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“This is a generational change”

Putting more science into soldiering – page 32



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“The result comes on the back of a really hard season”

Rewriting the rules of PT



PHYSICAL training is transforming across the entire Field Army.

Sick of being thrashed with the

same activity every Friday? Well, that's all about to change.

From now on, instructors will be tailoring sessions to suit their unit's specific role – including seven sets of movements that help to control force production and prepare the body for the stress of ops (page 40).

Think it sounds a bit academic? Well, you'd be right. Turn to pages 7 and 32 to find out how strength and conditioning science is being put at the forefront of all workouts.

The idea is that, like any athlete, British soldiers' physical training must be targeted. It's a philosophy that makes perfect sense to professional sports coaches (page 39) – not to mention those who have trialled the system and seen injury rates fall by 80 per cent (page 36).

Do get in touch when the new-look fitness sessions make their way to you – we'd love to hear your thoughts.

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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THE ART OF PERFORMANCE

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Picture: Graeme Main

Injury prevention gets major lift

New physical training routines are making soldiers fitter to fight

THE Royal Army Physical Training Corps (RAPTC) has introduced a revolutionary new fitness plan to help soldiers stay in optimum shape and avoid musculoskeletal injuries (page 32).

Essentially, it promotes short bursts of strength and conditioning work and reduces the emphasis on long runs.

What's not widely known, however, is that a number of its elements were inspired by a separate study at Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Catterick called Project Omega.

A survey of training injuries to recruits between 2012 and 2016 revealed that a third of those on the combat infantryman's course had suffered musculoskeletal problems.

As a result, the officer commanding ITC's primary care rehabilitation department, Maj Robert Heagerty (RAMC), a physiotherapist who works with British Olympic athletes, was asked to look into the problem.

"We knew that this issue wasn't just going to go away on its own," he told *Soldier*.

"Youngsters today don't do as much physical activity as previous generations so the step from civilian to soldier is bigger than ever before.

"I reviewed our methods with the intent of reducing musculoskeletal injuries and medical discharges without compromising the Army's physical fitness standards."

The officer formed a core project team, bringing in senior RAPTC

personnel to help test a new training programme and brief the centre's physical training instructors on how to deliver it.

"Their buy-in was crucial," explained Maj Heagerty.

"We introduced progressive training and a more rounded approach that included education on the importance of resting, hydration and nutrition.

"We focused on interval training and strength and conditioning exercises in the gym plus cardiovascular work in the swimming pool to reduce impact injuries.

"Soldiers need to be fit to run, not just run to get fit."

The team also hammered home the importance of feedback.

"Recruits had to feel free to report niggles and pains so we could nip problems in the bud early on," added the officer.

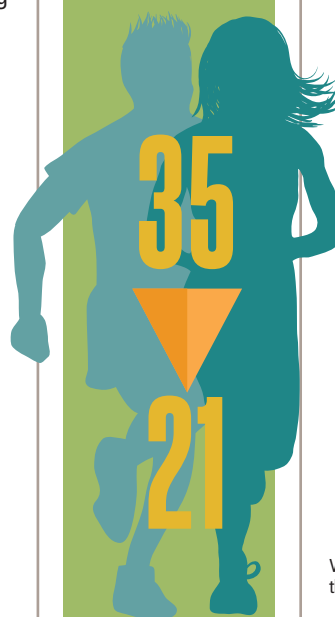
The results of the 12-month trial, which concluded earlier this year, make for impressive reading.

Some 1,450 recruits took part and the medical discharge rate was nearly half of that experienced between 2012 and 2016. The incidence of musculoskeletal injuries dropped from 35 to 21 per cent of trainees.

Catterick has now incorporated much of the trial's methods into its standard physical training syllabus.

"We introduced a different culture and after presenting to the Army I hope we've created a bow wave of change," said Maj Heagerty.

IN NUMBERS



Drop, in percentage, of musculoskeletal injuries at ITC Catterick

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SOLDIER is published by the Ministry of Defence and printed by Wyndeham (Roche) Ltd. Print contract managed by CDS.

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GLOBAL SITREP

1. CANADA

BANFF PUSHES BOUNDARIES

TROOPS from HQ Regional Command have taken to the Canadian Rockies for some arduous cross-country skiing.

They completed ski foundation level two and three courses during the adventurous training package in Banff National Park.

"The idea of AT is to put personnel in a challenging environment and push boundaries, and that was certainly the case here," Cpl Daniel Maxwell (RLC) said. "It's one of the best ways to fully test soldiers."

2. NORTH CAROLINA

WAR GAMES

UK security has been boosted by a milestone divisional HQ exercise in the USA.

Exercise Warfighter saw around 1,000 members of 3rd (UK) Division working within the country's 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg in North Carolina.

Speaking after the serial, British troops said the package had allowed an even greater level of cooperation between the two



Picture: Cpl Rebecca Brown, RLC

nations, which would be positive for future operations.

"It's been beneficial to the UK because it enables us to have a wider security network and gives us the whole picture internationally," added SSgt Alastair Smith (RA) of HQ 1st Artillery Brigade.

3. BOTSWANA

AFRICAN KITSTOP

AN Army team provided expertise to Botswanan counterparts in a mission to familiarise them with ex-British military kit owned by the nation's defence forces.

The 14 soldiers – drawn from a variety of cap badges – instructed troops on how to maintain 1,300 pieces of equipment and vehicles in a visit funded by the African country.

The initiative was organised by members of 2 Close Support Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Maj Brian Broomfield (REME, pictured), who coordinated the visit, said: "We were in the country for 16 days.

"The Botswanans were enthusiastic, professional and everyone gained a great deal.

"The soldiers loved the experience and relished the opportunity provided by our hosts."



2. NORTH CAROLINA

Four British Army teams took part in the Swiss ski mountaineering race Patrouille des Glaciers. Staged in the Alps around Verbier, the biennial event sees soldiers and civilians compete across 53- or 110-kilometre routes. A Royal Engineer team was the first military outfit to cross the line in the shorter race.

4. ESTONIA

BALTIC BIKERS

SERVICE personnel from the 1st Battalion, Royal Welsh Battlegroup took time out from Operation Cabrit to experience some cross-country racing in the snow.

The troops spent three days riding across Estonia on 250-350cc KTM motorcycles during the package, dubbed Exercise Dragon Enduro.

Commenting on the final serial, a 42-kilometre endurance race, Bdr Ian Hawkesworth (RA) said: "I spent more time on the floor than on my bike, but I had an amazing time."



5. UK

UNION ARMY

UNITS with a special connection to Prince Harry will be represented at his wedding to Meghan Markle this month.

Household Cavalry troops will form a staircase party at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, while 3 Regiment, Army Air Corps and The Royal Gurkha Rifles will line the streets around the venue.

Last month the couple attended trials for the Invictus Games in Bath (shown).



Picture: SAC Nicholas Egan, RAF

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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6. IRAQ TROOPS' TOUR TREBLE

SOLDIERS from 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards have been looking ahead to a busy summer as they prepare to rack up a raft of operational experience around the world.

As a large part of the outfit heads to Op Shader in the Middle East (page 20), there will be two smaller outings to Op Toral in Kabul as well as Op Trenton, South Sudan, in support of a United Nations action.

As this issue went to press, soldiers had already arrived in Afghanistan while the mission rehearsal exercise for the Iraq deployment (pictured below) was drawing to a conclusion. Dates for Africa had yet to be confirmed.

Commanding Officer Lt Col Piers Ashfield said many of his troops had yet to experience a deployment – adding they were “hungry and enthusiastic” for operations.



Podium success
for gunner on
the Gold Coast -
page 75



8. MICRONESIA FAR-FLUNG LIFESAVER

AN Army medic helped save the life of a man while on a multinational package in the South Pacific.

Cpl Darren Phillips (RAMC, pictured) treated a hospital patient in Yap.

The victim was bleeding heavily after cutting his wrist with a knife while clearing undergrowth.

Cpl Phillips is one of four British military medics on the US-led Exercise Pacific Partnership, providing humanitarian support to communities in the region.

The NCO said his actions had been a joint effort with his Japanese colleagues.

“We are trained to respond to trauma situations and acted quickly,” he added.

7. AUSTRALIA ON TOP DOWN UNDER

RESERVISTS from the Royal Yeomanry and three Regular soldiers from their paired regiment, 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards deployed to Queensland to work alongside counterparts from the 12/16 Hunter River Lancers, the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

The exercise tested both sides' reconnaissance abilities and culminated in a combined arms attack on a platoon position, with British officers given the chance to command assets including M1 Abrams tanks, armoured vehicles and Bushmaster troop transporters.



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A3 in full
– page 24



Picture: Graeme Main

Upgraded weapon on point

A NEW and improved version of the Army's SA80 assault rifle has been given the thumbs-up by troops who have been using the weapon ahead of operations in Iraq.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, said the A3 variation of the kit had been noticeably upgraded – with better accuracy and durability topping the impressive list of improvements.

Contractor Heckler and Koch is overhauling the weapon in a £5.4 million initiative. Defence Minister Guto Bebb has confirmed that 5,000 rifles will initially be upgraded in the mid-life programme, with more on the cards in future.

Improvements include a longer-lasting coating and a tactical colour scheme. It also has fittings for a new generation of sighting systems and a more streamlined fore grip.

Armourer WO2 Stuart Brompton-Taylor (REME) – who has been assisting troops with the weapon ahead of their Op Shader deployment –

was impressed with its capabilities.

He told *Soldier*: "In my view this is a good rifle – it's really durable and looks great. I only fired it relatively recently but I was immediately taken with its performance."

"It is generally much more user-friendly and the changes have enhanced its capability."

Soldiers on the Op Shader mission rehearsal exercise in Norfolk shared the sentiment – claiming adjustments to the weapon's barrel had made it more accurate.

LSgt James Moore said the combination of better performance, tactical colour scheme and a range of sighting options made the rifle a step-up from the last version.

"It's easier to look after too as the coating doesn't seem prone to rusting," he added.

Gdsm Shaun Crook-Rumsey was equally impressed. He said: "I have noticed the difference. I haven't fired it over long distances yet but I think it's an improvement."

“
It's really
durable
”



Picture: Cpl Ben Beale, RLC



MIND THE GAP

■ UK Armed Forces are suffering a shortfall of more than 8,000 Regular troops, with 102 trades unable to carry out operational tasks without cancelling leave or training, according to a report by the National Audit Office (NAO).

In 2017 the three Services trained just three quarters of the number they needed, it said.

Retention is another issue, with 7,500 Regulars leaving voluntarily last year.

But the MoD said it is working to reverse this trend with a range of initiatives, including retention pay for certain serving personnel, direct entry for civilians into specialist trades and the introduction of flexible working.

However, the NAO believes the challenge to fill some posts will grow as demand rises for specialist skills to respond to new threats.

An MoD spokesperson added: "The military has enough personnel to meet all its operational requirements, including being active on 25 operations in 30 countries throughout the world."

"Recruiting and retaining talent is one of our top priorities and we have a range of schemes to make sure we attract and keep the skilled people we need. In the past year we have drawn more than 13,000 people into the Armed Forces."

LAI'D TO REST AT LAST

■ THE remains of seven fallen First World War troops have been reinterred with full military honours at a ceremony in New Irish Farm Cemetery, Belgium.

The service saw Capt Henry Walker – a New Zealand national who served with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment – buried alongside six other soldiers, whose identities couldn't be established.

The bodies were found during an archaeological dig near Ypres in Belgium.



HORSE HEROINE

■ A MOUNTED gunner who risked her life to protect the public from a runaway gun carriage has been recognised with a major general's commendation. LBdr Grace Gostelow (RHA, above) was training with The King's Troop in Charlton Park, London, when her team of six horses became spooked and unseated the other riders. Left alone in the saddle, she fought to regain control – despite the risk of being crushed by the half-tonne First World War artillery piece. Eventually the animals crashed into a tree, breaking the soldier's neck and back. She received the award from Maj Gen Ben Bathurst on her return to work.

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Picture: Cpl Rebecca Brown, RLC



Nothing rattles airborne union

BRITISH paras have tested themselves alongside their American counterparts in a vast training package designed to create closer bonds between the nations.

Exercise Rattlesnake saw troops from 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment throw themselves – quite literally – into some tough tasks with the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions.

From company-level live-firing drills to parachute descents from US aircraft, the challenging serials allowed the troops from 16 Air Assault Brigade to hone their airborne skills and learn new procedures that could be used on joint operations.

"The Americans are very upbeat and very positive, and that gives a great sense of camaraderie," said Lt Will Maxton, who was based at Fort Bragg – the largest military camp in the US.

"Obviously, we've got different parachutes and different aircraft," he added. "But thanks to their positivity we've felt like we're back in Britain."

"We jumped yesterday and the parachutes were fantastic."

"It was a nice slow descent – different from ours, which is much faster – so it was good for everyone to have a bit of a softer landing."

Speaking at the end of the manoeuvres, which included an urban attack, Maj Robin Rowell said they had been "extremely realistic".

"The lessons my soldiers have learnt have been invaluable," the

officer commanding B Company continued. "It's great to see the conversations that have been going on at a very low level, pretty much regardless of rank."

LCpl Bartlee McHugh (shown below right) also praised the experience.

"We work well with them and it's really easy to make friends out here," he said of the airborne Americans.

"At the end of the day, it's the best of the best really."



“
It's easy to
make friends
out here
”



SPINE LINE COMPETITION

DID last month's spine line clues leave you stuck for words? Our feature on the Army Poetry Competition may have given you a clue.

(Laurence) Binyon, (Rudyard) Kipling, (Wilfred) Owen and (Siegfried) Sassoon are all English war poets.

This month *Soldier* has teamed up with luxury sustainable fashion brand Patria (www.patriagb.com) to offer one lucky reader a set of two top-notch sweatshirts, worth £120 each.

With ten per cent of Patria's profits going to military charities, and all of its clothing made in the UK, this high-end prize is not to be missed.

To be in with a chance of winning both slick jumpers – available in sizes S to XXL – tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Send your answers – plus size – to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by May 31. Good luck!



FUSILIERS FEEL THE LOVE

■ TROOPS from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers began a busy programme of events to mark their outfit's 50th anniversary with a ceremony at their Tower of London HQ.

Having guarded the building for 48 hours from April 22, they marked the half-century on St George's Day with a thanksgiving service in the venue's Chapel Royal.

Guests included Colonel-in-Chief, the Duke of Kent.

