report it.

If you receive a suspicious email to a personal account you should forward it to the National Cyber Security Centre on **report@phishing.gov.uk**

**Three webinars will take place on October 6, 13 and 20 to help personnel become more cyber confident. Use this QR code to sign up**



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# FLYING HIGH

Gunners soar to new heights with cutting-edge aerial assets

**I**N TERMS of military capability there is no denying the Puma AE (All Environment) mini unmanned air system (MUAS) – and its smaller sibling, Wasp – are incredible bits of kit. Highly portable, waterproofed and virtually silent, the high-quality live video streaming capabilities and laser target indicators these devices boast offer commanders an all-weather, 24-hour, 360-degree picture of the battlefield and an ability to assess any potential threats before putting boots on the ground.

But the cutting-edge technology is more than just a tool of the trade for 32 Regiment, Royal Artillery.

In 2016, the Larkhill-based unit received the devastating news that it was to be disbanded and its primary asset, Desert Hawk 3 (DH3), retired.

So, these platforms proved to be the lifeline that helped secure its future and prevented personnel from being redistributed across the rest of the Army.

“When the announcement was made that we were to be disbanded it became clear that it was down to us to demonstrate our relevance and I was given the freedom to show our future potential,” explains commanding officer Lt Col Charlie Harmer (RA, pictured right).

“The Directorate of Information secured funding to buy the Puma and conduct the experimental work needed to prove our capability, which ultimately led to the decision being made that we were to continue in our role in keeping soldiers safe.”

For a formation that has provided a lifesaving eye in the sky capability in all major overseas conflicts over the last 60 years, it seems unfathomable the Service's only MUAS regiment would be consigned to history.

But the hard work and determination of the personnel has paid off and their future now looks bright.

“I have been blessed with a regiment of outstanding soldiers who have »





„ done most of the work to ensure our survival,” continues Lt Col Harmer.

“And with our enhanced capability we have a freedom we have never had before, able to fly further and longer in all weather and not restricted by rain.

“Our role is down and dirty – we go in closer to the front line and can do that through air assault, protected mobility or in an armoured role.

“And by working in increasing conjunction with Watchkeeper we deliver as complete a picture as possible for the commander.”

A highly trained Puma detachment – consisting of a tactical commander, a signaller and two operators – control the aircraft via a handheld ground control station, with the ability to fly from the regiment’s moving Coyote vehicle.

A new long-range tracking antenna will soon enable the live feed and capture of colour, infra-red and thermal imagery up to an incredible range of 70 kilometres.

Gunners must complete a minimum of three years training on the DH3 before converting to Puma.

Here they are taught all four skill sets of the detachment and must be capable of operating the system alone if extreme circumstances dictate.

LBdr Declan Taylor (RA, pictured below right) has recently made the progression and previously deployed on Op Herrick 17 in Afghanistan, where he was attached to the Brigade Reconnaissance Force as a DH3 operator.

“I was utilised really well on tour and that experience has made me the soldier I am today,” he explains.

“We were used to collect information that would be given to the guys on the ground, so they knew exactly what was going on in a compound before they were sent in.

“I’ve been working with Puma and Wasp for about three months now and the capability and imagery it collects in comparison to the DH3 is phenomenal.

“Its capability is simply astounding – it can operate in extreme temperatures and reach a maximum height of 10,000 feet, although we normally work at around 1,000.”

Since the announcement was made 12 months ago that „



“  
It's capability  
is simply  
astounding  
”

LBdr Declan Taylor, RA





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## Wasp

**Line of sight range:** 5km

**Max altitude:** 9,800ft

**Tactical flying time:** 45min

Live feed full motion HD video and photos, day/night electro-optical, infra-red, thermal imaging

**Length:** 32in

**Wingspan:** 40in

**Weight:** 2.75lb

**Max Speed:** 83kph

**Operating temperature:** -29 to 54 degrees Celsius

## Puma

**Line of sight range:** 20km, extended to 70km with long-range tracking antenna

**Max altitude/operating height:** 10,000ft

**Tactical flying time:** 2.5hr

Live feed full motion HD video and photos, day/night electro-optical, infra-red, thermal imaging.

Navigation system with secondary GPS

**Length:** 1.4m

**Wingspan:** 2.8m

**Weight:** 13lb

**Max speed:** 75kph

**Operating temperature:** -29 to 60 degrees Celsius



» they were to be retained and relocated to Bicester, the Wessex Gunners have been given additional responsibility for leading the way in the development of a future surveillance programme known as Aquila.

It is due to enter service in 2023 and will offer junior and senior NCOs an opportunity to experiment and trial innovative new methods.

In addition to providing MUAS capability and collective training to the wider Army at home and in support of overseas exercises, as well as Op Cabrit in Estonia, it is perhaps the chance to prove themselves on future deployments where the most exciting opportunities lie.

And Lt Col Harmer stresses that when that call comes it will be met with an all-round team effort.

"The handle of the spear is as important as the tip and there's a huge contribution from all of our transport, logisticians and comms specialists that have enabled this to happen," he says.

"We are a family regiment who has had several years of upheaval and uncertainty that has now come to an end.

"I am blessed to command such bright, determined soldiers who genuinely love what they do.

"We couldn't have achieved any of this without them and the support of their families – and for that I am truly grateful." ■



# THE END OF THE HORROR BAG?

## Mission for nutrition



**U**NAPPETISING, dry sandwiches or half-frozen sausage rolls and pasties have long been the main staple of the packed lunches issued to exercising or travelling Service personnel.

But now, a new initiative looks set to change the face of the lunchtime “horror bags” and what soldiers are fed out in the field.

Developed by a team of experts from across the Field Army, 13,000 healthy and environmentally friendly alternative meals have been tested by troops training on Salisbury Plain during a six-month trial.

“We were asked to come up with some new ideas to replace the current lunch bags which aren’t very popular,” explains senior catering manager Sgt Kerry Bale (pictured below, RLC), who is attached to 32 Regiment, Royal Artillery – one of the units involved in the scheme.

“They can make people feel quite sluggish because of the high fat and sugar content, as well as creating a lot of food and packaging waste.

“On average, the old lunches were around 1,600 calories and we have replaced them with more nutritionally balanced options that are higher in carbs and contain slow-release energy.”

The team has also worked hard to tackle environmental issues, replacing the old single-use plastic water bottles and cutlery with sustainable packaging and compostable containers, while incorporating a range of tastier meat-free options.

“There are vegan, vegetarian and halal choices such as couscous, hummus, chickpea and Quorn, and either wholemeal or white

bread and baguettes, wheat wraps or pasta salads,” the chef continues.

“In terms of snacks, we have got vegan flapjacks, gluten-free popcorn and high-protein bars that contain slow-releasing energy to replace the calorie-laden crisps and chocolate bars that were the staple of the old packs.

“The Army, and the way it trains and operates, has changed a lot over the last few years but the food it provides hasn’t.

“It’s really important that soldiers are able to eat well and get proper nutrition before, during and after training and the feedback has been really good – they enjoy having

a choice in what they eat.”

An increase in funding and the permanent removal of savoury pies or pasties from the British Army packed meal orbat are changes the trial lead, Field Army’s divisional deputy chief of staff Col Tim Symonds, hopes will be implemented by the end of this year.

“Everything we have done has been about optimising performance,” he explains.

“Packed meals are often consumed before, during or after periods of physical exercise, when it is crucial to fuel the body with the right food and fluids to maximise performance and recovery time.

“We want all our soldiers to

stay properly hydrated and to eat healthily.”

Results of the trial are now being considered by the Army messing working group, who, among other things, will look at a possible increase in the amount of funding provided to pay for such lunches and changes to the outdated packed meals content list in the JSP. »

● Food for the fight – p74

### CURRENT MENU JSP 456 Vol 1 Chapter 5:

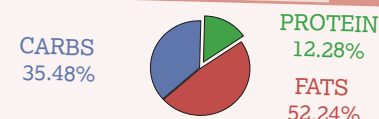
- 2 x sandwiches – or a savoury pie or pastry in lieu of one sandwich
- 2 x bakery/snack/confectionery items
- 1 x fruit
- 1 x water or juice



## Comparison of nutritional content of current and future packed meals

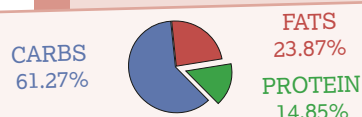
### Current packed lunch

Item	Protein (g)	Kcal	Carbs (g)	Kcal	Fats (g)	Kcal	Total Kcal
Cheese	21.00	84.00	0.00	0.00	16.50	148.50	232.50
White bread	4.40	17.60	26.50	99.38	1.20	10.80	127.78
Butter	1.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	11.00	99.00	103.00
Sausage roll	11.85	47.40	34.35	128.81	27.30	245.70	421.91
KP crisps	2.00	8.00	12.00	45.00	9.00	81.00	134.00
Yorkie	3.40	13.60	28.90	108.38	15.20	136.80	258.78
Biscuits	2.00	8.00	14.00	52.50	7.00	63.00	123.50
Water	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pear	1.00	4.00	27.00	101.25	0.00	0.00	105.25
<b>Total</b>							
	46.65	186.60	142.75	535.31	88.20	793.80	1506.71



### Tuna pasta

Item	Protein (g)	Kcal	Carbs (g)	Kcal	Fats (g)	Kcal	Total Kcal
Tuna	12.00	48.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	48.00
Penne pasta	9.00	36.00	54.00	202.50	1.00	9.00	247.50
Iceberg lettuce	1.00	4.00	3.00	11.25	0.00	0.00	15.25
Tomato	1.00	4.00	3.00	11.25	0.00	0.00	15.25
Cucumber	1.00	4.00	2.00	7.50	0.00	0.00	11.50
Red onion	0.00	0.00	2.00	7.50	0.00	0.00	7.50
Biscuits	2.00	8.00	14.00	52.50	7.00	63.00	123.50
Fruit	1.00	4.00	23.00	86.25	0.00	0.00	90.25
Eat natural bar	5.00	20.00	22.00	82.50	13.00	117.00	219.50
Propercorn	2.00	8.00	13.00	48.75	4.00	36.00	92.75
Juice	1.00	4.00	18.00	67.50	0.00	0.00	71.50
<b>Total</b>							
	35.00	140.00	154.00	577.50	25.00	225.00	942.50



### Tuna salad baguette

Item	Protein (g)	Kcal	Carbs (g)	Kcal	Fats (g)	Kcal	Total Kcal
Tuna	12.00	48.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	48.00
Baguette (Wh)	12.70	50.80	59.50	223.13	1.60	14.40	288.33
Iceberg lettuce	1.00	4.00	3.00	11.25	0.00	0.00	15.25
Tomato	1.00	4.00	3.00	11.25	0.00	0.00	15.25
Cucumber	1.00	4.00	2.00	7.50	0.00	0.00	11.50
Red onion	0.00	0.00	2.00	7.50	0.00	0.00	7.50
Biscuits	2.00	8.00	14.00	52.50	7.00	63.00	123.50
Fruit	1.00	4.00	23.00	86.25	0.00	0.00	90.25
Eat natural bar	5.00	20.00	22.00	82.50	13.00	117.00	219.50
Propercorn	2.00	8.00	13.00	48.75	4.00	36.00	92.75
Juice	1.00	4.00	18.00	67.50	0.00	0.00	71.50
<b>Total</b>							
	38.70	154.80	159.50	598.13	25.60	230.40	983.33

