

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

Reluctant **HERO**

Victoria Cross
winner speaks of
'complete shock'
at decoration

PLUS

OPERATIONAL HONOURS

Stories behind the medals

WORKING UP A SWEAT

Tigers tackle Central America

MOUNTAIN MISSION

Giving back in Nepal



1915



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2015



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The real VIPs

WELCOME to our April issue – and what a thought-provoking magazine we have for you this month.

After managing to tease an interview out of the very modest and even more camera-shy Victoria Cross winner LCpl Josh Leakey (pages 22-25), *Soldier* had the pleasure of speaking to several other recipients in the latest operational honours and awards list (pages 26-28).

As ever, their citations defy belief and show that the country's appreciation of the risks taken in Afghanistan is not confined to the past.

Last month's commemoration ceremony (pages 15 and 20-21) proved that fact further, bringing another sobering moment of reflection to an organisation hectic with seemingly-endless restructuring (page 7).

Seeing London's busy office workers pour out of their buildings to applaud bereaved families was deeply moving.

The country's VIPs may have been out in force that day but photographers and journalists were practically stepping over these individuals to reach those wearing operational medals and the Elizabeth Cross.

Perhaps our fears about a drop in public support for the Army post-Herrick are ill-founded. I guess only time will tell. ■

S. Goldthorpe



Sarah Goldthorpe ● Editor

Service personnel get a taste for Belize – pages 29-34



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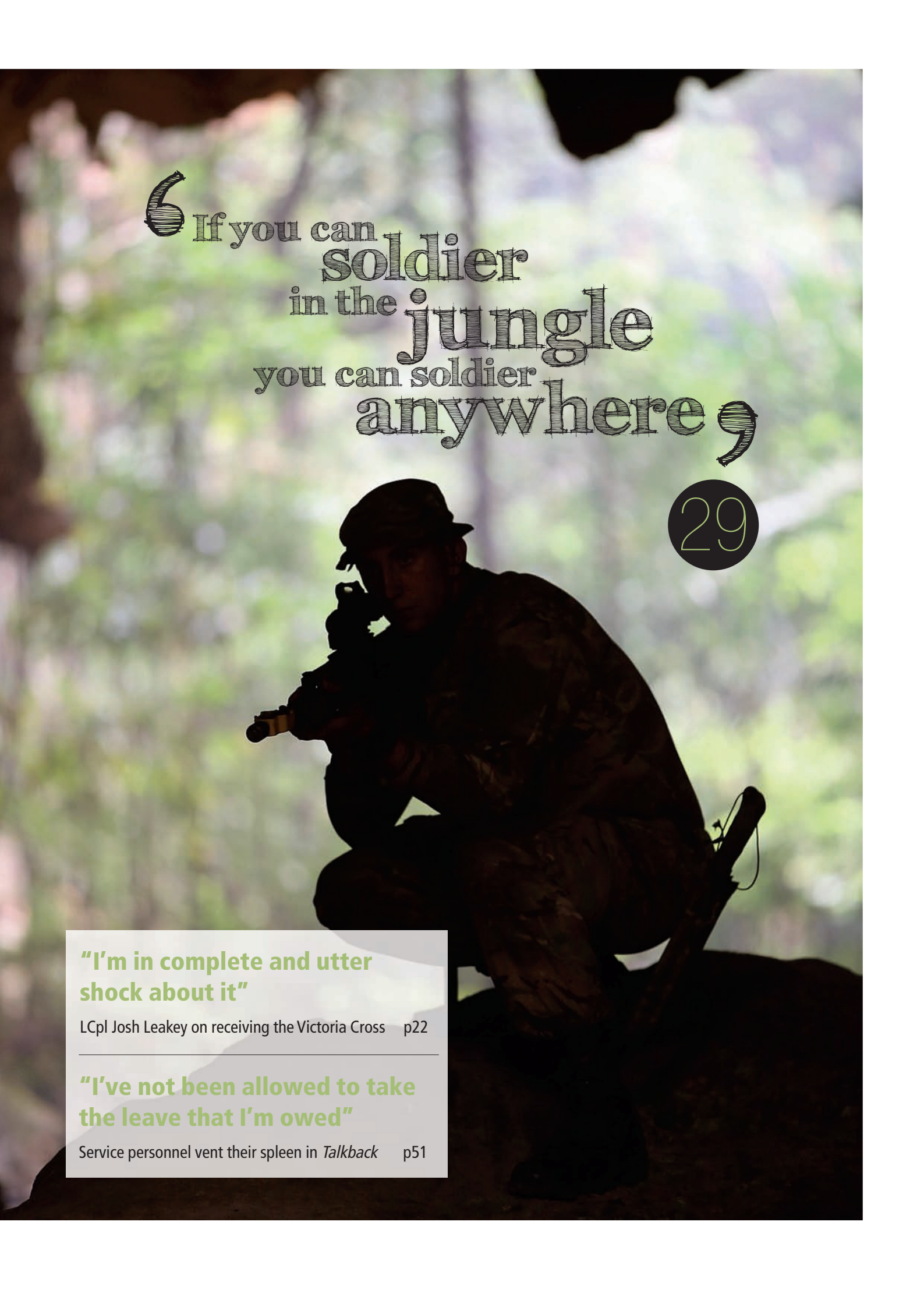
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"I'm in complete and utter shock about it"

LCpl Josh Leakey on receiving the Victoria Cross p22

"I've not been allowed to take the leave that I'm owed"

Service personnel vent their spleen in *Talkback* p51

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Tenner more a month

Predicted one per cent pay rise confirmed

ALL Service personnel will receive a one per cent increase in their basic salary from this month, the MoD has confirmed.

The rise, which is in-line with government policy across the public sector, had been recommended by members of the Armed Forces' pay review body (AFPRB).

It means a UK-based private soldier in the lowest pay band will be £10.75 per month better off.

A lance corporal at the lower end of pay band seven now earns £23,138 per year while a lieutenant at the same level receives £31,426.

"As with all public bodies we would have been naive to expect much more than one per cent," commented *Soldier* reviewer Maj Neil Johnson (AAC).

"An above-inflation increase would have been well received but with the consumer price index below one per cent, the AFPRB would have been hard-pressed to justify it."

The change means there will also be a one per cent increase in compensatory allowances, Reserve bounties, call-out gratuities and most recruitment and retention payments.

Charges for troops eating breakfast, lunch and dinner at pay-as-you-dine facilities will rise by seven



pence per day, as will the rate for personnel who live in at non pay-as-you-dine sites – now set at £4.79.

Rental fees for furnished Service families' accommodation will go up by 68 pence per day.

Increased rates of between one and 20 pence per day will also apply for single living accommodation.

"It would be very useful to see any increase in quarter charges matched with an increase in standards," added Maj Johnson.

Full details of this year's pay award can be found in [2015DIB/04](#).

“We would be naive to expect much more”

Overseas allowance package improved

ALLOWANCES have been stepped up for military personnel serving overseas in a bid to make foreign postings more attractive.

From this month, soldiers will get increased disturbance expenses, enhanced subsistence for travel on assignments in north-west Europe and double the number of funded schoolchildren's visits, from three return journeys per year to six.

Measures have also been introduced to pay for trips to the

UK for those needing resettlement training and for troops entitled to salary advances to be able to claim up to four weeks' worth.

The changes, detailed in [2015DIB/05](#), have been made following feedback from officers and continuous

attitude surveys which suggested soldiers do not rate overseas service.

Tributes to 'tremendous soldier'

A BRITISH Serviceman deployed as a United Nations peacekeeper on Operation Tosca has died during adventurous training.

Pte Jamie Sawyer (RLC), a chef attached to the battlegroup of 2nd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment, lost his life in a canoeing accident in Cyprus.

The 20-year-old, who joined the Army in 2013, was on his first operational tour.

Lt Col Shove Gilby, CO of 2 Mercian, paid tribute to "a tremendous young soldier".

"Full of life and with a keen sense of humour, he was a friend to many," the officer added. "Diligent, hardworking and with a constant smile, he was truly committed to his comrades and a career in the Army."



ARMY 2020 UPDATE

GUNNERS GET GONE

■ THE regimental flag of the Welsh Gunners has been lowered for the last time to signal the unit's disbandment.

More than 300 soldiers and officers from 39 Regiment, Royal Artillery were joined by veterans and family members during the ceremony at Albemarle Barracks in Northumberland.

Personnel have been moved into three different regiments and troops from 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery will return to their former home when they come back to the UK from Germany this summer.

NEW ROLE FOR RATS

■ THE latest stage of Service restructuring is complete with the creation of 7th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters East.

Based in Chetwynd Barracks in Chilwell, the new unit was formed by the merger of 7th Armoured Brigade and 49 (East) Brigade.

Its main function is to provide units to support operations and act as the regional point of command for the East Midlands and East Anglia.

While for 7 Brigade the change has meant a new role and a move from Germany to the UK, its historic Desert Rat insignia has been retained for the new force.

DIVISION COMPLETE

■ MEMBERS of 102 Logistic Brigade have moved under the control of 1st (UK) Division.

The formation has completed its reorganisation and will assume full operating capability on August 1, taking command of seven infantry brigades as well.

LEUCHARS RENAMED

■ FORMER Royal Air Force base Leuchars has been handed over to the Army.

Now known as Leuchars Station, the camp is home to a number of RAF and Army Reserve units, with some 800 troops from The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and 2 Close Support Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers due to move there from Germany this summer.

Members of 110 Provost Company, Royal Military Police will also arrive there between the end of this year and 2018.



GLOBAL SITREP



Pictures: Steve Dock

1 UK

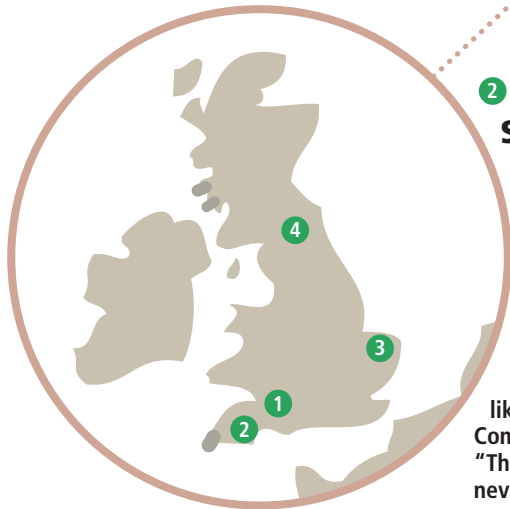
HEAVY DUTY

TROOPS have completed the first training package designed to test the readiness of 3rd (UK) Division's lead armoured task force.

Exercise Tractable, which will become an annual event on the Army calendar, saw some 1,600 soldiers deploy to Salisbury Plain for a month.

During the scenario 570 vehicles, including Challenger 2s, Warriors and Mastiffs, descended on the area before concluding with a combined arms demonstration by troops from 12th Armoured Infantry Brigade.

"It's been great to see how all the elements, especially those involved in finding as well as striking the enemy, do their jobs," commented Sgt Anthony Kipling (Yorks).



2 UK

SURVIVAL SCHOOL

THE wilds of Dartmoor have hosted a series of survival lessons for members of 6th Battalion, The Rifles.

Ten soldiers spent five days practising building shelters, making fire, finding water and foraging for food.

"I've never done anything like this before," explained D Company's LCpl Andrew Spooner. "There are so many facts that I never knew to help you survive."



Pictures: Cpl Steve Blake, RLC



IN NUMBERS:

40

Soldiers from 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 26 Engineer Regiment currently deployed to Egypt as part of the Multinational Force and Observers peacekeeping organisation. The sappers are responsible for upgrading force protection in North Camp, North Sinai.

British Army Training Unit Suffield

British Army Training and Support Unit Belize

JUNGLE JUICE

Battling Belize
– pages 29-34

The Falkland Islands

Germany

Cyprus

Gibraltar

Sierra Leone

British Army Training Unit Kenya



Pictures: Sgt Brian Gamble, RLC

3 UK

ADJUSTING TO CHANGE

THE Light Dragoons have embarked on a live-firing exercise in their new role as a light infantry formation.

The Norfolk-based soldiers deployed to Stanford Training Area on Jackal 2 and Coyote armoured vehicles and worked alongside members of 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery; 21 Engineer Regiment and 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

"Every time we come out on exercise we're learning and getting better at our new role," said Tpr Craig Griffiths.

TROOPS from 9 Regiment, Army Air Corps took to the UK skies for the last time as a unit ahead of disbandment next year.

Exercise Cumbrian Capri saw six Lynx Mk 9A aircrews undertake low-flying flying reconnaissance missions over Kielder Forest.

They will now focus on converting to the Wildcat aircraft when they merge with 1 Regiment, AAC in June 2016.

ISIL WARNING

Government alerts would-be fighters – page 11

MOUNTAIN LIFELINE

Giving back to Gurkhas – pages 44-49

Afghanistan

Brunei



5 GIBRALTAR

REINFORCING THE ROCK

MEMBERS of 10 Signal Regiment stood in for the Royal Gibraltar Regiment during their annual absence on mandatory training.

More than 100 signallers covered security and ceremonial commitments, as well as rehearsing tunnel warfare and conducting adventurous training and community projects.

The RG spent four weeks at Stanford Training Area in Norfolk on Exercise Jebel Tarik, a programme of collective drills and live-firing designed to maintain their high readiness status.



6 NORWAY

ARCTIC MISSION

ARMY Air Corps personnel have resupplied a remote log cabin within Norway's Arctic Circle as part of a Joint Helicopter Command training package.

Lynx Mk 7 crews from 659 Squadron delivered six tonnes of logs to a hut owned by the Norwegian Trust during Exercise Clockwork, which also saw members of 846 Naval Air Squadron fly the Merlin Mk 3 (pictured below).

The annual serial saw some 220 troops rehearse how to operate in extreme cold.



Pictures: POA (Photo) Mez Merrill, RN

7 UGANDA

SUB-SAHARAN SOUNDS

ARMY musicians have visited Uganda and Ethiopia to help the countries develop their military and police bands.

Members of the Corps of Army Music passed on their expert knowledge to the Uganda People's Defence Force, the Ethiopian National Defence Force and Somali Police, as well as offering lessons to youngsters through the Brass for Africa charity in Kampala.



Pictures: Cpl Tom Evans, RLC

8 UKRAINE

TROOPS HEAD EAST

BRITISH personnel have arrived in Ukraine on a mission to support and guide the nation's Armed Forces.

A total of 75 soldiers have deployed on Operation Orbital to provide medical, logistics, infantry and intelligence training for their counterparts.

The troops will be working in an advisory role and are based away from the conflict zone.

The move is part of an international response to the threat posed by pro-Russian rebels, who are trying to take control of the east of the country.

"In light of continued Russian-backed aggression, the UK is committed to providing additional non-lethal support to Ukraine to help them deal with the pressures they are facing," said Defence Secretary Michael Fallon.

Medics from 4 Medical Regiment will work with their counterparts in a "train the trainer" capacity to develop lifesaving skills, while logistics experts will be on hand to highlight deficiencies in the country's distribution system.

Infantry specialists will identify the training requirements of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and intelligence personnel will offer an insight into how to analyse information.

IN NUMBERS:



7

Place finish by **Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (RTR)** at **judo's African Open** in Casablanca. Read more about the Army's elite team on **pages 78-79**.

“We’re getting better at our new role”



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"ARE RAF PERSONNEL MORE VALUABLE THAN US?"

- MESSAGES AND MOANS, PAGES 51-55



Would-be heroes warned

Ex-soldiers taking fight to Isis could be arrested

BRITONS heading to Syria or Iraq to fight the jihadist group Isis face legal action on their return to the UK, the government has said.

Among the scores of Westerners thought to have travelled independently to the region to help the Kurdish militia are Army veterans.

However, travelling abroad to do so – no matter what side a person is fighting for – could be an offence under criminal and terror laws.

"Anyone conducting irregular fighting activity overseas is subject to British legislative sanction," Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond commented. "That is unlawful activity and can be dealt with on their return to the UK."

David Anderson QC, the

government's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, told BBC Radio Four's *Today* that the definition of terrorism was complicated.

"It doesn't just catch people fighting for terrorist organisations," he added. "It could also apply to those fighting against them."

Last month 25-year-old ex-Royal Marine Konstandinos Erik Scurfield was killed while in combat alongside Kurdish forces in Syria.

Earlier Defence Secretary Michael Fallon had visited troops operating in the region, including members of 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, who are training Iraqi forces.

● Books – pages 72-73

“There’s a big market for blokes who want to sew”

TROOPS ON TV:



■ A BBC contest to find the best amateur stitchers in the country saw an unlikely takeover by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Lt Col Neil Stace and former lance corporal Matt Chapple both reached the final of this year's *The Great British Sewing Bee*, which was watched by three million people.

"Sewing is engineering, just with material," said lifelong stitcher Lt Col Stace (pictured). "There's a big market out there for blokes who want to sew but perhaps aren't prepared to because of the stigma."

Despite being the bookies' favourite the officer's Afghanistan-inspired ensemble failed to impress the judges and Mr Chapple, a former vehicle mechanic, claimed top spot.

"It was a bit of a surprise," said the veteran afterwards.



Picture: Shane Wilkinson

■ ELSEWHERE on the BBC schedule, a Serviceman has been showcasing his skills with a paint brush.

Sgt Richard Salter (R Signals, pictured) was due to appear in the final of *The Big Painting Challenge* on BBC One as this issue was going to press.

"It's been stressful at times," the NCO explained.

"All artists are passionate about their work and criticism is tough – but it has been a really good experience."

"The military is disciplined, regimented and in straight lines and art is the opposite to that."



Picture: BBC Pictures

Battlefield hearing protection stepped up

BETTER ear protection is on its way to soldiers after the MoD signed contracts for a new range of plugs.

The tactical hearing protection system will improve situational awareness by allowing troops to talk to each other while using it.

The reusable plugs come in three different models (pictured) and work thanks to a small device which reduces impulse – or sudden – sounds like weapon fire while allowing voices and other background noise to get through.

They will be available in different sizes and are to be rolled out from the summer. "Servicemen and women often make and

experience loud noises but this should not just be 'part of the job'," explained Marcus Bruton, dismantled close combat team leader at the MoD's Defence, Equipment and Support organisation.

He said the new kit would provide a "step change" in comfort and had already been tested with in-service helmets, headsets and goggles.

Specialist user and dismantled close combat versions will also be made available to those in certain roles.



NEW TEST FOR MEDICALLY DOWNGRADED TROOPS

■ **INJURED** soldiers no longer have to undertake the 1.5-mile run in the Army's physical fitness test in order to prove their capability.

From this month, a new trial called the alternative aerobic assessment will be used for those whose condition prevents them sprinting.

It will see the 7,000-odd troops graded as either medically limited deployable or medically non-deployable put through their paces on a static bicycle called the Wattbike (pictured) instead.

"This equivalent test will let us gauge fitness levels," said Lt Col Brian Dupree (RAPTC), one of the officers behind the change. "We also think it will help personnel recover more quickly, so it's a win-win for everyone."



The A3 assessment, as it is known, must be approved by a medical officer and will be run as a trial for a year before being officially included as part of the military annual training test 2.

It features two stints in the saddle, during which power output is closely monitored.

Almost 500 Wattbikes have been purchased by the Army for the programme.

For more details read 2015DIN07-061.



WILDCAT BARES CLAWS

■ **EFFORTS** to incorporate Wildcat into the Service's aviation fleet are continuing apace.

Air and ground crews from 661 Squadron, 1 Regiment, Army Air Corps will begin six months of conversion training on the helicopter (pictured left) this month, followed by collective drills that will see them declared combat ready by the summer of 2016.

Their instructors will come from 652 (Wildcat Fielding) Squadron, who last month became the first to fire "chaff and flare" countermeasures from the aircraft during Exercise Wildcat Zenith in Cumbria and Northumberland.

So far there are 14 of the platforms in service, with the Army eventually due to receive a total of 30.

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"WHILE IT IS TOUGH IT IS NOT INSURMOUNTABLE"

- CYCLISTS MAKE MARK, PAGES 80-81



Forces medic contracts Ebola

Four other Service personnel monitored after contact

A MILITARY healthcare worker serving in Sierra Leone has been flown back to the UK after being diagnosed with Ebola.

The medic, whose identity had not been revealed as *Soldier* went to press, returned to Britain in an RAF C17 aircraft for treatment at a special isolation unit in London's Royal Free Hospital.

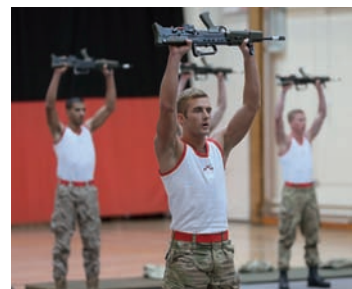
Four other Service personnel who had been in contact with the infected patient were admitted to the same facility and the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle for assessment, but have since

been discharged.

A statement from Public Health England said the troops would be monitored for the remainder of their 21-day incubation period, in line with standard protocols.



“It's more work for PTIs but we have to do something”



NEW COURSE TO MAKE PODGY 'FIGHTING FIT'

■ A NEW scheme to support overweight soldiers is being developed by the Army health team.

The defence operational fitness programme will see existing unit-level “fat clubs” replaced with a standardised curriculum delivered by members of the Royal Army Physical Training Corps (pictured above).

“This won't just be about physical training, but about behavioural change,” explained Lt Col Brian Dupree (RAPTC).

He is working closely with experts at the Institute for Naval Medicine, Headley Court and Public Health England to set up the scheme, which will eventually run across all three Services.

“It's more work for busy PTIs, yes, I get that, but we have to do something about this,” the officer continued.

“We will ensure troops are properly educated in how to run the course and that it is properly resourced.”

Last year a Freedom of Information request revealed that 22 UK soldiers were discharged from the Army between 2011 and 2012 because of obesity.

However, the problem of excess weight is far less common than in the civilian world, where one in four people are now obese.

Pilots for the programme are due to begin in early 2016.

URBAN BOOST

■ WORK is underway to improve the urban training area on Salisbury Plain.

Alleyways, tunnels, compounds and walkways are being added to the mock village to make it more complex.

A so-called “shoot house” is also being constructed to enable troops to practise clearing buildings.

Alterations are due to be complete by early next month.



FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



CAV CALLS FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT

CYCLING legend Mark Cavendish is urging the public to get on their bikes to raise money for wounded troops. The former world road race champion is an ambassador for Hero Ride 2015, which will see 2,000 cyclists take to the roads of Britain and France in aid of Help For Heroes. Official routes

range in length between 30 and 450 miles and will converge in Windsor for a grand finale on June 21 but participants can also organise their own events. Visit www.heroride.org.uk for more details.

Fundraising target:
£1 million
For:
Help for Heroes



FOOTBALL FAVOURS

FANS and players from Nottingham Forest and Bolton Wanderers pulled out all the stops for charity during their recent Championship clash. Both teams warmed up for the fixture in Blesma T-shirts while supporters donated money via collection buckets.

Money raised:
£1,512
For:
Blesma

LOGGIE HELPS DEMENTIA CAUSE

A SOLDIER is gearing up for the Big Pompey Ride cycling event. WO2 Spence Green (RLC) of 240 Transport Squadron will tackle the 300-mile route from York to Fratton Park this month in support of several local charities including one for veterans with dementia.

To sponsor visit:
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GOT AN EVENT?

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"I WAS AMAZED THAT IT GOT TO AN ARENA LEVEL SO QUICKLY" - SINGER'S SOLO SUCCESS, PAGES 70-71



Picture: Steve Dock

COLDSTREAM GUARDS GEAR UP FOR CONCERT

■ MUSICIANS from the Band of the Coldstream Guards are preparing for a St George's Day concert hosted by TV personality Christopher Biggins.

Taking place at Cadogan Hall on April 23, the event will raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

"I always feel a huge sense of pride to be able to be a part of one of the oldest and best known military bands in the world but as a born and bred Englishman, performing on St George's Day the honour will be extra special," said percussionist LSgt Glen Little.

To book tickets for the event log on to www.cadoganhall.com

FAMILY SURVEY

■ ARMY spouses and civil partners are being given their say in the families continuous attitude survey 2015.

Some 14,000 copies of the document have been distributed to selected personnel to pass on to their loved ones.

It asks for feedback on issues such as healthcare, military housing and education.

Complete surveys, which will be treated in confidence, must be returned by May 15.

IN NUMBERS:

£485,000

Amount raised by the Lt Dougie Dalzell MC Memorial Trust since it was set up in 2010 in memory of the fallen Coldstream Guard who died in Afghanistan. The charity provides grants to soldiers, veterans and their families who require extra support.



MAKING SPACE FOR ENTERPRISING VETERANS

■ SPARE MoD buildings are to be transformed into business premises to help self-employed Army leavers make a success of their own companies.

The "makerspace" scheme, which is being run by X-Forces and the MoD, has already seen disused military engineering workshops in Aldershot handed over for use by veterans, with other sites around the country likely to follow in the coming months.

"We are delighted that the government is supporting Service leavers with this," said Ren Kapur, chief executive of X-Forces.

The buildings will be equipped with a range of manufacturing equipment and facilities such as 3D printers and robotics.

To get help with a new start-up company contact X-Forces on 0207 811 3236.

HOME TRUTHS



A personal view from Catherine Spencer, chief executive at the Army Families Federation...



The price of pastures new

ASSIGNMENT orders are as much a cause of concern for loved ones as they are for soldiers – whether you're waiting for one, disappointed at the outcome or concerned the decision was unfair.

That's hardly surprising when one considers that families' lifestyles are shaped by the area they are posted to, often having to leave their job, friends and school as a result.

So it was with great interest that I visited the Army Personnel Centre (APC) in Glasgow recently to uncover the mysteries of career management.

Assignment orders are ultimately a "green" issue so our organisation's work in this area revolves around communicating timelines, the need to consider families and the Army policy on the care of dependants with disabilities and additional needs (AGAI 108).

The greatest problem we deal with is the need for a timely assignment order from APC so that families can start applying for houses and schools.

However, it appears Glasgow does understand the difficulties that moving causes and wants to make the process as stress-free as possible.

I was pleased to find that career

managers recognise the need to match the soldier's choice with the Army's operational need. But, of course, this is not always possible.

The jobs board, where a team of officers determines where you'll be sent, can seem like a lottery. But on witnessing one I was impressed.

Five officers discuss each role and the range of applicants.

They talk about the ability of each individual, their suitability for the job and the needs of the family.

I was surprised by how much emphasis this system placed on personal circumstances, with the location of families and girlfriends being carefully considered.

What was also clear was the fairness in the process.

When you don't get the position you hoped for it is easy to assume there has been some underhand dealing but what I saw was rigorous discussion and decisions based on experience, capability and welfare.

It highlighted that soldiers should not be afraid to make their case for a particular location as boards do take this seriously.

www.aff.org.uk

"I'M GOING TO TAKE THINGS ONE STEP AT A TIME BUT IT'S AN ENCOURAGING START"

- JUDO PLAYER EYES MEDAL PUSH, PAGES 78-79



Coming together to remember

Army community unites for 'moving' Afghanistan service

A SERVICE of commemoration has taken place at St Paul's Cathedral in London to mark 13 years of operations in Afghanistan.

Among those to attend the event, which was broadcast live on BBC One, was Her Majesty the Queen, serving soldiers, veterans, bereaved families, Nato personnel, charity workers and Prime Minister David Cameron.

After the service troops and military bands marched from the cathedral to Guildhall in tribute to those who died in the conflict.

Families followed on from the parade, to emotional applause from the city's spectators.

Kerry Ashworth, the mother of the late Victoria Cross winner LCpl James Ashworth (Gren Gds), read a prayer during the service.

"I am so grateful for the opportunity to give my thanks today," she said afterwards.

The event featured a fly-past by some of the aircraft involved in the campaign, including Apaches, Chinooks and a Hercules.



INSIDE ST PAUL'S

» What did the service mean to those in the congregation?



Capt Gary Barrow (KRH), Afghanistan veteran

"The last decade of my military career has been entirely focused on Afghanistan but there hadn't really been a chance to close that chapter. This service was a fitting way to do that, and to sit back and think about the guys we lost along the way."

Helena Tym, mother of Rfn Cyrus Thatcher (KIA 2009)

"It was very moving, and we got to meet others with their own stories of loss. I know some complained about who was and wasn't invited, but Cyrus signed up to serve Queen and country so I thought it was right those people were there."



APACHE DECISION LOOMS

A DECISION on the replacement for the Mk 1 Apache will be made in a year, defence chiefs have said.

The MoD is in talks with AugustaWestland and Boeing to buy 50 latest-generation models of the airframe, which is due to reach its end-of-service date within the next decade.

A spokesman for the department said it was working on finding best value for money for the taxpayer, with the assessment phase due to conclude in March 2016.



Bigger Picture
- pages 20-12

Final steps for Everest team

A MOUNTAINEERING team has topped off two years of training by taking to a pressurised chamber to simulate the high altitudes they will face when attempting to summit Mount Everest next month.

The six members of the British Army Everest 15 team used state-of-the-art facilities at Leeds Beckett University to learn how their bodies will cope with reduced oxygen levels.

After delaying the adventurous training mission from last year, the soldiers (pictured in training below) are set to deploy to Kathmandu on April 6 before tackling the 8,848-metre peak from its northern side in May.

"The hyperbaric chamber tells us how each individual's blood reacts at altitude, which will help us to work out how long we need to spend acclimatising in the Himalayas," explained expedition leader WO2 Si Naylor (RAPTC).

"The results will also be fed back to the wider Army to help troops prepare for other high-altitude deployments."

The team's progress can be followed on Twitter via @ArmyEverest14 and through the British Army Everest 14 Facebook page.



Picture: Mark Owens

BULLETPROOF BOOST

THE revolutionary vehicle aiming to reach 1,000mph with the help of British Army personnel has been given a bulletproof coating.

Panels of woven glass fibre have been fitted to both sides of the Bloodhound car – which will take on the world land speed record in South Africa next year – to help it withstand impact from the loose fragments thrown up as it gathers speed.

"If a piece of the wheel were to fly off, or indeed a stone lying just under the surface of the desert were to flick up, they could penetrate the incredibly strong carbon composite cockpit," said programme spokesman Jules Tipler.

The Bloodhound team will take to Newquay Airport's runway in August to test the car at 200mph.

IN MOVIES...



"Awesome slasher with great old-school horror"

★★★★

PAGES 68-69





"I DON'T THINK IT'S EVER GOING TO SINK IN"

– MEDAL SHOCK, PAGES 22–25

Previous winner: A shot by *Soldier* photographer Graeme Main



SHOW OFF YOUR SNAPS

■ THE 2015 Army Photographic Competition is open for entries.

Regulars, Reserves, cadets and MoD civilians who work for the Service are all invited to take part, with prizes available in both amateur and professional categories.

Submitted pictures and videos – with the exception of the Op Herrick group – must have been taken between September 5, 2014 and the closing date on October 2. They will be used to promote the work of the military.

For details and an entry form visit www.army.mod.uk/photocomp

THE 2015 CATEGORIES

- Professional video
- Multimedia
- Professional portrait
- Amateur portrait
- Professional sport/adventure training
- Amateur sport/adventure training
- 'Soldiering' professional
- 'Soldiering' amateur
- Professional portfolio (six photographs)
- Amateur portfolio (four photographs)
- Best professional Army PR image
- Best online image voted for by public



Operation Herrick

- Best professional Herrick image
- Ten years in Afghanistan – professional portfolio
- Ten years in Afghanistan – professional video

“We wanted to bring this to life”

Trashing the textbooks

Film and CGI bring military lessons to life instead

SPIRAL-bound textbooks are set to become a thing of the past for the Army as it overhauls the way it presents information to soldiers.

A team at the Land Warfare Centre is working on a project called “bringing doctrine to life” which sees them using film, computer-generated imagery (CGI) and music to create online lessons that are more accessible to troops.

The new material can be accessed via the Army Knowledge Exchange and theory from the latest draft of the *Battlegroup Tactics Offensive Operations* document has already been modernised in this way.

A film describing a new divisional headquarters has also been uploaded.

“People now have completely different learning styles,” said Maj Dale Clarke (RA) of the tactical doctrine support team, which is leading the overhaul.

“Young soldiers are used to being bombarded by different media streams and we wanted to bring this material to life and make it more accessible to a wider audience.”

Footage of vehicles such as Warrior and Challenger 2 was captured specifically for the project and the team has staged certain scenarios to

aid their illustrations.

“We have created an up-to-date enemy that really looks the part,” Maj Clarke added. “They have weapons such as AK47s and we also borrowed a T-55 from The Tank Museum in Bovington.”

“We’ve become good at incorporating ourselves into exercises to get images and have even filmed troops dropping from a Hercules.”

Experienced colour sergeants have been called upon to provide detailed voiceovers and work is now underway on a number of other subjects including urban operations.



Future films: The tactical doctrine support team has been shooting live footage in order to make military theory more interesting for younger Service personnel



GOT A SCOOP FOR SOLDIER?

If you or your colleagues have a story for our team contact us via 01252 787096 or news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

BOMBING TOWARDS ANOTHER WORLD RECORD...

■ ARMY athletes are gearing up for this month's Virgin Money London Marathon.

Among those who will be pounding the streets on April 26 is Maj Iain Church (RE, pictured), who will be attempting to beat his own world record for completing 26.2 miles while wearing a 70lb protective bomb suit.

The Serviceman claimed the title at the Marine Corps Marathon in 2012 after finishing in 6hr 55min 59sec.

“If I could get sponsorship for all the funny looks I’ve had while training then I’d have met my fundraising target already,” the 41-year-old, who will compete alongside three other Royal Engineers, told *Soldier*.

To help him raise £50,000 for The Royal British Legion visit uk.virginmoneygiving.com/bombsuitchallenge



Picture: Graeme Main

How will the new 2015 Armed Forces Pension Scheme affect you and your family?

The Forces Pension Society can tell you and will help you get the most from your pension.



FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES
AND THEIR FAMILIES



HOW WE CAN HELP

Armed Forces Pensions are complex and we can help ensure you **get the most from your pension** by advising **when to leave** (and when not to), commutation, how to deal with **pension troughs**, the implications of **redundancy, divorce**, how you might be able to top up your pension, the **impact of AFPS2015** and if you are a reservist, what the new pension rules mean for you. Help is available from our acknowledged **Pension Advisory Service** experts.

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April 2015 has seen the introduction of the new Armed Forces Pension Scheme and you need to know how it affects you and your family. And if you **join us online now** (membership for you and your partner costs just £35 p.a.), we'll send you a **City Break voucher worth £100** (Ts & Cs apply); just visit our website at **www.forcespensionsociety.org**, quoting Promo Code **SDM2015**.



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Tel: 020 7820 9988 - email: memsec@forpen.co.uk - www.forcespensionsociety.org





“THE HEAT IS LIKE NOTHING I’VE EVER EXPERIENCED” – BLISTERING BELIZE, PAGE 90

TRAILWALKER TIME

■ ENTRIES are open for the 2015 Oxfam Trailwalker challenge.

The event, which began life as a training exercise for the Queen’s Gurkha Signals, follows a 100-kilometre route across the South Downs and is open to teams of four.

Personnel from The Royal Gurkha Rifles won the 2014 race in a time of 9hr 56min and this year’s contest will take place from July 25 to 26.

For more details on how to enter visit www.oxfam.org.uk/trailwalker



Picture: Graeme Main

“
TO SERVE AT
ABBEY WOOD
CAN BE A
FRUSTRATING
EXPERIENCE
”

Talkback tantrums
– pages 51-55

COMEDY FOR A CAUSE

■ A MIDLANDS comedy night is set to raise money for injured soldiers later this month.

Organised by former Grenadier Guard and stand-up comedian Sebastian Miles, the event at Birmingham’s Glee Club on April 20 will feature a range of acts.

Profits from ticket sales will go to Help for Heroes and The Colonel’s Fund Grenadier Guards. For details visit www.glee.co.uk

CHEMICAL WARRIORS

■ THE UK’s Air Assault Task Force has been learning how to deal with a chemical attack.

Troops from 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment deployed to Stanford Training Area for Exercise Urban Eagle – a package focused on tackling chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons and undertaking urban warfighting.

“When you hear the shout of ‘gas, gas, gas’ it really gets the adrenalin going,” commented Pte Michael Glynn.



Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC

Troops to lift lid on private lives

Compulsory surveys will build better picture of workforce

SOLDIERS are being asked to reveal details of what they do in their spare time, in one of the biggest data-capturing exercises the Army has ever undertaken.

The personal preferences matrix will go live on the defence intranet from next month.

It will see all personnel complete a short, compulsory survey about their lifestyle, including questions on alcohol consumption, musical taste, social media use, sexual preferences and political views.

Other optional categories will quiz them on their favourite holiday destinations and clothing suppliers.

“Information we capture from this programme will help us to monitor the lifestyles of our people and the impact this could have on their military activities,” explained Lt Col Eric Blair (AGC (SPS)), the officer overseeing the initiative.

“Some lines of questioning may seem a bit odd at first glance but this information will help us plan future health campaigns, welfare provision and, above all, to meet our diversity obligations when it comes to the political and social make-up of deployable units.

“If one formation is found to



Picture: Sgt Barry Pope, RLC

Online activity: The matrix will quiz troops on their lifestyles, including their use of social media and the web

contain entirely right-wing soldiers, for example, we may wish to correct that by moving some troops between cap badges.”

The announcement follows the news that Servicemen and women are being asked to reveal their sexuality anonymously on DII.

However, the personal preferences matrix will link individuals to the information they provide.

“All of these details will help us to know exactly who our soldiers are as individuals,” added Lt Col Blair.

“The few staff at Army HQ who have access to this information will not be judging, but will be on a well-meaning mission to ensure that the only thing that remains private in the Service of tomorrow is the rank.”

WIN

A set of merino wool clothing

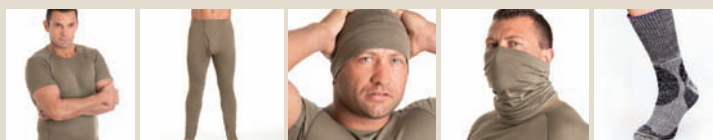
THE Army Air Corps had a head start with last month’s spine lines clues.

(Bdr Jordan) Bush, (Maj Stewart) Pearce, (Capt Nathan) Torbett and (SSgt Lewis) Whittaker were all quoted in our feature about Exercise Crimson Eagle in the USA.

This month, courtesy of next-to-skin protective clothing specialist Armadillo Merino (www.armadillomerino.com), we have two head-to-toe packages of items to give away in light olive.

To be in with a chance of scooping a set, which includes a T-shirt, long johns, beanie hat, neck gaiter and socks, worth nearly £200, tell us what links the words on the spine of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by April 30. Good luck!





ABOVE & BEYOND



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The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation. A vehicle's actual fuel consumption may differ from that achieved in such tests and these figures are for comparative purposes only. *Finance is subject to status and only available to serving members of HM Forces, aged 18 and over resident in Mainland UK and N.Ireland. Indemnities may be required. Finance rates correct at time of going to press.

THE BIG PICTURE

> AFGHANISTAN SERVICE, LONDON


AERIAL SALUTE

AN Apache attack helicopter soars above London during a fly-past by Forces aircraft to mark the end of operations in Afghanistan. The airborne tribute followed a service at St Paul's Cathedral to honour those who fought and died in the conflict. Military bases throughout the UK and Germany also held commemorative events for personnel and families.

Picture: SAC Nicholas Egan, RAF





A man in a British Army uniform, including a red beret and a brown jacket, stands in a dark studio. A large, bright spotlight is positioned to his left, casting a strong light on him. The background is dark and indistinct.

I'M JUST **ONE OF THE**
LADS, SOMEONE
WHO'S BEEN PLUCKED
OUT OF **OBSCURITY**

Camera-shy: Despite feeling uncomfortable in the spotlight, LCpl Leahey says he is 'deeply honoured' to be singled out

Victoria Cross winner LCpl Josh Leakey is a tad bemused at topping the latest operational honours and awards list...

Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe
Pictures: Graeme Main

It was a car journey that had bad news written all over it. After being summoned by his commanding officer and regimental sergeant major early one morning back in February, LCpl Josh Leakey (Para) was told he must attend an important meeting at Army Headquarters.

Puzzled, the Serviceman knew there was little point asking the boss any more questions about it.

Was he in trouble? Had he unwittingly stepped out of line?

Sitting in silence on the road to Andover, the 27-year-old wracked his brain.

As it happened, his concern couldn't have been more misplaced.

A one-on-one meeting with the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, brought the dumbfounding news that the Serviceman was to be decorated with the highest possible award for gallantry in the face of the enemy – the Victoria Cross.

When he receives the prestigious medal at an investiture ceremony this spring, the member of 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment will become only the eleventh British soldier to be honoured in this way since the end of the Second World War – and the first living recipient from Afghanistan.

"I'm in complete and utter shock about it," LCpl Leakey told *Soldier*.

"I don't think it's ever going to sink in.

"Why me? I mean, I was just another Parachute Regiment bloke in Afghanistan.

"To be singled out like this is staggering. But I am deeply honoured."

Flash back to August 22, 2013, however, and the reason for the honour becomes clearer – even if LCpl Leakey himself remains somewhat baffled.

After embarking on a combined UK/US assault to disrupt insurgent activity in the Taliban stronghold of Bar Nowzad, the Serviceman and his colleagues came under accurate machine-gun and RPG fire.

On an exposed forward slope of a hill the troops found themselves pinned down and after trying to extract from their position for an hour, a US Marine Corps captain was shot

and wounded with communications put out of action.

"The enemy were determined, even when air support was around," recalled LCpl Leakey. "They stood and fought, which was fairly uncommon.

"So I thought 'let's do this right'."

With total disregard for his own safety, the paratrooper dashed across a large area of ground being showered with rounds.

Some 20 fighters had now surrounded the force's machine-gun teams and a mortar section, rendering the fire support ineffective.

Despite being the most junior commander in the area, LCpl Leakey took control of the situation and moved across the hill to give first aid to the wounded officer.

Under attack, and weighed down by more than 60lbs of kit, he went to the top of the peak to get one of the suppressed machine guns back into action.

On reaching it, and with rounds impacting on the frame of the weapon, the soldier moved it to another position and began engaging the opposition.

He then cheated death again by going back down to pick up another machine gun, which he had decided needed to be set up on the crest of the hill.

"With rounds splashing around him, LCpl Leakey overcame his fatigue to resite the gun and return fire," his citation reads.

"This was the turning point as, inspired by his actions, and with a heavy weight of fire now at their disposal, the force began to fight back with renewed ferocity."

Thinking back to the mission, LCpl Leakey admits that it will stick in his mind.

"Afterwards when there was time to calm down, I had to have a moment," he explained.

"I was hanging out, but I had a drink and moved on. We still had another six or seven hours left on patrol and needed to continue."

The soldier's use of the word "we" is telling.

Like most personnel highlighted for honours, he is adamant that his actions were the result of an incredible team effort.

"It's a very simple story," he continued.

"Someone got wounded and a group of blokes helped out where they could. »»

Did you know?

Victoria Crosses are cast from the bronze cascabels of two cannons that were captured from the Russians during the Crimean War's Siege of Sevastopol in 1854-1855.





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»» "The operation was definitely something where everyone pulled together; there were loads of us involved."

"When they told me about the award one of the first things I thought was 'what about the others?'."

"At first I couldn't tell my mates, and not being able to talk to them about that was one of the hardest things I've ever done."

For a Victoria Cross recipient, that is certainly saying something.

So what do his comrades make of his success now?

"We're incredibly proud of Josh," a friend in 1 Para told *Soldier*.

"He is fiercely loyal to his fellow paratroopers and will carry his award as a mark of their commitment to the campaign."

LCpl Leakey's name may go down in history – and his face added to the walls of military museums across the world – but he is determined to avoid any such celebrity and settle down into regular battalion life as soon as possible.

"I will definitely be getting beasted for this when I get back," he smiled.

"But at the end of the day that encounter was just another patrol in a seven-month operational tour."

He continued: "I always knew I'd be in The Parachute Regiment."

"When I joined I'd read the stories about VC winner Bryan Budd and what he did in 3 Para. So to be put in the same bracket as him is out of this world."

"My regiment is the most important thing to me and I hope this medal is well received by them because it's on behalf of them all."

"It's a reflection of the long, hard service they performed in Afghanistan."