Earlier, Regular and Reserve personnel, veterans and cadets in north-east England marked the special occasion by exercising their Freedom of Newcastle (shown).





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

COMMON QUESTIONS

FOREIGN and Commonwealth issues remain one of our highest areas of enquiry, primarily because of the demanding immigration and visa processes families must go through.

Now, after many years of lobbying the Home Office, we're delighted to see an Armed Forces option has been added to the online form that people use to request entry to the UK.

This small change will have a big impact and, most importantly, families will no longer have to pay the onerous immigration health surcharge upfront then wait for a refund.

This couldn't come soon enough – enquiries to the AFF have almost doubled in this area since 2016.

And while this was probably due to an increase in foreign and Commonwealth recruits, it is vital they are made fully aware of the immigration process and available help.

Our support is continuing to make a difference, but this issue reveals the broader role we play in linking families with the decision makers.

We ask all those with responsibility for creating policy that affects Army communities to look at our evidence and listen to our guidance. And, above all, please consider the

families' lived experience to make immigration and visa processes more user friendly.



www.aff.org.uk

“
Always a
smile on
his face
”



Sludgy start – page 70

Talented NCO is remembered

THE commanding officer of 26 Engineer Regiment has paid tribute to a “hard working and popular” father-to-be who died in a diving incident.

Lt Col Simon Doyle said the loss of LCpl George Partridge (shown) on March 26 had been deeply felt by colleagues and their thoughts were with the Serviceman's wife Zoe, who is expecting the couple's first child.

The 27-year-old NCO had been on a course at the National Dive Activity Centre in Chepstow (pictured above).

Lt Col Doyle said the sapper was a talented soldier who had the respect of those he worked alongside.

“He was always ready to lend a helping hand when it was needed most,” he continued.

“Our clearest memories of him



will be on the rugby pitch and in the gymnasium where he was the epitome of a Royal Engineer junior NCO – always pushing himself and his soldiers to the next level and always with a smile on his face.”

LCpl Partridge joined the Army in 2010, instantly making an impression as he was awarded the fittest recruit prize following his phase one training at Basingstoke.

He served on Op Herrick 17 with 21 Engineer Regiment before moving to 26 Engineer Regiment in Perham Down after being selected for promotion.

While deployed to Canada he achieved a long-held ambition to start training as an Army diver – having also completed his junior commanders' course.



SGT MATT TONROE (33)
3RD BATTALION,
THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT
DIED MARCH 29 – MIDDLE EAST

FRIENDS and colleagues of a “courageous and compassionate” soldier have been reflecting on his many achievements following his death on operations.

Sgt Matt Tonroe of 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, was killed in action in the Middle East on March 29. The Ministry of Defence has not released further details.

Remembered as a brave and intelligent individual, the Serviceman

enlisted in the British Army in 2004 and went on to serve in 3 Para's sniper platoon.

Hailing from Manchester, he was also a capable parachute instructor who generously gave his time and advice to develop others.

He had deployed to the Middle East, including Afghanistan, on operations many times and colleagues said he was happiest when professionally tested.

His commanding officer – who has not been named – said the NCO would be missed.

“Matt Tonroe was a deeply intelligent man and one of life's characters,” he added.

“He was a caring and considerate soul, a loving and dutiful son and a friend to many.

“Yet he had a steel core, served his country with pride and was a first class soldier, proven in combat.

“He died as he lived – daring and fearless in duty. We are proud to have known him and will honour him by continuing this fight.”

IN MEMORIAM



Climbing back

'Freak accident won't thwart me' says injured soldier

A COURAGEOUS former NCO who survived an IED strike in Afghanistan – only to suffer horrifying injuries in a sports accident after leaving the Army – has vowed to continue his adventurous lifestyle.

Will Bennett (ex-QRH) was climbing at Avon Gorge, Bristol, in March last year when a freak rock fall severed his safety ropes.

He plunged 50 metres and was left in a critical condition. As well as losing both lower legs he suffered six fractures in his spine, leaving him paralysed from the waist down.

A former tank driver and radio operator, Bennett's military service from 2008 to 2013 saw him complete an Op Herrick tour as well as participate in sports including skydiving, cross country and hockey.

Now refusing to be beaten by his injuries, the ex-lance corporal has been battling back to recovery and has set his sights on becoming an elite athlete.

His pals have also launched a £50,000 Just Giving crowdfunding appeal to buy him an all-terrain wheelchair and adapted van. Thousands of pounds had been pledged as this issue went to press.

"Throughout all that has happened, Will remains full of life," said family friend Racheal Reynolds-Smith, who launched the initiative.

"At the age of 26, his future has been made so much more difficult but he continues to inspire all those he meets with determination and optimism for an independent future."

"He intends to make the most of what he has – a second chance at life. This is why we have set up the page. It is wonderful we have received so much support but we would love to hit the £50k target."

Bennett said he was determined to keep up his athletic pursuits. He emphasised: "I am determined to participate in the Paralympic Games in the boulder climbing discipline."

Visit www.justgiving.com and search "William Bennett" for details.



“
He inspires
all those he
meets
”



WALL OF HONOUR

■ ROYAL British Legion Industries is offering people a unique opportunity to honour past and present members of the Armed Forces in a project commemorating the end of the First World War.

The Wall of Honour will see a family name, or the name of a loved one, engraved onto a plaque at the charity's Garden of Honour in Aylesford.

All money raised from the £100 donations will help military veterans access employment and accommodation.

Visit www.rbli.co.uk/wallofhonour for more details.



MUSIC SCHOOL MATTERS

■ A NEW home for the Royal Military School of Music has yet to be identified, two years after the MoD announced that Kneller Hall in Twickenham was to be sold as part of its £500m estates disposal plan.

The Corps of Army Music headquarters is weighing up the viability of new venues, but no date has been set for the move.

Meanwhile, veterans charity The Legatee Educational Trust has been commissioned to chronicle the history of military music at the site over 160 years.

The National Lottery-backed project will film oral accounts of veterans and Service personnel, and will culminate with a public concert at the site in summer 2019.

If you know someone who has a story to tell, contact Martin Bisiker at martin@legatee.org.uk

BEST IN BUSINESS

■ NOMINATIONS are open for the inaugural Heropreneurs Awards, run by the charity of the same name. Entries are free and the deadline is June 1.

For more details on how to put someone forward visit <https://heropreneurs.co.uk>

The jewel is set in rock crystal, gold, silver stamens and diamonds. Catch it on the April 15 episode of *Antiques Roadshow* on BBC iPlayer until May 21



ARTEFACT AMAZES ON *ANTIQUES ROADSHOW*

■ MEMBERS of a West Midlands Reserve unit have been left astonished after a much-loved table decoration became one of most expensive artefacts ever seen on the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*. The Faberge flower had been part of The Royal Yeomanry's Dudley-based B (Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire) Squadron for years – and has even travelled with troops on manoeuvres. But while commanders said the five-inch ornamental pear blossom, valued at £1 million, would continue to play a full part in ceremonial life, they would be more careful with it in future. "We are very proud of the jewel but gone are the days when it will be taken on exercise and kept under the squadron leader's bed," OC Maj Will Mawby (RY) admitted. "I dare not touch it with my butter fingers."

SERVICE SCOUTS NORTH

■ SOLDIERS have given teenagers an insight into life as an Army musician.

Held in Greater Manchester, the four-day "spring academy" event saw the bands of the King's Division and Royal Armoured Corps tutor dozens of youngsters from around the UK.

It was the first time such an initiative has been run outside the corps' HQ in Twickenham, Middlesex. It culminated in a joint performance at Salford University.



ASSAULT COURSE ATTACK

■ ARMY administrators have been put through their paces in a gruelling physical fitness contest.

Eight teams from the Staff and Personnel Support branch of the Adjutant General's Corps battled through an assault course, six-mile loaded march and one-mile stretcher race at Wattisham Flying Station.

"It's been great to break away from our core role of HR and financial administration to show our fitness and soldiering skills," said Cpl Prakash Limbu, captain of one of the winning teams.



POLICING PERFORMANCE

■ TROOPS from the Royal Military Police put on an arresting show for multinational colleagues on Longmoor Training Area.

The soldiers demonstrated capabilities including reacting to attack, building clearance and vehicle drills as part of a Nato close protection conference.

The event was held to enhance joint working between partner nations – including the development of alliance standards and capabilities.

EX-SAPPER EYES DEEP SUCCESS

■ AN adventurous former sapper who lost both legs and a hand in Afghanistan is poised to become the world's first triple amputee rescue diver.

Josh Boggi, who served with 9 Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, is hoping to secure the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (Padi) qualification this month.

Wounded in an IED blast back in 2010, the ex-NCO admitted diving remained daunting.

"The ocean still scares me to be honest – although I like the adrenalin, pushing myself and rising to the challenge," Boggi told *Soldier*.

"I know this is going to be hard work, but I've been honing my skills and drills and I'll be well prepared."

Already a qualified open water diver, Boggi is assisted by charity Depththerapy, which helps injured ex-Forces personnel achieve Padi qualifications.

He will attempt to attain his rescue diver status at the Roots Red Sea resort in Egypt.



Picture: Graeme Main

Roadworks return hero, 100 years on

THE great niece of a fallen First World War officer has praised the work of the MoD Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre after the body of her relative was found a century after his death.

Sarah Foot (shown below) said staff at the Gloucestershire-based outfit had been exceptional in explaining what had happened to 2nd Lt Eric Henderson (right), who was killed in 1917.

She was also struck by the care they had shown in helping to arrange a funeral with military honours, which will take place this month.

2nd Lt Henderson – who served with 8th (City of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Post Office Rifles) – died in the Battle of Messines.

He had no known grave and his name had been engraved on the Menin Gate memorial in Ypres.

But a body recently found during roadworks in Voormezele was identified as the officer's after a coin engraved with his name was discovered with his remains.

Staff at the JCCC traced the



soldier's family after finding 2nd Lt Henderson remembered online in an ancestry project.

Foot told *Soldier*: "It was a real hit of emotion when I was told that great uncle Eric had been found."

"He means so much to me even though I never knew him."

"I'm glad that he will be buried with those troops he fought alongside."

"The JCCC team have been really helpful in providing us with information about him."

“It was a real hit of emotion”





Picture: Cpl Timothy Jones, RLC

Boxer is thrown into the ring

SERVICE chiefs are considering a deal for a fleet of new Boxer mechanised infantry vehicles after the Ministry of Defence announced the UK is rejoining the platform's development programme.

The Army is assessing the options to equip the 8x8 troop carrier, which is already used by the German (shown above) and Dutch militaries.

Boxer features a removable mission module – a key feature that allows it to be rapidly changed to meet different operational requirements.

The UK played a major role in the original design, development and testing of the vehicle but pulled out of

the project in 2003.

The deal could see the British Army vehicles assembled in this country – with around two-thirds of the manufacturing contracts awarded to UK firms.

Artecs, the German-led manufacturing consortium, recently signed partnership agreements with BAE Systems, Pearson Engineering and Thales UK, while Rolls Royce already provides the Boxer's engines and Parker-Hannifin, William Cook Engineering and other British companies supply sub-systems.

Estimates suggest Artecs's planned investment in the UK could secure or create at least 1,000 jobs.

■ A CIVILIAN artist is on a mission to paint 100 portraits of Service veterans over the next two years. Insurance broker Ants Holder wants to honour those who have served their country and ensure they remain in the public conscience all year round, not just on Remembrance Sunday. The 45-year-old from Cheshire has already finished 11 works and hopes to complete the project by 2020. "I want people to see the portraits and ask 'who is that person?' and 'what did they do?'," he told *Soldier*. "I think veterans tend to get lost." An exhibition and book are both expected to follow.



Target funds:
£1,000
For: Blesma

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Obstacles overcome

ROPE swings, wall climbs and mud crawls will be among the challenges facing ex-paratrooper Michael Lewis when he battles the Nuclear Rush obstacle course on May 19. The 34-year-old (shown), who lost his leg while serving in Afghanistan, will tackle the seven-kilometre route with his brother-in-law Joe Byrne, formerly of 9 Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers. Visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/michael-lewis40

Target funds:
£150
For: Blesma

Normandy bound

AMPUTEE veteran Rob Copsey will run 44 miles along the Normandy coastline as part of the D-Day 44 Challenge on June 6. The former Royal Engineer, who lost his leg while serving in Rwanda in 1994, said: "Blesma

was there for me when I was injured and this is my way to give back." To donate visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rob-copsey1



THE BIG PICTURE

Cadet Training Centre, Frimley Park

MILITARY IN MIND

DETERMINED youngsters took on a demanding combination of military skills and physical training when they battled it out at Frimley Park. More than 30 members of the Army Cadet Force took part in the 48-hour contest to stake their claim to the organisation's highest accolade – that of Champion Cadet. As well as a cross-country run at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (shown top right), their trials included a night navigation exercise, command tasks and weapons handling. Robert Jackson, cadet RSM of the Royal County of Berkshire ACF, was named 2018 winner.

Pictures: Graeme Main





“
It's good
we have
soldiers
who haven't
been on a
tour before
”

Report: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Graeme Main



IT once dominated the news – but editors have long turned their attention to other stories.

The British Army's presence in Iraq was a focal point for reporters for years. A roll of military deployments filled an endless stream of column inches and hours of broadcast airtime.

But with Operation Telic consigned to history, the boots still on the ground rarely seem to feature in the news agenda.

As a billowing plume of purple smoke is laid down to alert troops that a convoy lead vehicle has been disabled in an ambush, however, it is clear that the story is far from over for soldiers who are in the final stages of training for another outing to the Middle East.

A disorientating explosion reverberates across the exercise area in an aggressive attack by insurgents.

The military personnel dismount from their wagons and return fire while their colleagues are helped to safety.

Despite the ferocity of the assault, the troops resolutely hold their ground. There is a rapid exchange of rounds, then they hastily extract.

This mock contact – part of the mission rehearsal exercise for Operation Shader 7 – is proof that Iraq remains a real part of British Army life.

Away from the glare of the media, soldiers from the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards Battlegroup will be playing a vital role in imparting military skills to Iraqis when they deploy later this summer.

Most of those taking part are a generation removed from the troops who undertook Telic tours in the 2000s. But commanding officer Lt Col Piers Ashfield (pictured below right), is highly impressed with his team's abilities and the tight discipline they are showing.