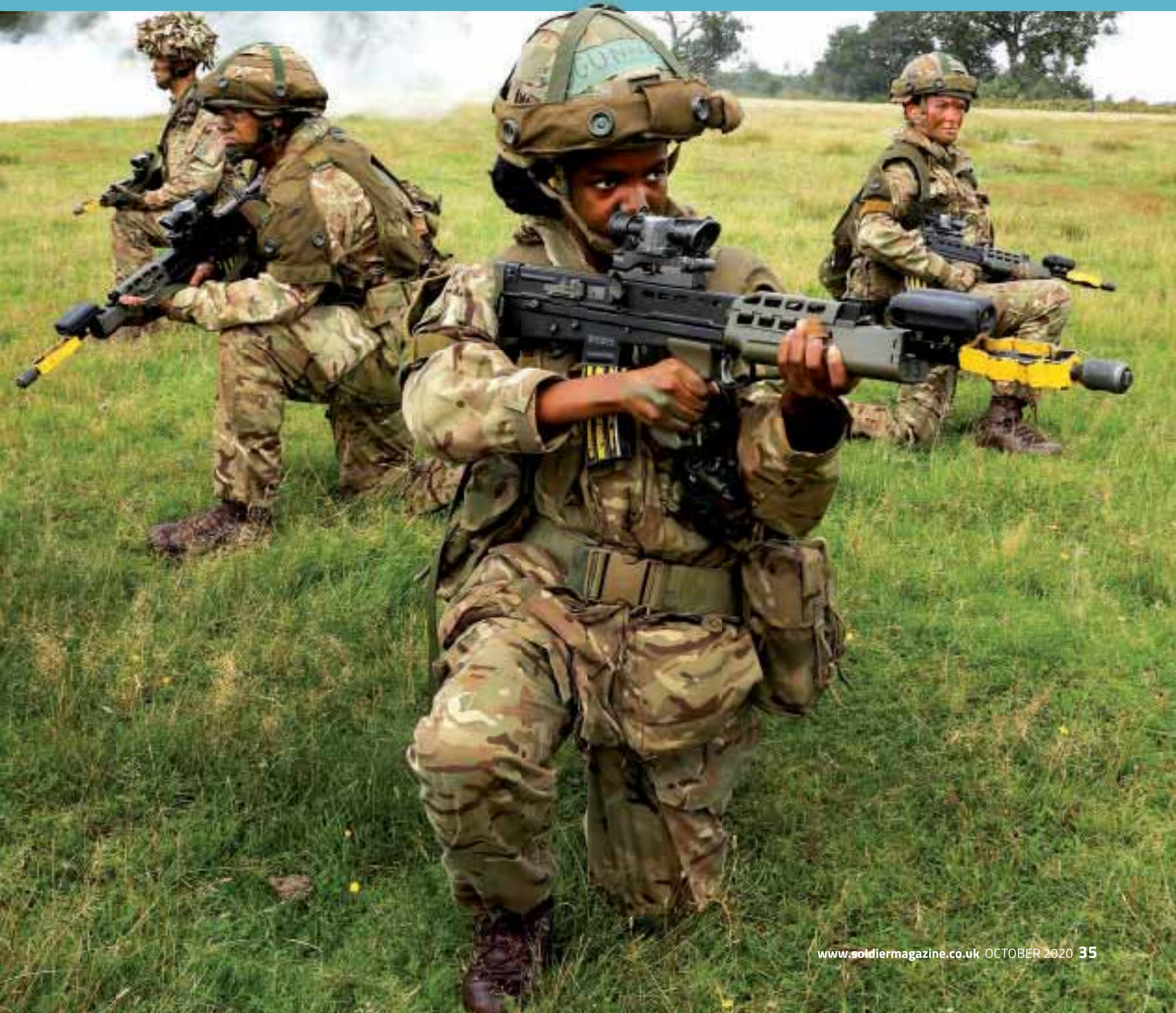






# SUMMER *at* STANTA

Officer cadets relish the challenge of Covid-delayed exercise »





**A**S THE Apache attack helicopter hovers menacingly above its landing zone, preparing to touch down, the watching Service personnel excitedly reach for their camera phones.

The Army's fearsome aerial asset provides captivating handheld footage for the Regular soldiers on the ground, but its presence proves particularly absorbing for the officer cadets in attendance.

The flypast, landing and subsequent rearming and refuelling performed by members of 3 Regiment, Army Air Corps form an impressive opening salvo to a week in the field for members of Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps as they embark on their Covid-delayed summer exercise.

Staged at Norfolk's Stanford Training Area, the package will see them complete key training modules before they return to their lecture halls for the new academic year, or embark on the first steps in their chosen careers.

Low-level section and platoon drills with Tes kit are the flavour of the week, with their efforts culminating in a final company attack against a live enemy formed by Reservists from The London Regiment.

While the itinerary sounds like an action-packed alternative to the traditional student summer of stacking supermarket shelves, it is an important stepping-stone for those who will progress to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and a future as an Army officer. Of the latest commissioning course, which started on September 6, 31 per cent were ex-UOTC members.

The exercise has been a long time in the making and expectations were heightened by the coronavirus outbreak and resulting lockdown, which meant hands-on training has been in short supply in recent times.

"They have been itching to get out here," executive officer Maj Rohan Bate (RLC) tells *Soldier*.

"All activity was stopped in March and this is a chance to get everyone together ahead of the new term. We have utilised our barracks for part of the exercise and it has been a case of living within our means, using what we've got and not travelling too far afield.

"The cadets are classified as soldiers in training and the standard we get them to is approximately the same as those in phase-one establishments.

"We are using platoon- and company-level tactics. It is not so much about having ninja soldiering skills but more about the ability to learn, lead and develop themselves, and others."

The make-up of Cambridge UOTC hits the key demographics the Army is trying to reach. Of its current 129 cadets, 55 are female and 23 are from the BAME community.

The numbers are particularly eye-catching given the fact Cambridge recruits from just three universities.

And its output is considerable.

"We are third equal within the UOTC group in terms of cadets passing the Army officer selection briefing and main board," Maj Bate explains.

"Our student-to-instructor ratio means we can really invest in our personnel and help prepare and encourage them to become either Regular or Reserve officers.

"We could have someone who is studying for a public services degree at Cambridge Regional College training ►►

Words: Richard Long Pictures: Graeme Main, JUO Martin Fearon and JUO Phoebe Mercer







“ They come on day one expecting to be stabbing bayonet dummies, but it is much more than that. We use infantry tactics in the field to tease out the leadership potential in everyone ”



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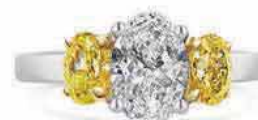
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» alongside an astrophysicist from Cambridge, but it doesn't matter – we are totally classless and peerless.

"In terms of our female numbers, we put on balanced, accessible training and the word gets around. There is no agenda here, everyone is treated exactly the same – it is based on capability, not sex or class.

"They come on day one expecting to be stabbing bayonet dummies, but it is much more than that. We use infantry tactics in the field to tease out the leadership potential in everyone."

A military leadership career is very much the focus for OCdt Edward Harborne, who graduated with a 2:1 in natural science from Cambridge University's Clare College in June.

He applied to join the Army as a 16-year-old and sat the junior main board before earning a place on the Service's undergraduate bursary scheme.

The 21-year-old will arrive at Sandhurst next year and believes the experience gained during his time at Cambridge UOTC will help him achieve his goal of becoming an officer in The Rifles.

"It is the little things," he explains. "You are getting familiar with the rank structure and the real basics of soldiering.

"While we are by no means perfect, being exposed to this before going to Sandhurst makes a huge difference.

"We also get to interact with serving soldiers and officers, which gives us an authentic feel for what it is going to be like in the future.

"There is no doubt the UOTC system is a positive for the Army."

Maj Bate stresses that the priority is to see "people marching up the steps to Sandhurst" but insists the set-up has other roles as well, such as demystifying some of the myths surrounding the Service.

This sentiment was echoed by Cambridge UOTC's commanding officer, Lt Col Alastair Field (Rifles).

"We play a critical role in furnishing the Army with officers and, of the latest intake on the Regular commissioning course, 31 per cent were from the UOTCs," he says.

"Some of the young men and women we work with will have

the clear idea that they want to go to Sandhurst.

"Another group will be curious – they like what we do in terms of leadership development, adventurous training and sport, and they know they can get paid.

"We try to encourage them, wherever possible, to get into that officer pipeline.

"Then there is the group who do this because it is fun, and it gives them some structure. They have a great time, but they don't have to join the Army.

"However, we hope that when they leave higher education and move on to business and other sectors, they will have that understanding of what we do and be in a position to champion the military."

Lt Col Field is now bracing himself for one of the most important periods on his calendar – recruiting fresh talent as the new university year gets under way.

Usually, this would mean a strong presence at various freshers' fairs but with coronavirus restrictions still in place he is having to adopt a new strategy.

"September/October is always our main effort," he adds. "If we don't get officer cadets into the UOTCs we cannot get them into the Army.

"In the next few weeks we will be making virtual presentations at all the freshers' fairs and we'll be looking to boost our social media activity.

"We've also found that word of mouth from existing cadets can be a powerful tool.

"Recruiting is a challenge for us as we only have the three universities. We set a target of getting 70 cadets through the medical stage – it was 50 last year, but 80 the year before that. It is always a crucial element of our training year."

The Army has adapted well to the challenges of the Covid era and there's no doubt Cambridge UOTC will do the same during its upcoming recruiting drive.

And with a new breed of officer cadets welcomed to the fold, this determined unit will continue to punch above its weight when it comes to guiding leaders of the future. »





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# Talking training

Officer cadets reflect on their experiences with Cambridge UOTC

## Did you know?

Cambridge is the only UOTC to have a battle honour. Its antecedent regiment, The Cambridge University Rifle Volunteers, sent a detachment of 28 personnel to fight in the Second Boer War and they were involved in a host of operations alongside The Suffolk Regiment between 1900 and 1901. Their efforts in South Africa were acknowledged on their return.

It is also one of the oldest UOTCs, with its origins traced to 1803.



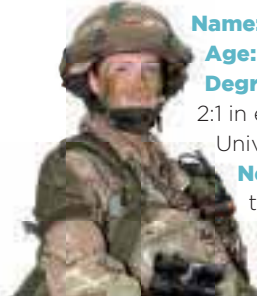
**Name:** OCdt Sam Banner  
**Age:** 27  
**Degree:** Graduated with a 2:1 in theology from Cambridge  
**Next step:** Now studying at Ridley Hall Theological College with the long-term goal of becoming a military chaplain in the Royal Marines

**He says:** "It has given me the chance to become a chaplain cadet and see what UOTC life is like. I only joined at the start of the academic year and with Covid-19 pushing the summer camp back, it meant I could hit the ground running. There is a refreshing mix of people who come from different backgrounds and cities. Compared to university, there is a bit more discipline and less room for error. Hopefully I can be the older, big brother figure to some of the undergraduates."



**Name:** OCdt Sophie Farrelly  
**Age:** 19  
**Degree:** Has just completed her first year in biomedicine at the University of East Anglia  
**Next step:** Plans to become an Army doctor after completing her post-

graduate studies in medicine  
**She says:** "My mum served as an officer. I was not necessarily planning to join the Army but by coming to the UOTC I have gained a better understanding of the military and it has confirmed my career path. It is a motivating environment and has pushed me to levels I have not been to before, which has helped my confidence. As we're students the instructors are patient, which means it's a comfortable place to learn in."



**Name:** JUO Charlotte Lee  
**Age:** 22  
**Degree:** Graduated with a 2:1 in economics from the University of East Anglia  
**Next step:** About to start the JP Morgan graduate scheme  
**She says:** "Joining the UOTC was the

best decision I made during my time at university due to the friends I've made and the experiences I've had. In my first year I had the chance to be a section commander, meaning I had to manage people and think quickly, and I was able to draw upon that during job interviews. It has given me a greater understanding of the Army and, in future, if I'm looking at two CVs and see that one has a Service background, I will know what that person has been through and what they can offer."