"I would be lying if I didn't think this was a big thing – it is – but I'm just one of the boys who has been plucked out of obscurity for this and that's where I want to return."

"Receiving this decoration shouldn't change anything." ■

FOR VALOUR

LCpl Josh Leakey's citation reads:

Displaying gritty leadership well above that expected of his rank, LCpl Leakey's actions single-handedly regained the initiative and prevented considerable loss of life, allowing a wounded US Marine officer to be evacuated. For this act of valour, he is highly deserving of significant national recognition.



IN THE FAMILY

● Amazingly, LCpl Leakey is not the first member of his family to be a recipient of the Victoria Cross.

His second cousin twice removed, Sgt Nigel Gray Leakey, was posthumously decorated in November 1945 for his front-line heroics in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) during the Second World War.

The member of the King's African Rifles was 28 when he was killed in action.



Hall of fame

Only three other British soldiers have been awarded with the Victoria Cross since the Falklands War – two of them posthumously.



LCpl James Ashworth
(Gren Gds)
Afghanistan
2012 (KIA)



Cpl Bryan Budd
(Para)
Afghanistan
2006 (KIA)



LSgt Johnson Beharry
(PWRR)
Iraq
2004

► To find out more about the stories behind the UK's highest military decoration visit the Imperial War Museum's free Extraordinary Heroes exhibition, which contains the world's largest collection of Victoria Crosses.

www.iwm.org

HEAD AND SHOULDERS

Pictures: Steve Dock and Cpl Jamie Peters, RLC



LONDON CALLING

Cpl Benjamin Spittle (RAMC)

**Queen's Commendation
for Valuable Service**



"THEY were really appreciative of everything we did," combat medic Cpl Benjamin Spittle (RAMC) says, reliving the moment on Op Herrick 19 that has seen him decorated with the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

Working in support of the Afghan National Army's 30 Brigade inside Checkpoint Yakhchal in November 2013, the Reservist found himself managing a major mass casualty situation following an operation to destroy a Taliban stronghold.

With the area full of the seriously wounded and dead, the London Ambulance Service paramedic worked with composure to treat sick troops and rally those around him to help.

He had only his issued medical pack and rudimentary Afghan supplies, but nevertheless the dedicated soldier managed to help save the lives of those suffering injuries ranging from multiple gunshot wounds to catastrophic haemorrhaging.

"I went to see one of the badly injured troops afterwards and he recognised me," Cpl Spittle tells *Soldier*. "He was so grateful and that was a really good feeling. In London you don't ever get a 'thank you'. People think healthcare is their right.

"It's a bit embarrassing to be singled out like this but I'm proud of what I did."



IT'S AN
EVENT THAT
WILL STAY
WITH ME
FOR THE
REST OF
MY LIFE

BROTHERS IN ARMS

Capt Will Hall (RA)

Military Cross

LCpl James Brynin (Int Corps)

Mention in Dispatches



"FROM the moment he joined the Brigade Reconnaissance Force it was clear that we were blessed with a truly special individual," said Lt Col Richard Slack (9/12 L) at the time of LCpl James Brynin's death in Afghanistan in October 2013.

Now, 18 months later, the fallen Serviceman has been recognised for his contribution to Op Herrick 19 with a posthumous Mention in Dispatches.

Tasked to intercept enemy communications in the insurgent stronghold of Kakaran on what was his first combat mission, the signals specialist held fast to continue his work despite the onset of intense enemy fire.

Weathering the projectiles striking his compound, the composed junior NCO rallied to assist a machine gunner and two snipers in fighting off the opposition.

Having won the initial firefight, he then started to extract up a ditch behind his officers. Moments later he was shot and killed.

Some 20 metres ahead was Capt Will Hall (RA), who reacted instantly, crawling through enemy fire to give his comrade immediate first aid.

The fire support team commander then turned his attention back to the opposition, engaging his personal weapon and calling for artillery support.

"At the time it felt like it was going on forever but afterwards you realise it was only a few minutes," recalls Capt Hall, who has been decorated with a Military Cross for his role that day. "It's an event that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

"We will never forget LCpl Brynin and everything he did.

"It was the biggest honour of my entire life to have served with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force and this award is a reflection of that group."

ABOVE



Soldier's pick of the individual stories behind the latest operational honours and awards for the period October 2013 to June 2014...

FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

SSgt Kate Lord (RAPTC)

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service



AS the sole female physical training instructor at the Afghan National Officer Academy, SSgt Kate Lord (RAPTC) had her work cut out.

Battling highly misogynistic views among the Afghan men she was mentoring, she became a force to be reckoned with and soon won their respect and admiration.

Training out-of-hours to develop the cadets' fitness with competitions and classes, she worked tirelessly to design a physical training syllabus for female recruits once they started to arrive at the establishment.

Her citation says: "Nobody in this mission, male or female, has done more to further the standing of women in the Afghan National Army."

Speaking to *Soldier* about the award, the Servicewoman adds: "It's only when you look back and reflect that you realise the influence you've had.

"It's nice for someone to recognise how hard you worked, and I am so proud, but I genuinely just see this as my job."

HELICOPTER HERO

Capt William Fry (9/12 L)

Mention in Dispatches



THANKS to the actions of Capt William Fry (9/12 L) in November 2013, the catastrophic loss of a support helicopter was prevented.

Overseeing a troop of 30 soldiers during a Brigade Reconnaissance Force pre-dawn raid in the insurgent area of Koshkawa, he led personnel through a rapid and daring assault under intense fire.

As the troops tried to extract by helicopter, machine-gun rounds began to strike the airframe.

It was hit twice but, despite the chaos of dust and rounds passing in front of them, Capt Fry rallied his men back from the platform to form a baseline and suppress the enemy.

"In those incidents Fry showed gallantry, leadership and speed of thought," his citation says.



WARRIOR RESCUE

Pte John Pyatt-Payne (Mercian)

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

WHEN an IED struck the vehicle he was inside during an operation to protect a road network in Helmand province, 26-year-old Pte John Pyatt-Payne (Mercian) sprang into action.

The device had killed the Warrior sergeant major, WO2 Ian Fisher (Mercian), and injured four other members of the company.

But despite having been thrown across the inside of the vehicle the junior soldier remained composed.

Realising he was the only one unhurt, and disregarding the threat from secondary devices, he climbed on top of the platform to assess the injuries of WO2 Fisher.

Alone, he began to treat his comrade while reassuring a distressed driver. Giving critical first aid, he remained calm while exposed to the very real danger of follow-up small arms fire.

"Pyatt-Payne's bravery was outstanding in the confusing first minutes of this tragic event," the Serviceman's citation reads.

"For someone so young he showed decisiveness and composure beyond his years and rank."





SNIPER STAMINA

A BRIGADE Reconnaissance Force sniper whose shrewd actions saved countless lives on the battlefield has also been recognised in this year's

operational honours and awards list.

The soldier, who cannot be named for personal security reasons, was on his first operational tour of Afghanistan where he repeatedly put himself in the line of fire to beat back a determined opposing force.

Among his most remarkable acts of skill, the Serviceman identified an enemy commander at extreme range using radio intercepts.

With a clear and cool head, he then killed the individual at a staggering distance of 1,347 metres.

Weeks later, during an operation in the Taliban stronghold of Kakaran, members of his troop were searching a canal line when a suicide vest and rocket were discovered.

Observing a group of men 300 metres away, the sniper suddenly identified a machine gun being brought to bear on his colleagues.

With only seconds to engage he took the shot. The target was struck and then exploded – it was an insurgent wearing a suicide vest.

Such swift action undoubtedly saved the lives of those around him.

Responsible for some 70 per cent of the enemy casualties inflicted by the Brigade Reconnaissance Force at that time, the Serviceman's commitment has now been rewarded.

"His decision making behind his weapon system was well beyond that expected for his rank and experience," the citation says.

OPERATIONAL HONOURS AND AWARDS



» AFGHANISTAN

Victoria Cross

LCpl Joshua LEAKEY, Para

Commander of the Order of the British Empire

Brig Martin Patrick MOORE, late RLC; Brig Paul Anthony Edward NANSON, late RRF; Col David James Lord SWANN, late QRH; Col Gary Paul WILKINSON, late RA; Brig James Medley WOODHAM, late R Anglian.

Officer of the Order of the British Empire

Lt Col Andrew Derek GRIFFITHS, AGC (SPS); Maj Neil Alexander KELLY, Mercian; Lt Col David Brian KENNY, R Irish; Lt Col Richard Oliver SLACK, 9/12 L.

Member of the Order of the British Empire

SSgt Lee Edwin ALLEN, Int Corps; Cpl (now A/ Sgt) Adam Ronald Peter BUTLER, RE; Capt Edward Philip CHALLIS, Scots; Maj Duane Joseph FLETCHER, QARANC; Capt Duncan Mark KNOX, Para; Capt (now Maj) Declan John LYNN, AGC (ETS); Maj Jeremy Dawson WALTERS, RA.

Distinguished Service Order

Lt Col James Rowland MARTIN, PWRR; Maj Thomas Robson MCDERMOTT, RTR; Lt Col (now Col) James Christopher RODDIS, Scots.

Military Cross

Capt William Andrew HALL, RA; Maj Angus Myles Arthur TILNEY, KRH.

Mention in Dispatches

Sgt Christopher Stephen BROWNE, 9/12 L; LCpl James Lee BRYNIN, Int Corps (KIA); LSgt Glenn CLARKE, Coldm Gds; LCpl Luke Oliver Pratley FORSHAW, Coldm Gds; Capt William Alan FRY, 9/12 L; Capt Alasdair John GRANT, 9/12 L; SSgt Stuart HOLLIS, 9/12 L; Capt James Richard HOWLIN, Coldm Guards; LCpl (now A/ Cpl) Jamie MCCAPPIN, RA; Capt Edward Gervase Colyer MONCKTON, 9/12 L; Cpl Jonathan William OLIVER, 9/12 L; Lt (now Capt) Luke Joshua WADMAN, RA.

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

WO1 Simon James William HALL, RLC; Pte John Steven PYATT-PAYNE, Mercian.

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

SSgt (now WO2) James BATTEN, Int Corps; Col Barry William BENNETT, late RA; Maj Samuel George COOKE, RLC; Lt Col Stephen Weatherley DAVIES, RE; A/Maj (now Maj) Darren Paul ELSEY, PWRR; Cpl Ricky Vincent FLEET, REME; Maj Jeremy Francis GILES, Scots; Maj Gordon GRIEVE, RA; SSgt Robert Charles HORTON, Para; Lt Col Alexander Graham JOHNSON, RAMC; LCpl (now Cpl) Benjamin JOHNSON, Int Corps; Lt Col Nigel Alan JOHNSON, R Anglian; Maj Mark Stuart JONES, RE; Pte Carl David LESTER, RLC; Col Nicholas John LOCK, late R Welsh; SSgt Kate Elizabeth LORD, RAPTC; Brig Neil MARSHALL, late RA; WO2 Mark MCDUGALL, RE; Cpl (now A/ Sgt) Stuart Johnathan MCINTOSH-MCKEOWN, RAMC; Maj (now A/Lt Col) Alexander Robert MCKAY, Mercian; Maj James Fraser Stuart MCLEMAN, Scots DG; A/Col (now Lt Col) John Robert MEAD, RA; Maj Adam Svend MORRIS, RAMC; Sgt (now SSgt) Steven David NIXON, Para; A/Capt (now Capt) Marcus Ian PEMBERTON, Scots; A/Lt Col

(now Maj) Andrew Robert REDDING, Para; LCpl (now A/Cpl) Scott ROBERTSON, R Signals; WO1 Nigel James ROGAN, R Signals; Cpl (now Sgt) Aaron Neil RUFFELL, Int Corps; Lt Col Bilal Muhammad SIDDIQUE, AGC (ALS); Pte (now A/ Cpl) Benjamin Charles SPITTLE, RAMC; Lt Col Andrew Terence STEWART, Scots DG; Maj Gary TAIT, Scots; Lt Hayden John Geoffrey TAYLOR, Int Corps; A/Maj (now Capt) Derek Francis William TICKNER, RA; Col Thomas George VALLINGS, late Yorks; Capt Richard Simon WOOD, Para; Cpl (now Sgt) Michael Terence WRIGHT, Int Corps

» REST OF THE WORLD

Commander of the Order of the British Empire

Brig Hugh Hollingworth BLACKMAN, late Scots DG.

Officer of the Order of the British Empire

Lt Col Benedict Peter Norman RAMSAY, WG; Lt Col Graeme Crichton WEARMOUTH, Scots.

Member of the Order of the British Empire

Capt Mark Edward ACKLAM, R Signals; A/Lt Col Jeremy Charles William MAWDSLEY, RA; A/Lt Col Michael Richard Nigel STEWART, IG.

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

Lt Col Benedict Holland Goddard CAMPBELL-COLQUHOUN, RE; Cpl Lisa Michelle DAWSON, R Signals; Maj Jonathan Lee GILBODY, Lancs; Cpl Karl Dominic PAGE, R Signals; Col Stuart Rokeby ROBERTS, late RLC.

» MISCELLANEOUS

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Cpl Alexander HARRIES, AGC (RMP), OCdt Frances Margaret Emma TOWNEND, UOTC.

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

Maj Paul James STEWART, AAC.

KINGS OF THE CANOPY

TIGERS TEST THEIR
METTLE IN THE
JUNGLE OF BELIZE



Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock

SWEAT soaks into the uniforms of the British soldiers as they race under the jungle canopy to engage the enemy. However, the searing heat of Belize is of little distraction as the personnel retain a steely focus in one of the most challenging environments the Army will find itself in.

A sharp downpour offers a moment's respite but the change in climate fails to halt the pace of the action.

Information feeds back down the lines. "31 mags left" followed by "two enemy confirmed killed".

Details of the skirmish continue to flow until the opposition's tree line offensive is finally defeated.

A successful conclusion to the mission puts another tick in the box for troops from A Company of 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment as they move through the arduous demands of Exercise Mayan Warrior.

The programme delivers a gruelling introduction in how to operate in the jungle – from surviving in its dense undergrowth to mastering the combat skills required for fighting on such terrain.

"This really came out of the blue," Lt Joe Black, A Company's 2iC, tells *Soldier* during a break in training.

"We were only told about it in November and had to write the exercise after our initial recce. It was a quick turn around.

"It is all about basic soldiering. Last year the battalion spent a lot of time preparing for Afghanistan. We were using big vehicles to drive around Stanta and Longmoor. But a counter-insurgency campaign is not conventional soldiering.

"We wanted this to be taught at platoon level. It is a totally new environment for everyone and there is a focus on jungle survival, tactics and navigation. There is no GPS out here so they have to rely on their compass and pacing.

"But this is perfect in terms of future promotion cadres and these drills will hold the guys in good stead for those courses.

"I think they are really enjoying it."

The opening lesson of the jungle survival package proves to be a true eye-opener for the troops as they are shown how to kill a pig. This is followed by a demonstration in the art of skinning and gutting the animal before it is cut into quarters in preparation for cooking.

A similar exercise is repeated on a chicken and while this may sound like a gruesome introduction to the course it left the soldiers with little doubt as to what their main objective is in such environments.

The demonstrations continued to flow as tutorials in making fire, building shelters, sourcing water and setting traps are covered in depth.

"I've always been interested in coming to the jungle," says Pte Toby Brown. "I want to see the wildlife and there is a great training aspect as well.

"I believe this place can set you up for the future as it really hones your low-level skills.

"It is totally different to a normal exercise. You have to live off a small amount of kit and it has to go everywhere with you. The environment is really hard and you are constantly sweating, it makes life difficult but we are getting used to the routine."

With the lessons complete the students are tasked with putting their new-found skills to the test.

Armed with only basic equipment the platoon heads into the wilderness where they have to survive on their own for 48 hours.

Soldier catches up with the troops after their first night under the canopy and it is obvious they have been quick to adjust to their surroundings.

"We had a battle against time as the sun was going down fast," explains LCpl Jurie Fick. "We started a fire then built our shelter and made a bed."



In profile: 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

- Nicknamed "The Tigers", they are currently based in Dhekelia, in Cyprus.
- The unit forms the regional standby battalion for the Middle East and North Africa, leaving a company of soldiers on very high readiness to deploy.
- Personnel from 2 PWRR are currently deployed in Iraq on Op Shader, where they are teaching Peshmerga fighters basic infantry tactics as they prepare to lock horns with ISIL.
- They also conduct flight line security at RAF Akrotiri, in Cyprus.
- Last year the soldiers embarked on a full cycle of mission-specific training for Op Herrick/Op Toral.
- In 2015 they will complete overseas training exercises in Belize, Jordan and the Falkland Islands.
- These are designed to prepare troops for austere deployments to remote locations.





“You have to live off a small amount of kit and it has to go everywhere with you”

Survival instincts: Clockwise: Cpl Carvas Garraway constructing an attap; a civilian instructor demonstrates how to butcher a pig; LCpl Jurie Fick sets a wildlife trap



“I’m from South Africa and grew up in the bush so I have some experience with this kind of thing. But the section is doing very well, we have picked things up quite quickly and we slept dry in the rain last night.

“If you can soldier in the jungle you can soldier anywhere. It is definitely one of the toughest places we’ve been; the heat and humidity makes it such hard work.”

While second platoon master their survival techniques their colleagues in first platoon face a different challenge.

The exercise boasts a testing live fire package that begins on an individual basis before building towards section- and platoon-level drills.

Having completed a sweat-inducing run with his light machine gun Pte Matthew Daley describes the experience as he takes a well-earned drink.

“It is very hard to manoeuvre across the ground, there is a lot of foliage and your depth of vision is impaired,” he says.

“Muzzle clearance is another factor to consider. It is completely different to any other range, in Cyprus we have the bush and open savanna but it is nothing like this.

“You have to make sure your observations are totally on point, as long as you do that it is not a problem.”

The third phase of the exercise sees the troops focus on the tactics of jungle warfare. This starts with a two-day route patrol through secondary and primary jungle while carrying all the food, water, ammunition and kit needed to survive.

The average weight of Bergens and webbing tips the scales at more than 40 kilograms and with temperatures pushing 30 degrees Celsius life is far from easy.

Personnel wade chest-deep through a river crossing before they regroup for an advance to contact drill.

“Because of the closed environment we are listening and smelling for things, rather than seeing them,” explains Lt Will Happel, commander of third platoon.

“We have to apply slightly different principles, even at section level. The closeness of the terrain means you cannot go on big flanking manoeuvres, everything has to be tight.

“Our alertness levels are really high; it is so hot and we do not have huge amounts of water.

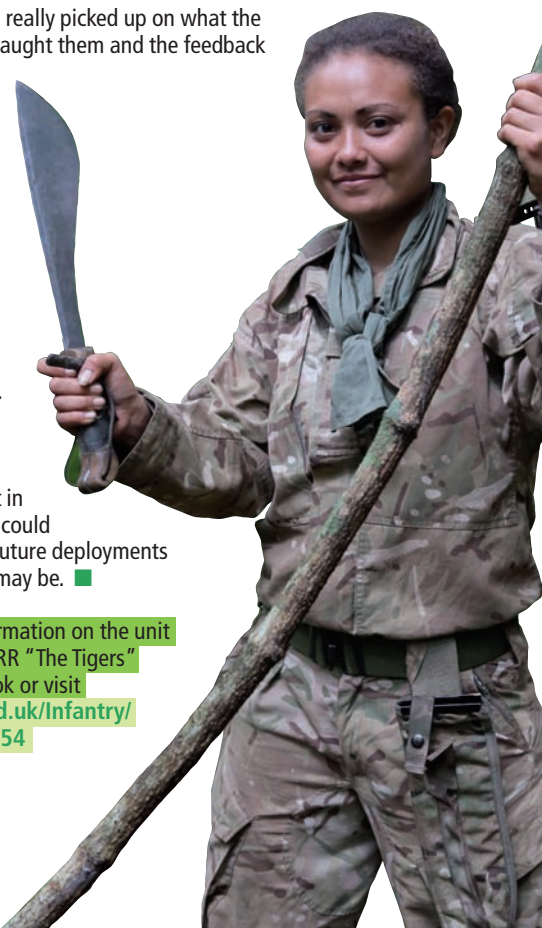
“But this is what people join the Infantry to do. These guys do not want to be ferried around in vehicles and dropped off in various locations. They want to be self-sustaining and patrol on foot so they can find and exploit the enemy.

“The lads have really picked up on what the instructors have taught them and the feedback has been very positive.”

It would be optimistic to say the jungle could ever be fully tamed but personnel from 2 PWRR are proving to be more than a match for its punishing terrain.

And with the post-Herrick era now in full swing the lessons learnt in this environment could prove crucial on future deployments – wherever they may be. ■

● For more information on the unit follow the 2 PWRR “The Tigers” page on Facebook or visit www.army.mod.uk/Infantry/Regiments/24854





Flammable materials: Maj Sean Caine delivers a lesson on starting fires using a variety of different tools.



BACK IN THE GROOVE

● THE TEMPO AT BRITISH ARMY TRAINING AND SUPPORT UNIT BELIZE (BATSUB) IS PICKING UP AGAIN FOLLOWING THE END OF OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN.

SOLDIER SPOKE TO THE OFFICER IN CHARGE – MAJ SEAN CAINE (YORKS) – TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FACILITY AND ITS ROLE AS THE SERVICE MOVES FORWARD.

» WHY DID THE NUMBER OF UNITS PASSING THROUGH BATSUB DROP OFF IN RECENT YEARS?

"Because we were committed to other deployments operating in close-country environments took a back step. But now the Army is looking for more places to train. The UK is full but Belize allows us to test soldiers in a completely different setting."

» SO WHICH FORMATIONS HAVE DEPLOYED TO BELIZE SINCE THE TRAINING CYCLE GATHERED PACE?

"We've had a company from The Welsh Guards, the Royal Marines and now 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. The Dutch Marines are due to come and hopefully, towards the end of the year, The Coldstream Guards battlegroup will arrive for a six-week package with 480 soldiers. That will be the biggest exercise in Belize for the last seven years."

» WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF TRAINING IN THE JUNGLE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR TROOPS TO TRAIN HERE?

"The guys can really hone their personal skills as the jungle is an unforgiving place. Cuts can go septic really quickly so their admin has to be right. There are strong characters in camp or in the field but others may come to the forefront out here. It is surprising how skills can shine through. This is an art we have not practised for a long time as it has not been needed but it is a very interesting subject."