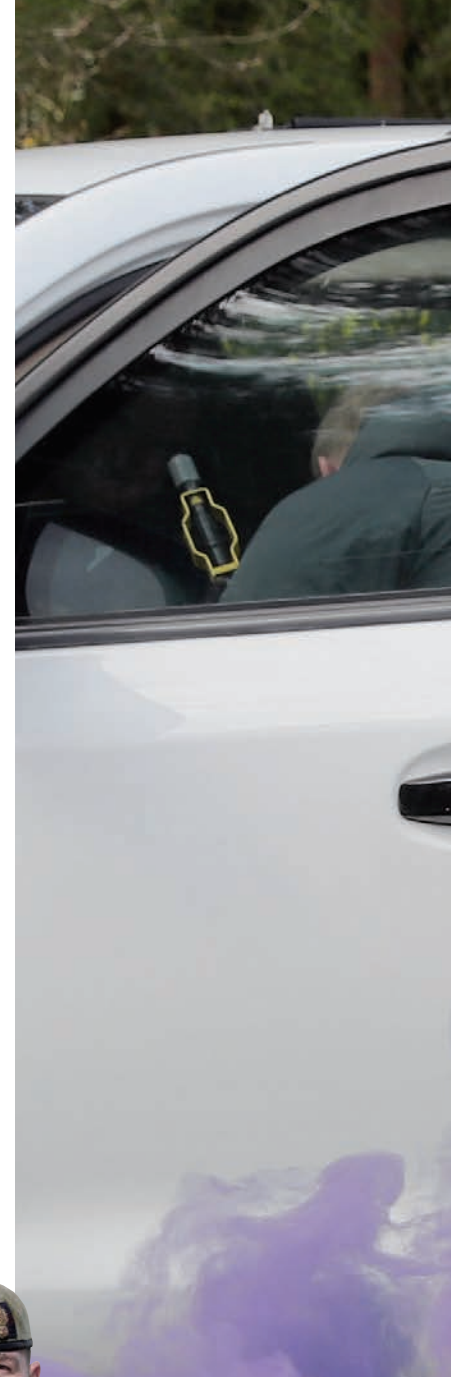
Keenly aware that his battalion is also deploying personnel to both South Sudan and Afghanistan over the coming months (page 9), the CO is confident they will rise to the challenges of the months ahead.

“From section commander down, there are those who do not have operational experience,” he tells *Soldier* after watching a serial at Stanford Training Area in Norfolk. “But that is not to say they are not capable and don't have real hunger and enthusiasm.

“The situation across the Middle East is dynamic – elections will have been held in Iraq shortly before our arrival and there is obviously still a great deal happening in neighbouring Syria.”

While the Shader mission – which is part of the US-led multinational effort to support the Iraqi forces – is relatively straightforward, the mechanics of the operation are more complex.

More than 200 British personnel will be responsible for force protection and training in three locations – the Kurdish region of Irbil as well as Taji and Bismaya near the capital Baghdad.





On track for Iraq

Troops are
maintaining
the Middle East
momentum,
away from the
media spotlight



And this outing, in which the soldiers will take over from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, will be the first that has seen a single headquarters commanding training at all three locations.

It will involve sappers from 35 Engineer Regiment and 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment imparting their knowledge of counter-IED drills while the Grenadier Guards will be assisting with infantry skills and force protection. Specialists including medics, logisticians and intelligence experts underpin the deployment.

Officer commanding Number 2 Company Maj Rupert King-Evans – who will be leading efforts in Iraqi Kurdistan – admits that his troops have been on a steep learning curve.

But preparations have been well tailored, focusing on disciplines including dealing with ambushes and insider threats as well as counter-CBRN drills.

"There is no longer a 'sausage machine' of pre-deployment training as there was for Afghanistan," he says.

"We have done a lot of internally generated stuff with guidance from the Military Training and Mobilisation Centre – it has worked really well.

"And I conducted some reconnaissance of the areas where we will be working so I could shape our deployment preparations accordingly."

Maj King-Evans also believes that having troops without operational experience on the tour will actually be an advantage, as they will be coming to the region with a fresh approach.

"I was on Op Herrick and it has been important for me to realise that this will not be the same," he continues.





"There is obviously a threat but our focus is going to be on how we train the Kurdish troops – it is good that we have soldiers who have not been out on a tour before."

There is certainly an eagerness among troops to deliver Shader: as this rehearsal approaches its conclusion there is a commitment to making the tour a success.

Gdsm Bruce Steele says he is well prepared for his first tenure on operations.

"I am quite new to the Army so I'll be getting good experience," he highlights.

"During Op Shader I am going to be involved in providing force protection."

Battalion colleague LCpl Elliott Fairley also believes the formation is ready. "Everybody knows what they're doing," he concludes. "And I am looking forward to going." ■

Soldier asked troops from the battlegroup how they felt about their upcoming deployment to Iraq...

HEADING EAST



"We're going to be forming a counter-IED training team on operations and we will be teaching courses to both detect and defeat devices. The pre-deployment training has been good and varied, and we have been integrating well with the Grenadier Guards."

Lt Ben Turner, RE



"This will be my first proper tour. Our RLC ammunition technicians will assist with the training. I'm helping on the course to defeat IEDs – it'll be worthwhile work."

LCpl Gai Scivyer, RLC

"I'm a Reservist and it is a real privilege to be involved in something like this to help the Iraqis secure their country. It's a chance for me to play a part. I am hoping to take transferable skills back to my civilian role at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office."

Lt Sam Greville-Smith, RE



Words: Cliff Caswell Picture: Graeme Main

AIMING FOR

Everything you need to know about the Army assault rifle's latest upgrade

THE latest version of the SA80 assault rifle includes a host of changes that improve both its handling and accuracy – and troops are already giving it the thumbs-up.

Personnel from 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards were among the first to take delivery of the A3 upgrade, ahead of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and South Sudan this year.

Soldier was given a rundown of the significant changes from armourer WO2 Stuart Brompton-Taylor (REME), who has been training with the troops ahead of their deployments.

Barrel

The weapon's barrel can resonate freely when firing, meaning that once it is fixed on a target it is less likely to be affected by shaking or vibration. Laying down effective fire is now easier.

Durability

A tougher coating in a new flat, dark earth colour scheme makes for better camouflage. This also means it is more robust, resistant to the weather and straightforward to clean.



EXCELLENCE



Picatinny rail

This has been extended and allows for the fitting of new accessories – including low-light sights, which clip in front of the day sights to make it more versatile.

Weight distribution

As well as being 100g lighter than its A2 predecessor, the SA80's weight has been moved to the rear of the rifle. Together with a more streamlined fore grip, this boosts control and makes life more comfortable for users.

Rifle sling

Sometimes the basic improvements are the most effective. The sling can now be better adjusted to bolster both performance and comfort.

KILLER CACHE

Fancy getting your hands on some incredible weapons? It could be time for your unit to visit the Small Arms School Corps...

Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures: Peter Davies

INSPECTING Colonel Gaddafi's gold-plated Ruger or getting up close to Napoleon's personal pistol – these aren't exactly run-of-the-mill encounters for your average British soldier.

But they are just a flavour of the exciting hands-on experiences available to Service personnel who visit the Small Arms School Corps' (SASC) infantry weapons collection in Warminster.

Based at the corps' headquarters at Waterloo Lines, this impressive facility is open to visits from any branch of the Armed Forces – with more than a thousand personnel coming through the doors each year. Yet it still remains something of a hidden gem in the military community.

However, following a £1.2 million refurbishment the centre is raising awareness of what it can offer troops – access to more than 1,500 weapons that tell the story of British combat from the medieval Longbow (shown) right through to the latest SA80 upgrade (page 11).

If you're beginning to picture a military museum, though, think again.





“Some of the items here are absolutely priceless”

What is the Small Arms School Corps?

Part of HQ Infantry, it is responsible for keeping the Army at the top of its game in the use of small arms, support weapons and range management.

With most of the collection still available for live firing, this establishment is a far cry from the world of dusty, static exhibitions.

Inside, its arms-laden corridors take on the feel of a workshop – where visitors poke, prod and pick apart a colourful array of kit under the watchful eye of volunteer trustees.

An anorak's haven it certainly is. But as Lt Col Paul Redding (pictured left), commanding officer of HQ SASC, explains to *Soldier* the establishment is playing an important role in preparing troops for operations.

“Primarily, this is a facility to enable military training and deployments,” the officer says.

“But what is remarkable about this collection is the fact that it charts the history of weaponry from the 13th century all the way through to today.

“It is almost second-to-none, enabling deep research where the visitors can get really hands-on.

“Soldiers down to the youngest recruits get to

handle the weapons as well as strip them down.

“And the vast majority of these items can be used for live firing.”

With British troops involved in a growing number of defence engagement and short-term training team activities across the world, the need for a body of expertise like this is easy to see.

From counter-poaching work in Gabon to Nato taskings in Eastern Europe, today's Servicemen and women are likely to be encountering a broader range of rifles and pistols than during Op Herrick.

“But not everyone knows about this place,” Lt Col Redding continues.

“Some of the items are absolutely priceless and we get great feedback from those who have used it, but we want more units to know it's here.

“Without SASC and its collection, the Army would find it much harder to deploy safely.

“It is fair to say we have a significant role to play in preparing troops for operations around the world.

“To get the quality and expertise, there's really nowhere else.”

● Contact HQ SASC to arrange a visit to the collection





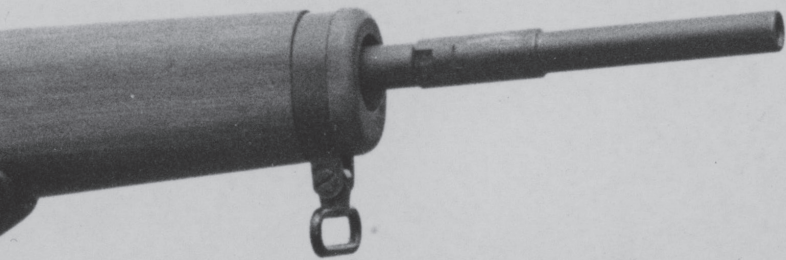
→ THE STORY OF WEAPONRY

...in five fearsome firearms

Soldier took a walk around the Small Arms School Corps' infantry weapons collection in Warminster to discover some of its historic pieces of kit from the dedicated trustees who help to run the establishment.

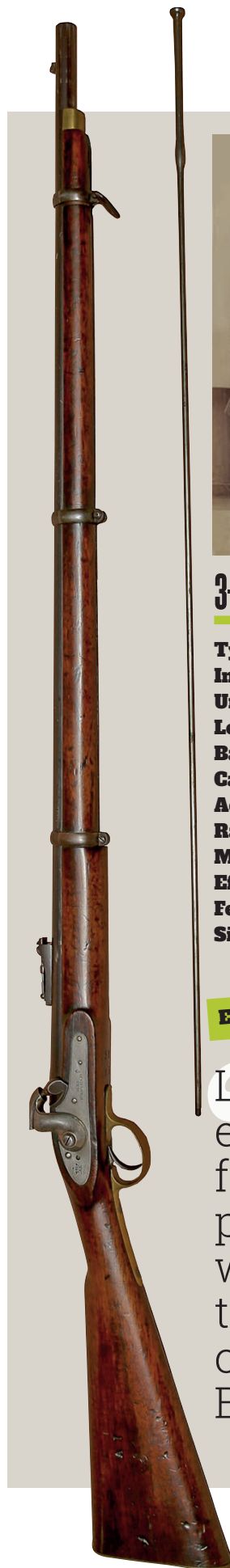
EM-2 No 9 (Janson) Rifle

Type: Bullpup assault rifle
In Service: British Army 1951
Unloaded weight: 3.49kg
Length: 88.9cm
Barrel: 62.3cm
Calibre: .280in British
Action: Gas operated, flapper locked
Rate of fire: 450-600rpm
Muzzle velocity: 2,545ft/sec
Effective range: 700m
Feed system: 20-round box mag
Sights: Optical



Expert view:

“A stepping stone to the SA80, this is the weapon that could have been, had it not been spurned by the Americans who didn't like its .280in cartridge.”



3-Band Pattern 1853 Enfield

Type: Rifle-musket
In Service: British Army 1853-1867
Unloaded weight: 4.3kg
Length: 140cm
Barrel: 99cm
Calibre: .58in (15mm)
Action: Percussion rifle
Rate of fire: 3+ rpm
Muzzle velocity: 900ft/sec
Effective range: 1,140m
Feed system: Muzzle loading
Sights: Adjustable iron

Expert view:

“Long range, exact and fast for its period, this weapon was the forerunner of all accurate British rifles.”

Pictured above: Troops of the 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment of Foot armed with the 1853 Pattern Enfield Rifled Musket. Picture: National Army Museum





Vickers Machine Gun

Type: Automatic machine gun
In Service: British Army 1912-1968
Unloaded weight: 15kg (23kg all up)
Length: 112cm **Barrel:** 720mm
Calibre: .303in British **Action:** Recoil with gas
Rate of fire: 450-500rpm
Muzzle velocity: 2,440ft/sec
Effective range: 2,000m
Feed system: 250-round belt
Sights: Adjustable iron or optical dial

Expert view:

“A phenomenal piece of kit, this remains the longest-serving weapon in the British arsenal. During the Battle of the Somme the 100th Machine Gun Company fired a staggering one million rounds from seven of these weapons in just 12 hours!”



MP-44 (StG 44)

Type: Assault rifle
In Service: Wehrmacht 1944-45; East Germany 1949-62
Unloaded weight: 4.6kg (5.13kg all up)
Length: 94cm **Barrel:** 42cm
Calibre: 7.92mm x 33mm
Action: Gas operated, tilting bolt
Rate of fire: 550-600rpm
Muzzle velocity: 2,247ft/sec
Effective range: 800m auto; 600m semi-auto
Feed system: 30-round box mag
Sights: Adjustable iron

Expert view:

“Probably one of the most important weapons of the 20th century, all assault rifles are fathered by this model. It is where it all began for Kalashnikov, who took his design from this system of operation.”



Colt 1911 .45

Type: Automatic pistol
In Service: USA 1911-present
Unloaded weight: 1.105kg
Length: 210mm **Barrel:** 89-127mm
Calibre: .45in ACP **Action:** Short recoil
Rate of fire: 70-85rpm
Muzzle velocity: 830ft/sec
Effective range: 50m
Feed system: 7- or 15-round box mag
Sights: Open iron

Expert view:

“In terms of modern pistols, the way this weapon worked really proved to be the future.”



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PEAK PERFORMANCE

Physical training in the British Army is set for its biggest overhaul in a generation. This is why...