**Name:** OCdt Lola Ogunnaike  
**Age:** 21  
**Degree:** Graduated with a 2:1 in biomedical science from Anglia Ruskin University  
**Next step:** Applied for graduate schemes with a host of leading pharmaceutical companies  
**She says:** "It has been amazing. When I was younger, I knew I didn't want an ordinary life and this has given me an opportunity to try things I have never done before, such as skiing, sailing and learning about leadership. I used to be very quiet, but now I am confident when it comes to talking in front of people. The UOTC gives you that sense of camaraderie and a feeling of being part of something. You never know what the future holds and I may become bored of civilian life, so I can never say never when it comes to joining the Army."

**Name:** JUO Oliver White  
**Age:** 22  
**Degree:** Graduated with a 2:2 in politics and economics from the University of East Anglia  
**Next step:** Starts Sandhurst in May, with the hope of becoming an officer in The Royal Anglian Regiment  
**He says:** "I've been with the UOTC for three-and-a-half years and this is my fourth summer exercise. Coming here is a good contrast to university life – you have to survive in the field, adjust to the lack of sleep and work within the constraints of following orders. This is completely different to what other students

experience and I think it will give me an advantage in my first few weeks at Sandhurst. It exposes you to Army life and we know what it's about."



**Name:** JUO Phoebe Mercer  
**Age:** 21  
**Degree:** Graduated with a first in physical education, sport and health from the University of East Anglia  
**Next step:** Is in the process of applying to Sandhurst  
**She says:** "I've been with the UOTC for three years and knew all about it before I came to university. I wanted something that was going to push me, especially in terms of adventurous training, and this has given me that. I was also able to take part in Cambrian Patrol, which was a real challenge. I'm hoping to do my main board in 2021 and feel I am well prepared for when I join the Army – I want a combat role that is fast paced and hands-on. The Infantry really appeals as I love the physical aspect of what they do."

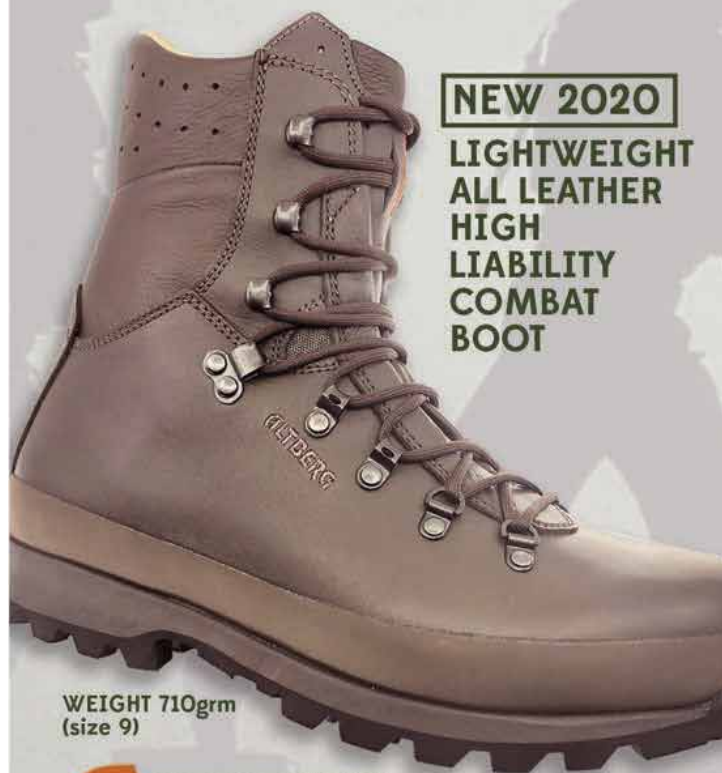


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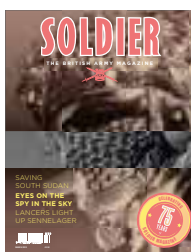
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# GOING UNDERGROUND

## Fusiliers find new challenges in Cold War tunnel network

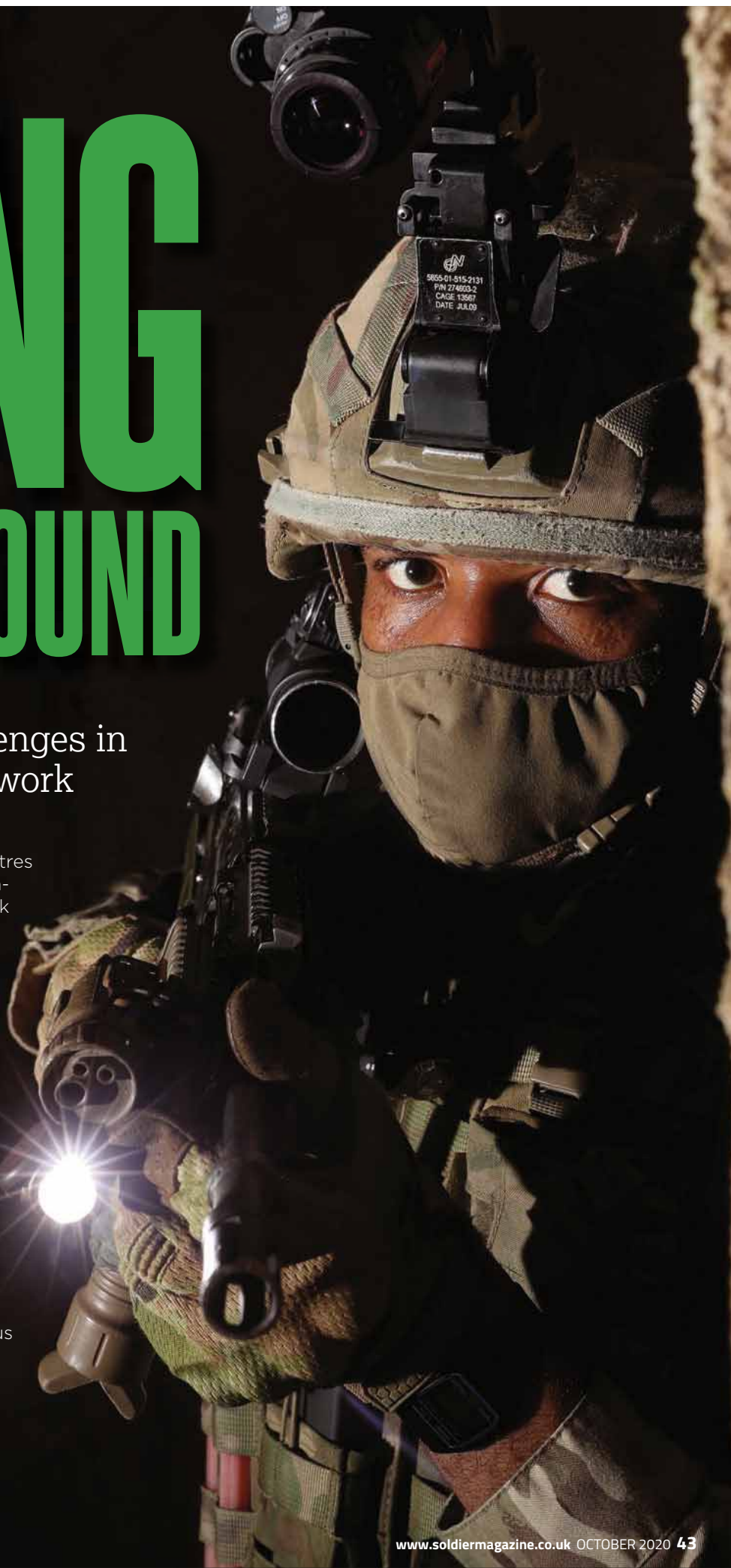
**I**N A top-secret location around 30 metres below ground somewhere in the south-west of England, lies a disused network of bunkers and the Army's latest subterranean training facility.

Recommissioned during the Cold War era, the former quarry consists of numerous tunnels spanning dozens of acres and connecting hundreds of rooms containing the decaying remnants of its previous life.

Deserted medical facilities, boiler rooms, kitchens, canteens and offices littered with abandoned equipment provide a haunting backdrop for the personnel of 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers – one of only a handful of units to use the facility since its approval for military use last year.

"It's unnerving and can be claustrophobic," explains OC Maj Matt Selby (RRF).

"Although it's not cold and wet, it is arduous training because they are operating in a completely different way which can be quite overwhelming psychologically." »



» Thick stone walls and winding passageways render traditional comms equipment obsolete, so – using only night vision capabilities – the troops have returned to an older style of silent military warfare that relies heavily on communicating through the sense of touch and runners.

“All your senses are heightened, but your sphere of awareness shrinks because wearing night vision goggles constrains your peripheral vision,” the officer continues. “And using active ear defence, which amplifies ambient noise like footsteps, can be quite disconcerting.

“It’s a 360-degree battlespace but the training we’ve delivered hasn’t been a tactical thrashing – the emphasis has been on coaching and mentoring to improve each individual’s judgement and leadership, as well as their military skills and drills.”

For the operational support group to the battalion currently serving on Op Cabrit in Estonia, the underground training has provided a vital opportunity for some of its newest soldiers to develop skill sets akin to those of their deployed counterparts.

The package was designed and delivered by junior NCOs and officers who have rotated between the roles of directing staff and exercising troops.

“This is a new way of fighting for many of us, in a completely different atmosphere. It’s eerie and everything is louder and darker,” describes instructor Cpl Jake Barrington (RRF).

“It really takes a toll on your senses and affects your situational awareness and judgement.

“We’ve progressed from carrying out basic paired infantry manoeuvres right up to platoon-level attacks and dealing with hostage scenarios.

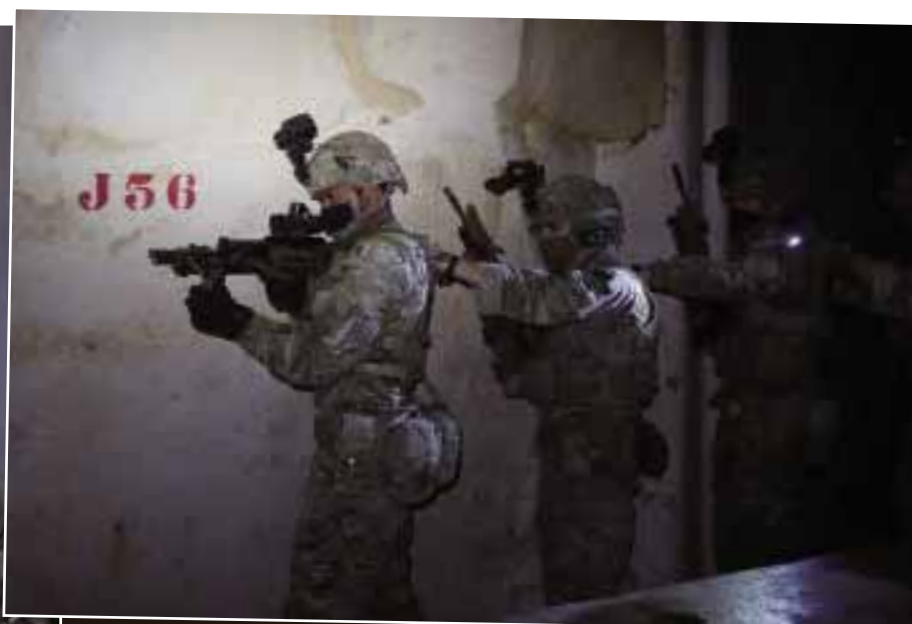
“With limited or no light capabilities, the emphasis is placed much more on individual responsibility – everyone involved needs to know exactly what they are doing.”