» IS TRAINING HERE PURELY ABOUT SURVIVING THE JUNGLE? WHAT ELSE IS ON OFFER?

"This is all about the unknown. Whenever anyone comes to Belize they think it is all about the jungle but there are lots of different opportunities from river operations to working on big rolling plains. The company commander sets his own training programme and we give him the area to facilitate that. For example, they can plan and prepare their own ranges, stage basic fieldcraft lessons or focus on navigation."

» ADVENTUROUS TRAINING IS ALSO INCLUDED IN THE PACKAGE. WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE ON OFFER AND WHY ARE THEY SO IMPORTANT?

"We've got caving, zip lining, diving and mountain biking. The guys can also visit the cays or head to Mexico. We have to have adventurous training at the end of the cycle. You cannot bring a soldier half way round the world and not give him an opportunity to see Belize."



TALKING TRAINING

6 The guys can really hone their skills as the jungle is an unforgiving place 9

WHILE training in Belize provided a thorough examination for 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment it also offered an opportunity for the Army's jungle warfare instructors to put their theory to the test.



Sgt Rob Cowen (1 Yorks) was part of an eight-man training team charged with guiding the visiting troops and it was a trip he was determined to be part of.

"When the trawl for instructors came out I wanted to be here," he told *Soldier*. "I love being in the jungle."

"I remember coming here in 1998 as a private soldier. I then had the chance to become an instructor and it was a great opportunity."

"The lads are really excited, we are taking 18-year-olds and putting them in a jungle environment to test them on their skills."

"This is the other side to the counter-insurgency in Afghanistan. It is brilliant training."

"The boys love Bear Grylls and they see this as a mirror image of that. They will be talking about what they did in the jungle for years to come."

SGT COWEN'S TOP TIPS FOR SURVIVING IN THE JUNGLE:

KIT

Make sure you have the basic equipment needed to survive. This should include a means of starting fire, such as a flint and striker, and materials for purifying water.



FIRE

A fire can be used as a way to purify water and cook food and offers a sense of togetherness for troops.



SHELTER

This offers protection from the weather and elements. It should be built in a location that is free from animal tracks and off the ground.





SINGING SANDHURST'S PRAISES

BELIZEAN OFFICER RECALLS ACADEMY EXPERIENCE



» WITH the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst enjoying a global reputation for its standards in officer training there is no shortage of takers when it comes to offering places to cadets from foreign forces.

One of those to benefit from such an invitation is Lt Claudio Quiroz, of the Belize Defence Force (BDF).

The 25-year-old graduated from the famed institution in 2010 and is now a troop commander in his formation's Light Engineers Company.

Sandhurst selection formed the Serviceman's first overseas trip and having never heard of the academy he had little idea of what was lying in wait when he reported for his first day.

"I didn't know what I was letting myself in for," he told *Soldier*. "I don't come from a military background and I was doing what the high command asked.

"The BDF does not have such an academy so Sandhurst gave me a wide range of officer training. It was awesome.

"The British Army has the art of leadership nailed down. All the officers who have become generals in our defence force are Sandhurst graduates so it is a huge honour for us to have such opportunities."

Lt Quiroz later returned to the UK for the Platoon Commander's Battle Course in Brecon, which offered a further eye-opener.

"I really suffered in the cold," he recalled. "But then we came here for the final exercise and I saw everyone else suffer with the heat. It was one extreme to the other."

With his training complete the officer was tasked with performing anti-poaching patrols on the Guatemala border before transferring to the light engineers.

He has since been involved in various civil engineering projects, such as building new schools in his home country.

And with his career flourishing he was keen to pay tribute to the place where it all began.

"Sandhurst has played a massive part in getting me where I am today," he added. "I would definitely encourage others to go.

"It is difficult and there are many dark nights of the soul, but it is worth it." ■





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THE SHARP END

EXERCISE STEEL SABRE GIVES ARTILLERY UNITS A CUTTING EDGE



Report: Steve Muncney

EVEN when you are standing 50 yards away you can feel a disturbing thud go through your chest. A high explosive shell weighing about the same as a fully loaded Bergen has just been launched at twice the speed of sound from the barrel of an AS90 self-propelled gun.

Less than 30 seconds later it pulverises a target located 20 kilometres away across the Otterburn training area.

During the next minute or so half a dozen more rounds are unleashed from a further five platforms manned by personnel from 1 Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery.

Fire support teams out in the hills radio in with feedback on the accuracy of those strikes to the battery commander and aims are

adjusted accordingly.

Then, on the other side of the ranges, L118 light guns of 4th Regiment, Royal Artillery deliver a supporting salvo to the same target.

The guided multiple-launch rocket systems (GMLRS) of 101 Regiment, located across the valley, are also brought to bear on the enemy.

A simulated foe is being chased across the windswept terrain of Northumberland's Cheviot Hills and the multiple strikes are being coordinated by three fire direction centres situated in separate locations a few miles away.

This is the live-firing phase of Exercise Steel Sabre that took place last month to test the Royal Artillery's ability to bring different components together and coordinate their firepower on the battlefield.



The annual serial may have become a regular event on the Army's training roster but this year's staging was arguably the most significant yet because it was the first opportunity for all the elements of the newly created 1st Artillery Brigade to participate in collective training.

The formation, which is part of Force Troops Command, controls all close support artillery assets across the adaptable, high readiness and very high readiness forces, and is the regional point of command for units based in the South West that were part of the now defunct 43 (Wessex) Brigade.

"This is the first time we've ever concentrated all the Army's close support artillery in one place," explained the formation's commanding officer, Brig Jeremy Bennett.

"All our surface-to-surface

AN ARTILLERY SERIAL ON THIS SCALE HASN'T BEEN STAGED FOR AT LEAST A DECADE



fires are here along with a Royal Navy element, 29 Commando Brigade."

A total of 11 regiments were involved – including the paired Reserve units 101 and 103 Regiments – bringing together artillery, mortars, rockets, unmanned aerial systems and air defence assets.

"It's a big exercise with 1,300 people taking part this year," continued Brig Bennett.

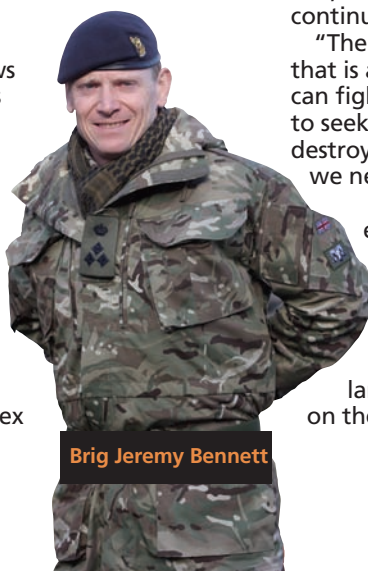
"An artillery serial on this scale hasn't been staged for at least a decade and it allows us to train personnel to mass their fire at a single target.

"We're also here to get used to handling the scale of everything that goes into that effort; command and control element, logistics, equipment and the medical support that's required.

"We had started to stagnate on artillery training and hardly ever integrated other features such as complex

Clockwise from top left, Deadly delivery: An AS90 unleashes another deadly salvo; a GMLRS unleashes its deadly cargo; 4 Regt, RA use light guns to push back the simulated foe; lugging rounds for an AS90

Pictures: Graeme Main and Sgt Si Longworth, RLC



Brig Jeremy Bennett

smoke or illumination missions to help concentrate fire on an enemy that was moving."

With the Service-wide shift to preparing for contingency operations, it is not surprising that the scenario this year involved conventional strike-and-manoeuve tactics against a similarly equipped force.

"We are now reverting to training for a war, not the war, which was Afghanistan," continued the officer.

"The focus is on an enemy that is a near-peer; one that can fight back and will try to seek out our artillery and destroy it. So as soon as we fire we need to move on.

"We haven't faced enemies like that for decades but it's about time we got back to training for them."

For personnel of 1 RHA – who had the largest single presence on the exercise with 480

Servicemen and women participating – the timing couldn't have been better because it gave many of them the chance to use the formidable AS90 in battlefield conditions for the first time.

"With the move into this brigade we have switched from light to armour in the last year," explained Lt Pete Stanley (1 RHA).

"For 90 per cent of these lads and lasses this will be the first time they have ever operated that asset on an exercise."

The Army 2020 mantra calling for adaptability among personnel has certainly been taken on-board by members of 1 RHA, who in the space of a few months have moved from a relatively simple weapon system to one of the most complex the Service employs.

"It's taken a lot of hard work," LBdr John Lane told *Soldier*. "The light gun has virtually no moving parts but



AS90s are incredibly complex and need lots of maintenance to keep them going.

"As a number two I'm responsible for loading the weapon. On the light gun it's all manual but these have automated systems, which you need to know about," added LBdr Lane (pictured below).

"We must be more flexible now; we have to practise reversionary loading, for instance, where we simulate all the platform's electricals failing and then have to manage the whole thing manually."

Bdr Bob Ozbek is one of the regiment's most experienced members, having completed a deployment to Iraq as well as two Herrick tours, all using the light gun.

As a number one his role has changed markedly in the past 12 months.

In addition to being a master gunner and team leader he now needs to be versed in other skills – ones that aren't always covered by the Army's

many training courses.

"The AS90s require a lot of care and attention and I've found that I end up doing lot of fault finding.

"But when you radio for, say, the REME boys to come in it really helps if you can diagnose the problem – so if it's a hydraulic fault, for example, they'll be able to bring in the right kit to fix it, which saves a lot of time.

"It's been a challenging year for us but we're learning to become more adaptable, more efficient and we've also done a lot of training – and exercises like this really help us get up to speed.

"This is where you really find out about the AS90s – it's only when you use them in conditions like this that their faults become apparent and then we can do what we need to do to

Clockwise from top left, Combined might: A fire support team member assesses the strike; 1 RHA personnel get to grips with the AS90's complex gun laying and navigation systems as well as the lethal 45kg shells; guns rumble across Otterburn

Pictures: Sgt Si Longworth, RLC



get them properly sorted out."

Lt Stanley has been more than impressed with his men's readiness to embrace the changes and deal with the pace of learning that's required to become operational on a new, sophisticated system.

"I came out of Sandhurst just over two years ago and haven't experienced deployments, so I've been trained green, so to speak," he explained.

"However, many of the guys have been using the light gun for years, including in Afghanistan, and have found the AS90s very different to what they expected.

"But the blokes have been brilliant in the way they've applied themselves and done all the courses they need and more besides – they really are all over the kit.

"We're off to Batus later this year where we can manoeuvre a lot more and take our skills to an even higher level so this has been extremely valuable in preparing us."





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Report: Becky Clark
Pictures: Graeme Main

THE mighty Challenger 2 may pack a serious punch when it comes to high-tech weaponry, but a well-constructed anti-tank ditch can stop this formidable beast in its tracks.

In fact, from barbed wire to minefields, even a relatively poorly equipped enemy has the means to make life very difficult for an army that is on the advance.

Enter the Royal Engineers' reconnaissance crews.

Scouting ahead of the battlegroup, it falls to these troops to determine a probable route for the formation to take and which of the armoured assets in the corps' extensive toolbox could be used to clear any obstacles.

And while such skills were not often called upon in Afghanistan, the shift towards less predictable, short-notice missions means the capability is likely to be more in demand than ever.

Last month, 48 soldiers from the regiments of 25 (Close Support) Group, 8 Engineer Brigade attended the first recce-specific training course of the post-Herrick era – a six-week package designed to bring them up to speed with the kind of tasks they could find themselves facing on contingency operations.

"The last cadre of this kind was about ten years ago," explained instructor, WO2 Paul Phipps.

"What with Iraq and Afghanistan we haven't really had a chance to run anything like this, so people were picking the skills up on the job rather than actually being taught them.

"With the move back to contingency we've found, especially out in Batus, that the capability was maybe lacking a bit so coming on this course will prepare the guys for future training and operations. »

Route masters: A Trojan crew demonstrates the vehicle's capabilities during phase one of the 25 (Close Support) Group reconnaissance cadre in Tidworth



CAN YOU DIG IT?

New package revives Royal Engineers' reconnaissance role

» "We've pulled in subject matter experts from all over the place in things like communications, mounted and dismounted tactics and movement to give the guys an overview of stuff they might not have done as engineers."

"It's mainly aimed at recce sergeants and troop commanders but there are lance corporals and sappers here too, because they are their vehicle crews."

"It's important for them to know what the commanders are trying to achieve so that when they're on a mission it's a team working together rather than just one man on his own."

The majority of those taking part in the package hailed from five engineer regiments belonging to the Reaction and Adaptable Force structures.

Personnel first completed a two-week theory phase in Tidworth, after which they deployed to the Jordanian desert for a live-firing package and final test exercise.

On Salisbury Plain, *Soldier* watched Trojan and Terrier crews demonstrate obstacle and mine clearance before the students were given the chance to sit in the platforms and experience the cramped conditions for themselves.

"I've never set foot anywhere near a tank before so I was quite surprised how little you can see and how small it is inside considering the size of the vehicle," commented LCpl Glen Jones of 23 Engineer Regiment.

"It's totally new ground, especially with the armour because we're a light role regiment so usually dismounted, but if we work with Terrier in the future it's a good insight into what it's capable of."

Like scaled-up Swiss army knives, Terrier, Trojan and their giant cousin Titan give the corps considerable clout in the digging, lifting, ploughing and bridging departments.

Lt James Gill, a new recce troop commander at 21 Engineer Regiment, said the training had broadened his understanding of how such armoured assets could be deployed in battle.

Describing how the reconnaissance role works, the 26-year-old explained: "It's all about knowing what exactly

is in your armoury and then remaining flexible.

"This course mainly covers close recce, which is two to five kilometres in front.

"We're the first point of contact onto an obstacle so when we come across a gap or an obstruction we can say 'this is how big it is, we need x, y and z to clear it and this is how long it will take.'

"We give the integral, or squadron recce, some grids to work off and then they can do a detailed plan and pull the platforms forward that are definitely needed."

Having relocated to Jordan for the second leg of the package, the students practised live-firing drills from CVRTs, Jackal and WMIKs, before embarking on a nine-day final exercise.

Based on a scenario involving a conventional enemy, the serial focused on developing their skills in the so-called "find" and "commander's critical information" functions – in other words, locating any obstructions and infrastructure, identifying corridors of manoeuvre for the battleground and gathering information for the chain of command.

Explaining why the role is so crucial on operations, WO2 Phipps added: "The recce guys will be the furthest forward, finding out exactly what's on the ground in terms of civilian infrastructure – like power lines, for example – and obstacles such as rivers,

Packing a punch:
The sappers' recce specialists can call on an arsenal of heavy machinery to get the job done

as well as decent routes in and out of the area.

"It's painting a picture of the terrain so the troop commander can understand exactly what's out there and the commanding officer of the regiment can advise the group up to divisional level on the likely course of action.

"They are the eyes and ears of the whole formation."

In a world where the next mission could take place in any number of trouble spots, it's clear that if these recce specialists are to support the Army's fighting formations effectively they need to be at the top of their game.

No pressure then. ■



THEY ARE THE EYES AND EARS OF THE WHOLE FORMATION



WO2 Paul Phipps, RE



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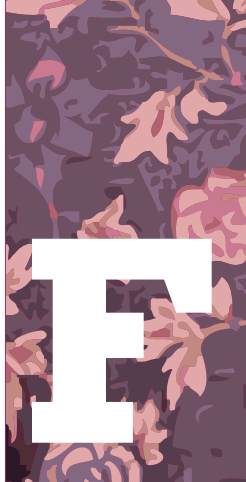
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Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

FORTY-eight hours of continuous walking usually means one of two things for soldiers in the UK – a gruelling patrol or some sort of charity event.

But more than 4,000 miles away in Nepal, this is a typical journey made by thousands of elderly veterans – many of them pushing 100 – just to collect the pensions they depend on.

Through a network of 28 outreach centres across the country, the Gurkha Welfare Trust is the organisation behind this process.

Since its establishment in 1969, the charity has committed itself to repaying ex-Servicemen and their communities for the courageous acts they showed on behalf of the British crown.

This is done in various ways, from medical provision for veterans' families to projects that deliver clean water and new schools to Nepalese villages.

However, it is the cash payments handed out by the organisation's field arm, the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, which is making one of the biggest impacts on the lives of former soldiers.

Accounting for about a third of the total money the trust raises each year, this initiative sees individuals who served with the Indian Army but were deprived of a military pension because they served less than 15 years awarded with 7,000 rupees per month – about £45.

And with a generation of more than 7,000 ex-Gurkhas and widows relying on this money, it has proved crucial in helping them avoid a life of destitution.

En route to an area welfare centre in

Kaski, a town in central Nepal, one of the charity's senior coordinators explains the importance of this work to *Soldier*.

"This pension is a lifeline for these people, which is why it's our main priority," says Hikmatbahadur Gurung, a retired captain of The Royal Gurkha Rifles. "Without it they would struggle to maintain their lives.

"Health is our second most important task; we can provide medication and treat individuals in hospital.

"We also run regular clinics that are free to attend."

On arrival in Kaski, hundreds of Nepalese families flock to the charity's hub to collect their quarterly pension money.

Those who are too frail to walk there themselves send nominees in their place.

"Most are quite elderly now but they do tend to live to an old age – 25 of the recipients are over 90 and two are older than 100," explains senior welfare officer and former major Chandra Gurung.

"Some pensioners are paralysed or blind so we go out to visit them to pay their money and offer medical checks.

"It's so satisfying to meet with them and hand them the cash.

"The accounting is very tightly controlled, though, which means people who deserve it get exactly what they are owed."

Among those to have made the arduous journey from the foothills on this occasion are Dambarsing Tamang and Padam-Sing Gurung, former members of The 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles and The 4th Gorkha Rifles respectively.

"I'm very happy to be able to collect the money because with it I can purchase food," says 87-year-old Mr Tamang, who served in India between 1948 and 1950. >>>

CASH FOR COURAGE

The organisation providing a lifeline to retired Gurkhas and their families across Nepal



Pensioners' pay
day: A dependant
collects her
money in Kaski

MORE THAN A PENSION:

The Gurkha Welfare
Trust's work over the
last year in numbers...

121,508

ex-soldiers given treatment through
the charity's medical programme
in Nepal

49

villages that received clean drinking
water for the first time

21,615

children who benefited from the
trust's scheme to build and
improve schools

£14.9m

total amount raised for the charity
through donations, grants,
investments and other fundraising



**This pension is a
lifeline for these
people, which
is why it's our
main priority**

Hikmatbahadur Gurung

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Forces TV video journalists report from operations, military exercises and live events to provide news and features from the UK and overseas.

The channel works with charities and organisations that support the serving and veteran communities to cover areas such as welfare and policy changes.

Both Sky and the BBC are supporting Forces TV with content, and programmes from specialist documentary-makers are also on the schedule.

www.forces.tv

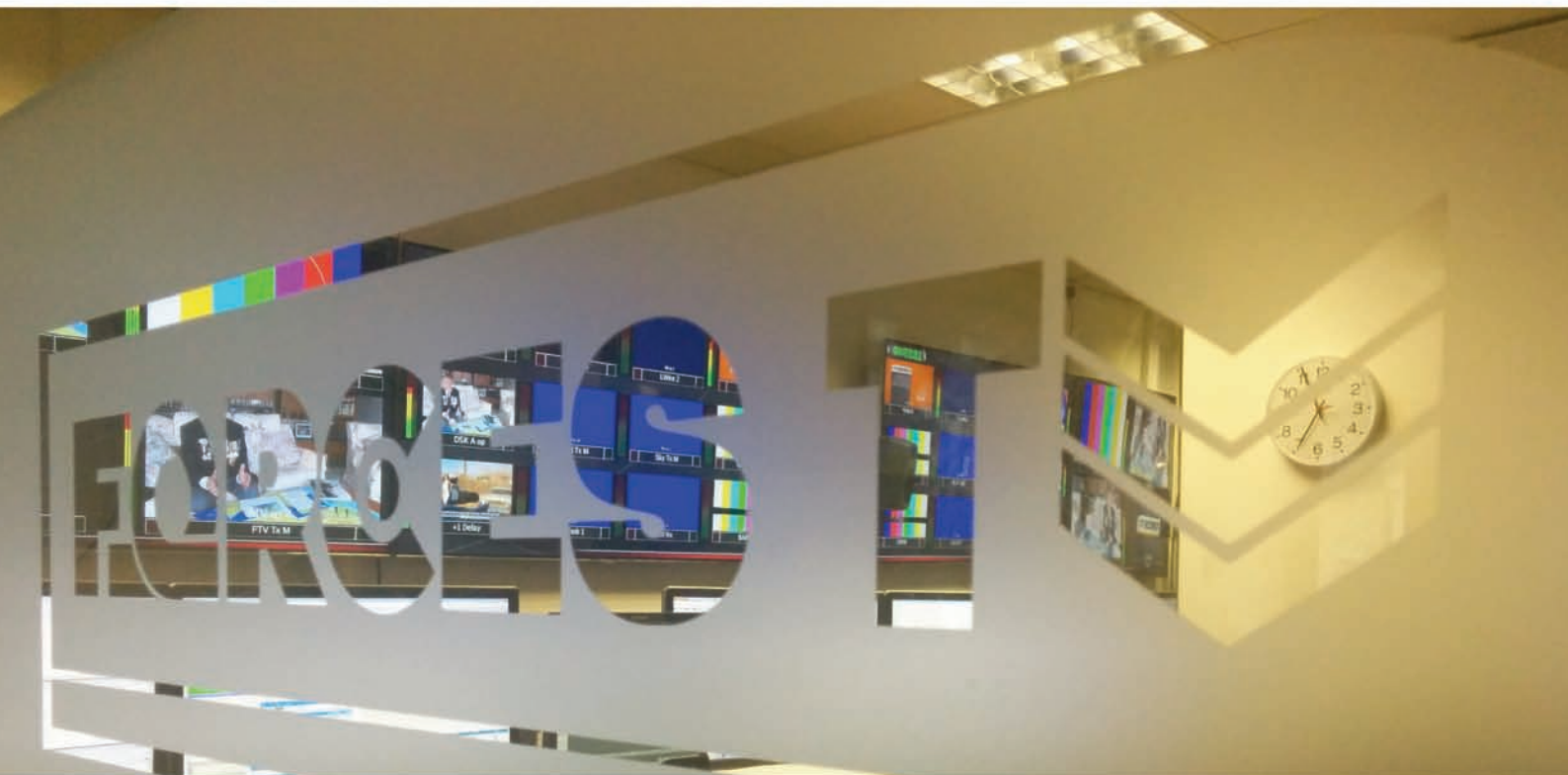


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"I'm getting older so I can't walk as far to get things and it's becoming more expensive to buy items."