SOLDIERS are unlike any other breed of athlete. For one thing, their performance has far more at stake than a podium place or medal. Failure to act quickly under enemy fire, difficulty rescuing a comrade – these sorts of experiences can haunt a person to their dying day. And in ways your average Olympian could never imagine.

For another, they are expected to excel in a stranger mix of physical tasks than a decathlete-turned-mixed-martial-artist.

One minute a Serviceman is pacing the deserts of Africa as part of a short-term training team, the next he is fighting through forests or helping to move a broken vehicle.

With that in mind, it is easy to see how around 60 per cent of medical discharges are down to musculoskeletal injury.

Each task puts its own particular strain on the body. And although cracking-on through niggling pain is sometimes a necessity on missions, it also increases the risk of damage.

For that reason, it is vital soldiers' bodies are properly conditioned to deal with the rigours of operations.

Enter the Royal Army Physical Training Corps (RAPTC), which is on a mission to revolutionise fitness sessions across the Field Army.

It wants to shift troops' focus from smashing out the reps and runs, to thoroughly preparing their bodies for the tasks they face on the battlefield.

Developed in collaboration with the UK Strength and Conditioning Association, the initiative will overhaul the sessions delivered to soldiers by their RAPTC and all-arms

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe



physical training instructors. And it bases everything on science.

Friday PT, for example, may no longer be a case of turning up, getting thrashed through a loaded march, and clearing off.

Instead, troops could be put through a selection of carefully-planned strength and agility tasks, with more focus on technique and movement patterns.

All of this will ensure their bodies benefit fully from every workout. And although more prescriptive in some ways – there are some definite dos and don'ts here – the system will allow exercise to be honed to each unit's particular needs.

One of the biggest changes is the introduction of rest periods. According to Senior Master at Arms Lt Col Tom Scarr (RAPTC, pictured below), higher levels of fitness are achieved when troops train at a steady rate.

"PT is complicated; if you know a little bit you can do a lot of damage," he tells *Soldier*.

"What has been evident over the last 20 to 30 years is that people who do things incorrectly, or who do exactly the same thing every day, end up getting injured.

"The soldier's body needs a certain amount of time to recover, and if you do things again too quickly you aren't going to hit the same level of performance.

"The new Army physical training system will spell an end to the idea that if you're not getting thrashed you haven't done a training session.

"Of course, there are occasions when you can tap into the high-intensity stuff, but mostly you don't need to do that.

"Anything that isn't helping the end game is a negative, at the end of the day."

It's a concept that is familiar to most other sporting disciplines. Professional footballers, for example, are paid to fulfil a specific function and any physical activity that doesn't enhance their pitch performance is bad news (page 39).

The same rule goes for the Army.

Soldiers, however, do not have their own personal trainers or nutritionists so it is even more important they seek advice from the RAPTC about the best approach.

“
It's as
important as
being able
to shoot a
weapon
”



Lt Col Scarr cites the recent Crossfit craze – tough and high-intensity bodyweight manoeuvres that get the heart pounding – as an example of where troops could be doing more harm than good.

"It doesn't make sense to do stuff that's counter-productive to do the job you're paid for," the officer adds.

"Professional rugby wouldn't allow a bloke to train all week, then do something Friday before the game that could see him get broken.

"And in the Army being physically fit is as important as being able to shoot a weapon or operate a platform.

"We don't want to interfere with sport, but what we bring in will complement conditioning for all disciplines."

The change will see seven exercises – known as "foundation movements" – take centre stage in PT (page 40).

They replace what were known as the "big five" exercises, and the results at unit-level are undeniably exciting.

Lower rates of injury and higher deployability have been reported across the board by those who have trialled the scheme (page 36).

The Army's health and rehabilitation fraternities are also supporting the programme, which is set to be fully in place by 2019 after a period of upskilling for instructors.

Lt Col Sandra Williams (RAMC), assistant director of defence rehabilitation and the Army's lead physiotherapist, welcomes the change.

"Our hope is that this will bring a reduction in the number of injuries presented to us; we will be closely monitoring the results," she says.

"The less people we break – particularly during training – the more we can take through to completion, which is good news for recruitment and retention."

Lt Col Scarr adds: "This is a generational change – a tectonic shift.

"I don't know any other discipline that doesn't deliver a systematic programme of training; the RAPTC is shifting its mentality into the 21st century." ■

STRENGTH &
CONDITIONING

+

PUTTING THE SCIENCE IN SOLDIERING

The brains behind the new
take on physical training

WITH musculoskeletal injuries now accounting for 60 per cent of Army medical discharges, the time to change the way troops train has arrived.

Underpinned by the studies of WO2 Colin Suffield (RAPTC, pictured), the new system applies a more structured approach to PT sessions.

Having completed a degree in strength and conditioning, the senior NCO introduced his revolutionary concept while posted to 36 Engineer Regiment and with the results receiving glowing endorsements it is now being rolled out.

So what can Servicemen and women expect from this radical overhaul? *Soldier* spoke to WO2 Suffield to learn more...



It makes
running more
sophisticated
instead of just
pounding the
pavements

“IT IS based around the idea of periodisation,” the warrant officer explains. “Where you allocate periods of time to a programme.

“The system is used by most professional sports teams (page 39) and in a military setting it allows units to plan their PT and prepare for deployments.”

Units will recognise elements of the system’s three blocks – foundation, resilience and specific – and personnel will pass through these as instructors help them meet the requirements of the formation.

The foundation phase

usually applies to someone who is coming back from annual leave or an arduous exercise. It’s about building the base for muscular endurance and low-level running, improving tissue tolerance and getting back into the swing of things. Once the body hits a certain level of stress increases can be made. But, crucially, this stage also features a recovery period to allow the body to adapt to the various changes being made.

The resilience block

hinges on the idea of going high intensity, but for less distance. “This is also known as the workhorse block,” adds WO2 Suffield, who is now in the final year of a masters degree in strength and conditioning.

“They’ve had the period of coming back from leave, and are now starting to build muscle to do the job. When you say ‘muscle growth’ people think of bodybuilding but when the muscle is bigger you’re able to exert more force. This will be different to what the guys have seen before. A lot of activities have been endurance-based with long runs. This has a place but we now realise soldiers have to be stronger. In the past, when a unit went out on a run, there were those who struggled and those who didn’t. Now we’re looking at maximum aerobic speed. We will take an individual’s one-and-a-half-mile time, work out their metres per second, and devise shuttle runs to work them at various intensity levels. The slower guys will be working at a similar level to the fitter guys – shorter runs but at a higher intensity. It makes running more sophisticated instead of just pounding the pavements and that will reduce injuries. We don’t have to be out for long runs all the time – short, sharp exercises can achieve the same aims.”

This block also looks at developing explosive strength with activities such as weightlifting and multi-jumps. And personnel can expect to do some of this in uniform.

From here they move to the specific stage.

As the name suggests, the training focuses on the particular task a unit will be doing. The resilience block makes soldiers stronger, agile and combat ready – specific training complements that. WO2 Suffield adds: “If you peak for an exercise or operational tour you will only go downhill afterwards. We are building physical resilience for the tasks they are going to do. Sometimes guys don’t know exactly what they are training for. We are promoting physical training readiness so they can deploy at short notice if required, rather than peaking at certain times.”

As a result, PT sessions will now have a different feel with four set exercises featuring in every lesson:

- **Compound lifts** – such as squats or deadlifts and multi-joint movements
- **Explosive strength** – a focus on power movements like medicine ball slams and throws; this was done before but not in every session
- **Posterior chain** – gravity means our shoulders naturally slope forward, so strengthening the back of the body will support better posture. A lot of injuries stem from the lower back
- **Trunk conditioning** – a move away from simply doing sit-ups; the trunk works while we are standing up and exercises will reflect that

Once complete, soldiers will go on a run, do some high intensity training or an obstacle course – whatever the lesson dictates. They should also expect to use their Bergens in the process, with weights being added to up the training effect. With positive feedback already gathered from the sappers in Maidstone, WO2

Suffield is hoping for more of the same from across the Army, although he concedes it may take time. “Because it is such a change, education is key,” he explains. “Guys are not running as far but we are making their chassis stronger. Once they get started they will realise they are training more productively, instead of just going hell for leather.”



'IT'S THE BEST PT I'VE EVER DONE'

How Sandhurst is reaping the benefits of a focused training regime

IFE has changed in the three decades since Maj Bob Whitaker (RAPTC) enlisted in the Army – and he is the first to admit that the Service's physical training regime has had its faults.

Observing from a gallery overlooking Montgomery gym at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS), he tells *Soldier* that the exercises being carried out by cadets from Gaza Company are a far cry from the one-size-fits-all approach of his 34-year military career.

Inspired by the Army's new physical training system, their exercise programme has had some astonishing results on these future officers.

As well as promoting better overall fitness and wellbeing, the drop in injuries has been huge.

In the past two years, there has been an 80 per cent reduction during the opening six weeks of the course.

"When I originally joined the 13/18 Hussars in 1984 training was all about running and endurance, which can be destructive over time," Maj Whitaker says.

"Few people benefited – the fittest gained nothing and the unfit ended up getting hurt.

"The modern Army really needed to do better – and this is an important step forward."

Heading up physical development at Sandhurst, Maj Whitaker was an early adopter of the RAPTC's new approach.

Adapted to the commissioning course's needs, the initiative is focused on creating a "chassis" of strength on which to build further.

Cardiovascular exercises follow, and the entire schedule

is designed to mimic soldiering activities like moving with a weapon, pulling objects and load carrying.

"As the actual physical training element only makes up three per cent of the commissioning course, our approach must be optimised to get the best results," he stresses.

"In our programme, there is no endurance running or loaded marching in the first seven weeks of the junior term – we have also increased the time we spend on both swimming and recovery sessions.

"In tandem, we have opened a modern strength and conditioning facility – equipped with the latest kit – which gives cadets the opportunity to do their own training."

There have also been other significant developments.

From late last year, women have been carrying out their PT separately for the opening weeks of the commissioning course – with exercise tailored to their physique – before rejoining their male counterparts for the intermediate term.

Meanwhile, men are separated into two ability groups so they can develop at their own pace during the early part of their training.

Taking a more structured approach to PT has allowed the cadets space for up to 60 minutes more sleep, with around six hours in bed now normal, according to Maj Whitaker.

The pioneering approach is certainly racking up more impressive statistics.

Running times are faster despite cadets covering around

"This is an important step forward"



400km less on foot in their first four months at the academy. And Maj Whitaker has noticed far fewer personnel in the rehabilitation platoon.

"There are a lot of reasons for these results," the officer continues.

"They are not only about the changes to PT but the holistic approach to training across the board.

"We own our own programme here at Sandhurst and we have used the elements of the new physical training system where it has been appropriate."

Nonetheless, Maj Whitaker – whose next job will see him responsible for recruit PT – is convinced that the Army will feel the benefit of the new regime, which he maintains is delivering on its promises and proving popular with troops.

"You have to remember that sports science is a new discipline to us – and as we continue to learn we will know more about what works and what doesn't," he concludes. "There is also a responsibility for us in terms of bringing our findings to the attention of Army policy-makers and helping them understand the benefits."

The feeling here is summed up succinctly by OCdt Liam Irving.

"This is some of the best PT I've done," he says. 

FITNESS FIRST

RMAS gives *Soldier* its verdict on the new physical training system

"It's been exciting to do something different. I have never done this type of training before, and it's good you're given time to recover between sessions

OCdt Tilly Ashcroft



"Although I've always been fit, I have never been particularly strong. Last term the girls and boys trained separately, which worked well

OCdt Beth Rolt



"I have been through the old and new style of training, having previously been in Aberdeen University Officer Training Corps. There was less functional stuff before and your legs could take a beating. I have noticed there are far fewer people going down in training sessions with the current programme – which has more variety too

OCdt Robbie Lewis



IN NUMBERS SANDHURST SUCCESS

80%

injury reduction
in the first six
weeks of the
academy's new
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programme

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PITCH-SIDE PERSPECTIVE

Targeted training is a given in professional football. Former Liverpool assistant manager and Doncaster Rovers boss, Sean O'Driscoll, explains how a considered approach develops the best athletes...

FOOTBALL will always require an essential level of fitness, which is based on position-specific movements, game patterns and benchmarking data.

But while position-specific fitness isn't new, the game has become more fluid and positions are increasingly interchangeable. So the physical demands on different players has changed too.

Centre backs, for example, have traditionally focused on building upper body strength, vertical-based power and sprints for backwards-angled runs.

Nowadays, endurance is also key with these players having more of the ball in starting attacks.

Likewise, full backs are now probably the hardest working team members, so they need more endurance-based training and explosive power to get up and down the pitch for 90 minutes.

With the demand for fluidity among forward players, they all need greater anaerobic and explosive fitness to change direction at speed.

Everyone wears GPS in training. This provides data on distance run, speed and the percentage of maximum heart rate being working at.

Players have individual targets to maintain their base fitness level. But more crucially, this data ensures players don't overtrain as accelerations and decelerations are a key cause of lower muscle injuries.

Gym work is done every day, but not to the point of exhaustion. And players have their own strength and conditioning programmes.

Tactical periodisation – where session load and intensity is determined by how far you are from a match – is also common now.

Meanwhile, more top players are employing their own sports scientists in a range of disciplines (strength and conditioning, nutrition, psychology) to give them the personalised programmes they believe will keep them performing at a consistently high level. ■

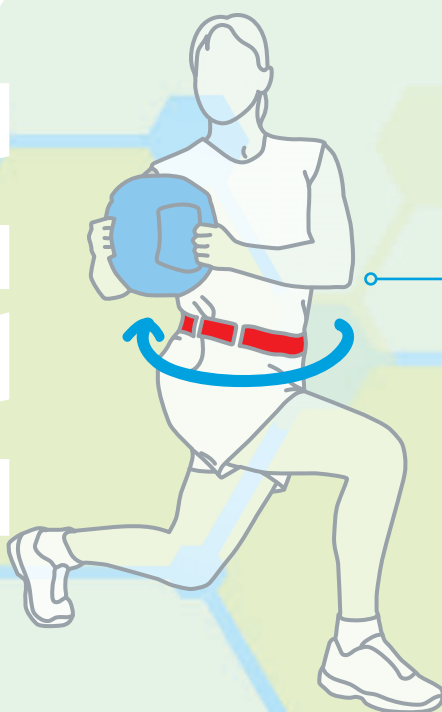


NEED TO KNOW

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Functional fitness

The seven foundation movements at the core of the Army's new physical training system. Include each type for a well-rounded workout...