The company completed a comprehensive close-quarter battle training package, progressing from firing blank rounds to simunition before descending underground to a setting rivalling that of any *Call of Duty* offering.

They are unsure whether enemies are concealed among industrial ventilation systems that run along the ceilings of narrow passageways, or lie in wait in abandoned cranes in the vast looming caverns that unexpectedly open up around unfamiliar corners.







“  
Learning how to deal  
with the enemy in a dark,  
open urban space is  
completely different to  
being out in the field  
”

Fus Matthew Humphreys (RRF)

The troops also have to determine if it is friend or foe sheltering in old ammunition storage rooms or hidden alcoves, so it's imperative they remain silent to avoid giving their opponent the advantage.

“Trying to be quiet can be a struggle – it goes against your natural instincts,” says LCpl Jacob Coyle (RRF).

“It's been a bit of a shock to the system, but it really improves your skill set. No matter what rank you are, if you're not doing your drills right it can affect the attack.”

A vast and complex environment that was set up to house hundreds of people in the event of an all-out attack, the facility offers a virtually limitless range of dynamic opportunities to those who have become used to the familiar urban training areas of Longmoor and Brecon, where it can be difficult for commanders to bring a much-needed sense of surprise.

“A modern infantry soldier is required to think and not just do what they are told,” concludes Maj Selby. “It is a genuine specialism.”

“This is an outstanding asset and it has enabled these troops to reach a high level of tactical competence, as well as have loads of fun.

“It's not a purpose-built training area, so it's almost daunting what you can do here – the possibilities are endless.

“But it's been really rewarding to see how the lads have reacted to training in this environment, particularly with the restrictions of Covid-19.

“We've managed to conduct a genuinely worthwhile collective exercise while still staying safe and protecting ourselves. I'm really proud of the soldiers and NCOs who have made it possible.” ■

● For the latest guidance in support of CFA's urban training directive, commanders should refer to the new Land Warfare Centre doctrine note on subterranean operations in the urban environment, which is available on the AKX Urban Ops page on Defence Connect



# DURING THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES, WE ARE STILL HERE AND READY TO HELP

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# From the Western Front to Mosul

Principal Army geologist Lt Col Drew Craig (RE) says subterranean warfare is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago

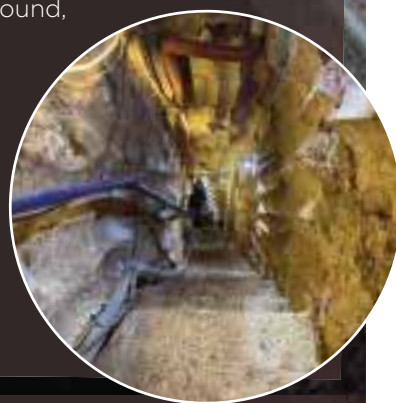
## First World War

The mine warfare exploits of the Royal Engineer tunnelling companies are well documented and graphically chart the ruthless underground campaign on the Western Front. Less well known are the battles fought between 1915 and 1918 across the Italian Alps, where the high altitude and bitter winters added a different dimension to subterranean combat. Structures were carved out of glaciers, cable systems transported huge volumes of vital supplies up vertical mountainsides and many summit stations hosted artillery and powerful spotlights



## Israel

The Israeli Defence Forces commenced Operation Northern Shield along the border with Lebanon in early December 2018 and by mid-January had located six cross-border tunnels. Once intelligence specialists identified particular areas of ground, military engineers employed a range of geophysical and drilling techniques to find the tunnels. The largest and most sophisticated one was at Zarit – it had electrical lighting, a rail system, rubbish disposal, and stairs. Once discovered, the tunnels were demolished by explosives or infilled with liquid cement



## Vietnam

The tunnels of Cu Chi are an immense Viet Cong system located close to Ho Chi Minh City (then called Saigon). They served as communication and supply routes, hospitals, storage and living quarters for hundreds of troops. Clearing this heavily booby-trapped stronghold was extremely hazardous and US efforts to do so using specialists on the ground and aerial bombing were of limited success. It was Cu Chi operations that gave rise to the expression “Tunnel Rats” to describe the actions of Australian engineers



## Iraq

In July 2017, Iraqi forces, assisted by US-led coalition warplanes and military advisers, successfully recaptured the city of Mosul. After several years of occupation, Islamic State militants had prepared complex surface and sub-surface defences within the city and its surroundings. Inferior in air and ISTAR capabilities, they had repurposed existing infrastructure and added extensive tactical tunnels and covered trenches. This complex and congested urban environment was further complicated due to the presence of large numbers of civilians

Lt Col Craig heads up the Military Geology Cell at 66 Works Group, Royal Engineers. To find out more about subterranean capability follow him on Twitter @SapperGeologist



## North Korea

Four so-called “Tunnels of Aggression” have been discovered underneath the Demilitarized Zone since 1974. Built to move thousands of troops quickly and covertly onto South Korean soil, one was discovered only 32 kilometres from Seoul. Western intelligence has long held the belief that significant portions of the North’s military might is underground, including an advanced nuclear weapons programme. While the regime made a very public demonstration of explosively demolishing some of its purported nuclear infrastructure in 2018, many think this did little to curtail their development strategy





Soldiers drink a cheery toast before leaving Trinidad for a war zone overseas

Imperial War Museum

# HIDDEN HISTORY

## Uncovering the untold stories of Caribbean personnel

**W**HEN *Soldier* put out an appeal on social media for serving personnel to take part in our black history month coverage it became our most commented-on post of the year – and not purely in a positive way.

More than 20 years after the initiative was first coined – and despite the light shed on continued racial inequality by the Black Lives Matter protests – it seems there are still those who question why it is necessary to focus on the contribution of African and Caribbean people to British society, and its military, every October.

But as we found out when we spoke to National Army Museum research curator Jasdeep Singh, there are compelling reasons why the achievements of black troops deserve more recognition.

The fact is, black history remains under-reported in general, and the stories of the men and women who have served in the forces are no different.

Their contribution dates back almost 400 years, yet the narrative is dominated by the deeds of white soldiers, with the odd exceptions – among them Army officer, footballer and Victoria Cross recipient Walter Tull, and the West African troops who fought in Burma in the Second World War.

Singh is working on bringing more stories to light in preparation for a forthcoming exhibition on the topic, but he says part of the challenge is the difficulty of identifying individuals.

“Searching for Indians on the Army list is easy because you

can tell their heritage by their names,” he explains.

“However, black soldiers often have westernised names, so a lot of the time there is nothing to actually tell us they are black, unless you know what regiment they belonged to, for instance.

“You won’t know someone’s ethnicity just by looking at a document. That makes researching and memorialising them more difficult.”

And while thousands of diaries and letters exist from the First World War, for example, black personnel at that time were less likely to leave behind such documents – probably due to lower literacy rates among West Indian recruits and the fact they would have lacked free time to keep journals.

This presents another barrier to finding out about their experiences – and that is why the story of Norman Manley stands out.

Born in Jamaica, Manley was of mixed race. When his parents died in 1909, he was granted a scholarship to the University of Oxford – a rare opportunity offered to only the brightest minds.

After graduating he wanted to follow his brother into the Army, but while his education would usually have guaranteed him a commission, his heritage meant he had to join the ranks instead.

So he enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery, where he was awarded a Military Medal for acts of gallantry and devotion to duty and was promoted to NCO.

Unlike most of his peers though, he left a diary, which gives a



vivid insight into the struggles he faced.

“Manley writes that, without exception, from sergeant upwards he was intensely disliked,” says Singh.

“They didn’t like a coloured man sharing their rights and privileges and it showed in every possible way – he faced a virtual prosecution.

“Earlier on though, among his fellow new recruits – many of whom were Cockneys – there was a lot of banter, in good fashion.

“He was really fond of them and they stuck up for him when anyone called him ‘Darky’, which they knew he didn’t like.

“So, he describes how the lower ranks bonded well with him, but the officers didn’t like who he was.

“Later, he became the first premier of Jamaica and those experiences – both good and bad – would help shape his own identity and that of the people of the land through his politics.”

Manley’s story illustrates how the Army’s history as an instrument of empire means that looking into the past can sometimes be a painful process.

The story begins with the conquest of Jamaica in 1655. A crucial strategic outpost, the island was soon flooded with English troops, but it quickly became apparent that they weren’t well-suited to the Caribbean climate and local people were recruited to bolster the garrison and carry out menial labour.

Later they were employed as rangers or militia, but it wasn’t until 1795 that the first eight West India Regiments were formed, with more than 13,000 slaves purchased to fill the ranks – the looming prospect of abolition actually led to a rush to buy as many as possible before time ran out.

Even after the trans-Atlantic slave trade ended in 1807, free black men continued to serve, up to and throughout the First World War, though their equipment was likely to be of poorer quality than their white counterparts and they remained restricted to supporting, rather than combat roles.

And despite serving with courage and honour from 1914-18, at the end of the conflict they were not invited to take part in the victory parade along the Mall.

For Singh, his role is to acknowledge the darker side of history, as well as the positive elements to preserve an honest record of the past for future generations.

“We can’t change history – it’s happened,” he continues.

“But at the same time we can’t sugar coat it and we are doomed to repeat mistakes if we delete that history.

“That’s why black history month needs to happen. People mock it and say, ‘what about the other 11 months?’ but actually the novelty of it gives you a focus and allows you to really rally, like we are doing now.”

He also believes it’s vital for serving African and Caribbean troops today to understand more about their ancestors’ experiences and struggles.

“If soldiers don’t see themselves in the history of the organisation they are part of, then they don’t feel like they belong,” he adds.

“It wasn’t all rosy, but there were some positives too – and when we put all that together it gives today’s personnel a more rounded picture of their past.

“These stories allow us to understand what these trailblazers did, and their legacy, which hopefully allows black soldiers to look back into history and place themselves within it.” »

## Pictures with the power to change perspectives...

**The National Army Museum’s Jasdeep Singh selects three images that tell a different side of the story for West Indian troops**



Oil painting of a private of the 8th West India Regiment from around 1804. “This is the first known example in our collection where a Caribbean soldier was the subject of the piece,” says Singh. “Throughout the 1700s you would see black troops appearing in the background of portraits of officers, for example as trumpeters, but here the focus is on the private.”



A First World War recruiting poster for the British West Indies Regiment. Much like last year’s *Your Army Needs You* campaign, it was designed to speak directly to potential recruits and spread the word that men of every class, creed and colour were required to come forward and fight. Singh explains: “That would have meant a lot to people in the Caribbean, to see that, and think ‘that’s me’. They started to see themselves in those posters and it gave them a sense of their own identity within the wider Army, which was so important for their morale.”



Members of the West Indies Auxiliary Territorial Service arriving in Britain to join the war effort between 1943 and 1947. Around 600 women were recruited for clerical and support roles in order to free up men to go to fight. They faced both racial and sexual discrimination, with some arguing they would not be able to adapt to the climate or work, however many stayed and made Britain their home after the conflict ended. “This also shows that migration to the UK actually started several years before the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948, which is when the conventional narrative begins,” adds Singh.



National Army Museum

# 'WE WOULD HAVE BECOME THEIR SLAVES'

Two serving soldiers and one veteran tell us what black history month and the legacy of African and Caribbean troops who fought with the British Army in the past mean to them »



Caribbean troops in London, 1945 – Imperial War Museum

Words: Becky Clark and Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main and Derrick Cobbinah, ex-RLC





**SSgt Simon Nkwah**, originally from Cameroon, joined the Army in 2003 and serves with 13 Air Assault Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps in Colchester. He has deployed to Iraq twice, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia and the Falklands.