Mr Gurung, aged 92, adds: "The welfare pension is very useful and I'm pleased we're entitled to it."

Across the road from the centre a different bunch of ex-Gurkhas are occupying themselves with a board game in the sunshine.

They are sitting in front of another consequence of the Gurkha Welfare Trust's work – the Kulbir Thapa VC residential home.

Designed to provide expert care to the most vulnerable Nepalese veterans, this facility equips residents with far more than a private en-suite bedroom.

"Being here is like being in a haven because the staff work so hard and I'm with my comrades," says 92-year-old Khadkabahadur Sunuwar, a former member of 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles.

"It's such a friendly place."

And 88-year-old Sankhalal Gurung (ex-5 Gorkha Rifles) agrees the facility prevents loneliness among former comrades.

"In the hills it was very difficult to walk around but here I am looked after very well," he tells *Soldier*.

"It makes me so happy to be surrounded by fellow ex-Servicemen and we talk about the old war days all the time."

One glance into the eyes of any one of these veterans reveals everything you need to know about how the Gurkha Welfare Trust's work is received across the country.

Thanks to the organisation's tireless work, ex-soldiers can know that even though they were not dignified with an Army pension, their work has certainly not gone unappreciated. ■

WATER FOR THE WARRIORS

THIS year the Gurkha Welfare Trust's fight to improve sanitation levels and provide clean drinking water in Nepal will continue as it joint-funds 64 new projects with the UK's Department for International Development.

"The water initiatives will be taking place in villages where Servicemen have come from, including current soldiers' forefathers," says charity coordinator Hikmatbahadur Gurung.

"Even though pensioners may not live there anymore we don't forget the places they came from – especially as they are still our recruiting heartlands."

Stand easy: Ex-Gurkhas Sankhalal Gurung and Sirbahadur Gurung relax at the Gurkha Welfare Trust's Kulbir Thapa VC home



MEDICAL CALL TO ARMS

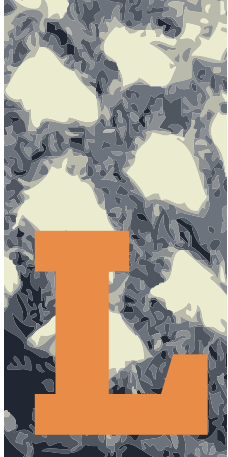
AS the Brigade of Gurkhas celebrates 200 years of service to the British crown, the Gurkha Welfare Trust has launched an appeal called Our Duty of Care.

The idea is to raise £6 million to help its welfare pensioners – one-third of whom are suffering from serious medical conditions such as dementia or diabetes that current funds cannot deal with.

The campaign aims to provide nine mobile doctors, 12 district nurses, four pathology laboratories, mobile medical equipment and home carer allowances for military families across Nepal.

Visit www.gurkha200.co.uk/ourappeal for details.





Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

LOOSE rocks tumble down a steep ravine as our high-powered four-wheel drive vehicle struggles up a difficult incline on the only road into Bhadaure.

Amazingly, this rough track is the easy way into

the Himalayan village.

Those on foot must battle through the undergrowth for 25 miles in order to reach the nearest town of Kaski.

For the locals here, though, this is just part of everyday life – much like walking for hours to fetch fresh water or hauling firewood back from the forest.

However difficult, this considerable journey is one that Army veterans must make if they want to receive regular medical check-ups and welfare pensions from the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Although Bhadaure enjoys access to electricity and drinking water its population of less than 600 survives on a hand-to-mouth basis, with the younger generation undertaking hours of manual labour to provide for the elders.

One of those, 97-year-old NK Ram Gurung, relies on a welfare pension to top up his income stream.

And until very recently the former soldier of The 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkha Rifles insisted on making the arduous trip to collect it himself.

"Sometimes I walk to Kaski to pick up my money but occasionally my wife or daughter will go in my place," he says.

"It takes at least one day to walk down the hill and along the lakeside into town.

"But I want to collect my pension for food and to provide for my household – I am very happy with whatever I get."

The former corporal served in India from 1940 until his discharge in 1947.

And like thousands of others whose total time in the Army came to less than 15 years, he did not qualify for a pension so retired with no income.

Surrounded by his family, this village's most senior citizen has memories of serving that are still very lucid.

"I remember that our ammunition was heavy and the smell of the gunpowder is still in my mind," he says.

"When I was away on duty I thought about my family; many people were not married but I was so I thought about my wife a lot.

"When I was younger I was strong and known by others because I was a Gurkha but at this age I am about to die and I need help."

It is a stark fact that isn't lost on the rest of Mr Gurung's family.

The ex-Serviceman now spends many hours each day on a wicker stool alongside his 91-year-old wife, Purnasiri, while his children and grandchildren carry out the labour.

His daughter-in-law, Anita, tells *Soldier* how daily life here pans out.

"We get up early to feed the buffalo, clean

**THE MONEY
COMES FROM
DONATIONS
IN THE UK
AND WE ARE
SO THANKFUL
FOR IT**



UP CLOSE

THE ROAD TO BHADAURE

**SOLDIER TAKES A TRIP INTO
NEPAL'S FOOTHILLS TO SEE THE
IMPACT OF THE GURKHA
WELFARE TRUST'S WORK**

the house and prepare meals for the whole family," she says.

"Then we go to the forest to collect firewood and foliage to feed the cattle.

"Thanks to the Gurkha Welfare Trust there is a public tap where we can collect fresh water but we have to climb up and down steep hills with it."

She adds: "I'm not really aware of the work of the British Army today but I have been with my father-in-law to receive blankets and his pension, so I know what he has done to deserve it.

"I know that the money comes from donations in the UK and we are so thankful for it."

Today Mr Gurung has very little vision from his watery blue eyes but a steely determination – the sort that ensured his success in the Service – lingers in them.

"I used to lead everything in the village but now I'm not strong enough – I wish I could help," he says.

"In the past I could read and write but now that I have reached this stage I cannot see very well.

"But as far as my life is concerned I would say so far so good, but I want to make it to the age of 100."

Age may be wearing this veteran, but thanks to his welfare pension he is still afforded the dignity of providing for his family. ■

Right to left, Mountain mission: NK Ram Gurung, a 96-year-old veteran; Govindu Gurung from the Gurkha Welfare Scheme chats with Mr Gurung's wife Purnasir, daughter-in-law Anita and granddaughter Sofiya





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TALKBACK

YOUR letters provide an insight into the issues at the top of soldiers' agendas... but please be brief. Emails (mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk) 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.

“IT'S DONE NOTHING BUT PUT A HUGE STRAIN ON MY FAMILY”

'This bonus has left me feeling poorer'

THROUGHOUT my Army career I looked forward to getting my eight-year commitment bonus but it has caused nothing but aggravation since I received it.

In March last year I was paid a £15,000 lump sum before tax.

My plan was to treat my family to a short holiday abroad, some new furniture and, most importantly, a deposit on a house.

But then I got some bad news.

The tax credits we had been receiving before I was awarded the bonus were being stopped because, as a result of the lump sum, my earnings had risen to a point where we were no longer eligible for them. This removed £300 from our regular monthly income.

Then I got another letter informing me that I had to pay back nearly a whole year's worth of the credits – which totalled £2,398.

My chance of putting a deposit down on a house is now zero and I've been left feeling that this "bonus" is nothing of the sort.

All it has done is put a huge strain

on my family and I am currently arguing the case with the tax office.

I didn't receive the money until March so, due to the financial year, I believe I only owe one month's tax credit, although I fear I am fighting a losing battle.

I hope this letter serves as a warning to all soldiers to get some good advice before they become eligible for similar payouts. – **Cpl Billy Ormond, RLC.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: Commitment bonuses, financial retention incentives, "golden hellos" and the like are all taxable.

Therefore, a large commitment bonus can, like a promotion or other change in income, push an individual's earnings over the eligibility threshold for tax credits or even into a different tax bracket.

Individuals who receive these payouts should not find themselves worse off but some may find they are not as well off as they expected if they are unaware of the tax implications.

Getting the balance right between a meaningful bonus and avoiding these wider financial measures is always difficult.

The directorate of manning is undertaking a review of such incentives and tax will be taken into account as part of it.

However, your case has highlighted that we are not getting the communications right on this.

As a start we will ensure that administration and career management officers provide advice on tax issues to potential recipients.

Similarly, an amendment to JSP 754 will be staffed to ensure that individuals are better made aware of the tax situation when they consider their options for taking a gratuity of this nature.

Those in similar circumstances might consider taking the smaller commitment bonus earlier in their careers with the option of receiving another one later to avoid breaching any tax thresholds.



CLOWNING AROUND

● **READING** your excellent 70th anniversary edition (*Soldier*, March) reminded me that an old tradition probably died when the post of director of public relations (Army), a position I held from 1982-84, was abolished by Geoff Hoon in 2002, just before the second Gulf War.

In March 1982 the then editor of *Soldier* rang me up to say that the two people in our positions always lunched together every March to agree on the April fool story that would be published in the magazine that year.

We met and decided that an article would run claiming that because the UK was in the European Union the cavalry regiments would be renumbered metrically so that there would be the .75 Lancers and the .5 Dragoon Guards and so on.

This was duly published and the next day there was an immediate angry response in the form of an editorial in the *Daily Mail*.

I hoped that enraged members of the public would make the story run and run but, unfortunately, the Argentinians spoiled it all by invading the Falkland Islands later that week! – **Gen (Retd) David Ramsbotham.**



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Separation anxiety

SINCE arriving at my new unit I have been away on several courses but have not been paid the longer separation allowance (LSA).

My chief clerk told me that in order to be eligible for it I need to be in field conditions for at least ten days.

But my previous unit didn't have a problem paying out even when we weren't away in those circumstances and for less than ten days.

So should I have been paid it or not?
– Name and address supplied.

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: LSA applies to soldiers who experience separation over and above that compensated for by the X-factor element within basic pay.

It goes to individuals on temporary duty for periods of seven or more consecutive days who are unable to spend a minimum of 24 hours at their duty station, family home or permanent residence.

The qualifying period was reduced from ten days to seven in April 2010.

However, when field conditions for both food and single living accommodation have been declared, LSA is paid from the first day and at increasing rates as more separated service is accumulated.

New entrant officers are not eligible for it until they have completed initial training while new non-commissioned ranks start to accrue LSA after 26 weeks of service or on completion of phase two training.

“ARE RAF PERSONNEL CONSIDERED MORE VALUABLE THAN US?”

Has the system gong wrong?

● COULD some one please explain to me why the qualifying criteria for the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal (VRSM) is so complicated?

I have completed 22 years Regular service yet only two-and-a-half years of it goes towards the medal.

I also finished five years' service as non-Regular permanent staff, but only two thirds of that goes towards the VRSM as well.

I am now in my second year of full-time Reserve service and the first two years are applicable as a whole but after that it drops to 50 per cent, so if I serve for six years only four of them count.

I was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 2002 but do not qualify for the VRSM until 2018, which seems pretty crazy to me.

Why can't this be simplified to make more sense?

I am sure there is an answer out there somewhere, so can someone supply it please? – WO2 Tony Gill, AGC (SPS).



Brig Mathew Lowe, D Pers Ops, replies: The medal you refer to replaced single Service awards so there are transitional regulations in place for those who were serving in the Reserves prior to 1999.

The VRSM is designed to reward those individuals who choose to combine a ten-year commitment or more to Reserve service alongside full-time civilian employment and providing family support.

Non-Regular permanent and full-time Reserve service personnel are primary employments that do not require the same juggling of civilian employers and families so the qualifying times towards the VRSM are more demanding in order to reflect the different contract terms.

The qualification criteria have to cover all the permutations and ensure that the value of the VRSM awarded to an individual who serves for ten years and earns nine bounties is not undermined.

HOUSING POLICY FAVOURS FLYBOYS

● WHY is there inequality in family accommodation provision across the three Services?

JSP 464 states that Royal Navy, Royal Marine and Army warrant officers with smaller or younger families should be allocated a four-bedroom type D unit, where available.

However, Royal Air Force warrant officers are entitled by rank to occupy this class of accommodation regardless of their family size.

What possible reason can there be for this?

Are RAF personnel far more valuable than their counterparts in the other two Services, or perhaps they have significantly more equipment and uniform that warrants the extra space? – WO1 Christopher Hill, RA.

Robert Higgins, Tri-Service Accommodation Policy, responds: This particular entitlement was set by the RAF as a form of benefit to its warrant officer cadre.

As part of the new employment model such differences are being reviewed to ensure the accommodation offer for all personnel and their families is appropriate and fair.



DIGITAL DOSSIER

Your views from the web...



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L/Cpl Josh Leakey (1 Para), awarded Victoria Cross for valour against Taliban 2013, a former student @CHSchoolHorsham. I'm proud to be a Governor



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BELIZE

Danny Hill

Different kettle of fish in the jungle.... fire ants were my bane

Stuart Moore

Sadly our focus should not be on jungle warfare but on counter-terrorism. Our biggest threat comes from the desert not from the trees

Iain Collins

The best exercise that I have ever done was out there

AFGHANISTAN SERVICE

Sabine Mae Pitcher

An important milestone – though we mustn't forget about all those sacrifices that will never make the headlines. "Thank you" to all who have served

Andynlizz Daniels

I enjoyed every thought-provoking, tear-jerking, pride-swelling minute! So proud of my darling brother, number 282. Stand firm strike hard! May all our fallen heroes rest in peace and rise in glory

GOT A GRIPE?

✉ mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

🐦 @soldiermagazine



“THE PROVISION OF A MESS FACILITY IS UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN”

They're not happy eaters

ABBEY Wood employs several hundred Army personnel alongside Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and civilian colleagues yet it has no quartermaster facility to look after this large cohort.

To serve the site can be a frustrating experience for some given the peculiar chain of command, a lack of mess facilities and the dispersed living but to be unable to exchange even a pair of socks at the MoD's supposed centre of logistic excellence is, at best, ironic.

To be asked to call in favours from outside units is administratively questionable and not possible for all. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Colin McClean, Land Domain and Army Customer Team, DE&S, responds: Clothing support to Army personnel at Abbey Wood is currently delivered through the clothing on-line (CoL) service.

This provides your essential MTP gear, boots, socks and other items and therefore covers the majority of the needs of a large organisation like Defence Equipment and Support.

It is an innovative and effective system and I am confident that in time it will offer a highly efficient method of ensuring that people have what they need at minimum cost to the Army.

However, like many new services it is, as yet, not well known to many personnel and not as widely deployed as it could be.

Furthermore, the system does

not yet meet the full needs of an organisation like yours – an example might be the demand to “de-kit” individuals at the end of their colour service.

Therefore, two strands of work are currently being done.

Firstly, the online function is being made more accessible through the Moss site, details of which have already been promulgated.

Secondly, we are working with Army Headquarters to see if it is possible for a support unit to better satisfy the clothing fulfilment at your location.

This may require a storeman post to be created, although in these austere times there is a need to ensure best use of finite resources is being achieved.

A decision is expected very soon and the outcome will be communicated through the chain of command.

Regarding your other frustrations with serving at Abbey Wood, the provision of a mess is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future I'm afraid.

However, we are aware that there are a number of aspects where this establishment differs from what might be expected elsewhere and the director of human resources, supported by the military, is reviewing these at the moment and is scheduled to present recommendations over the coming months.

Recuperation rumpus

“I FAIL TO SEE WHY I HAVE NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO TAKE THE DAYS I'M OWED”

AFTER returning from a tour in Afghanistan I tried to recover some rest and recuperation days that were owed to me but, so far, my request has been turned down.

I was in the country longer than 210 days so I should have received two periods of leave but only managed to take one due to a number of operational commitments.

I was told by admin staff that I couldn't add the untaken days to my post-tour allowance because, "my chain of command should have flagged it up when it was anticipated I was going to be in theatre that long".

This is totally unfair. It was hard to estimate how long I was going to be serving out there because my end of tour date was changed three times.

Having read the regulations in JSP 760, I fail to see why I've not been allowed to take the days I'm owed, especially as many of my colleagues with other units in Afghanistan were granted them without a problem.

Even though I may now have lost the chance of claiming this extra time off, I would like someone to correctly interpret the regulations for me. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: The rules covering rest and recuperation and post-operational leave are clearly laid down in JSP 760.

Both types are granted in recognition of the many stresses and strains that accompany deployments and are key factors in maintaining

operational effectiveness, morale and well-being.

If you served in Afghanistan for a continuous period in excess of 210 days you should have been granted two periods of leave during that time.

There may have been occasions when you were prevented from taking some or all of it but if this type of break is not taken because of Service commitments then it should be added to your post-operational entitlement. It should not be included in your standard annual allocation either.

There is no qualifying period before post-operational leave can be taken – you are eligible from the day you leave your permanent duty station.

It should be taken as soon as possible after returning from the operation concerned and whilst you are still serving with the unit with which you deployed.

You should speak to your admin staff and ask them to credit your JPA leave account with the appropriate number of days earned from your deployment. If

they have any issues with this they should contact my staff.

ANOTHER TAXING QUESTION

● **FURTHER** to the letter in the January issue, "I can't see why I'm being taxed twice", the question posed in respect of the individual's own home in the UK and the payment of council tax was specifically answered.

However, being in the same position I would like to know why, given the circumstances, an individual is levied sums in lieu of council tax by the MoD at all? – **Capt Derek Morton, RLC.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: The previous reply you referred to outlined the responsibility for payment of council tax for properties in the UK when individuals are serving overseas.

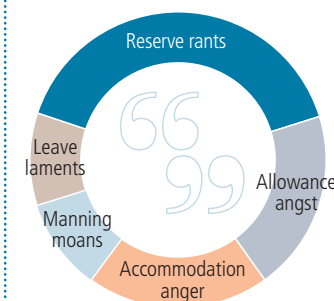
Irrespective of whether they own property in this country, all Army personnel have an expectation of worldwide service and an obligation to pay the appropriate charges for the accommodation they are allocated, wherever they are based.

This includes a payment in lieu of council tax in respect of the services provided by the MoD (or on its behalf by an agency in the host nation), which would normally be provided by a local authority back home.



SLICE OF SERVICE LIFE

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



Boarding School - Girls & Boys - 5 to 19 years

Queen Ethelburga's

Thorpe Underwood, York. YO26 9SS. Tel: 01423 333330 Email: info@QE.org. www.QE.org

Why choose an independent school education for your child if you qualify for CEA?

If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, academic results, a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, excellent sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects, first class confidence and self assurance. If you want the best for your child, and to stand a chance of achieving most of this list, we believe you would need to pick one of the top 10 UK Independent boarding schools as ranked by the Sunday Times. **Yes we are in the top 10 !**

Getting Value For Money - with your CEA you can afford a top ten school - just £795 per term !

For four years we have pegged your contribution per child, per term, at £795. Childcare Vouchers also accepted. This now means we rank as one of the most competitively priced schools for Forces in the UK. Over £100m invested in new facilities in the last eight years. Our boarding facilities are the best in Europe. No one else even comes close. Every bedroom has its own private shower and toilet plus telephone, voice mail, large plasma TV/DVD player + gaming port (on timer), a Sony PS3, fridge, microwave, trouser press and hot drinks facilities. House staff are friendly and caring.

We understand the needs of service families with staff who are married to serving members of the Forces. With years of experience in ensuring our 350 + Forces children settle well, are confident and successful. Easy to get to by road, rail and air. Dedicated, professional, friendly and helpful staff go the "extra mile" to ensure your child is happy and doing well. We have Forces families from all over the UK. 98% of Year 13 students go to University with majority to Oxbridge, Ivy League or Russell Group universities.

QE has its own £20m Sports Village with 7 Astro-Turfs + 250,000 sq feet of indoor facilities + QE is

- Regional Performance Coaching Centre: England Hockey, England Netball and England Basketball
- Regional Centre for the Developing Player Programme for England Rugby

Who comes where in the independent schools league tables?

All independent schools want to portray themselves as academically successful. So how do parents make a sensible comparison of the different claims made? The answer is to use the internationally recognised independent school league tables produced by the Sunday Times each year. It contains virtually all UK Independent Schools. Where does the school you might be thinking about come?

We are 7th and 9th.