Rotation

It's really important to build a strong and stable trunk. You use it throughout the day – for example, every time you twist. These exercises are never done on their own and often combine one or several other foundation movements. All of them require you to link upper and lower body movements around a strong core.

Remember: Always build a strong trunk before adding any form of fast or explosive movement.

Lunge

Being able to do single leg functional movements well is key to optimising performance in the field, where you have to carry additional weight and move at speed. This is where things can go wrong and injuries occur. Lunge variations include **split squats**, **alternate**, **lateral**, **forward** and **reverse lunges** and progress through to **hopping** and **bounding**. You must become strong and master this movement pattern to fulfil your potential of becoming a soldier athlete.

Remember: When performing a lunge the knees should track straight with no inward collapse of the knee.





Brace

You perform a brace movement many times a day without knowing it – getting up from a chair, lifting, walking, running, jumping or carrying equipment. Although this is done automatically it is still something that needs training either statically (**plank variations, kneeling superman**) or when moving (**press-ups, crawls**). Mastering these techniques improves efficiency, prevents injury and enhances your overall performance.

Remember: During the plank keep the shoulders, hips, knees and ankles in a straight line.



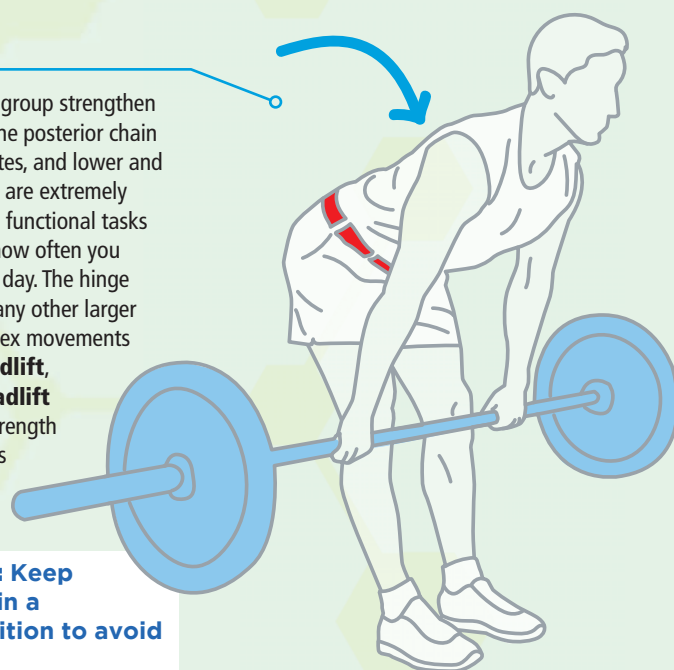
Squat

The squat and its variations (**air squat, goblet squat, overhead, front, back and jump squats**) are used to develop strength and explosive power, which have significant use in military activities. Strengthening the lower body and trunk like this will improve your efficiency in all military tasks that involve walking, running, jumping, sprinting, acceleration, deceleration and carrying loads.

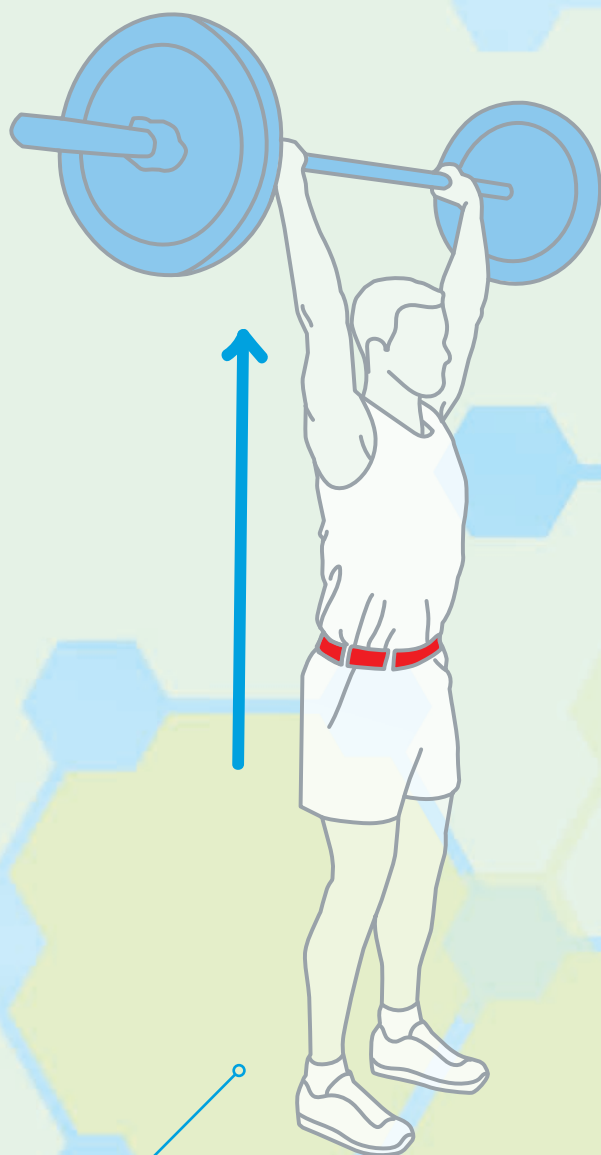
Remember: The trunk should remain braced and upright with a neutral head position throughout.

Hinge

Exercises in this group strengthen the muscles of the posterior chain (hamstrings, glutes, and lower and upper back) and are extremely important for all functional tasks – just consider how often you bend during the day. The hinge forms part of many other larger and more complex movements such as the **deadlift, Romanian deadlift** and explosive strength exercises such as the **high pull** or **clean**.



Remember: Keep your spine in a neutral position to avoid injury.



Push

These types of activities aren't just about building the upper body for the beach – they are important to generate strength and explosive power. Whether you're pushing your own body up from the floor or moving equipment as part of a military task, it is a key skill. During training you will carry out exercises in the horizontal (**press-ups, bench press, box push**) and vertical planes (**push press, strict press, throws**).

Remember: When doing a press-up make sure the body moves as one – don't bend your body at the hips or waist.



Pull

This movement comes into play every time you hoist yourself over an obstacle or drag your mucker off the battlefield, but it's often neglected in training. It is essential for maintaining muscle balance between push and pull activities and creating bulletproof shoulders and a strong back. Pull exercises cover the vertical (**lat pull down, heaves**) and horizontal (**bent-over row, inverted row**) planes.

Remember: During the heave do not use your body's momentum, use your strength and concentrate on form and technique.



WARNING

Don't perform any of these exercises with weights until a physical training instructor has assessed your ability

How to address a sports injury correctly

► AN accident, failure to warm up properly, poor technique or pushing yourself too hard – all of these can lead to injury, with ankles and knees particularly vulnerable. So what should troops do if they suffer a training setback? Here are some tips to help you bounce back.

If you're injured you may get immediate pain, tenderness, swelling, bruising and stiffness or these symptoms may show hours later. If you feel pain, **STOP** exercising. Carrying on can cause more damage and slow recovery times.

Minor injuries may not need a visit to the doc.

Anything that is likely to restrict a soldier for more than seven days, however, should be **reported to a medical professional**.

Rest the affected body part for two to three days, and regularly apply an ice pack to address any swelling.

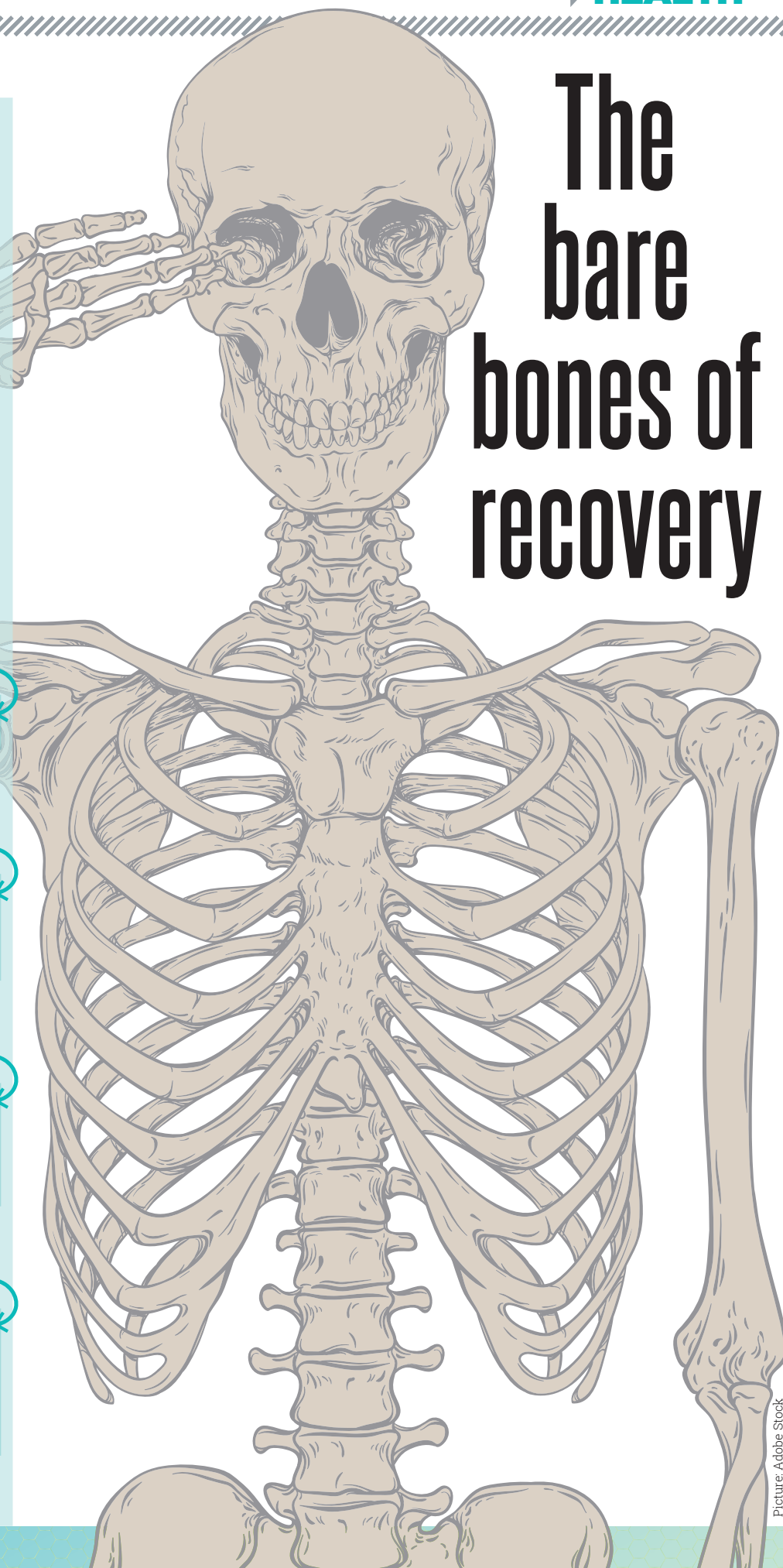
Over-the-counter painkillers such as **paracetamol** or **ibuprofen** can help with discomfort.

If your symptoms are severe or don't improve within two weeks **you may be referred for treatment and formal rehab**.

Serious injuries will occasionally need **a procedure** to repair torn ligaments or broken bones.

Remember that recovery can take weeks or months. **Don't do too much too soon** – increase your activity level gradually in contact with the chain of command and PTIs, who run special sessions for injured personnel.

The bare bones of recovery



Breaking points



Failing to feel the benefit of your PT? Maj Bob Whitaker (RAPTC), responsible for keeping future officers fitness focused, outlines some common exercise errors

Keeping it real

Avoid comparing yourself with elite athletes. Your training programme has to be appropriate. If you start upping your exercise intensity before your body is ready then you may harm yourself. Seek the advice of one of the PTs if you are unsure of what you should be doing.

Preparation problems

Failing to warm up tops my pitfalls list – you need to make sure you properly prepare. Work through the range of movements in your programme – this should take you between eight and ten minutes.

Body drought

People can underestimate the need to stay hydrated. You must take on water before you start exercising – drinking also forms an important part of the recovery procedure.

Ignoring the inner voice

People can have a tendency not to listen to their body. You shouldn't exercise if you are injured, neither is it a good idea if you're suffering from a lack of sleep.

Shunning sleep

There can be a tendency to play down the importance of getting your head down – ideally get between seven and nine hours per night. You aren't going to achieve your desired fitness goals if you don't sleep.

Walking away

Don't underestimate the importance of cooling down. If you don't go through a post-training routine, then you aren't helping your body to recover properly.

Sandhurst success story

- Read more about the new PT system and an **80 per cent** drop in injury rates – page 36



'You have to crack on'

Bobsleigh pilot LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) reveals how his military mindset helped him cope with the frustration of falling short on the Olympic stage...

IT was a huge disappointment as things really didn't go to plan.

It can happen at any event; a World Cup, a European Cup but unfortunately for us it was at the Winter Olympics.

Having a soldier's mentality helped.

Yes, it was upsetting but you have to crack on.

It took a week or so to sink in and now it is back to the drawing board – we are already planning for the World Championships in Whistler next year.

Our short-term goal is to qualify for that event and put a good performance in.

There is no point dwelling on what has happened, and it goes back to the military mentality of not sitting around and brooding over things.

We must move forward as a team.

If we do well at the World Championships, which historically we have done, it will all be forgotten about.

There has been talk of a cut in funding from UK Sport but I don't know what the outcome will be.

We have had one of the most successful seasons as a squad for many years and have consistently been up there.

But in terms of the future, I'm just going to take it year by year and see what happens.

It is four years until the next Olympics and that is a long time. I've also got a Service career to think about.

I've sacrificed a lot to get where I am now and people in my peer group have been promoted to warrant officer.

However, the rewards have been great.