**Joseph Hammond**, 95, from Ghana, was a private in the 82nd Division and saw action on the front line in Burma from 1944 to 1945. He

was one of more than 600,000 African soldiers who served alongside British forces during the Second World War. Joseph was recently honoured by the Queen for walking two miles a day for a week after being inspired by Capt Sir Tom Moore. He raised more than £40,000 for health workers and vulnerable veterans across Africa.



**Cpl Sada Maxi Sumareh** (AGC (SPS)) joined the Army in 2008 and now works in the office of the general officer commanding 6th

Division at Upavon. He also runs his own charity that supports school children in the country of his birth, The Gambia. He completed tours of Iraq on Op Shader and Afghanistan on Op Toral while attached to 4th Battalion, The Rifles.

### What does the history of black soldiers in the British Army mean to you?

**SSgt Simon Nkwah:** The Africans who fought in previous wars were definitely an inspiration for me to join the Army.

I come from Cameroon, which was a German colony until it was invaded by the French and English during the First World War and then partitioned by them. During the Second World War it was easy for the British Army to enlist locals from their sector so there is a strong military tradition among many families in my country. When I left university I wanted to experience something different and

found out I could join the British Army, which I did in 2003.

**Joseph Hammond:** In Ghana we fought for the British during the Second World War because we were colonial subjects back then. If we had not fought for them and the Germans had won the war, they would have conquered us and we would have become their slaves – of that I am certain. So we fought with all our might to prevent this happening and to this day I'm glad we supported the UK.

**Cpl Sada Maxi Sumareh:** In The Gambia it's a big deal to join the

serve as a gunner with Bomber Command. He survived 30 missions, retrained as a pilot and completed another 15 sorties before PTSD grounded him. Britain called upon lots of Commonwealth men like Billy to fight but remembrance events largely fail to acknowledge their contribution and experiences.

### Joseph, how scared were you going off to fight for another nation half way across the world?

**Joseph:** I was young, I had no wife or child to worry myself over. After the war, when I grew up, then I knew what fear was, but when I was

“ When I first joined I realised there was almost a template for report writing on a black soldier ”

British Army because of our colonial links. We achieved our independence in 1965 but every year we have Commonwealth Day, which is important to us.

Friends and family really look up to you if you serve and my dad, who has passed now, was really proud when I was accepted into the Service back in 2008. When I first joined I read up on black soldiers in the British Armed Forces and discovered the story of Jamaican, Billy Strachan, who became a hero of mine. Like me, he came to the UK with almost no money. He enlisted with the Royal Air Force and went on to

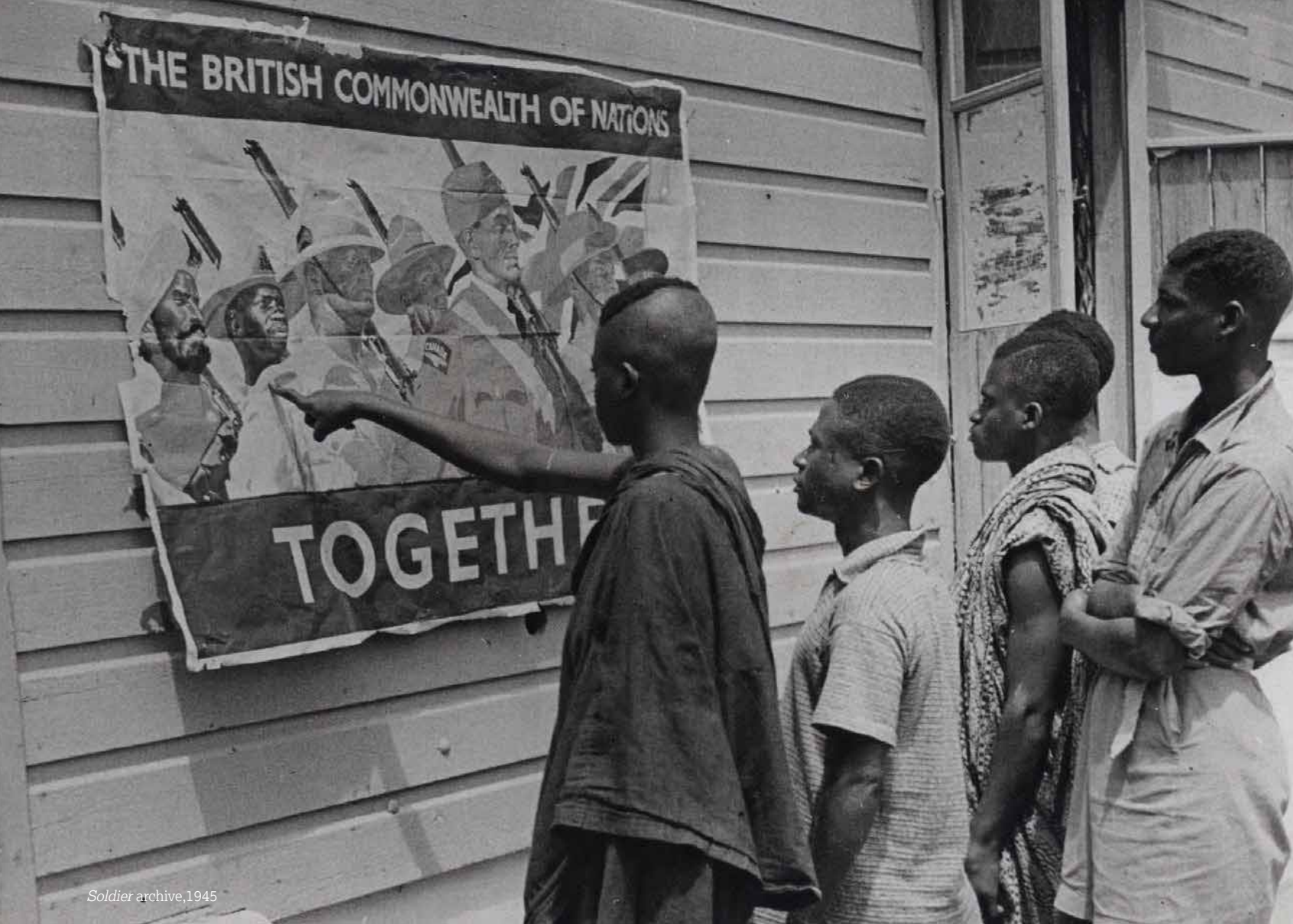
on the battlefield I was not scared. We fought intrepidly and, looking back, the suffering we went through facing the Japanese was beyond comprehension. They were the most ferocious fighters I've ever seen.

They had no fear – they saw death as an honour. That was their mentality.

We Africans fought ferociously and I'm so proud that we defended the British Empire.

**Should more have been done to recognise the contribution of black and Commonwealth soldiers who fought in past conflicts? ))**





*Soldier archive, 1945*

“ It’s important to have the officer in charge declare that we, as black soldiers, are accepted and supported ”

» **Cpl Sumareh:** Definitely. There are many in the military who literally know nothing about it.

When I first joined up I was with 29 Commando, Royal Artillery and was one of a few black soldiers in the whole unit. Then I moved to 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery and many of them had no knowledge of the British military’s past, how

black soldiers from Commonwealth countries had fought in major wars. They are more aware now thanks to things like social media and just getting to know more black soldiers.

**SSgt Nkwah:** People like Joseph should be better recognised for sure – they are our heroes because of what they went through 75 years

ago. Having been on operations such as Iraq, I can fully appreciate what they did. You think about those who fought in trenches with little equipment and in extreme conditions and you ask yourself, ‘how did they manage that?’

Afghanistan was like a nightmare for me but Joseph went to India and then on to fight the Japanese for two years in the jungles of Burma. It really makes you think.

**Cpl Sumareh:** Former soldiers like Joseph should have been better looked after because they did something positive for this country.

They should have been granted the privilege to come and live here if they wanted. I know a few Caribbean soldiers who fought in recent conflicts for the British Army who have been deported, which is shameful.



The Gurkhas have been lucky because Joanna Lumley campaigned for them and shone a spotlight on their situation, so they eventually got what they wanted. Other ethnic groups need help like that too.

**Joseph:** The UK governments have tried to do their best, I think. They did neglect us just after the Second World War, and there was disruption and anger over that in Ghana. Some of our soldiers were begging in the streets, but things are better now and the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League (RCEL) really look after us well.

### How does that organisation help?

**Joseph:** They care for the poorer veterans here – some are very old and feeble, but the RCEL provides essential funds to help with living costs, housing and food.

### Simon and Maxi, what are your thoughts on that?

**SSgt Nkwah:** I've followed Joseph for a while now – he's so inspirational. I watched him doing his charity walk, like Capt Sir Tom Moore, at the age of 95 and I said to myself, 'if I ever go to Ghana I definitely want to shake hands with him'.

When I go back home, I do jobs for the ex-soldiers, such as cleaning their houses and giving them money. We try to make life bearable for them.

The RCEL does amazing work and have coordinators in many countries and give the veterans an allowance.

The British government could do more to help them and also serving soldiers too, especially around immigration. It costs a lot of money to naturalise – around £1,200. The least they can do after a soldier has put his or her life on the line is pay for that.

**Cpl Sumareh:** I agree, as a clerk I have lots of soldiers who come to me for help – I've even loaned



Soldier archive, 1945

them money because they can't afford to bring their wife and kids across, which is sad. A lot of them, like me, support their extended families and friends back home.

My charity pays for five kids in The Gambia to go to school. And during the Covid crisis I purchased rice for my neighbourhood and I always take boxes of clothes when I go back to help them get by.

### Do your colleagues appreciate the situation in your home countries?

**Cpl Sumareh:** When I did a black history month presentation at 6 Div headquarters last year loads of people were really surprised and approached me wanting to help. They don't always appreciate things until you explain it to them.

I just want people to ask me about The Gambia, or my religion, not just make assumptions. Others don't want to know or care. I had one colleague say to me fairly recently, 'this is my army, why don't you go and join your own'. He was a junior NCO at the time but thankfully he's not in the Service anymore.

### Joseph, did you experience any prejudice while serving?

**Joseph:** We have an adage in Ghana – everywhere there are good and bad people. This is just how it goes. You can't say 'all the white men are bad' as many are good. Just as some black people are nasty. That's the world. You have to accept it.

**SSgt Nkwah:** When I first joined I realised there was almost a template for report writing on

a black soldier. The officer wouldn't know you but he'd write, 'he is quiet', because he thought all black people were like that. It takes a good officer to know his soldiers. Once they know you, they know your worth.

### Has increasing diversity in the Service changed views at all?

**SSgt Nkwah:** It has, completely. When I went to [my first posting] in Germany in 2004, there weren't any black senior NCOs and no one understood your culture or way of life. If, say, a Fijian soldier was shouted at he might put his head down because that's their way, but it was often perceived as a sign of disrespect. And Muslim personnel out on exercise who didn't eat the rations because they were not halal would be punished.

Life could be miserable; we were often treated as an afterthought.

The Army makes allowances now, whether it's being permitted to grow your hair long if you are a Rastafarian or an Indian of a particular religion, or you have certain food requirements. That is how it should be.

### You used the word "miserable" – did you ever think you'd made a mistake in joining the Army?

**SSgt Nkwah:** Yes, at first. I was shocked by the different values of a minority. Some would spit on the floor and swear all the time, which was normal to them, but people don't do that in Africa. When I mentioned this to senior personnel they would simply say 'maybe you shouldn't be here, you're in the wrong place'. Back then, they weren't interested in listening to »



Burma 1945, Soldier archive

» you. Every difference in us was perceived as a weakness. In Germany or Poland, which can get very cold in winter, Commonwealth soldiers would suffer more because they grew up in hot climates, but senior personnel didn't want to know.

I had a friend who literally had to have his boots cut off his feet because they were so frozen. He left the Army as a result of his injuries and can't wear shoes for long periods to this day.