UK's Top 10 Boarding Schools 2014 Sunday Times % A* / A A-Levels

1	Wycombe Abbey School
2	Winchester College
3	St Paul's School, London
4	Eton College
5	Westminster School
6	Sevenoaks School
7	Queen Ethelburga's College
8	Concord College
9	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's
10	Brighton College



Alphabetical Ranking All UK Independent Schools with boarding - 2014 Sunday Times % A*/A A-Levels

Position	A* / A	Name of School	Position	A* / A	Name of School	Position	A* / A	Name of School	Position	A* / A	Name of School
21st	66%	Abingdon School	77th	49%	Dean Close School	60th	53%	Merchiston Castle Sch	172nd	31%	St Felix School
155th	34%	Ackworth School	138th	38%	Denstone College	100th	45%	Mill Hill School	107th	44%	St Francis, Letchworth
120th	41%	Adcote School Girls	182nd	29%	Dover College	192nd	25%	Millfield School	161st	33%	St George's, Ascot
94th	47%	Ampoleford College	16th	70%	D'Overbrock's College	109th	44%	Monmouth School	178th	29%	St James Senior Boys
90th	47%	Ardingly College	15th	73%	Downe House	95th	47%	Moreton Hall	72nd	50%	St John's, Leatherhead
70th	52%	Ashford School	112th	43%	Downside School	108th	44%	Mount Kelly	167th	32%	St John's, Southsea
137th	38%	Ashville College	27th	63%	Dulwich College	58th	53%	Mount School, York	92nd	47%	St Leonards School
23rd	66%	Badminton School	140th	37%	Durham School	88th	47%	New Hall School	31st	61%	St Leonards-Mayfield
171st	31%	Barnard Castle School	76th	49%	Eastbourne College	127th	40%	Oakham School	128th	40%	St Margaret's, Bushey
143rd	36%	Battle Abbey School	36th	58%	Epsom College	49th	55%	Ockbrook School	97th	46%	St Mary's, Cambridge
87th	48%	Bedales School	4th	85%	Eton College	144th	36%	Oratory School, Reading	13th	75%	St Mary's, Ascot
154th	34%	Bede's Senior School	9th	78%	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	149th	29%	Oswestry School	83rd	48%	St Mary's Shaftesbury
93rd	47%	Bedford School	190th	26%	Farlington School	34th	59%	Oundle school	3rd	86%	St Paul's Sch, London
159th	33%	Bedstone College	163rd	33%	Felstead School	191st	26%	Padworth College	51st	54%	St Peter's, York
82nd	48%	Bellerbys Coll Brighton	55th	53%	Fettes College	146th	36%	Plymouth College	14th	75%	St Swithun's School
98th	46%	Bellerbys Coll Cambridge	193rd	24%	Framlington College	168th	32%	Pocklington School	91st	47%	St Teresa's, Effingham
44th	56%	Bellerbys Coll London	NR	20%	Giggleswick School	177th	29%	Princess Helena College	123rd	41%	Stamford High Sch
28th	62%	Benenden School	149th	36%	Glenalmond College	63rd	52%	Prior Park College	135th	39%	Stamford School
71st	50%	Berkhamsted School	89th	47%	Godolphin School	162nd	33%	Queen Anne's, Cavsham	174th	30%	Stonyhurst College
187th	27%	Bethany School	121st	41%	Gresham's School	7th	82%	Queen Ethelburga's College	116th	42%	Strathallan
37th	58%	Bishop's Stortford Coll	53rd	54%	Haberdashers' Mon Girls	20th	66%	Queen Margaret's, York	150th	35%	Sutton Valance Sch
85th	48%	Blundell's School	118th	42%	Haileybury	110th	43%	Queen's College, Taunton	111th	43%	Talbot Heath School
69th	52%	Bootham School	158th	34%	Hampshire Collegiate	46th	56%	Queenswood	157th	34%	Taunton School
156th	34%	Box Hill School	119th	41%	Harrogate Ladies College	26th	64%	Radley College	194th	24%	Tettenhall College
132nd	40%	Bradfield College	25th	65%	Headington School	147th	36%	Radcliffe College	74th	50%	The Leys School
103rd	45%	Brentwood School	183rd	28%	Heathfield, Ascot	91th	45%	Reed's School	170th	31%	The Purcell School
10th	76%	Brighton College	114th	42%	Ipswich School	195th	24%	Rendcomb College	11th	76%	Tonbridge Schhol
52nd	54%	Bromsgrove School	80th	48%	Kent College, Canterbury	42nd	56%	Repton School	141st	37%	Trent College
96th	46%	Bruton School Girls	32nd	60%	Kent College, Pembury	79th	49%	Roedean School	180th	29%	Tring Park Perf Arts
78th	49%	Bryanston School	125th	41%	Kimbolton School	48th	55%	Royal High Sch, Bath	115th	42%	Truro High School Girls
73rd	50%	Burgess Hill Sch Girls	105th	44%	King William's, Castletown	26th	48%	Royal Masonic Sch Girls	81st	48%	Truro School
38th	57%	Canford School	189th	26%	King's Bruton	147th	41%	Royal Russell School	133rd	40%	Tudor Hall
22nd	66%	Caterham School	164th	33%	King's College, Taunton	99th	57%	Royal School, Haslemere	47th	56%	Uppingham School
181st	29%	CATS College London	113th	43%	King's Ely	195th	54%	Rugby School	169th	31%	Warminster School
185th	27%	CCSS Centre 6th Form	35th	59%	King's School, Canterbury	42nd	69%	Ruthin School	33rd	60%	Warwick School
176th	30%	Chase Grammar School	129th	40%	King's St Michael's Coll	142nd	37%	Rydal Penrhos Senior	19th	67%	Wellington College
86th	48%	Cheltenham College	184th	28%	King's, Rochester	67th	53%	Rydal School U Chine	134th	40%	Wellington School
12th	76%	Cheltenham Ladies' Coll	43rd	56%	Kingswood School, Bath	188th	26%	Rye St Antony School	75th	49%	Wells Cathedral School
117th	42%	Chetham's School Music	126th	41%	Kirkham Grammar School	186th	27%	Sedbergh School	101st	45%	West Buckland School
50th	55%	Chigwell School	61st	52%	Lancing College	6th	82%	Sevenoaks School	5th	85%	Westminster School
66th	53%	Christ College	148th	36%	Langley School	59th	53%	Sherborne Girls	29th	62%	Whitgift School
56th	53%	Christ's Hospital	166th	32%	Leighton Park School	104th	45%	Sherborne School	2nd	89%	Winchester College
18th	67%	City London Freeman's	68th	52%	Leweston School	39th	57%	Shrewsbury School	106th	44%	Windermere School
65th	53%	Clifton College	131st	40%	Lincoln Minster School	124th	41%	Sidcot	45th	56%	Woldingham School
130th	40%	Cobham Hall	102nd	45%	Lord Wandsworth College	173rd	30%	St Bees School	151st	35%	Woodbridge School
8th	81%	Concord College	136th	39%	Loretto School	24th	65%	St Catherine's Sch, Bramley	160th	33%	Woodhouse Grove
57th	53%	Cranleigh School	40th	57%	Loughborough Grammar	165th	32%	St Edmund's College	152nd	35%	Workshop College
175th	30%	Culford School	139th	37%	Luckley House School	145th	36%	St Edmund's Canterbury	153rd	35%	Wrekin College
64th	53%	Dauntsey's School	30th	62%	Marlborough College	62nd	52%	St Edward's Sch, Oxford	1st	91%	Wycombe Abbey Sch

State Schools not ranked however if Duke of York's Royal Military School were, with 29% A*/A A-Level, it would come around 178th. Welbeck would come around 178th also with 29% A*/A A-Level

BULLET POINTS

BITE-SIZED DATA TO KEEP YOU IN THE KNOW

APPOINTMENTS

Brig Mark Gaunt, Director Equipment Army Headquarters, to be appointed **Director Supply Army Headquarters** in the rank of major general in succession to Maj Gen Richard Semple in April 2015.

CAREERS

Employment website **TipTopJob** has created **www.exmilitaryjob.com** to help former Service personnel find work in the civilian sector. Visit the website for more details.

The Officers' Association has opened two new sites in Bristol and Leeds. To book a one-to-one career consultation at either venue call 020 7808 4170 or visit **www.officersassociation.org.uk/register**

COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Lt Col Andy Gladen, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Fury DVD: Lisa Telford, Shefford, Bedfordshire; Robert Smith, Uckfield, East Sussex; Richard Partridge, Portishead, Bristol; Clement Mwandira, Wentworth Barracks, BFPO 15; Graham Drew, Marlborough Barracks, Southam.

DIARY

April 16: Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch on behalf of ABF The Soldiers' Charity at the Guildhall, London. For further information visit **www.bigcurry.org/events/lordmayor**

April 18: Military Ancestry Roadshow, Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND, from 1030 to 1600. Part of Surrey Libraries' programme of commemorative events for the First World War centenary. Bring military items from your family's past for experts to identify their history. Tickets £6, including refreshments. To book visit **www.surreycc.gov/events/woking**

April 21-22: Counter Terror Expo, Olympia, London. April 21 from 0900 to 1730, evening networking event 1630 to 1930. April 22 from 0900 to 1645. Register for free at **www.counterterrorexp.com/invite**

April 23: St George's Day concert in

aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity with the Band of the Coldstream Guards at Cadogan Hall, London from 1930. Cost £18 adults. VIP tickets also available. Further details by logging on to **www.cadoganhall.com**

April 26: Virgin Money London Marathon. For information visit **www.virginmoneylondonmarathon.com**

May 9: Stoke-on-Trent Military Tattoo, King's Hall, Kingsway, Stoke-on-Trent, on behalf of ABF The Soldiers' Charity. The event will feature the Military Wives' Choir, massed bands, marching displays, beating retreat and sunset ceremonies. For further details visit **www.soldierscharity.org**

July 11-February 2016: Horrible Histories: Blitzed Brits at the Imperial War Museum North. A free exhibition marking the 75th anniversary of the Blitz. Objects, photographs, film and recordings from the centre's collections, narrated with the words of *Horrible Histories* author Terry Deary. For details visit **www.iwm.org.uk**

Until August 31: Fashion on the Ration: 1940s street style exhibition at the Imperial War Museum London. Uniforms and textiles from wartime Britain. Adults £10; concessions £7; children (15 and under) £5.

Until September 6: WithDraw at Water Way Gallery, Imperial War Museum North. A display of new artwork by George Butler, exploring everyday life in Afghanistan. Free entry but donations welcome.

DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity:
0845 241 4820

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

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

Armed Forces Humanist Association:
www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk

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

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:

www.armybirding.org.uk

Army Welfare Service:
01980 615975;
www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association:
020 8590 1124; **www.blesma.org**

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service:
01980 618244;
enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk

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

Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society:
01372 841600;
www.combatstress.com

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

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

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01722 436575

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group):
www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

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

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

Regular Forces' Employment

Association:
0121 236 0058; **www.rfea.org.uk**

Remount:
01451 850 341; **www.remount.net**

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

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

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

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

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency:
0808 1914 218 (from the UK);
0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

SSAFA:
0845 1300 975; **www.ssafo.org.uk**

Stoll (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation):
020 7385 2110; **info@stoll.org.uk**;
www.stoll.org.uk

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

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

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

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

uk4u Thanks!:
01798 812081; **www.uk4u.org**

INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 027/15: Preferred bidder announcement – Marchwood Sea Mounting Centre

ABN 026/15: Op Herrick campaign study

ABN 025/15: Occupational shared parental leave scheme

ABN 024/15: The Army Reserve and Armed Forces pension scheme 2015

ABN 023/15: Army Photographic Competition 2015

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

DIRECTORY CONTINUED

ABN 022/15: British Army Review podcasts

ABN 021/15: Families continuous attitude survey 2015

ABN 020/15: Civilian attendance management policy

ABN 019/15: The wearing of level 4 emblems

DIN 2015DIN01-055: Clarification of sanctions available to full-time Reserve service resulting from major administrative action

DIN 2015DIN01-054: JSP 342: *Education of Service Children and Young People*. Interim policy on preserved rights for overseas schooling fees

DIN 2015DIN01-053: Reservists and the Armed Forces pension scheme 2015

DIN 2015DIN01-052: Revised Reservist policy guidance for civil servants

DIN 2015DIN01-051: JPA – changes to personnel processes. JPA contact data – disclosure to third parties

DIN 2015DIN01-049: Armed Forces Buddhist (spiritual and moral leadership) conference, May 27-29

DIN 2015DIN01-048: Establishment of the defence engineering champion team

DIN 2015DIN01-047: The Worshipful Company of Carmen movements' awards

DIN 2015DIN01-045: Recruitment of volunteers for training as an Army welfare worker

DIN 2015DIN01-043: Armed Forces Act 2006 – higher authorities for joint units and organisations and Service personnel in non-operational posts overseas

DIN 2015DIN01-042: Pension benefits for members of Armed Forces and Reserve Forces pension schemes who marry their same-sex partner or change gender

DIN 2015DIN01-041: The introduction of shared parental leave and pay for the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces

DIN 2015DIN01-040: MoD firefighters 2014 pay award

DIN 2015DIN04-049: MoD sanctuary awards 2015 – calling notice for nominations

DIN 2015DIN04-048: Airworthiness

and other domain implications of the removal of celloseal sealing compound (JC11), NSN: 8030-99-220-1306, due to Reach regulations

DIN 2015DIN04-047: Dismounted close combat 2D barcoding maintenance instruction

DIN 2015DIN04-046: Introduction of team medic packs (583) into core

DIN 2015DIN04-045: Supply contract for the provision of mechanical, avionics, airfield and related consumables

DIN 2015DIN04-044: Removal from service of all variants of mines anti-tank HE blast (Barmine)

DIN 2015DIN04-043: Introduction to the conversion of defence medical modules 584 and 587

DIN 2015DIN04-042: Multi-terrain pattern personal load carrying equipment demand and direction for attritional replacements

DIN 2015DIN04-041: Removal from service of cartridges, illuminating/signal, 1

DIN 2015DIN04-040: Declaration of obsolete and deletion of misc NSNs within DMC GMD

DIN 2015DIN04-039: Declaration of obsolete and deletion of misc NSNs within DMC SAR

DIN 2015DIN04-038: Declaration of obsolete and deletion of misc NSNs within DMC 5Z7LSR

DIN 2015DIN04-037: Consumption of Mk 16/17 one-piece coveralls and cotton undergarments

DIN 2015DIN04-036: Reintroduction of battery charging

DIN 2015DIN04-035: Virtual bridge service for access to ship datum pack drawings

DIN 2015DIN04-034: Temporary demand policy for aircrew socks

DIN 2015DIN04-033: Removal from service of flare ground indicating No 1 yellow Mk 4

DIN 2015DIN04-032: Declaration of out-of-service date for the pistol pyrotechnic 1 inch, No1, Mk 5; DMC Pyro, NSN 1095-99-961-8490

DIN 2015DIN04-031: Declaration of obsolescence – Clansman and ANR Mk 1 headsets

DIN 2015DIN04-030: Declaration of obsolescence – ANR user test equipment

DIN 2015DIN04-029: Bowman and tactical comms and information systems supported Army equipment

support publications withdrawal: notice of obsolete, cancellation and disposal

DIN 2015DIN04-028: Declaration of obsolete: Bowman tactical comms and information systems miscellaneous equipments to include vehicle user-data terminal protection kit, e-tags, VHF SRM battery charger cable and BSIU

DIN 2015DIN04-027: Declaration of obsolete – intelligent battery management system

DIN 2015DIN05-007: Transition of high-grade messaging interface messaging service users to Omega Plus messaging service

DIN 2015DIN06-008: Extension and change to the cross-government contract with Specsavers for display screen equipment eyesight tests and spectacles

DIN 2015DIN06-007: Transfer of ownership of JSP 800 *Defence Movements and Transport Regulations*, volumes 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 to ACDS Log Ops

DIN 2015DIN06-006: Defence annual road safety award 2014

DIN 2015DIN07-049: Tactical medical wing course schedule training year 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN07-044: Helicopter handling training

DIN 2015DIN07-043: Attendance on the intermediate command and staff course (Land Reserves) by Regular Army Medical Services professionally qualified officers

DIN 2015DIN07-042: UK Special Forces units briefing course dates, selection course dates and medical standards

DIN 2015DIN07-041: School of Aerospace Battle Management courses

DIN 2015DIN07-040: Procurement of external training for civilians

DIN 2015DIN07-039: Procurement of external training for military personnel

DIN 2015DIN07-037: Defence foreign language training courses for training year 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN07-036: Applications for courses at the Empire Test Pilots' School

DIN 2015DIN07-035: Volunteering for military linguist duties with the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit

DIN 2015DIN07-034: Training – Defence School of Policing and

Guarding courses to be held April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016

DIN 2015DIN07-033: Defence spectrum awareness training

DIN 2015DIN07-032: Joint and single service CI, intelligence, photographic, geospatial and navigation training courses for training year

DIN 2015DIN07-031: Army education service support to NCO and warrant officer command, leadership and management

DIN 2015DIN07-030: Volunteers for 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery, Royal Artillery

DIN 2015DIN07-029: UK Maritime Component Command (Bahrain) core planning group pre-deployment training

DIN 2015DIN07-028: Individual pre-deployment training policy

DIN 2015DIN07-027: Ethical issues for medical personnel – captured persons – practitioner

DIN 2015DIN07-026: Defence learning environment course migration requirements

DIN 2015DIN07-025: 2015/16 Tri-Service chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence training and centre information

DIN 2015DIN07-024: AP 3376 Adventure Training Instructors Career Framework

DIN 2015DIN07-023: Educational and Training Services support to the officer career development programme 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN10-021: Inter-Service and Tri-Service Ice Hockey Championships, June 1-5

DIN 2015DIN10-020: Army Martial Arts Association open championships 2015

DIN 2015DIN10-019: WTF Taekwondo skills course

DIN 2015DIN10-018: Kendo basic/intermediate course

DIN 2015DIN10-017: Army Karate selection weekend

DIN 2015DIN10-016: Army Sailing Association regatta, Ex Solent Venture

DIN 2015DIN10-015: Army Canoe Union 2015 competition dates

DIN 2015DIN10-014: Tri-Services bouldering league 2014/15 – round 5 registration

DIN 2015DIN10-013: Army level golf events organised by the Army

Golf Association in 2015

DIN 2015DIN10-012: Army Inter-Unit Cricket Cup Competition 2015

DIN 2015DIN10-005: Army motorcycle road racing participation 2015

DIN 2015DIN10-004: Inter-Services Paragliding Championships 2015

DIN 2015DIN10-003: Basic gliding courses at the Wyvern (Army) Gliding Club – Upavon 2015

DIN 2015DIN10-002: Army Support Command South climbing competition 2015

DIB03/15: CDS and PUS write to all staff about the publication of the *Powers For a Purpose: Towards a Lasting Devolution Settlement for Wales* command paper

DIB02/15: PUS and CDP write to staff about the new civilian attendance management policy

DIB01/15: CDS and PUS write to all staff about Scotland in the United Kingdom: an enduring settlement command paper



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Commando sapper reunion on May 15-17. Concurrent wives and girlfriends social. For tickets and information contact 01271 857607.

81st Artillery clerks' reunion and association dinner on June 10-12 at Larkhill. AGM followed by dinner on June 13. For details contact reunion secretary Maj Ian Constantine at Honourable Artillery Company on 0207 448718 or email **ian.constantine758@mod.uk**

Roebuck Company Royal Rifle Volunteers/ 3rd Battalion Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment Op Telic 6 2005 reunion on June 13 at F Coy, 7 Rifles, Davies Street, London. For details contact **mike.scott-hyde@bt.com**

The Royal Pioneer Corps Association annual reunion on July 3-5 at The Royal Court Hotel, Coventry. For details contact Norman Brown on 01869 360694 or email **royalpioneer corps@gmail.com**

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Harrogate 'Intake 75C' 40-year reunion. September 12, Majestic Hotel Harrogate. Accommodation available at the hotel. Bar opens at 1800. For more details email **ray.bray@gmail.com**

Mansergh Troop 75/76 Joint Leaders Regiment Royal Artillery reunion on September 12-13. Open to all former personnel and their partners. Exact venue and timings to be confirmed. To attend contact Mike Cave on 07516 633675.

23/144 Parachute Field Ambulance Old Comrades Association dinner, combined with the Midlands Region Parachute Regiment Association gala dinner, at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry on October 10. For information contact Roy Hatch on 01926 812363.



SEARCHLINE

Tony McWilliam is writing a history of the **Bermuda Regiment** and would like to hear from anyone who knows Peter Settle, formerly of the Staffordshire Regiment in the 1960s, who served as RSM of the Bermuda Regiment. Anyone with any information is asked to email him at **tonymcwilliam@yahoo.com**

Frankie (Frances) Roeser is looking for information about her father, **Sgt John Peter Roeser (Int Corps)**, who died in a traffic collision in Lisburn in 1978. Anyone who knew him and can help is asked to contact her at **fmroeser@hotmail.com**

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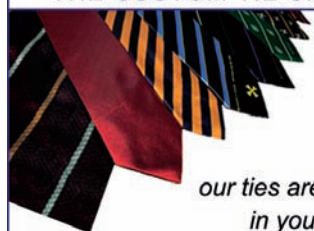
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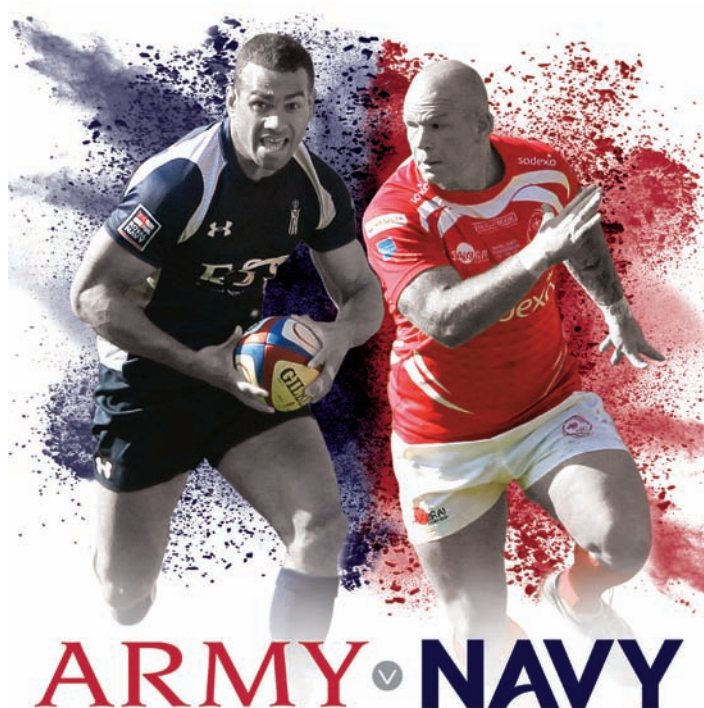
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MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH:
BORN OF WAR

FEMALE AT THE FRONT

DIRECTOR HAS BOND
IN HER SIGHTS

Interview: Joe Clapson

ARMED with military expertise and stunning backdrops there is a new director on the action movie block with grand ambitions.

Born Of War is Vicky Jewson's first feature film in the genre and with realistic fight scenes, a decent storyline and a strong female lead she has set herself a solid benchmark to work from.

Shot on location in the UK, Cyprus and Jordan, the fast-paced thriller sees a teenage girl's life torn apart after her parents are murdered.

Mina, played by Sofia Black-D'Elia, discovers that she isn't who she thinks she is and that her real father is a ruthless warlord her mother had an affair with. Now he wants her back.

When hiding proves futile Mina decides that the only course of action left is to go after her father.

For Jewson, the movie, which hits cinemas on May 1, is the start of a quest to get more powerful female characters on screen in high-octane roles.

"I've always wanted to make an action film with a female protagonist," she explained.

"The idea for this title came when I was on a plane with terrible turbulence and I started thinking that we might not survive.