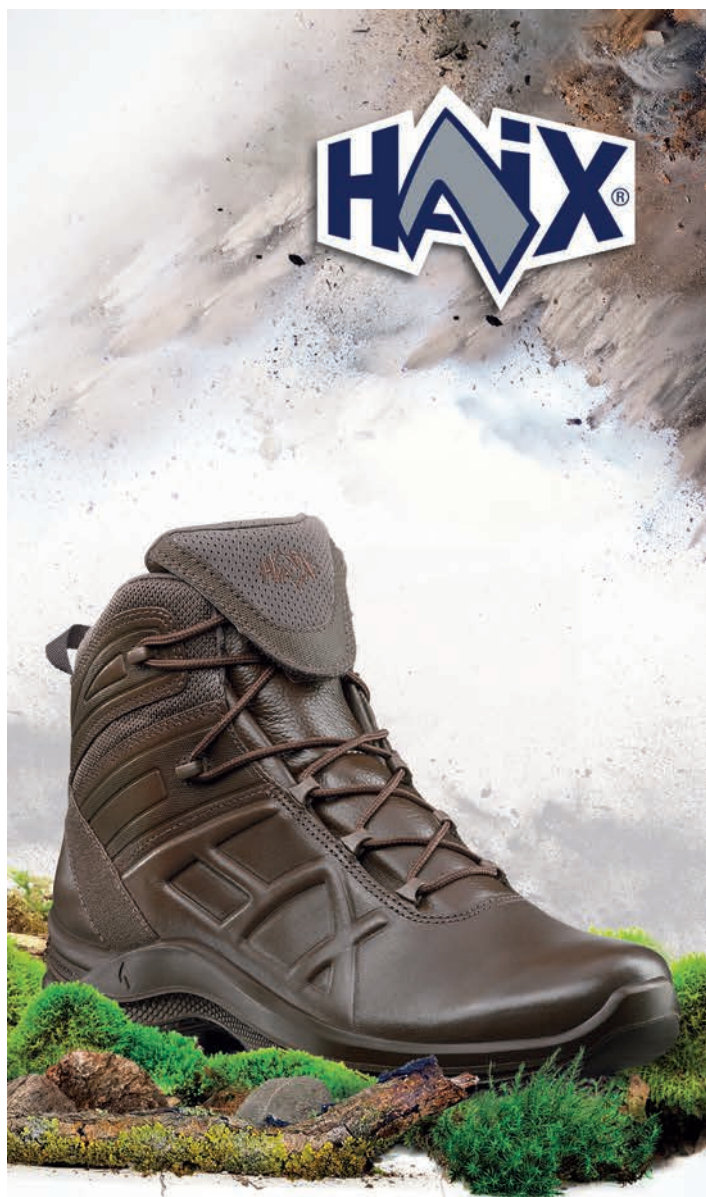
The Army has been fantastic towards me and I've been allowed to train full-time over two Olympic cycles – I couldn't have asked for more.

My career, in terms of rank, has taken a blow but that is a sacrifice I have had to make.

After the Games I went to compete at the Inter-Services Championships and absolutely loved it. That is where it all started for me; it is a different type of pressure and you are expected to perform – luckily I did that.

Bobsleigh is now very strong in the Army and participation among the women is on the rise.

There are areas to work on but we will definitely look to come back next year and win. ■



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Picture: Steve Dock

Looking for perks in Cyprus

LAST year I was selected for Op Shader and received an assignment order to go to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus.

I was told I was entitled to the longer separation allowance (LSA), while the local overseas allowance (LOA) was only available for permanent staff based there.

I met several permanent staff while in Cyprus who, because of the latter, earned more than someone two ranks above them on Op Shader.

The rules also meant troops exercising there receive it as well.

JSP 752 says it contributes towards the necessary additional expense of everyday living when overseas. An example of this is the shop on camp where certain items can cost four or five times as much as in the UK. We're unable to leave the garrison so we have no choice, but permanent staff can go to the local supermarkets off camp and pay less.

So shouldn't Op Shader personnel get a temporary duty rate of LOA that would subsidise these extra costs?

I've been told one reason we don't get it is because we receive the overseas operational welfare package that provides free television, films, books, internet access and a telephone allowance.

But the phone cards are obsolete now that roaming charges within the European Union have been abolished, while the internet connection is so poor most personnel buy their own boosters.

One reason soldiers volunteer for overseas assignments is the money so in the case of Cyprus this could become a significant deterrent. – **Name and address supplied**

Col John Oldroyd, Army Pay Colonel,

Remuneration Policy, Personnel Directorate, responds: Allowances aim to cater for different food, accommodation and welfare provisions in a location, as well as compensating for the elements above and beyond those addressed by the X-factor.

LOA is contributory and recognises essential day-to-day expenditure overseas can differ from the UK.

It is not paid on operations as TV, internet and post (including small parcels from the UK) are provided in the deployment welfare package.

Also, the main factors affecting LOA rates for unaccompanied personnel are vehicle and food costs – neither of which relate to being on operations.

LSA is compensatory, recognising those separated from their immediate family over and above that catered for by the X-factor and permanent staff in Cyprus do not routinely qualify for it.

The payments are dependent on accumulated qualifying days, irrelevant of rank, and range from £7.04 to £32.18 per day.

For troops on exercise, the field conditions rate of LOA for unaccompanied personnel in Cyprus is 35 per cent of the full rate, ranging from £5.72 per day for privates to £6.22 per day for majors.

However, direct monetary comparisons can be unhelpful as different allowances are designed to contribute to, or compensate for, different things.

Talkback

“This could become a deterrent”

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

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Food fund allowance not on menu

AS a permanent staff instructor at a Reserve unit, I have to stay from 0800 until 2130 on drill nights.

I recently asked the administration staff about claiming meals out expenses (MOE) but was told that, being married, I wasn't eligible because I can bring in my own food.

If I was single and living in the mess, which has cooking facilities, I would be eligible though. Is this right? – **Name and address supplied**

Col John Oldroyd, Army Pay Colonel, Remuneration Policy, Personnel Directorate, replies: MOE aims to assist single or married unaccompanied personnel who would ordinarily have access to meals in a military establishment.

It contributes to the additional costs incurred when they are

regularly required to purchase meals at a commercial retail outlet.

In exceptional circumstances, policy permits such payment to permanent staff instructors who occupy Service family accommodation or a privately owned or rented property.

This can relate to attendance at drill nights where instructors may be required to bring a meal with them.

Based on the information you have provided, it would be appropriate for you to claim MOE for an evening involving drill nights, provided all other eligibility criteria are met.

The rates are linked to the daily food charge and contribute to the cost difference between a mess meal and one from a commercial outlet.

Current rates are £1.44 for breakfast, £4.79 for a lunch or dinner and £3.35 for a third meal.

“The policy must be reviewed”

New system receives a rap

● WE are having problems with the Reserve attendance and pay service (RAPS).

We have to complete the online and paper registers and neither are being processed efficiently.

A large number of us didn't get paid for a training weekend – it took weeks to resolve – while I've had to wait two months for money owed from taking a training course. Payments for service days have also been delayed because our paperwork was lost.

Do I have any course of redress?

– **Name and address supplied**

Lt Col Greg Andrews, Headquarters, Field Army, replies: Units have not been given any direction by the Field Army to stop using paper-based attendance registers – this is echoed by your experience and was highlighted at the RAPS workshops.

Therefore, the unfortunate incidents you describe are not RAPS-related and can only be put down to poor unit attendance record-keeping and processing and, as such, must be addressed by the commanding officer or his/her representatives.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

● A FEW years ago I moved my loved ones out of Service housing and into our own home.

My wife restarted her career and my children settled at a good school.

But then I was given a directed assignment to Cyprus.

It was not worth the disruption to relocate, so I am reluctantly serving unaccompanied.

I've been told I do not qualify as involuntarily separated despite not volunteering or being able to move my family without financial penalty.

I do receive level one longer separation allowance (LSA), which helps but only provides one flight home a year that my family cannot use.

I am paid X-factor for my flexibility but surely as we become a more settled Army the policy on involuntary separation must be reviewed. – **Name and address supplied**

Col John Oldroyd, Army Pay Colonel, Remuneration Policy, Personnel Directorate, responds:

The allowance supports accompanied and unaccompanied service but differentiates between personnel who choose not to move with their family on assignment (volsep), and those where certain factors preclude them making a choice (involvep).

The latter are eligible to receive LSA at the level appropriate to their accumulated qualifying separation; those serving volsep in a different theatre to the UK family home receive LSA as you describe.

Unfortunately, your case does not appear to meet the involvep criteria. If there are additional factors to consider you should contact the pay and allowances complaints and casework cell.

Your chain of command may offer support with working routine or trooping flights access.

There is also an MoD review into supporting personnel overseas.

Options being examined include more flexible respite travel and an air scheme similar to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office trial.

Although I cannot offer an immediate solution, defence accepts the need to better support families in future as it continues to promote stability through the future accommodation model and other projects.



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TACTICAL

“I wouldn't have opted for Scotland”



Counting cost of the ‘tartan tax’

ON completing my tax return, I was told by my accountant that my 2017/18 liability in Scotland is likely to be £400 more than if I had remained in England.

This is because the country's higher rate tax kicks in at a lower income level.

I heard the MoD were looking at ways to compensate those affected by this as it would not only cause differences in income but may also affect recruitment and retention.

I have searched for policy on this and found nothing. After speaking to the pensions policy branch it would seem there is nothing in the pipeline either.

They also told me that some soldiers in Scotland could be worse off next year.

I knew a posting here would cost me more in travel to visit friends and family, but what I hadn't anticipated was being poorer than my counterparts in England due to taxation.

Had I known about this I would not have opted to put it down as one of my posting preferences and I feel personnel should be made more aware of the potential financial penalty.

Those working in London are given extra funding for the cost of living so why can't this be considered for those posted north of the border? – **Name and address supplied**

Brig Chris Ghika, Head of Personnel Capability, Army Headquarters, responds: As you are probably aware, the Scottish government has approved the introduction of new tax thresholds and of a Scottish rate

of income tax.

This will affect all Scottish taxpayers and in the 2018/19 financial year those who earn under £26,000 will pay less tax than their equivalents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland while those earning above that amount will pay more.

The secretary of state has announced the MoD will seek financial mitigation for those who will be worse off.

Any decision to offer these compensatory measures in subsequent years will be made on an annual basis and there are no plans to offer this to individuals affected in the 2017/18 financial year.

It is important to note that the new rate only applies if you are identified as a Scottish taxpayer, which is based on your place of residence and is determined by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

If you are one of these you will have the letter "S" at the start of your tax code.

We are aware of the adverse impact this has and, although paying tax is an individual responsibility, we are currently monitoring the willingness of personnel to be posted to Scotland.

Guidance – with examples on whether an individual should be classified as a Scottish taxpayer – is contained within [2018DIN01-037](#) and further information on the new Scottish tax rates can be found in [2018DIB/02](#) and [ABN 32/18](#).

“Personnel could be worse off next year”

RANT OF THE MONTH



Get it off your chest and on social media



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

The latest version of the SA80 drew some shots on Facebook.



Danny Montgomery

I wonder how it compares with the A2 and if the gas plug design is any better?



Dylan Sudek

Great improvement over original SA80.



Nigel Radcliffe

Give me an SLR any day, you don't mess with 7.62.



Mark John Kemp

Everyone bashes on the SA80, usually people who've never actually fired a weapon. I liked it. Was it perfect? No. It was a bit heavy with most of the weight towards the rear of the rifle but I never really had any major issues and it's accurate and easy to move around in confined spaces.



Paul Whiteman

If it was a good weapon it would sell well on the private market. I can't see elite troops using this.



Jordan Algar

Special coating to prevent rust, which will get removed by Scotch-Brite from weapon cleaning twice a week for no reason.

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→ QE College is league table ranked as the 3rd best UK boarding school for academic results, our Faculty is 5th.

We accept a broad ability range. As one parent said "QE can turn a youngster into well above average academically and have them also turn out as happy and well-rounded." 95% of Year 13 go to University with majority to Oxbridge, Ivy League or Russell Group universities.

→ Our boarding facilities are the best in Europe. No one else even comes close.

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→ £100m invested in new facilities in the last 8 years.

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

Other Schools Results		
5	QE College	85%
17	Faculty of QE	77%
68	Christ's Hospital Sch	57%
81	Monmouth School	55%
	Cheltenham College	55%
85	Bromsgrove School	54%
	Dauntsey's School	50%
	Dean Close School	49%
114	Kingswood School	48%
143	Kingham Hill School	45%
	Monkton Combe	42%
	Gordon's School	36%
	King's School Bruton	34%
	Welbeck College	34%
	King's Coll Taunton	31%
239	Stamford School	30%
	Millfield School	25%
	Barnard Castle School	21%
271	Licensed Vict Ascot	16%

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



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

Ranking of Schools taking boarders

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

BULLET POINTS

Bite-sized data to keep you in the know



APPOINTMENTS

Gen Sir Nick Carter, Chief of the General Staff, appointed **Chief of the Defence Staff** this summer in succession to Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach.



COMPETITIONS

The Man with the Iron Heart DVD and book winners: Malcom Atkinson, West Woodburn, Hexham; Ian Yates, Clitheroe, Lancashire and Wendy Ann Sparrow, Marlborough Lines, Andover, Hampshire.

Spine line winners: John Wall, Llanrumney, Cardiff



DIARY

Throughout May: A Brave Face, a wordless play based on the book *AfterShock*, about the real-life impact of PTSD. For dates and venues visit www.vamostheatre.co.uk/shows/show/a-brave-face

May 5: Stoke-on-Trent Military Tattoo in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity at King's Hall, Kingsway. Doors open at 1730. Tickets are £10 from Music Mania, Hanley on 01782 206000.

May 16: Driving Forces Roadshow at Grass Crete Car Park, Aldershot Sports Ground from 1300 to 1800. Visit www.drivingforces.co.uk

May 22 and 27: Guided walk at the National Memorial Arboretum National Forest Walking Festival. Admission £3.

June 2: Royal Military Police annual remembrance service and parade at the National Memorial Arboretum.