If you look at the number of people who left the military in the past due to cold injuries you'll find the majority were black soldiers. But these days we are all well briefed and properly looked after.

**Joseph:** The rank that black soldiers reach can be so important for changes in attitude to take place. In the Second World War we

had only one black officer, he went out to the Far East as a captain and came back as a major.

**Cpl Sumareh:** Joseph has made a really important point there. Even when I joined the British Army in 2008 I saw very few black officers or senior soldiers around, but now there are plenty and some have become really valuable mentors. One – Capt Henry Owens (AGC (SPS)) – was one of my teachers back in Gambia. People like him are inspirational and it's so important to see them rising up through the ranks.

### Can events like black history month change people's views?

**SSgt Nkwah:** It depends on their background. Lots of soldiers have simply never set eyes on a black person before they joined the Army. Maybe it helps if they have been to college or university and mixed with different people at a young age.

**Cpl Sumareh:** It can also depend on the unit. I served with 4 Rifles for a while and they were a very diverse battalion. They educated their troops well and the LE officers were very good. But at another unit I was attached to, Muslim soldiers were told to do PT, even when fasting during Ramadan, because the NCOs knew nothing about it, or didn't care.

**SSgt Nkwah:** When I joined my unit, 13 Air Assault Support, in 2018, things were very different. Back in 2004 it had maybe five black soldiers but now it is a very diversified with more than 100, and 15 black senior NCOs.

That's because we have embraced diversity and our present CO organises diversity meetings. I really admire him for that. It used to be run by any old officer, but now the CO wants to chair them personally and, to me, it is so important to have the officer in charge declare that we, as black personnel, are fully accepted and supported. ■







## ‘Is this a good use of my time?’

**W**E hold so much data on JPA, and yet seem to do very little with it to benefit Service personnel.

Could modern technology make better use of the information we already have at our finger tips?

For instance, despite the Army knowing when I would turn 37 for the last 20 years, I’m still having to put an application in manually for the over-37 package on a form that exclusively covers information the organisation already knows about me.

Is this really a good use of my time and is the situation not ripe for automation?

The mind boggles at how much staff time could be saved.

A programme similar to that used by web browsers for form filling could allow for automation of common paperwork. It could be generated on request, or after being triggered by a specific date, promotion or posting.

We are often told to do more with what we have – how about the Army does the same and better uses the information it holds to save people from unnecessary manual admin? – **Maj Jim Morris, RAMC**

**Stephen Read, Assistant Head of Personnel Data, Directorate of Personnel, Army Headquarters, replies:** This is exactly the sort of engagement that we need to ensure we get the Army’s digital

transformation right – both to bring the Service into the digital age, and to serve our people.

To directly answer your questions, the value of the personal data held in JPA is recognised at the highest levels, as is the requirement to maximise its exploitation.

We are working closely with Defence Business Services, who manage JPA, the Information Directorate and Home Command to maximise the use of this material and provide soldiers with improved access to it.

You will be able to read more about this work in the near future on Army channels.

The point made about reducing the amount of manual form filling is well made and while the unit Service leavers’ checklist is an example of how it can be done, there is much more that we can do.

An over-37 package form which is triggered by, and self populates with, JPA data is under development.

In an example of joint working, the Personnel Directorate is also cooperating with the Royal Air Force to develop a JPA-based home to duty application process.

If these proof of concepts are successful then the intent is to produce a range of commonly used forms that soldiers can use.

“We are told to do more with what we have”

# “Talkback”

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

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## ‘DON’T WRITE OFF THE OLD SOLDIERS’

● HAVING read with interest the current recruitment issues affecting the Army, I found myself wondering why it does not consider raising the recruitment age?

This would tempt the ranks of veterans out there who, like me, would relish the opportunity to don a uniform again.

I am not suggesting that they shoulder arms but, rather, form a back-up force involved in admin, driving and logistics, or help out as cooks in the many canteens, officers’ messes and field kitchens.

As they say, old soldiers never die and many, in their dreams, are still marching on. – William Sallows, Salford

**Lt Col Matt Brocklesby, Workforce Policy, Army Headquarters responds:** Current policy allows for civilian candidates seeking specialist recruitment into the Army Reserve to join up to the age of 50.

This includes cultural, language, finance, cyber, policing and survey specialists to name a few.

Previous service in the Regular or Reserve force allows individuals to rejoin the Army Reserve up to the age of 52.

Equally, where individuals possess specialist skills and their retention is considered in the needs of the Service, mechanisms exist to extend them beyond the normal retirement age, up to 65 in some cases.

The Military Provost Guard Service and those employed on full-time Reserve service are a good example of individuals being utilised in non-deployable roles which maximises the availability of deployable personnel for operations.

Increasing opportunities to serve for longer and in a more flexible way are key objectives of Programme Castle; attracting and retaining individuals with specialist skills as you describe is a key part of this.

You may be interested to hear that this project has recently successfully trialled lateral entry, whereby individuals with niche capabilities can join at a rank commensurate with their skills for immediate employment in the Service.

The Corps of Army Music are the first beneficiaries, having recruited an experienced civilian musician at the rank of corporal for employment as a sergeant in a bandmaster role once the individual is qualified.



Picture: Graeme Main

## ‘Has my disciplinary record shut the door?’

I AM currently serving my 19th year in the Army but was sent to the Military Corrective Training Centre back in 2011 for five months.

I’m sure I read in a past edition of *Soldier* that I could still be eligible for the Long Service and Good Conduct (LS&GC) medal as long as I’m clear of any charges in the last one or two years before my retirement date.

I would like to know whether this is the case or not. – Cpl Dhanahang Limbu, RLC

**Col Jim Taylor, Assistant Head, Personal Services, Army Headquarters, responds:** The LS&GC medal has strict qualifying criteria as it is a prestigious award designed to recognise service in the Regular forces that is considered of good conduct in all respects.

It is also part of the eligibility criteria for further awards for personnel who are of irreproachable character and conduct.

As set out in annex eight to chapter five of **JSP 761**, to be eligible for the LS&GC medal an individual must have completed 15 years of service in the Regular forces.

The policy makes it clear that any entry on an individual’s disciplinary record will result in an automatic delay of a further period of 15

years from the date of the most recent entry. Unfortunately, there is no mention of any eligibility if the soldier is clear of any charges just before retirement.

However, if they are subject to a delay due to a disciplinary entry and believe the offence to be minor, there is the provision to submit an appeal, in accordance with para 5B.07d of JSP 761, to the MoD Medal Office for further consideration.

Without knowing the full facts of your own service record, it is difficult for me to judge whether an appeal would be supported but, given that you were sentenced to detention, I am not confident it would result in the removal of the delay.

However, should you continue to serve with good conduct in all respects and have no further disciplinary entries, you will eventually qualify for the medal.

Please be aware this will not be identified automatically as the system does not fulfil this function.

Once you have completed the required qualifying service, you should apply in accordance with para 5B.07c of JSP 761 using JPA Form S002 submitted to the Medal Office for processing.

Your unit admin office should be able to help you with the application.

“I could still be eligible”

# BULLET POINTS

Bite-sized data to keep you in the know



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**UK Armed Forces Rugby Football Club** is looking for a communications officer. To apply for the post go to: [ukafRFC.co.uk/advert-communications-officer](http://ukafRFC.co.uk/advert-communications-officer)

**Linx Security Training** is offering a 20 per cent reduction on 28 courses for serving and former personnel through the MoD-approved Defence Discount Service. The courses on offer range from technical skills to management with industry-approved qualifications. For more details visit [linxtraining.co.uk](http://linxtraining.co.uk)

**Are you a Service spouse with a flair for sales?** Switch Lifestyles is looking for new insurance advisers. This role would suit someone who is outgoing and not afraid to talk about the product. You don't need any previous experience as training is offered – just no bankruptcies or criminal convictions. It is a self-employed role and commission based, however, the commission splits are some of the highest in the market. For an informal chat contact Louise on 07889 902256 or email [louise@switchlifestyles.co.uk](mailto:louise@switchlifestyles.co.uk)

**The Recruit for Spouses coaching programme**, which helps Army partners get back into employment, has received a funding boost to help it reach more husbands and wives. To apply for a six-week course of one-hour sessions contact [coaching@recruitforspouses.co.uk](mailto:coaching@recruitforspouses.co.uk)



## COMPETITIONS

**August issue – Just how observant are you?:** Stephen Fisher, Worsley Barracks, York; Steve Thompson, Huddersfield; M. McGrath, Cosford, West Midlands; Suzanne Eaton, Tunbridge Wells.

**August issue – Spinelines:** William Smith, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire.



## SEARCHLINE

**Hugh Corby is trying to trace the military medals and citations of his late father, Capt Eric Corby (RA)**, who served as a forward observation officer during the Second World War. Anyone with information is asked to contact him on 07961 606766.

**Kay Smith is trying to solve a mystery of her late grandfather**, who could have been Gerald Horace Patrick Smith or James Michael Murphy. The former was born in 1901 and served in the Merchant Navy – claiming to have saved the life of Fred Key during his service. He died in February 1949, but the doctor who certified his death believed he was at least 20 years older than stated. Murphy was born in May 1878 in Ireland and disappeared after the First World War. Anyone with information should email [smith\\_kay@sky.com](mailto:smith_kay@sky.com)

**Retired Royal Air Force Serviceman Andrew Clark** is a collector of British military tokens used in Iraq and Afghanistan and is seeking examples of pre-2007 issues to boost his collection. If you have any items of interest email [amcpapermoneyman@aol.com](mailto:amcpapermoneyman@aol.com)

**The Air Training Corps, now part of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets**, will celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2021. To help mark the occasion, they would like to interview those who were cadets when the formation launched in 1941. Email [al.munns@btinternet.com](mailto:al.munns@btinternet.com)

**The Women's Royal Army Corps Association has launched a campaign to find the oldest British female Second World War veteran.** To nominate someone visit [www.wraccassociation.org](http://www.wraccassociation.org) or use #FindOurOATS on social media.

**Anita Louise Watson is trying to trace her father, James Watson**, who served as a lance corporal in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers during the 70s. Anyone with information should email [anitawatson164@gmail.com](mailto:anitawatson164@gmail.com)



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**WRVS Services Welfare:**  
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## ROADSHOWS

**The Forces Pension Society**  
is staging a number of roadshows at garrison locations throughout the year, as well as FAR (financial aspects of resettlement) briefings. See [forcespensionsociety.org/news-events/events](http://forcespensionsociety.org/news-events/events) for the latest dates and details.

**The Army Engagement Team**  
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Circle all the differences in the left image and send the panel to HOAY 943, *Soldier*, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU with your full contact details, including email address, by no later than October 30. The winners' names will be published in the December issue. All the usual rules apply.



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# REVIEWS

## MOVIES

### BROTHERS IN ARMS

The making of *Platoon*

➤ IN 1986 **Oliver Stone** recruited a ragtag cast of relative unknowns, sent them on a jungle boot camp and set about turning his semi-autobiographical tale of the Vietnam War into an Oscar-winning epic.

If, like me, you are an avid fan of *Platoon*, then **Paul Sanchez's** documentary, *Brothers in Arms*, released in the UK this month, is a must-see.

Sanchez, who played the unit's medic, Doc (and later starred in *Navy Seals*, as well as appearing in Stone's other Academy Award-winning film, *Born on the Fourth of July*), rallied his old "war buddies" to reflect on the making of the movie.



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MOVIES

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## MOVIES

● *Brothers in Arms* is released on DVD and digital download on October 5



**Willem Dafoe, Tom Berenger, Charlie Sheen, Johnny Depp, Kevin Dillon**

and **John C McGinley** – to name a few – look back on how they got their parts and the infamous training programme devised by legendary military adviser, retired US Marine Corps captain and Vietnam veteran Dale Dye.