"I wanted to do something where a woman faces up to extraordinary circumstances and it's a case of fight or flight."

The 29-year-old added: "I'm not an aggressive feminist at all but I think we could do with more women fighting to triumph against the odds in exciting movies."

Jewson has recently been signed to make another flick in the same vein in Hollywood but with more financial backing.

"The next step will be to put more money into another action film, again working with a female protagonist," she commented.

"For *Born Of War* we were shooting with a budget of only £300,000, which is very low for a title in this genre, so we had to get as much production value as possible out of our location and contacts assisting us.

"My dream would be to be the first female director of a James Bond movie – obviously that would be amazing."

For this picture, which sees Mina operating in war-torn Jordan, Jewson drafted in soldiers from The Mercian Regiment as well as the Jordanian Special Forces to provide attention to detail.

"We worked with the Mercians for quite a lot of the film to give us an insight into weapons and how an enemy might operate," she said.

"Using real guns allowed the actors to realise that they were handling deadly firearms, not just playing with replicas like kids.

"Having troops involved was brilliant because they could tell us how to make things accurate."

Coupling such realism with a strong female lead was paramount for Jewson, which is why Black-D'Elia was her first choice.

"I saw Sofia in the US version of *Skins* and just knew she was right because she had an edge – a very raw element that I loved," she said.

"For the role I just tried to put her out of her comfort zone to make a scene real."

Despite its low budget the movie offers edge-of-your-seat action and could well springboard Jewson into the mainstream. ■

VERDICT: A promising start to director Vicky Jewson's mission to create female action heroes ★★★★★



CLOWN out now

A LOVING father finds a clown suit to wear to his son's birthday party, only to realise the outfit is part of a malevolent curse that turns its wearer into an evil, child-killing, demonic monster. This is an awesome slasher movie with great old-school horror elements, a predictable storyline and plenty of gory scenes. Do not watch the full trailer beforehand though, as it pretty much shows all of the best bits.

Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

VERDICT: An entertaining horror unless you have coulrophobia ★★★★★



FIELD PUNISHMENT NO. 1 out now

FRASER Brown stars as Archibald Baxter from the New Zealand Army who was shamefully bullied along with other conscientious objectors after being forcibly conscripted to fight in the First World War. This movie tells the story of Baxter and his courageous comrades who were all called cowards by the military, when in fact they were the bravest, strongest and most admirable men imaginable.

Cpl Nick Reader, Rifles

VERDICT: Brilliant story that gives the truth about brave men ★★★★★



HALO: NIGHTFALL out now

BASED on the long-running cult video game series this live-action sci-fi film brings the computer characters to life. With the help of executive producer **Ridley Scott**, director **Dan Wang** does the massive fan base justice with an interesting plot, excellent cinematography, fantastic sound and a great cast. It's the personal story of Jameson Locke, a legendary manhunter and agent with Earth's most powerful military branch.

Cfn Jack Watkinson, REME

VERDICT: Excellent for Halo fans and worth a watch for others ★★★★★



SLEEPLESS NIGHT out now

THIS French subtitled police thriller follows Vincent, a cop and a devoted husband and father. He is relentlessly tailing a group of bad guys who have kidnapped his son. Vincent is contacted by a drug lord and ordered to cooperate in order to secure the release of his child. What unfolds is a deadly chase within a Paris nightclub where the revellers are oblivious to what is going on.

Phil Tiffany, ex-RLC

VERDICT: Great story but difficult to keep up with subtitles ★★★★★



THE HOMESMAN out now

DIRECTED by and starring **Tommy Lee Jones**, this tragic portrayal of the hardships and brutality of Nebraska in 19th century America is a challenging experience. **Hilary Swank** is excellent as a selfless spinster who volunteers to move three psychologically disturbed women to a sanatorium in Iowa. She finds Jones, a drifter, who reluctantly helps her. A tale of violence, vengeance and survival unravels.

Maj Neil Johnson, AAC

VERDICT: An uncomfortable affirmation of the kindness of strangers ★★★★★



WIN... '71

JACK O'CONNELL plays Gary Hook, a young British soldier accidentally abandoned by his unit following a riot on the streets of Belfast. Disorientated and unable to trust anyone, the recruit fights to survive the night in a deadly environment. *Soldier* has teamed up with Studio Canal to offer copies of the DVD to five lucky readers. To be in with a chance of winning just tell us what country the film is set in. Send your answers to the usual postal address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: April 30

MUSIC

PICK OF THE MONTH:
CHASING YESTERDAY

CHANGE OF PACE

GALLAGHER REVELS IN
SOLO SPOTLIGHT



Review: Richard Long

THE recent sighting of Liam Gallagher at one of his brother's concerts has inevitably fuelled speculation of an imminent Oasis reunion.

While such a prospect would appeal to the younger sibling, given the demise of his former band Beady Eye in 2014, it is hard to gauge whether such a notion holds similar sway with Noel Gallagher.

His self-titled debut offering was released in 2011 and while the star was somewhat reluctant to see his name in lights he has quickly adapted to the change in direction.

"I wasn't ready for the positive reaction from the album and solo gigs," he said.

"At first I'd just about tolerate being a centre-stage singer every night but I really enjoyed it, probably because neither I nor the audience had any expectations and just went with it. I was amazed that it got to an arena level so quickly."

The initial success led to a 15-month tour and with the dates complete he soon felt an urge to move on to the next project.

"When the Oasis tours came to an end it was always great to get away from the chaos and take a year off, but this time I got bored extremely quickly," Gallagher explained.

"I had no idea what I was doing from one day to the next. I watched some telly, went to the shops and thought about getting back into the studio."

With former producer Dave Sardy occupied elsewhere the artist took control of the project himself in a move that proved to be challenging but ultimately rewarding.

He said: "It's not that I've ever had people telling me what to write or what direction to go in, but managing sessions from one end of the week to the other proved difficult."

"I'm not one for taking notes, whereas producers have systems to know how to book session musicians and so on."

"I had all these people looking at me and saying 'right, what are we doing today?' I was making the whole thing up as I went along."

While this way of working may sound disjointed, or even a little chaotic, it is not reflected in the end result.

Gallagher's previous album had a distinctly transitional feel but *Chasing Yesterday* is a confident and bold second step.

The tracks are not shackled by the pressure of the immediate post-Oasis era and the music flows in directions that perhaps would not have been possible within the confines of such an energy-charged band.

Hints of saxophone ripple through the superb opening song *Riverman*, while tranquil offering *The Right Stuff* represents his most experimental move to date.

Singles *In the Heat of the Moment* and *Ballad of the Mighty I* follow a more familiar route and it is hard to pick fault with anything on what proves to be an excellent album from a musician now fully in tune with life as a solo star. ■

VERDICT: Noel Gallagher flies high on what is an outstanding second album ★★★★★

Do What You Want To by Flowers

THIS is London trio **Flowers'** debut album. Produced by **Bernard Butler** it sounds very much like **The Cocteau Twins** as synths and moody drums provide the perfect backing for singer **Rachel Kennedy's** wonderful voice. As the title suggests the songs are all about the excitement of youth, *Young* and *Forget The Fall* encapsulate this brilliantly. It is warm, delicate and a real feast for the ears. The only slight criticism is that they need to let themselves go with a scream or shout, but there's no real need to here.

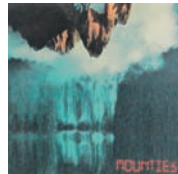


Capt Damian Hern, AGC (SPS)

VERDICT: A fresh, young band with echoes of indie greats ★★★★★

Thrash Rock Legacy by Mounties

THRASH rock this is not, nor is it likely to leave a legacy. But, once you get past the poorly chosen album title, this debut from Canadian outfit **Mounties** is a curiosity that improves with each listen. The sound is best described as an alternative rock band in which the lead guitar has been replaced by an 80s' Commodore 64 home computer, stuck in a state of perpetual and polyphonic loading. This is not necessarily a bad thing and, when mixed with a little songwriting and a few vocal harmonies, is almost compelling in places.



Maj Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)

VERDICT: Genre defying non-thrash, electronic rock-pop ★★★★★

Lady Sings the Blues

FORMER *X Factor* star **Rebecca Ferguson** releases her third album – *Lady Sings the Blues* – on what would have been **Billie Holiday's** 100th birthday. It features a host of the legend's famous tracks and was recorded in the same LA studio. Strings, horns and woodwind instruments offer the perfect accompaniment to Ferguson's sound, while her deep and soulful voice enhances the lyrics and draws you into the songs. This offering wraps you in a velvet cloud from which you never want to leave.



Julie Jessup, civvy

VERDICT: Brilliant – there is nothing else to say ★★★★★

Blaster by Scott Weiland

FORMER **Stone Temple Pilots** and **Velvet Revolver** frontman **Scott Weiland** is back with a long-awaited new album. Having described this offering as "guitar heavy" it is hard to disagree with the star's assessment. Opening track *Modzilla* hits you with a strong yet classic riff that will leave you wanting more. But this is a record of two halves. The first is full of old-school rock while the second takes a musical turn as the tempo slows completely. Standout tracks include *Youth Quake* and *Parachute*.



Sgt Ben McDaniel, REME

VERDICT: A guitar-heavy album that is a listening pleasure ★★★★★

Game On by The Amorettes

DIG out your jeans, denim waistcoats and hairspray in preparation for this earth shatteringly great throwback to the heyday of 80s' glam metal. **The Amorettes** are an all-girl group who can pump out a fist shakingly good tune like **Motley Crue** or **Guns N' Roses** to the point where you can't tell the difference. *Son of a Gun* and *Hot and Heavy* are prime examples of songs that make you want to open the throttle on your motorbike, while *Rock Me, Roll Me* has the unashamedly crude innuendos that we all know and love.



LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

VERDICT: A must-have for any self-respecting metal fan ★★★★★

The Great Pretenders

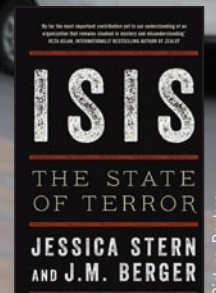
LISTENING to the new album from **Mini Mansions** cast me back to my younger days and a reminiscence of the 80s. With strong similarities to the likes of **David Bowie**, **Iggy Pop** and **Roxy Music** I felt a certain warmth for their music. But as the record continued that disappeared as fierce bass and powerful synths drowned out the lyrics. If you're a child from the era you will have a connection with their electro-pop sound and it will be no surprise to see them peaking the charts in the not-too-distant future.



Sgt Craig Backhouse, Coldm Gds

VERDICT: An 80s flashback missing a 21st century beat ★★★★★

BOOKS



Picture: Reuters

ISIS: The State of Terror is out now, priced £14.99

PICK OF THE MONTH:
ISIS: THE STATE OF TERROR

REWRITING THE RULES OF JIHAD

ACADEMICS LIFT LID ON FUNDAMENTALIST FACTION

Interview: Becky Clark

RELIGIOUS extremism has a long and ugly history but Isis has plumbed new depths of brutality in its efforts to stamp its brand of Islam on parts of Iraq and Syria.

From beheadings to systematic rape, acts of medieval cruelty are meted out on an almost daily basis – much of it filmed and published online.

Just how the group rose to infamy so quickly is revealed in a new book by American academics J.M Berger and Jessica Stern.

Isis: The State of Terror charts its complex origins and evaluates the foreign policy threats posed by its ruthless ideology.

Originally an affiliate of al-Qaeda, Isis's doctrine eventually became too radical even for them and the two groups severed ties.

According to Berger, the West's first error was its failure to understand these dynamics.

"Al-Qaeda's central power and influence had been waning, while its allies in Yemen and Iraq were rising but some policy makers saw the associates as junior partners," he told *Soldier*.

"Very few people anticipated the split or that Isis could challenge al-Qaeda so effectively."

The international community may since have woken up to the threat but building a clear picture of such a disparate force remains a challenge.

"Isis members hail from dozens of different countries and are typically young men aged around 18 to 24," explained Berger.

"There are also many who don't fit that profile – in addition to some recruits in their 40s and 50s, they are increasingly using children as fighters."

Commenting on the difficulty of obtaining reliable figures on the group's fighting strength he added: "Its total force is probably at least 30,000, but some estimates run much higher."

"At this point, we believe there are certainly more than 20,000 foreign fighters in all of Iraq and Syria, which is up quite a bit since we finished the book. Most of the newcomers have joined Isis as opposed to other factions."

The organisation's ability to reach out to disaffected Muslims around the world via online channels is one of its most disturbing facets.

Not only does the strategy provide a steady influx of foot soldiers, it also raises the threat of "lone wolf" attacks in the West.

Addressing this worrying new trend Berger continued: "Our current estimate is that there are around 30,000 Twitter accounts supporting Isis."

"Tweets never killed anyone but their social media acumen allows them to leverage and amplify the effects of their violence to manipulate their various audiences, including potential recruits and world leaders."

In response, suggest the book's authors, the international community needs to be savvier about its own approach. Greater military intervention would, they argue, only reinforce the notion of a war between Islam and the West.

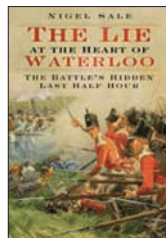
"Our efforts should be focused more on constricting the flow of fighters, money and propaganda and creating an environment in which Isis fails because of its weak internal situation," said Berger. "It's similar to how we would think of a medieval siege, only much more complicated."

As this insightful title makes clear, the jihadists' savagery may belong in the dark ages but their mastery of the online battle space is very much a modern tactic – and a game-changer.

It's time the West caught up. ■

The Lie at the Heart of Waterloo

by Nigel Sale



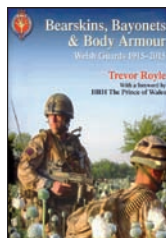
THIS book aims to set the record straight on the role of the 52nd Regiment in defeating the French at Waterloo. Nigel Sale has researched widely, albeit in published sources. His ability to ferret out half-concealed nuggets of information from participants' stories is admirable, but his claim that historians have neglected the 52nd is weakened because he ignores the heavy fire brought by Wellington's guns against the Imperial Guard. Nonetheless, Waterloo buffs should read this account.

Dr Rodney Atwood, military historian

VERDICT: A fascinating, if flawed, challenge to the accepted narrative ★★★★★

Bearskins, Bayonets and Body

Armour by T Royle



CHARTING the 100-year history of the Welsh Guards, from the Battle of Loos up to today, this book is packed with information, paintings and photographs of past operations and personalities. Even for non-guardsmen there is plenty to hold the reader's attention. I was attached to the battalion on Op Herrick 16 so enjoyed seeing some familiar names on those pages. My only criticism would be the cover image, which features the back of someone's head.

SSgt Mike Owens, RE

VERDICT: A believable story about modern operations ★★★★★

Bloody Cross

by David James



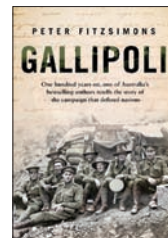
IN 2006 British Army colonel David James was assigned to the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is a well written and entertaining account of his year-long stint coordinating security during the nation's first democratic elections in decades. It also gives a sobering insight into the corruption, poverty and crumbling infrastructure that blights the region. I suspect he's not the first soldier to return from operations in a country to feel that he does not actually know its people.

Maj Andrew Banks, AGC (RMP)

VERDICT: A modern *Heart of Darkness* for anyone posted to the DRC ★★★★★

Gallipoli

by Peter Fitzsimons



A HUNDRED years after Gallipoli, Peter Fitzsimons has written an unashamedly Australian history of the campaign. Impeccably researched and written with a slightly odd informality, the book reveals how the planned naval diversion turned into a shambles that sucked in entire divisions of largely untested Allied soldiers. Fighting heroically over terrain entirely unsuited for attack, they died in their tens of thousands in a battle that was unwinnable after the element of surprise was lost on day one.

Doug Jackson, historical novelist

VERDICT: An excellent book despite some catty asides by the author ★★★★★

Words of Command

by Allan Mallinson



THE 12th title in the Matthew Herve series is set 15 years after Waterloo and gives a good insight into life as a cavalry officer when Wellington was prime minister. Herve is in command of the 6th Light Dragoons and a relative peace has descended on Europe, though in the background there is civil disturbance by Reformists. It all makes for a good story but I thought the flow of the book was spoilt by the author repeatedly dropping in quotes in foreign languages.

Andy Kay, ex-RS

VERDICT: If you're a fan of the series then this one's for you ★★★★★

Ramblings of a Rascal

by Lawrence Stacey



I USUALLY look for a book to provide lessons or education of some kind that the reader can take away and use. In the case of this autobiography, it was not until I finished that I realised that the moral here was perhaps more subtle but no less poignant: live life to the fullest and take advantage of opportunity where you find it. Stacey is an excellent storyteller and his adventures keep you engaged, entertained and a little envious of his having drunk deep from the cup of life.

Maj Chris Buckham, RCAF

VERDICT: This bon viveur's tale is well worth a read ★★★★★

TOP GEAR



PICK OF THE MONTH: DISCOVERY SPORT

ROVER'S NEW BREED

OFF-ROAD STALWARTS WELCOME NEW
ADDITION TO THE FAMILY

Review: Richard Long

WITH Land Rover recently calling time on its Freelander and Defender models the manufacturer has been left with a void in its off-road portfolio.

The release of the new Discovery Sport is aimed at plugging the gap and its chic design, coupled with cutting-edge innovations, ensure this latest offspring will be more than welcome at the family table.

On first impressions this vehicle looks markedly different from the bulky frames witnessed in earlier Land Rovers.

Its streamlined features see it veer towards the sleekness of the Range Rover Evoque, meaning this is anything but your traditional road-hogging four-by-four.

The stylish approach continues on the inside, where leather seats and trim offer an element of luxury while a suite of gadgets will appeal to the more technologically-minded motorists.

At the centre of this is an eight-inch infotainment console that includes a DAB radio and satellite navigation system.

The highlight is the navigational device, which is simple to use and provides highly accurate information on any disruptions.

Unfortunately, the radio does not offer the wide range of stations found in other vehicles but USB connectivity and Bluetooth mean any musical shortfalls can easily be countered via an iPod.

Automatic headlights and windscreen wipers are a very welcome touch and the heated seats will more than prove their worth during the winter months.

As a driver who touches 6ft 3in in height a little extra legroom behind the wheel would have been appreciated but even with the seat fully pushed back there is plenty of space for passengers in the rear, which is something that is lacking in the Evoque.

Those seeking a family car will also be pleased to know the boot can be reconfigured to offer two additional seats.

In terms of ride, the Discovery is smooth and exceptionally quiet at high speed and the handling is light and very responsive.

But with any car like this thoughts inevitably turn to performance and the resulting hit on the wallet at the pumps.

This review was conducted with the 2.2-litre SD4 turbo diesel variant which boasts CO2 emissions of 166g/km and a fuel efficiency of up to 44.8 miles-per-gallon.

However, such a figure seemed a little optimistic on this test – where it averaged just under 40 miles-per-gallon – and a weekend trip from Aldershot to Norfolk and back made a hefty dent on the fuel levels.

That said, this vehicle must also be judged on its off-road performance, which fares particularly well.

Different settings cater for varying terrains – with grass, gravel, snow, mud and sand proving to be no match for this machine.

Land Rover may now be missing a few famous names but their efforts to bridge the gap have been successful.

It just remains to be seen whether the Discovery Sport will enjoy the longevity of its predecessors. ■

...TRIED AND TESTED...TRIED AND TESTED...TRIED AND TESTED...TRIED AND TESTED...

WHAT WE LIKED...

THE LOOK

The design team at Land Rover has hit the target with this streamlined and elegant machine, which cuts an impressive figure when compared with the more cumbersome off-roaders of years gone by.



CENTRAL CONSOLE

This easy-to-use system features an array of gadgets, from a highly detailed satellite navigation device to a DAB radio. The dashboard also displays this information to avoid distractions for the driver. The screen can be used to control the climate inside the car and doubles as a rear-view camera to help with parking.



DISCOUNTS

Peterborough-based Marshall Military Sales offer substantial discounts to serving personnel, with diesel models starting at £30,143. Visit www.landrovermilitarysales.co.uk or call 01733 231231 for more information.



WHAT WE DIDN'T...

BACK END BLUES

While the option to reconfigure the boot to create two extra seats will appeal to larger families it does come at a cost. With the seating in place there is little room for the storage required for additional passengers – especially when those being transported are children. But the second and third rows can easily be folded down to create ample space.



ON THE ROAD

Express pace from 0-60mph is not what this car is about and the fuel consumption isn't as economical as first thought. But compared with other off-road vehicles on the market it more than holds its own.



OVERALL VERDICT: Land Rover has bridged the gap between pure off-road driving and luxury motoring with this impressive newcomer to the fold.

★★★★★

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SOLDIERSPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long

Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Tough call: The Army's boxers endured a challenging night in the ring before finally securing a 32nd consecutive Inter-Services title. Read more about their success on page 89...





Elite team dares to dream

Personnel eye global glory as sport takes off

THE man charged with heading up the Army's elite-level judo set-up is targeting success on the world stage after celebrating a promising start to his tenure.

Maj Dave Campey (RE) has seen his players win medals at the Scottish and English Opens this year and with competitions coming thick and fast further glory is on the cards.

Seasoned performers Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (RTR, pictured below) and LCpl Victor Ahiavor (RRF, pictured left) remain integral to the group but with a pool of 18 athletes at his disposal Campey is not short of talent.

Next year's Rio Olympics may arrive too soon for some but the Commonwealth Games in 2018 is seen as a realistic goal when it comes to international honours.

"This is all about finding a structure for the players who have progressed from Army level to an elite standard," Campey told *SoldierSport*.

"We are looking at part- or full-time training within different national set-ups.

"Five of our squad members could win medals at the Commonwealth Games and then we can look at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

"Japan is the birthplace of

our sport and it would be a privilege to compete there."

Judo is currently enjoying a boom and there were more than 70 entrants at the last Army championships.

The soldiers are also the team to beat at Inter-Services level, where they have recorded nine successive victories.

"We run four skills courses a season and they are always full," Campey explained.

"People come as novices but they can progress and compete at Inter-Services level. After that there will be opportunities to join the elite group.

"These guys are selected on performance and what they achieved in the last campaign. We will do the same next year.

"2015 is going to be busy and there is a lot going on. They are keen and want to do well."

Tpr Russel Parker (QRL) is a newcomer to

the group but his background in the martial art means he is well placed to progress.