DIRECTORY

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

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

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

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

Armed Services Advice Project:
0808 800 1007;

www.adviceasap.org.uk

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

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

ArmyLibraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

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

Care After Combat:
www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

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

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

Defence Humanists:
www.defencehumanists.org.uk

Erskine:
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www.erskine.org.uk

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

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

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

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01252 787574

Medal Office:
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:
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www.legionscotland.org.uk

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Veterans Welfare Service:
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0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)
www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service



INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 36/18: Army physical training system

ABN 35/18: Notification of new land doctrine *Army Field Manual Tactics for Stability Operations – part 5 capacity building*

ABN 34/18: Civilian performance management 2017/18 end of year process

ABN 33/18: Army Photographic Competition 2018

ABN 32/18: Scottish rates of income tax

ABN 31/18: Matt 6 module E: diversity and inclusion update

ABN 30/18: Army Mediation Service awareness sessions

ABN 29/18: Instructions for all Army TLB staff on the *MoD Electronic Hospitality Book*

ABN 28/18: Suspension of Army trainer capability accreditation

ABN 27/18: Army advanced development programme expressions of interest

DIB 02/18: Mitigating the effects of Scottish rates of income tax – tax year 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN01-060: Safety critical and safety enabling positions afforded priority 1 manning status

DIN 2018DIN01-058: Risk ownership and risk management for civilian (operational) overseas business travel

DIN 2018DIN01-057: MoD (and MoD sponsored) civilian visits to operational locations

DIN 2018DIN01-055: Name change of logistics caterer to logistics air and ground steward, and the removal of manager annotation to chef and air and ground steward

DIN 2018DIN01-054: Armed Forces Buddhist (Spiritual and Moral

Continued on page 54

Leadership) Conference, June 20-22

DIN 2018DIN01-053: Band B nine box grid assessment to the senior civil service

DIN 2018DIN01-052: Lapse of MoD's stakeholder pension contract with Scottish Widows

DIN 2018DIN01-051: Increases in the rate of excess fares allowance for public transport users

DIN 2018DIN01-049: Recruitment of volunteers for training as an Army welfare worker

DIN 2018DIN01-048: TV licensing – commanding officers' responsibilities and the requirements for Service personnel, visiting forces, MoD establishments, messes and clubs

DIN 2018DIN01-047: Support to operations kit and equipment

DIN 2018DIN01-046: Professional membership in the information profession

DIN 2018DIN01-044: Defence Humanists Network Conference and annual general meeting

DIN 2018DIN01-043: British Armed Forces Rastafarian Association inaugural gathering – Tidworth Garrison Theatre

DIN 2018DIN01-042: Formal career review policy

DIN 2018DIN02-004: Implementing National Cyber Security Centre bulk

data measures on MoD bulk data systems

DIN 2018DIN02-003: Approvals process for all developed vetting applications

DIN 2018DIN03-007: Ordering of UK hydrographic office paper products by MoD users

DIN 2018DIN03-005: Continued support to wounded, injured and sick Service personnel and veterans during private home adaptations

DIN 2018DIN04-044: Withdrawal of the Mark 1 electrostatic discharge pole (NSN 5920-99-835-5109) from service

DIN 2018DIN04-043: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – module 300 and 501

DIN 2018DIN04-042: Change of order process for water detection capsules 6630-99-2241108, and nylon syringe water detector 6630-99-2241107, currently supplied under contract number DFFS/5047

DIN 2018DIN04-040: MoD Sanctuary Awards 2018 – calling notice for nominations

DIN 2018DIN04-039: Notification of obsolescence – Houchin air start units 165/230

DIN 2018DIN05-013: Mine warfare drills and procedures committee

DIN 2018DIN05-012: The Joint Air Land Organisation

DIN 2018DIN05-011: Formation of the United Kingdom Air Support Operations Squadron

DIN 2018DIN06-018: Patient data and the national data opt out programme

DIN 2018DIN06-017: Publication of *Dangerous Goods Manual*, version 1

DIN 2018DIN06-016: JSP 800, vol 4a, version 4, detail of latest amendments

DIN 2018DIN07-051: Defence foreign language training courses for training year 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN07-050: Spouse/partner language training for overseas postings

DIN 2018DIN07-049: School of Aerospace battle management courses

DIN 2018DIN07-048: Electronic range action safety plan implementation

DIN 2018DIN07-047: Training requirements for MoD (and MoD sponsored) civilian visits and deployments

DIN 2018DIN07-046: Nurse and allied health professionals clinical placements

DIN 2018DIN07-045: Cessation of accountancy bounties

DIN 2018DIN07-044: United Kingdom and international events available to members of the UK volunteer Reserve Forces

DIN 2018DIN07-043: Applications for test and evaluation training

DIN 2018DIN07-042: Defence exercise programme

DIN 2018DIN07-041: Qualified weapons instructor Reaper course

DIN 2018DIN08-004: Advice and guidance for top level budget holders on the delegation of infrastructure funding – effective from April 2018

DIN 2018DIN09-011: Minister (DP) Acquisition Awards 2018 – calling notice for nominations

DIN 2018DIN09-009: The Ruth Carter Prize for Nurses and the Eliza Mackenzie Prize for Student Nurses

DIN 2018DIN09-004: The George Beeching Prize for Compassion

DIN 2018DIN10-017: Army overseas sports visit

DIN 2018DIN10-016: Army Sports Lottery

DIN 2018DIN10-015: Army Sport Climbing Championships 2018

ROADSHOWS

The Army Engagement Group wants to hear from members of the public who would like an invitation to one of its roadshows. For more information call 01276 412880 or visit www.army.mod.uk/engagement

May: 1, Preston (employer event); 2, Manchester; 14, Croydon; 15, Ipswich; 16, Derby

NO. 918 JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed in this picture of the naming of a Virgin Trains locomotive to mark the fiftieth anniversary of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers at King's Cross station.

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March's winner: Cpl Amit Gurung, 1 RGR, Sir John Moore Barracks, Folkestone.



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REVIEWS

MOVIES

JOURNEY'S END

Classic First World War play
revived for big screen

NORTHERN France – spring, 1918. A bright-eyed public schoolboy heads for the front, eager to join the company commanded by his childhood friend. Upon reaching the trenches he finds a battle-weary unit anxiously awaiting a German counter-attack, and the pal he used to idolise reduced to an alcoholic wreck. The ensuing drama will be familiar to anyone who has seen the classic RC Sherriff play, *Journey's End*, but now the production has been given the big-screen treatment. »

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BOOKS

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TOP GEAR

MOVIES



Produced by **Guy de Beaujeu** and starring **Asa Butterfield** (*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*) as the fresh-faced Raleigh and **Sam Claflin** (*The Hunger Games, Me Before You*) as Capt Stanhope, the movie is out on home release next month and paints a grim picture of men living at the very limits of human endurance.

De Beaujeu told *Soldier* he was thrilled to be bringing the story to life some 90 years after the play first appeared in theatres and as the centenary of the conflict nears its end.

"I feel very strongly that there's a disconnect between young people's understanding of what war is," he said.

"I think Hollywood representations have perverted the reality of conflict, which is almost universally horrific.

"The other thing that attracted me to it is that there's no point making a film that doesn't work in current times and there's little doubt that infantry warfare hasn't really changed in 100 years.

"There are still men in dugouts in places like Iraq or Afghanistan waiting for an attack, joking, being scared."

Shot almost entirely in the officers' cramped, underground quarters, the film examines the effects of extreme stress on different individuals.

Stanhope is clearly suffering from what would now be called PTSD.

Second in command Lt Osborne, played by **Paul Bettany** (*Wimbledon, The Da Vinci Code*), is a stoic father figure.

The always-excellent **Stephen Graham** (*Boardwalk Empire, Pirates of the Caribbean*) appears as pragmatic ex-ranker Trotter, while **Toby Jones** (*Dad's Army, Infamous*) is lugubrious cook, Pte Mason.

Raleigh's youthful innocence in contrast to his battle-hardened comrades illustrates the ravages of conflict on the human spirit.

Sherriff based his play on his own experiences in the war and, in an effort to understand the reality of battle trauma, cast and crew spoke to veterans who had turned to charity Combat Stress for help.

Reflecting on the meeting, de Beaujeu said: "It was one of the most incredible days of all our lives.

"For the actors it was just a phenomenal experience to meet real soldiers who had seen combat and come out the other side with some pretty bad mental scars.

"It absolutely brought home to them that this wasn't any old film – it would be a project they could get their teeth into.

"They became utterly committed to making it as authentic as it possibly could be."

The movie may lack the cinematic set pieces of bigger productions like *War Horse* but, with the viewer confined to the dugout along with the troops, it perfectly captures the claustrophobia of the trenches and the utter helplessness of



VERDICT:

A shattering portrayal of war's cruelties

★★★★★

having your fate determined by the whims of generals or the lottery of shellfire.

From the outset a sense of impending doom pervades, right up until the disturbing final scenes.

A century on from the events that inspired the play, de Beaujeu believes *Journey's End* remains as relevant as ever.

"It's incredible that we can use film as a very modern medium to tell a story that's 100 years old but that has such resonance today," he continued.

"It's important that we don't forget – because the play and the film leads you to one conclusion; that war is hell and we have to try our best not to put our Servicemen and women through it again." ■

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*



MOVIES



DVD/DIGITAL RELEASES



Looking Glass Out now

THIS is one of those films you're either going to love or hate, and I have to say I enjoyed it. But I'm probably going to be in the

minority. **Nicolas Cage** and his wife buy a motel after a family tragedy, and long-story-short he finds that the previous owner put a load of two-way mirrors in. It's not going to win any Oscars but this could be worth a watch if you approach it light-heartedly.

Cpl Adam Jackson, 3 Para



Accident Man Out now

SCOTT Adkins takes on the role of Mike Fallon – the Accident Man – first seen in the pages of *2000AD* alumni **Pat Mill's** comic book. A

hitman must avenge the death of his girlfriend, and a series of fights ensues against a cast of oddball characters (played by **Ray Park**, **Michael Jai White** and **Ray Stevenson**). Think *John Wick* meets *Deadpool* meets *Lock Stock*. A surprisingly dumb, fun movie. Just let it wash over you and enjoy some excellent martial arts sequences.

Capt Alex Janaway, RAMC



Acts of Violence Out now

A CINEMATIC masterpiece is said to contain five memorable scenes that stay with the audience. **Brett**

Donowho's film comes close, but for entirely the wrong reasons. A well-worn formula from start to finish, its plot follows three veteran brothers battling a criminal network in a desperate search for their kidnapped sister. The title leans heavily upon the mechanics of recent (and more original) films in the action genre. And while not totally devoid of entertaining moments, these are mainly derived from its laughably stereotypical characters and simplistic script. This is another brain-dead carbon copy of the exhausted *Taken* franchise.

Rfn Jacob Sargant, Rifles



Only the Brave Out now

WE all know the Americans like to fill their films with hyperbole and outrageous feats of bravery.

But, for once, this story did not require any of this. **Josh Brolin** is the wildfire crew chief who takes a down-and-out fireman under his wing. However, it is not the flames that cause this crew the most problems; their personal dramas are what leave you empathising. Then their greatest battle – a forest fire – looks set to destroy everything. This is an absolutely splendid film for all the family, that will have you rooting for the lads and welling up by the end.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



WIN

WANT to see what the fuss is about? *Soldier* has teamed up with our friends at Lionsgate UK to offer five lucky readers a copy of our lead movie on DVD. To be in with a chance of winning tell us who plays Pte Mason in the film. Answers to the usual address or

comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by May 31.

BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH:

NO WAY OUT

Ex-officer sets the record straight on modern-day Rorke's Drift

OF all the stories to emerge from the battlefields of Afghanistan, few missions were as unorthodox as the siege of Musa Qala.

In the summer of 2006, 88 British troops held firm against some 500 Taliban fighters for three weeks, before coming to an unprecedented truce with the enemy.

Later this month the man in charge at the time, Adam Jowett (ex-Para, pictured below), will publish his account of the deployment, which gained notoriety not just for its Rorke's Drift-style odds, but for the controversial way it ended.

No Way Out reveals how he was given command of Easy Company – a hastily assembled and undermanned unit of paratroopers, Royal Irish rangers and attached arms – and sent to hold the town's district centre after Danish forces withdrew.

Now retired, the former major told *Soldier* how his troops were eager to embark on the "Dirty Dozen-type mission".

"There was a real air of adventure," he said.

"Musa Qala had a reputation. By the time we got there there was no pattern of life.

"There were fighters in concentric circles around our location and that was it.

"It was very black and white."

With the more heavily armed Danes gone, the insurgents set out to overrun the vulnerable compound, launching a series of ferocious attacks from such close quarters that both sides could literally trade insults as they fired upon each other.

"It was a classic siege and we came close to defeat," continued Jowett.

"There were so many tipping points where it could have gone the other way but for signaller X or ranger Y up on the roof – young 18- or 19-year-olds on their first operational tour." After three weeks of relentless fighting orders came from above that a ceasefire was to be negotiated, the terms of which would eventually see Easy Company leave the outpost in cattle trucks.

It is the oft-repeated rumour of a tactical retreat that Jowett now hopes to correct.

"I've been sick to death of hearing 'the Paras got kicked out'," he explained.

"It's true that the negotiation with the elders and the way we left was highly contentious and it's also truthful to say it stuck in our throats.

"Not one of us wanted it and there was an element of it being a bit of a stain, but that's inappropriate.

"We were doing the

VERDICT:

A nail-biting account of an extraordinary chapter of Op Herrick

★★★★★

right thing and stuck at an extraordinary mission.

"When it switched we cracked on and made that work, doing everything we could to breathe life back into the town during the ceasefire.

"I want people to understand the pride I have in the blokes for doing it."

The criticisms are doubtless all the more galling because three members of the company – LCpl Jonathan Hetherington (R Signals), Rgr Anare Draiva and LCpl Paul Muirhead (both R Irish) – lost their lives during the fighting and *No Way Out* is as much a tribute to their sacrifice as an attempt to set the record straight.

"You don't forget a loss like that; you don't forget a friendship like that," said Jowett.

"Even now I think about it every single day. That's why it's worth telling the story."

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*

BOOK RELEASES



1918: Winning The War, Losing The War

edited by Matthias Strohn

★★★★★

THERE is much for the modern soldier to learn

from past conflicts – the trick is to select the appropriate historical campaign and dig deep enough to identify the lessons that are most valid today. This collection of chapters, written by an array of distinguished contributors, offers great insight into the final year of the First World War. It is a thought-provoking and useful read. The British perspective is particularly topical. The Regular Army of 1914 mobilised for war on a scale for which they were ill-prepared and emerged, after four years, sophisticated, the most technologically advanced and above all victorious.

Mike Peters, ex-AAC



Churchill's Spy Files

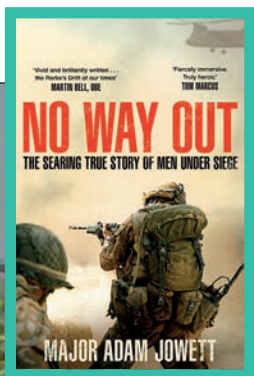
by Nigel West

★★★★★

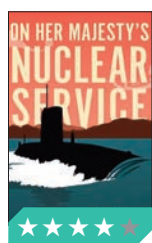
THIS is the latest book by security and intelligence writer and historian Rupert Allason – also

known by his pen name Nigel West. It gives us not only the content of MI5's monthly briefings to Churchill – each one so highly classified that they were handed to him personally and returned once he had read them – but many of the underlying stories behind them as well. These documents also allowed the Security Service to influence the prime minister's perceptions of its work and value. This title is a fascinating read, albeit a demanding one at times. But nothing worthwhile was ever easy. I highly recommended it.