I was amused to hear Dillon recalling his dismay at the news that all he needed for two weeks in the Philippine jungle was a toothbrush.

But despite – or likely because of – the deprivations, the actors formed their bonds and became the platoon they were hired to be.

It is striking how close they were. Dye's training prepared them to be as authentic as possible and when their characters were eventually "killed off" on screen, they were immediately put on a plane home.

Sanchez, who was one of the last to go, remembers clearly that the atmosphere changed when people started leaving one by one and the hotel



bar gradually emptied.

It is a testimony to their friendship that nearly all the cast members – some now Hollywood A-listers – came together for the project, although who knows what might have become of Depp's career if someone hadn't stopped him urinating on Stone's head in protest at his confrontational directorial style.

Over 90 minutes, the documentary gives a real sense of the camaraderie that military service brings.

These actors may have only spent three months together, but more than 30 years on, they still wanted to tell their story and remember that they were once "the platoon". ■

### VERDICT:

If there was ever a reason to re-watch *Platoon* for the umpteenth time, this is it

★★★★★

REVIEW: WO2 MIKE OWENS, RE



## Q&A Actor and director Paul Sanchez tells *Soldier* about making *Brothers in Arms*

### How and why did the documentary come about?

I originally wanted to make a music video to the Dire Straits' song *Brothers in Arms* to mark the tenth anniversary of *Platoon*, but life got in the way. Eventually, I decided to get the guys together to do a retrospective on making the film. So, one night I emailed about ten of them and when I woke up in the morning every one of them had got back to me. To a man they said "yes, it's a great idea, what do you need?"

### When did you start filming?

2016 was the 30th anniversary and I knew we couldn't get it out in time for that, but we got going at the start of 2017. I travelled around the world getting the actors – if someone was on set, I had to go and visit them.

### Some are pretty big names now, how did you get hold of the ones you weren't in touch with?

Johnny Depp was filming *Orient Express* and I happened to know someone in the crew, so I asked him to get a note to him. He said he wasn't allowed to talk to him, and I said, "please, just let him know it's from me. Call him 'Learner'." That was his character in the film – it was an old trick we had. If you were in a crowd and someone called out your character's name, you would jump. So, Johnny called me back and couldn't have been happier to do it. If you want him to do a film it's like 40 million dollars – I ordered two large pizzas, so I got a bit of a break.

### It was clearly a transformative experience for you all – have you ever been through anything like it on another set?

Absolutely not. You do get tight on set but never anything as close as this. Mark Moses, Ivan Kane, Charlie [Sheen], Tom [Berenger], Corey Glover and John C McGinley and I were the last ones to die or be wounded and we shared a plane back. Mark asked me "what are you going to do now?"

and I said, "I'm going to visit my family". He said, "do you mind if I go with you?", and I was like, "sure!". You didn't want to disconnect.

### What made it so special?

You don't go to a boot camp like that, and not get paid, unless you've drunk the Kool-Aid. Oliver picked actors who would walk through a wall for him. And Dale Dye taught us how to get through it. I don't know how you put these 24-30 men into such an adverse situation and they come out loving you more! No one was a weak link – even Charlie, baby-faced "Malibu" Charlie, 19 years old – he never tried to get out of anything. He was rappelling, rock climbing. I'd have paid to be in it – and not out of desperation, but the story was just brilliant, and it had to be told.

### What did it mean to you all to be involved in one of the first films that helped the American people understand the war in Vietnam?

Reading veterans' stories and talking to Oliver and Dale, you could see in their eyes how important it was and that gives you a responsibility to dive in and learn as much as you can about what a medic or a private first class does. We were the conduit to getting Oliver's dream out there and no one wanted to be the one to ruin it. But when we saw it, we thought we'd made the worst film ever – someone had their finger on the trigger, or their helmet wasn't right. And then when it did take off and there wasn't a bad review you realised people didn't care about the minute little mistakes, especially the veterans who saw it. That authenticity is all we cared about.

### Do you think in another life you could have been a soldier?

You know, we're actors. I'm proud that none of us got to saying, "we know what it's like." As Willem says in the documentary – the training helped us to be able to pretend better, but don't for a second think that we know anything about what it was really like.

### Thanks for your time, Paul.

Thanks for helping to get the documentary out there. This is my gift to my fellow actors, my way of showing them how much they mean to me. I never got to make that music video so this is the best I could do.

## PICK OF THE MONTH:

# LIFE UNDER FIRE

## Summoning strength in adversity, military style

➤ SINCE helping to pioneer the reality TV sub-genre "hapless civvies take on special forces training", the directing staff on *SAS: Who Dares Wins* have released a steady stream of memoirs of their formative years in the elite echelons of the British forces.

And their steely-eyed glares have also graced the covers of numerous subsequent books urging readers to harness the military mindset and generally become better versions of themselves.

Jason "Foxy" Fox's latest offering, *Life Under Fire*, follows this basic format, but it would be unfair to write it off as just another attempt to cash in on the show's popularity.

Fox candidly documented his mental health struggles in his first title, *Battle Scars*, and the follow-up reads like a heartfelt attempt to pass on the benefit of his experience to those facing adversity or just feeling stuck in a rut.

Speaking to *Soldier* while quarantining ahead of filming series six of the UK show, he explained how he reluctantly came to accept that telling his story might help others.

"I didn't set out to do this," he said.

"To be honest, I didn't really want to do the first book, but after people read it they would say to me 'it's made me realise that I need to talk,' and that fallout was completely unexpected and very rewarding.

"So, I wanted to do something that was a bit more about my spin on where I've got to.

"Yes, there's stuff in there on what I've been through, but it's more about lessons learnt, although not in a preachy way – hopefully in a way that is accessible to anyone."

Subtitled *How to Build Inner Strength and Thrive Under Pressure*, the book was conceived by Fox and co-author Matt Allen to be read either in a linear fashion or for readers to dip in and out of at random.

Its chapters, or phases as they are termed, cover topics such as self-awareness, finding your purpose and developing emotional control – each interspersed with anecdotes from Fox's time in the Royal Marines, his career in TV or life in general.

The section he is most proud of – but also the





● *Life Under Fire*, by Jason Fox, is published by Bantam Press on October 15 and priced £20

## BOOKS

### BOOK RELEASES

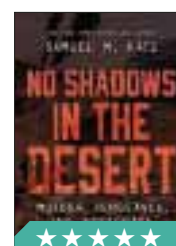


**Draca**  
by Geoffrey Gudgion

JACK Ahlquist is a former Royal Marine who was medically discharged after losing a leg in an IED strike in Afghanistan. When his grandfather

dies, he leaves him his house and boat – a Bristol pilot cutter from 1905 – further angering his estranged father, who expected to receive the inheritance. However, included is a ship's figurehead of a dragon from Viking times, which may or may not be evil and able to control Jack. This is the basis of a story that is a slow starter, but once it gets going is hard to put down. Tense and atmospheric, this excellent book draws the reader in, just like the sinister figurehead. It also weaves in themes of PTSD, so it is fitting that the author is sharing royalties with mental health charity Combat Stress.

**Andy Kay, ex-RS**



**No Shadows in the Desert**  
by Samuel M Katz

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed this original, gripping and much-needed account of the war

against Islamic State from the perspective of Jordan's security services. All too often, we have overlooked the vast role played by indigenous partners in the global war on terror. Jordan is no different and has been an integral partner in Operation Inherent Resolve. This is just as well written as the author's previous books and offers a rare insight into the workings of the country's security services. It is a must-read for all those seeking a better understanding of the battle against Daesh.

**Pte Daniel Levy, RAVC**

most nervous about – examines the role gender plays in different kinds of resilience.

"It's such an emotive subject, so I ummed and ahhed about including that part," he admitted.

"Ultimately, what I was trying to get at is that men aren't necessarily stronger, women aren't weaker – there are qualities that each gender can bring in different situations.

"It's so easy to word it wrong and get misinterpreted or even evoke anger in certain people – and I hope it's been written in a way that it won't do that but will at least encourage a sensible conversation."

Fox is speaking as someone who has had to work hard to regain his equilibrium after a PTSD diagnosis and the subsequent end of his military career led to him considering suicide.

But he emphasises that events don't have to be traumatic to seriously impact a person's mental health – relationship breakdown, bereavement or work-related burnout can affect anyone's wellbeing.

"People tend to think the special forces are super-human legends, but it's not the case," he continued. "They're just normal guys who have learnt a form of resilience to get them through tricky situations.

"I've got mates who have left the military and are fumbling and are having to use that way of thinking in their new lives – they don't always get it right but they're still picking themselves up and trying again.

"That's where the book came from. I wanted to show it is something that can be developed and applied to anything – life, your career, sports, whatever.

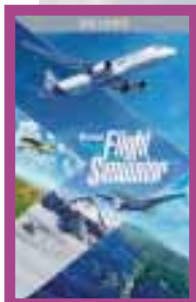
"With a little bit of guidance and by adopting a specific kind of mindset you can find that inner strength." ■

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, SOLDIER

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## GAMES



PICK OF THE MONTH:

### Microsoft Flight Simulator 2020

#### Digital aviation for the next generation

► CLOUD formations aside, taking to the skies tends to produce remarkably similar vistas wherever you are in the world – so keeping new versions of a flight sim interesting can be difficult.

Microsoft, however, has again risen to the challenge with the most ambitious game in its iconic series – which offers airborne adventures on a truly global scale.

In short, virtual pilots can now strap into a line-up of aircraft and venture anywhere in the world. Whether it is a private Cessna 152 from Leeds Bradford, a charter 747 from JFK in New York or something more exclusive out of Tokyo, all journeys are possible.

Asobo Studios have made use of Bing Maps and Microsoft Azure tech to render the entire globe in its digital splendour, resulting in a playing area covering all five continents.

This feat is matched by an impressive level of realism. Weather fronts, for example, can be seen in cockpits from hundreds of miles away – and they can be accurately configured to match the real-world conditions in the area at the time.

There are more than two million cities and

towns and 37,000 airports included too. Some most familiar to troops, such as the runway at Gibraltar, are digitally hand drawn and ramping up graphics settings of the most powerful PCs yields jaw-dropping results.

But the scenery is only a fraction of the entertainment. Players can fly alone or online, interacting with dozens of other pilots, while AI flight patterns emulate real sky traffic.

The fun lies in choice – it's up to you. Die-hard fans of the series can immerse themselves via those long-haul trips across the Atlantic at the controls of a Jumbo.

But if you fancy something smaller there is the option of skimming the Las Vegas Strip, paying a visit to Toronto or barrel rolling over the beaches of the Bahamas in an agile prop.

Alternatively, you could simply stay much closer to home with a *Top Gun*-style flyby over your street.

*Flight Simulator 2020* provides the tools and leaves it down to players how to use them. It's an impressive product, which will satisfy pilots from the armchair to professional. ■

#### VERDICT:

A virtual aviator's dream

★★★★★

REVIEW: DAVID MCDUGALL, CIVVY



## GAMES RELEASES



### Tank Mechanic Simulator For Switch

MANAGEMENT games designed for PC have always been an awkward fit for consoles – mouse-driven, point-and-click

interfaces rarely seem to make the transition.

And this offering – in which players assume the role of a tank museum owner who excavates and restores Second World War armour – is a case in point. Flipping between workshop and the field, virtual mechanics must deal with jobs of varying complexity. Cash paid can be used for workplace upgrades. Sadly, the gameplay is cumbersome and clunky – astonishingly there seems to be no use of the Switch's touchscreen capability, which could have made all the difference. Committed tankies, however, will probably enjoy this nonetheless.