The 25-year-old competed at the Youth Olympics and European Under-21 Championships as a youngster but a long-term shoulder injury brought his sporting career to a sudden halt.

He joined the Army in 2011 and after deploying on Op



"We have a lot of people who are pushing hard and hopefully we can get to where we want to go"

Tpr Russel Parker (QRL)



Herrick 17 the Serviceman started planning his comeback, which materialised in October last year.

A silver medal at the Army Championships was followed by gold at the Inter-Services and Parker cemented his return with silvers at the Scottish and English Opens.

"I had a long lay-off and the first five or six weeks back were very difficult," the prospect explained.

"It took a while for my body to get used to the demands of judo again.

"But the injuries have gone and I'm fully fit. I've got ranking competitions throughout the season and I'm aiming for a place in the national squad at the end of the year."

Parker is now in full-time training at the British Judo Centre of Excellence in Walsall and has praised the Service set-up, and his unit, for helping him to get back on track.

"I didn't know much about Army judo but it is really good," he said.

"It is a chance for all the elite players to get together and having individuals like Emmanuel and Victor on-board is brilliant.

"We have a lot of people who are pushing hard and hopefully we can all get to where we want to go." ■



f For more details on how to get involved in the sport visit the Army Judo Association page on Facebook.

SISTERS OF MERCY



» THE Scottish Open was a family affair for the Hawkes sisters – who secured bronze medals on the mat.

The duo form part of a three-strong female contingent in the Army's elite group and they are hoping more Servicewomen can follow in their footsteps.

LCpl Rachael Hawkes (Int Corps, pictured right) told *SoldierSport* her success in the under-70kg category came as a surprise given the fact that her recent focus has been on the day job.

"I have not been out of training long," she explained. "My last competition was a while ago and I was using this for experience so it was a shock to win the bronze.

"I'm going to take things one step at a time but it is an encouraging start."

Her sibling, LCpl Sarah Hawkes (AGC [RMP], pictured left), is a two-time Inter-Services champion and is currently ranked 15th in the country.

"The Army is really supportive," she said. "They run regular skills courses and the coaching is brilliant.

"If there are any tournaments we want to fight in they are keen to help out. We are going on tour to America and Canada later this year and will be up against athletes from both countries.

"I won gold last time and will be looking for more of the same.

"The standard of female players is very high. I'm looking to get my coaching certificates and I want to break into the top ten by the end of the year."

Elite pathway: how to progress to judo's upper echelons



1 Newcomers learn their trade at one of four skills courses each year



2 Players test themselves at the Army Championships and Inter-Services



3 Repeated success leads to elite status and a push for international honours

THE stunning landscape of Snowdonia National Park again formed the backdrop for the Army Cycling Union's (ACU) annual training camp as Service riders geared up for the rigours of a new season.

Exercise Welsh Epic saw 300 athletes taking to the saddle on punishing routes for the Reds' road race and mountain bike specialists.

As well as offering an arduous schedule for those hoping to push for representative honours the programme provided welcome experience for the discipline's increasing number of newcomers.

SoldierSport followed the peloton as it tackled a gruelling 75-mile circular route from the group's base in Capel Curig to the imposing headland of the Great Orme.

"The aim of this camp is to get everyone ready for the racing season," explained event organiser Sgt Ben Bradley (RE).

"They need to get the miles in their legs. But it is not

just about riding, we have coaching and nutritional briefs and there is an opportunity to learn all about the basics of what to do on a bike.

"Capel Curig is a great facility. If you can ride in the hills you can ride anywhere. This route was used in the Tour of Britain so it really lends itself to cycling."

Bradley said the recent performances of Team Sky and Team GB have inspired a new breed of cyclists on civvy street and in the Army.

"It is massive," he added. "The strength in depth we now have is amazing. We've got more and more people representing the ACU in British Cycling races and that means the men's and women's road teams will both have successful

seasons this year.

"The sky's the limit."

Sig Matthew Thorpe (R Signals) is among the new arrivals and having taken up the sport during phase two training his attention has now turned to coaching with 30 Signal Regiment.

While he admitted that competitive cycling was not a priority he said exercises such as Welsh Epic allow him to develop his skill levels.

Thorpe added: "It is miles in the bank and we are in a privileged position to be able to come and

do something like this.

"The ACU is fantastic in the way it organises races and training camps and the discounts we receive on kit makes it a lot easier for people to get into the sport.

"I now want to achieve my

level two specific coaching qualification and I also hope to get more females involved. There are six in our regiment and we want as many girls as possible to give it a try."

As well as providing unrivalled training the camp formed the selection process for the Army's 2015 road race team.

One of those hoping for a spot was Reservist LCpl Dave Reeves (RLC).

"I want to push for a place in the A team and earn category one status in the British Cycling standings," he said.

"Camps like this are fantastic. There are more Reservists coming through now and it is not just in cycling, it is other sports too.

"This is my fourth time here. It offers bread-and-butter training to those who are just starting out and for others it is the build up for the year ahead.

"It is all about getting together with different people so we can focus on the strengths of those we will be riding with." ■



“Camps like this are fantastic”

LCpl Dave Reeves (RLC)

CYCLING

IN NUMBERS

300

Average miles covered by cyclists on the road during a week on Exercise Welsh Epic

ELITE TEAM SADDLES UP



WITH the new season gathering pace the Army's road race squads are aiming high as they look to capitalise on the momentum that is flowing through the sport.

Capt Ryan Perry (REME) and Spr Alex Royle (RE) have made giant strides in recent years but they have been keen to highlight the team nature of the discipline ahead of the pursuit of individual honours.

"We have got a small nucleus of really strong riders," Perry (pictured near left) told *SoldierSport*. "Then we have another six who can really push at National B level.

"Below that there is a group of ten guys who have the potential to reach a similar standard.

"Last year I secured a lot of podiums at National B but this season we want to win that while being competitive in National A.

"It is so hard. We are just a gang of squaddies doing our best and while it is tough it is not insurmountable as we have the talent."

Perry and Royle are in full-time

training – alongside teammate Sjt Deacon Cutterham (Rifles) – and the officer believes such status is essential if they are to progress.

"There is no way round it," he added. "Fortunately, I have a really understanding commanding officer and he is supportive of what we are trying to do.

"It isn't going to happen overnight. It takes three or four years for guys to reach the required standard. The talent is there we just need the structure and support."

Royle (pictured far left) collected the rising star accolade at last year's Army Sports Awards and he is hoping for more success in 2015.

"I want to be featuring in the top 20 of the British Premier Calendar race series," he said. "I'm also targeting a top-five finish or even a medal at the national under-23 time trial championships.

"The Army has provided me with a superb platform and these opportunities would not be available on civvy street."

EPIC ADVENTURE

Cyclists tested in the Welsh countryside as preparations for new season gather pace



MONTH in sport

April's key fixtures...



WHAT: Army Surf Championships

WHEN: Monday, April 13 to Friday, April 17

WHERE: Newquay, Cornwall

COMMENTS: Soldiers take to the surf during a week-long training camp and competition cycle that leads in to the annual Inter-Services showdown from April 18 to 19



WHAT: Inter-Services Table Tennis Championships

WHEN: Monday, April 20 to Tuesday, April 21

WHERE: HMS *Temeraire*, Portsmouth

COMMENTS: The team head to the tournament on the back of a successful Army championships last month



WHAT: Shinty – Scots Camanachd v Lochaber

WHEN: Saturday, April 25 (1430 throw up)

WHERE: Spean Bridge, Lochaber, Scotland

COMMENTS: The Forces side face Lochaber, or any other team from the area, for the first time in this Sutherland Cup tie



Defensive duo lead the way

Inter-Services Netball

Army 24
Royal Air Force 9

Army 37
Royal Navy 23

THE Army continued their dominance of the Inter-Services Netball Championships as they recorded back-to-back victories over their Forces rivals at HMS *Nelson*.

A 24-9 triumph over the Royal Air Force was followed by a battling 37-23 win against the Royal Navy as the Reds lifted the trophy for a fourth consecutive season.

Defensive duo Cpl Nordia Masters (AGC) and Pte Fern Davies (RLC) formed

the backbone of the team's success, while Maj Laura White (REME) showed a lethal touch in front of goal in her final campaign as skipper.

The light blues proved to be stubborn opponents in the early exchanges but an increase in tempo late on saw the soldiers record a comfortable win.

Victory against the Senior Service appeared to be well within the side's grasp but a spell in the sin bin for centre Capt Steph Novak (AGC (RMP)) made life difficult.

The hosts came out on top in the third quarter but a strong showing in the final period ensured another title was safely secured.

"We didn't make things easy for ourselves and nerves played a part," White told *SoldierSport*. "Our match with the RAF was a lot closer than

the scoreline suggests but our fitness showed in the second half and that really helped us.

"Having a player sent to the sin bin disrupted our pattern of play against the Navy. They got back to within three points but we made sure of the result in the last quarter.

"We managed to use every single player in the squad and that shows the strength in depth we now have."

With Davies recently winning a first senior cap for Wales and the development squad also boasting a wealth of talent White believes the Reds' set-up is well placed for future success.

"Fern was player of the tournament," she added.

"We have more than 50 players coming to the trials each year and that reflects the strength of Army netball at unit and corps level." ■



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Game brief

Date: March 18, 2015

Competition: Inter-Services football

Venue: Army Military Stadium

Army

Wilkinson	7	Glass	10
Emmerson	11	Agar	9
Molyneux	4	Williams	8
Broadbent	3	Haley	2
Paddock	5	Crawford	6
Smyth	1		

Captain's comment

Every time we play the RAF it is a difficult match but we stuck to our game plan and it worked in the end.

These matches are always close and they have never beaten us convincingly. There have been a lot of draws and this competition has often been decided on goal difference.

We wanted to frustrate them and then hit them with our pace on the counter-attack, we stuck at it and that's what produced the victory.

This season there has been a real discipline and togetherness in the squad. We know if we go into games with the right attitude we will do well.



Sgt Keith Emmerson (RAPTC)



Reds on target for Services win

Inter-Services

Army 4
Royal Air Force 0

THE Royal Air Force saw their domination of football's Inter-Services championship emphatically broken by a rampant Army side who are now favourites to lift the trophy for the first time in eight years.

Goals from Sig Ryan Paddock (R Signals), Pte Matt Glass, LCpl Calum Wilkinson (both RLC) and substitute Spr Steve Currie (RE) fired the Reds to a 4-0 victory and they now only need a draw with the Royal Navy to lift the trophy.

The soldiers signalled their intent from the outset and Wilkinson looked set to break the deadlock in the third

minute but a last-gasp tackle saw his shot deflect over.

Livewire LCpl Sam Agar (R Signals) was the next to threaten and he forced a smart save from visiting keeper SAC Matt Hyslop after finding space in the area.

The winger turned provider moments later as he left two defenders in his wake before cutting the ball back to Wilkinson (pictured), who blazed over from close range.

However, the Army edged themselves ahead in the 37th minute when Hyslop failed to deal with a corner from Gnr Peter Williams (RA) and Sig Ryan Paddock (R Signals) rifled the ball into the roof of the net.

The light blues produced their first meaningful effort on the stroke of half-time when Cpl Alex Woodhouse fired agonisingly wide from distance and they maintained the pressure after the interval

without creating the clear-cut chances they needed.

Further punishment followed on the hour mark as Wilkinson played in Glass, who calmly converted when one-on-one with Hyslop.

The Army's counter-attacking philosophy reaped dividends shortly afterwards as Agar picked out skipper Sgt Keith Emmerson (RAPTC) with a raking cross-field pass.

With players in support the wide man saw his cross blocked but Wilkinson pounced to drill home the third.

Currie completed the rout when a horrendous error from Hyslop allowed him to roll the ball into an empty net.

"My players were excellent," said head coach Capt Joe Collins (R Signals). "Gnr Ben Crawford (RA) and Ryan Paddock defended superbly and going forward we looked really good." ■

Match in numbers



20

Service appearances from defender Gnr Tom Broadbent



8

Years since the Army's last Inter-Services title



Shots on goal by the Reds' forwards

12



Ross delivers in Forces thriller

Inter-Services

Army 5
Royal Air Force 3

DEFENDING champions the Army have one hand on another Inter-Services women's trophy after they emerged victorious from a nail-biting eight-goal thriller in the opening fixture of their 2015 campaign.

Having raced into a 4-0 lead the soldiers looked set for a convincing win against the Royal Air Force but a stirring second-half fightback threatened to ruin their party.

Three late strikes from the visitors set nerves racing through the Reds' camp but skipper SSgt Krissy Wright

(AGC (RMP)) was on hand to seal the contest with a last-gasp effort deep in injury time.

There was little sign of the trouble to come as the Servicewomen bossed the first half with relative ease.

Cfn Rachel Gwilliam (REME) opened the scoring in the eleventh minute with a long-range half volley that flew past keeper Cpl Lucy Whitfield.

And their advantage was doubled moments later as Wright produced a driving run down the wing and when Whitfield parried her cross Cfn Jemma Dinning (REME) was on hand to bundle home.

With the RAF limited to half chances the Army extended their advantage in the 36th minute as Cfn Bianca Ross (REME) connected with a neat cutback from strike partner Dinning to fire a third.

And the forward – who was playing her last match in Service colours – grabbed a deserved second when she held off would-be tacklers to slot the ball into the bottom corner after a storming run.

SAC Keri Haywood snared what appeared to be a consolation goal when she saw a speculative effort from distance beat home keeper Cpl Nikki O'Donnell (AGC (RMP)) and she struck again in the 70th minute following some clever play from skipper Cpl Zara McIntosh.

The light blues were offered further hope in injury time as SAC Jade Ellis-Johnson evaded the Army offside trap before calmly converting.

But with time running out the soldiers created one last opening as Wright ran clear to slot home. ■

SPORT SHORTS



Young guns on top

Inter-Services Under-23 football

Army 2
Royal Air Force 2

» AN outstanding defensive display saw the Army under-23s reclaim the Inter-Services trophy.

After walloping the Royal Navy 5-0 the Reds required only a draw against the Royal Air Force to secure the title and they duly obliged with a performance full of grit and determination.

They dominated the opening exchanges and the deadlock was broken when Spr Steve Currie (RE) converted a penalty.

Cpl David Webb equalised from a tight angle before the soldiers regained the lead courtesy of an own goal.

SAC Lewis Johnson bundled home to give the RAF hope but the Army held firm for a draw.



SSgt Krissy Wright (AGC (RMP))

Front-line feedback

» The RAF changed their system in the second period and it took us a while to get to grips with that. Our nerves were getting a little shredded at 4-3 but we had a game plan and we wanted to stick to it. If we kept our composure we knew we would come out on top.

I was really pleased with my goal. When that went in we knew the match was safe. It is a 90-minute game, we could have easily folded but we got there in the end. »

SPORT
SHORTS

Ticket to ride

» MOTORCYCLE enthusiasts are being invited to the annual British Army Track Day on Saturday, July 25.

This year's event is being staged at Oulton Park in Cheshire and is open to Service riders of all standards. Dependants are also welcome.

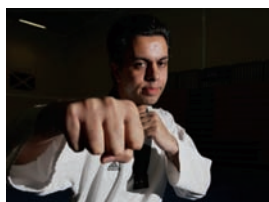
Entry costs £170 and bookings can be made by calling 01727 827794.

Further details are available on the British Army Track Day page on Facebook or from WO2 Glyn Hannah (RE) on military 94659 3750.

IN NUMBERS

4

Titles won by the Army at the Inter-Services Squash Championships. The men, women, under-25s and veterans all won their competitions on the courts of Aldershot



Course date

» A WTF tae-kwon-do skills course is being held at Combermere Barracks in Windsor from April 27 to May 1.

The programme is aimed at beginners and experts and will cover a range of topics. For more information contact Aftab Hussain on 94253 5115.

→ Team of the month

Adjutant General's Corps Women's Football Team



EMPHATIC form in front of goal has underpinned a superb season for the Adjutant General's Corps women's team – who have been crowned league champions with a 100 per cent record.

The squad won all seven fixtures in the Service's Inter-Corps competition and the only blot on their copybook was a 1-0 defeat to the Royal Artillery in the semi-final of the Edwards Challenge Cup.

Skipper SSgt Krissy Wright has been a driving force on and off the pitch but with goals being shared among the group their success has proved to be a real team effort.

"Over the last few years we have brought a number of new players into the set-up and there is now a lot of interest in the game," coach Sgt Ryan McDowell told *SoldierSport*.

"They want to come and play. Word of mouth has spread throughout the corps, people have seen how well we are doing and when they come to have a look they end up staying."

The highlight of the season was a 17-0 win against the Royal Engineers and they scored 41 goals in their seven league fixtures – with a further five coming in a quarter-final win against the Intelligence Corps.

"A lot of our success this year is down to Krissy," McDowell added.

"She has contributed a massive amount of assists and goals."

"LCpl Libby Dixon scored five times against the sappers and got another four against the Int Corps. She was only with us for half the season but proved to be a good player."

Wright has been a mainstay of the Army squad for a number of years now

and has recently been joined by teammates Pte Terri Trowbridge and LCpl Charlene Rooney.

"Hopefully we'll get a few more call-ups," the coach said. "It is great experience for them."

"We've worked hard to develop our team and hopefully the success can continue next season."



Women's Inter-Corps Football Championship 2014/15 winners – AGC

Edwards Challenge Cup Final – April 29



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Turmoil in title defence

Inter-Services Boxing

Army 5
Royal Navy 3
Royal Air Force 1

THE Army boxing team survived a scare in the ring to claim a 32nd consecutive Combined Services title on a controversial night at HMS *Nelson* in Portsmouth.

With LCpl Shamim Khan (RLC) recording an early walkover win at flyweight the defending champions looked set to extend their lead as Pte Kyle Morrison (RLC) took the initiative against Royal Air Force rival SAC Ricki Lyon.

After a tight opening round the bantamweight picked up the pace in the second before a flurry of strong jabs produced two standing counts in the final exchanges of what appeared to be a comfortable win for the Reds.

But, to the astonishment of the crowd, the referee raised the hand of Lyon as the victor and the Army found themselves in a fight on more than one front.

Gnr Ryan Fillingham (RA) set about repairing the damage against Mne Lewis Duggan and the lightweight produced an emphatic display that left the result in little doubt.

After two high-octane rounds the soldier launched a brutal assault in the third and with Duggan struggling under a barrage of blows the referee stopped the contest.

Fus Oliver Knight (RRF) then suffered a narrow loss to AB Luke Fisher and with Mne Aaren Meder proving too strong for Rfn Peter Nevison (4 Rifles) the Reds were up against it.

However, Pte Tom Barry (3 Para) stopped the rot with a controlled victory against SAC Adam Watson before the Royal Navy hit back.

LCpl Christian Flynn (216 Para Sig Sqn) looked in control against Mne Ben

Jones and a standing count in the final round appeared to underline his superiority. But the setback spurred his opponent on and an impressive late counter-attack saw him win the bout on a split decision.

Skipper LCpl Chez Nihell (2 PWRR) gave his side the upper hand as he defeated Mne Kallum Radley before the undefeated LCpl Natty Ngwenya (Gren Gds) ended the night in style.

"Our plan was to go out and win the first fight," head coach SSgt Jason Browning (RAPTC) told *SoldierSport*. "We needed Kyle to box well and he did just that; the decision was a disgrace.

"But Ryan Fillingham produced a professional performance against a really tough lad. It looked like things were going against us but I was confident that Natty would win at the end." ■



"It looked like things were going against us"

SSgt Jason Browning



SPORT SHORTS



Honoured again

» BOXING sensation LCpl Alanna Audley-Murphy (RLC) has added another accolade to her growing collection of honours after she was named Combined Services sportswoman of the year.

The soldier was called upon to represent Northern Ireland at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and she went on to win a bronze medal after defeating Valerian Spicer of the Dominican Republic.

She was named Army sportswoman of the year in December.

IN NUMBERS

4

Trophies won by the Army at the Inter-Services Hockey Championships. The women, under-25s and veterans all won titles, while the men lost out to the Royal Navy



Final looming

» THE Army Major Units Boxing Final will be held on Thursday, April 30.

1 PWRR faced 3 Para in the first semi-final as this issue went to press, while 2 Mercian will take on 13 Air Assault Support Regiment, RLC on April 2.

The venue for the final has yet to be confirmed.

Final word

We asked personnel from 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment – deployed on Exercise Mayan Warrior in Belize – about the benefits of overseas training in the post-Herrick era



Pte Luis Traverso

For me it is essential. I've just come out of training and Belize is a challenge, especially when it comes to the environment. I joined the Army with the aim of deploying to Afghanistan but I also heard about overseas packages. Being a new bloke it is a hard start but an exercise like this makes me part of the team.



Pte Wesley Lanning

I think it is very important. The heat out here is like nothing I've ever experienced and it is a good chance to work on your skills and drills. You also get to know the blokes better; we are in the field for four weeks so it is a good way to bond.



LCpl Sam Rowe

The Army promotes a lot of travelling as part of the job and this proves it follows through on its word. For the younger privates it is a massive experience and will hold them in good stead for the future. It gets you ready for operations, wherever they may be.



2nd Lt Jack Bowden

We have all kinds of facilities in Kenya and Canada that offer a range of environments. Here we have savannah mixed up with jungle. The guys are going to exciting places and it is something their friends back home would not necessarily be doing.



Pte Matthew Daley

Now Afghanistan has closed down we are going back to the roots of training. Coming to somewhere like Belize allows us to concentrate on conventional warfare – and everyone loves that. If you can admin and soldier in the jungle you can do it anywhere.



Pte Josh Deacon

You never know what is going to happen in the world; we could deploy to a range of different environments and need to be prepared. This is great experience; it gets us working as teams from section through to company level. Coming here allows us to see different cultures; not many people get the chance to go to the jungle and we have come for free.



Pte Talitha Woodhouse (RAMC)

This training is pulling people away from the Herrick campaign and making them focus on what may pop up in the future. When I signed up I didn't think travelling to somewhere like Belize would be possible but I'm now here as a medic doing the same exercise as the others.



Pte Quinton Kelly

I joined the Army so I could deploy to Afghanistan but that is not going to happen now. I didn't know about this kind of stuff; it's great. We have learnt a lot of skills that will be useful in the future. I see this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and it isn't something that would normally happen unless I paid for it.

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