Cliff Caswell, *Soldier*



### WRC 9 for PS4, Xbox One

MOTORSPORT fans will again find their skills tested in the latest instalment of the officially licensed game recreating the race series of the same

name. And they will not be disappointed with this offering. There are plenty of playing modes – ranging from one-off outings to full driver careers and forays into team management – all held against amazingly detailed environments. We sampled the PS4 version – where you should expect a steep learning curve on all fronts. But *WRC 9* rewards hard work, making gamers feel part of the rally fraternity.

WO1 Al Brewer, RLC



# SOLDIER SPORT



## « HOMECOMING

BOBSLEIGH star LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) took to the track in Aldershot for some intensive sprint work ahead of the new season. He travelled to the home of Army sport after plans for an overseas camp were shelved due to the coronavirus. Read about his preparations on page 70...



Picture: Vjesturs Laci/Relords

# COMFORTS OF HOME DELIVER PRE-SEASON BOOST

**W**ITH thoughts of a warm weather training camp in Italy put on hold due to Covid-19, bobsleigh ace LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) turned to more familiar surroundings as he stepped up preparations for the new season.

The two-time Winter Olympian touched down at the home of Army sport in Aldershot for a week-long workout that saw the 39-year-old and his crewmates – which include fellow soldier Pte Olly Butterworth (Para, pictured far right) – pushed in four punishing sessions a day.

The Army Athletics Stadium formed the ideal testing ground for the sprint work that forms a core element of the discipline, while the garrison pool hosted their swimming activity.

Deen was also able to call on the expertise of physical training instructors, who delivered a high-intensity fitness programme.

“There were a lot of obstacles

that prevented us from getting to Italy and that’s when I had a lightbulb moment,” the athlete told *SoldierSport*.

“I thought ‘why not bring the team down for a week?’. I knew Aldershot had the accommodation and facilities needed to carry out an international training camp.

“We had people from all over the world commenting on social media about how good the facilities are and the guys on the team were gobsmacked.

“We have some high-profile players within the group and that was really good for the younger soldiers to see.”

Among the signature names in the Deen camp is former European sprint champion James Dasaolu, whose time of 9.91sec over 100 metres makes him the second fastest British athlete of all time, after Linford Christie.

Fellow speedster Joel Fearon has clocked 9.96sec over the



**"WE  
WANT  
TO GET  
A REAL  
ROCKET  
START"**

same distance and was a bronze medallist in the four-man bobsleigh at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

With such power supporting his talents as a driver, it comes as no surprise to learn that Deen’s focus is on perfecting the crew’s all-important opening burst.

“We are really working on our starts,” he explained. “We want to get a real rocket at the beginning of our runs.

“We’re looking at a reduced season this year. The North American programme has already been called off, so we’ll just be in Europe.

“Some tracks will host double races and we may find ourselves spending a couple of weeks in one location to reduce the movement through countries.

“We will be looking to make an impact. Due to Covid-19 the rules have changed, which means world rankings will not be in force this year.



“That gives us some leeway to experiment as we won’t be penalised if things don’t quite go to plan.”

Competition for places among Deen’s squad will be fierce, with eight athletes vying for the four spots in the starting line-up.

The soldier is also hoping to find the right chemistry for his third Olympic campaign in 2022.

“This camp is our launch for the Games,” he added. “It is about getting our focus on what’s to come over the next 18 months and racing as fast as we can.”

However, the pursuit of glory does not come cheaply.

With bobsleigh no longer receiving national funding he is entirely self-financed, with costs amounting to around £150,000 a year.

Corporate sponsors, military charities and the Army Sport Control Board have been vital contributors to the cause and Deen is also grateful to the backing he continues to receive from the Grenadier Guards’ chain of command.

“Our old commanding officer was fully supportive – he was huge on sport,” he said. “His replacement is even more enthusiastic – that is a huge weight off my shoulders.”

The new season gets under way in November, with the World Championships following in the new year and an Olympic test event in Beijing in February. ■



## DEEN IN NUMBERS

YEAR OF THE SOLDIER’S OLYMPIC DEBUT

2014

POSITION ACHIEVED IN THE FOUR-MAN BOBSLEIGH. HE FINISHED 18TH FOUR YEARS LATER IN SOUTH KOREA

19

SPEED CLOCKED, IN MPH, AS HE WON WORLD CUP SILVER IN CANADA IN 2017

97

NUMBER OF WORLD CHAMPS COMPETED IN

7

ATHLETES ON HIS 2020/21 TEAM

8



## DECISION DUE ON SKI SEASON

THE Service’s winter sports fraternity is waiting for news on when, or even if, they can return to the slopes for the 2020/21 campaign.

Various proposals on how to proceed were being considered by Army Headquarters as this issue went to press.

The Inter-Services schedule is already in doubt after the Royal Navy intimated a possible cessation of overseas sporting activity until April.

Winter pursuits aside, the Army has moved to resume 21 of its recognised 45 disciplines and further progress will be announced soon.

“If our latest recommendations are accepted, we will reach the 50 per cent mark,” said Lt Col (Retd) Paul Leighton, the Army Sport Control Board’s chief of staff. “We are getting there slowly, but safely.”

Netball was among those to

be given the green light and players were due to return to the court for the Inter-Corps Championships this month.

However, the tightening of coronavirus restrictions – which included the limiting of indoor sports to six people – prompted a rapid rethink.

“We had made plans for a knockout competition over three days and the draw had been made,” Maj (Retd) John Killoran, secretary of the Army Netball Association, explained.

“But we have had to postpone that until November and are now trying to find an outdoor venue.

“These restrictions could be in place for up to six months so we are also looking at how we can make the Inter-Services, which are due to be held in March, work.

“The Army team will need an outdoor training venue as well but we are confident we can find somewhere.” ■



# SHORTENED SEASON YIELDS POSITIVES FOR REDS

**A**RMY women's cricket team manager Maj Mel Vaggers (AGC (SPS)) has insisted the squad can take plenty of positives from the 2020 campaign – despite the coronavirus pandemic limiting them to just four fixtures.

The Reds recorded a victory and defeat in a Twenty20 double-header with the Free Foresters, before an away clash with Alton was washed out.

However, the players finished on a high with a convincing win over Aldershot Ladies.

"We have been really lucky to get out and play," a delighted Vaggers told *SoldierSport*.

"A lot of credit must go to the Army Cricket Association, who ensured we could go ahead in a safe environment.

"It was all a bit last minute, but we managed to get the team together and have some really good training sessions in and around the games, which meant

we were able to continue the momentum that was generated last season."

In 2019, the Army won both the 40-over and Twenty20 Inter-Services titles and also enjoyed a historic tour to Japan.

The Forces fixtures were cancelled this year but Vaggers highlighted the contribution of newcomers such as 2Lt Connie Cant (RA), Pte Georgie Cant (Int Corps) and OCdt Izzy Harrison, who is due to start Sandhurst imminently, in the fixtures they did play.

She also paid tribute to established players like Sgt Amanda Potgieter (REME).

"We all learnt huge amounts in those training sessions and were trying to put that into practice, which is why the matches were so important," she added.

"There is a lot of new talent coming through and it is vital they remain part of the team and keep improving.



**"THERE IS A LOT OF NEW TALENT"**

"Connie is a potential future captain and we have a number of Reservists as well.

"There were some good individual performances – it was about ensuring those new players picked up from where they left off over the last couple of seasons."

With the shortened campaign now over the focus has turned to the winter training that will follow, with indoor net sessions planned for January onwards.

It is also hoped that a full fixture list can be compiled in time for 2021.

Vaggers said: "Cricket has been played in a really safe environment throughout the summer and there is no reason why we cannot have a full season next year.

"We are already looking ahead to pre-season and our sixes tournament, which allows us to identify the new breed of talent at corps level." ■



# READY FOR RUGBY'S RETURN



**T**HE Army Rugby Union (ARU) has taken steps towards a return to action with news that units can take part in a non-contact form of the sport from October 1.

Ready 4 Rugby allows two teams of up to ten players to engage in training and matches within a specified environment which, for Service personnel, is defined as the boundaries of their garrison.

However, admin instructions and full risk assessments must be submitted and approved prior to any sessions taking place.

Further developments could be announced this month, when the Rugby Football Union will decide if the Army game can progress to contact training.

"If that happens, we might be in a position to play some competitive games before Christmas," Maj (Retd) Chris Fowke, secretary of the ARU, told *SoldierSport*.

He also confirmed that plans are continuing to take shape for next year's Inter-Services campaign, with fixtures against the Royal Air Force at Gloucester's Kingsholm Stadium and the Royal Navy at Twickenham not being ruled out at this stage.

For full guidance on Ready 4 Rugby and links to the necessary documents visit [www.armyrugbyunion.org.uk](http://www.armyrugbyunion.org.uk)

**"IT WAS A STRONG FIELD AND AMAZING RACE"**

● **TRIATHLON** ace Capt Katrina Matthews (RAMC) added another accolade to her haul with victory at the Ironman 70.3 in Estonia.

Fresh from her win at cycling's National 100-mile Time Trial Championships, the officer dominated the women's professional field in Tallinn – posting the fastest swim, bike and run splits of the day to top the standings in style.

The result also saw her qualify for the Ironman World Championships.

"I'm chuffed to win," Matthews said afterwards. "It was a strong field and an amazing race."

Personnel from the enhanced forward presence in Estonia also took part in the race, with the Army finishing an impressive third in the team standings.



## SPORT SHORTS



### Injury ends Murray's bid

**E**NDURANCE athlete Lt Col Christina Murray (Int Corps) saw her attempt to set a new record for the fastest time cycling from Lands' End to John O'Groats scuppered by injury.

The officer, who set a new Edinburgh to York record last year, had hoped to beat the time of 52 hours and 45 minutes set by Lynne Biddulph in 2002 but was forced to withdraw after reaching Kendal.

Murray clocked 416 miles in her first 24 hours.



### Duo earn programme call

**H**OT shots Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) and Spr Michael Bamsey (RE, pictured) have been included in British Shooting's world class programme for 2020/21.

The duo are among a 25-strong cohort to be named within the initiative's national academy set-up, which gives athletes an opportunity to progress to the elite level of their sport.

Talent pathways manager Dean Leak said: "Many who have gone on to achieve world success have graduated from the academy.

"It has an exciting feel with yet again more positive signs the pathway is developing highly talented shooters."



I've chosen the chicken pasta salad – I think you can compare them to a meal deal in a supermarket in terms of quality and taste. I never used to eat the old ones – they were terrible – so I always bought my own lunch, but now I look forward to eating these.

**Bdr Sean Gavin**



**These are much better than the old frozen sausage rolls and pasties, there's far greater choice compared to what we were presented with before.**

**Sgt Adan Horwood**



I went with the ham salad wrap, which I think is a lot healthier than a large sausage roll. I'm very conscious of what I eat so it's great there are halal, vegetarian or vegan choices. I always pick a nutritious meal if I can.

**Sgt Ashley Stubbs**



Soldiers march on their stomachs so if they're not getting the right nutrition they won't function at their full capability. I would always supplement the old "horror bags" but these are great because everything is edible.

**WO2 David Gosney**



The new packs are good for morale, especially if you're on exercise. There's more taste and variety, and the recyclable packaging means they're better for the environment as well.

**SSgt Ricardo Tannis**

Food is a really important part of looking after your body and wellbeing and it's definitely a healthier option than before. It's much easier to be healthy if that option is there in front of you.

**LBdr Jack Bridger**



## Food for the fight

Personnel from 32 Regiment, Royal Artillery share their thoughts on the Army's new lunch pack trials ([page 33](#))

A lot of people just threw the old lunch packs away. There's more snack variety and protein options now, which is why I've chosen the chicken salad.

**LBdr Declan Taylor**







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