Mark Hainge, ex-RE



No Way Out by Adam Jowett is published by Sidgwick and Jackson on May 17, priced £18.99



On Her Majesty's Nuclear Service by Eric Thompson

THE theme of "submarines are scary" runs deep throughout this engaging and

informative tale of the author's time in the Royal Navy. Like many other military memoirs it starts off predictably with stories of ill-fitting uniforms, ungainly marching and colourful discussions with training staff. But the account gets better as the Cold War progresses and it reveals a great deal about life under the waves. There are deadly tales of where it went wrong for other nations, including the sinking of the USS *Thresher*, the first nuclear powered sub to be lost at sea. Thompson also delves into the mindset required to accept the risks of the trade. Submarines? Not for me, thanks.

Paul Merry, ex-RAF



MUSIC

PICK OF THE MONTH:

DROPPING A FUN-BOMB

Dynamic duo seek an upbeat route through troubled times

▶ WITH five studio albums already to their name, New York-based power pop troupe **We Are Scientists** decided a change of direction was needed as they plotted their musical return.

So band members **Keith Murray** and **Chris Cain** set about creating a record with splashes of colour and an upbeat feel to counter the bleak times which they perceive us to be living in. The result is *Megaplex*.

"In the past we've used our music to educate, to enlighten, to awaken people to the depth and complexity of moral concerns," Cain explained.

"This time we really wanted to drop a fun-bomb, something to dance to."

Recorded at **Tim Wheeler** from **Ash's** Atomic Heart Studios in New York, and once again produced by **Max Hart (Katy Perry)**, the album was condensed to the ten-track line-up that the duo felt would create a "concise pop beast".

"At this point in our career we've written so many songs," explained Murray. "The pool for this record alone was something like 90 songs deep – but we know exactly what we want out of a We Are Scientists release."

"We want it to be taut, to bang hard, to have a big hook every four seconds or so. We don't have to be precious

VERDICT:
Pop path
delivers
mixed
results
★★★★★

about which songs make it onto an album; we can listen to the ones that didn't quite make it at home, on our own time.

"*Megaplex* is just the ten most delicious tracks that we have."

Early offerings from the pair were underpinned by a rock, guitar-driven edge but this is a definite step in the pop direction.

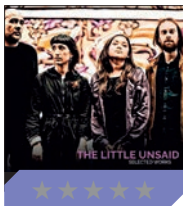
Opener *One In, One Out* is an infectious, upbeat number that could have easily been sung by Katy Perry and while this offers an encouraging start the following tracks prove to be a mixed bag.

Notes in a Bottle and *You Failed* lack the same sparkle and prove forgettable but the pop formula works well on *Heart is a Weapon* and *Not Another Word*.

Hints of the band's more edgy past can be found on *Your Light Has Changed* and *No Wait at Five Leaves* and, as a fan of their previous work, this is something I'd like to see much more of here.

While *Megaplex* is entertaining at times it would be better served by cranking up the amps and injecting some much needed extra energy into the track listing. ■

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, SOLDIER



Selected Works by The Little Unsaid

TO call this album bland, drab or even benign would be doing it a favour. I can only assume that the lacklustre opening track *Day is Golden* is ironic, as any start to the day has to be better than the darkness before it. Unfortunately, in this case, the darkness would have been better. What follows is more of the same dreary folk-cum-wimp pop that nobody in their right mind would like. Midway through I couldn't wait for it to finish so I took matters into my own hands by binning it. Essentially, it would send hyperactive insomniacs to sleep and is probably the worst album in the world – ever!

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



The Magic Gang by The Magic Gang

THIS is the debut offering from Brighton-based outfit **The Magic Gang** and on the first listen I was reminded of **Weezer** and **Teenage Fanclub**. The guitars are jangly, the bass is melodic and the vocals are harmonious, reminiscent of **The Beatles**. Highlights are the singles *Alright* and *Your Love*, which both blast in with banging guitar hooks. But there's more to the band than this, which is evidenced with the moody piano ballad *Take Care*. The album closes with *All I Want is You*, a track laden with **Beach Boys** harmonies that provides a joyful and uplifting moment and points to the direction they may want to go with on their next effort.

Damian Hern, ex-AGC (SPS)



The Great Untold by Scott Matthews

IVOR Novello Award-winning singer-songwriter **Scott Matthews** returns with his sixth album, which proves to be a rather mellow affair. Delicate backing accompanies acoustic guitars and the artist's magnificent voice. This offering is equally entertaining as a record to actually listen to or as a backdrop to quiet contemplation. Hearing his voice for the first time reminded me of the **Calvin Harris** hit *I'm Not Alone*, but there are hints of **Neil Young** as well. Is there a standout track? Quite frankly, no – all the tracks are standout. I shall certainly be seeking out his other work as a good soundtrack for those laidback moments.

Martyn Timmis, civvy

Want to join our review team?
Email reviews@soldiermagazine.co.uk

PICK OF THE MONTH:

G-SHOCK MUDMASTER

Hard-wearing watch doesn't quite keep up with the times

THE G-Shock Mudmaster GG 1000 AER from Casio is rugged, ideal for outdoor pursuits and great for what watches used to be for – telling the time.

But these days, as we look to our mobile devices for weather updates, GPS and all manner of additional extras, a new timepiece needs to do much more than that to impress.

I'm not sure this model quite delivers the goods.

As with most Casios, it comes replete with a host of standard functions: a stopwatch, digital and analogue displays and a four-way alarm in case you want to set yourself reminders daily, monthly or on a specific date.

There are a few things that would make this a reliable watch to take on exercise or operations – it can withstand low temperatures and immersion in water up to a depth of 200m, as well as being shock and vibration-proof.

I feel pretty confident you could run it over with any sizeable vehicle up to and including a Bulldog and it would come out okay, not that I had one lying around to test it.

There's little doubt it would stand up to the rigours of military life.

However, the Mudmaster's extra navigational features felt a little like half-hearted add-ons.

A built-in direction sensor detects magnetic north and indicates your current bearing in degrees, useful if you suddenly find yourself geographically embarrassed and needing a quick pointer.



But I would suggest that in our line of work, a grid display system would be helpful.

All in all this is a perfectly adequate watch but there are many rival products on the market that do the same as this model – and do it better too.

I would be inclined to spend a little more than the £300 price tag and pick up something with more functionality.

I'm sure it would serve you well in the jungles of Belize or the Canadian prairie, but I wouldn't rely on it to get you to the RV. ■

REVIEW: WO2 MIKE OWENS, RE

VERDICT:

Sturdy but pricey for what it actually delivers

★★★★★



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The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

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SOLDIER SPORT



KING OF THE RING »

SUPERHEAVYWEIGHT star LCpl Chez Nihell (PWRR) added to his personal prize haul with victory at the Amateur Boxing Association Elite Championships. Read about the fighter's latest success on page 80...



SERIES OPENER OFFERS TOUGH TEST

HEAVY rain showers and sludgy terrain failed to deter the riders in the opening round of this season's Army Cross-Country Mountain Bike Series.

More than 150 soldiers took to the start line for the event at Erlestoke, near Devizes, which represented the first leg of a five-race competition at courses across the country.

The race boasted some impressive individual displays – despite the challenging backdrop – and there were victories for LCpl Leon Stoneman (RE) in the men's senior race and Maj Natalie Taylor (RAMC) in the women's field.

"The weather made the ground conditions quite difficult," the officer, who was part of the successful Ice Maidens team to reach the South Pole in January, told *SoldierSport*.

"There was a lot of mud and it was quite slippery in places; the uphill sections were really tough.

"I'm very happy with the result

but I'm more proud to finish ninth overall. Sometimes it is difficult to get away and compete but hopefully a result like this will help me get released for more races in the future."

The contest has gone from strength to strength in recent years and now plays a pivotal role in attracting newcomers to the sport.

It boasts a range of age categories as well as prizes for the best corps and unit teams.

"We have scheduled an extra race this season and have high hopes for the series as a whole," said organiser WO1 James Cooper (REME).

"The pinnacle will be the championship race in Tidworth later in the year.

"It also gives an opportunity for the Army team to talent spot. WO2 Stacey Welden (AGC (RMP)) competed in this series last season and is now part of the Service's race squad.

"We are hopeful more riders can make the step up." ■



"THE UPHILL SECTION WAS REALLY TOUGH"



RIDERS WELCOME

ARMY Cycling Union vice chairman Lt Col Jamie Baxter (RAMC) is a keen supporter of the Cross-Country Mountain Bike Series and believes it is the ideal platform for encouraging more soldiers to take to the saddle.

"It is about getting personnel out on their bikes and to enter into a bit of competition," the officer explained.

"The courses are all accessible to complete novices. Each lap is four to five kilometres long and there is nothing too technical.

"Every location will have different terrain; some are flat while others have a lot of hills.

"Last year we averaged 180 riders in each round, which was just brilliant.

"Cycling is really on the up within the Service.

"This is an official race series; that means soldiers can go to their commanding officers with the admin instruction and then come and take part.

"It offers a sense of competition and there is a will to win among personnel. They are out in the field in harsh conditions racing for themselves and their corps."



SPORT SHORTS

Picture: Garry Fox



Eventing's debut success

MORE than 100 riders took to the saddle for the inaugural Eventers Grand Prix at the Defence Animal Training Regiment in Melton Mowbray.

The tri-Service contest featured two showjumping phases and a cross-country stage and, for the majority of those taking part, it was their first taste of competitive action this year.

Gnr Laura Moon of The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery was among the winners as she took top spot in the novice class with her ride, Slayer.

"I didn't think I was going to win," the 20-year-old explained. "I enjoy this type of competition; it's nice to do and is something different for the horses."

Picture: Cpl Mark Lamer, RLC



Guards shine in Tull final

THE Scots Guards lifted the Walter Tull Cup after they downed 5th Battalion, The Rifles in a thrilling final in Aldershot.

With the contest all square after 90 minutes extra time was needed – and it was the guardsmen who prevailed 3-2 to be crowned the Infantry's champion unit for 2017/18.

Elsewhere, 4th Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment defeated 3rd Battalion, The Royal Welsh 3-1 in a penalty shootout after the inaugural Bernard Vann Cup final ended 1-1.



JONES DELIVERS ON EUROPEAN STAGE



**"MY
DREAM
WAS TO
WIN THE
GOLD
MEDAL"**

BOXING sensation Spr Ebonie Jones (RE) underlined her growing potential in the ring as she claimed a gold medal at the European Under-22 Championships in Romania.

The 19-year-old secured four victories via unanimous decisions to top the podium in the 54kg division and is now eyeing a place at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 after impressing on her tournament debut for Team GB.

"My dream was to go there and win the gold medal," the fighter told *SoldierSport*. "I was confident as I had been training so hard."

"I could not have done any more but I was still nervous ahead of that first bout as I had not boxed for a while."

Jones' Romanian quest represented her first taste of competitive action in more than seven months but the soldier insisted ring rust was not an issue as she stepped on to the canvas.

"I didn't want a bye and I was glad I was able to

compete on the first day," she explained. "You need that first fight to get the confidence levels flowing."

"There was no way I was going to let it be a close encounter. In every bout I gave it my all so there was no doubt for the judges."

"Sometimes you can have off days but I think I deserved that gold medal for how hard I trained beforehand."

Jones now intends to drop to 51kg as part of her bid to secure an Olympic place and, with tournaments coming thick and fast, gaining the necessary experience will not be an issue.

"My next target is the English Championships and I want to establish myself at that Olympic weight," the fighter said.

"I boxed at 51kg before I joined the Army so I know what it takes. I have to be very strict but it will be worth it in the end."

"It is all about taking the small steps towards the Tokyo Games in 2020." ■



SOLDIERS MADE TO PAY AS PENALTIES MOUNT

LL discipline proved costly for defending champions the Army as they crashed to a 20-19 defeat to the Royal Air Force.

A succession of conceded penalties and a yellow card for prop forward Sgt Ken Dowding (RA) handed the advantage to their rivals, who adapted better to the challenging conditions and scored three tries on their way to securing a famous win.

However, there was little sign of the trouble to come as the visitors produced a faultless display in the first 20 minutes.

Lock Cpl Ross Parkins (RLC) gave them the perfect start as he crashed to the line following an early raid downfield and when RAF fly half Sgt Andy Byrne missed a straightforward penalty attempt the Reds administered further punishment.

The excellent LCpl Chris Leatham (R Irish) launched a scintillating break from inside his own half and after

exchanging passes with Bdr Owain Davies (RA) he sprinted home under the posts.

Skipper LCpl James Dixon (RE) slotted the extras to stretch the lead to 12-0 after 15 minutes and the Army seemed in control.

But with the penalty count rising the hosts established a foothold in the game and some powerful play from the forwards sparked a flowing passing move that saw Fg Off Sam Randle touch down in the corner.

The Army suffered a further setback in the dying stages of the half as Dowding was sent to the sin bin after he was deemed to infringe an opponent illegally.

And the RAF took maximum reward as they gathered the ball from the resulting lineout and surged forward to allow scrum half SAC Ross Macdougall to tie the match at 12-12 at the break.

Byrne converted from the tee when the soldiers were penalised at the scrum and yet

**INTER-SERVICES
RUGBY UNION**

RAF

20

ARMY

19



another penalty resulted in further punishment on the hour.

With Byrne kicking for touch the hosts gathered at the lineout and then flexed their muscles up front, with skipper Flt Lt Stu Philpott rounding off a powerful surge in the corner.

A converted score in the 67th minute from replacement LCpl Sonoma Veikune (RE) brought the Army to within a point of their rivals but they failed to produce a grandstand finish as their opponents held firm.

"Our ill discipline has cost us," head coach Capt Andy Sanger (RE) told *SoldierSport*. "Aside from the tries, we created a couple of good chances and if we had taken them it would have been a different game."

"The RAF hung in there and built the pressure."

"I expected them to have strong periods. We conceded ten points after the yellow card and that killed us." ■

GAME BRIEF

DATE: April 11, 2018
COMPETITION: RAF v Army
 – Women's Inter-Services Rugby Union Championships
VENUE: RAF Halton

ARMY

Batley 1	Mimmagh 2	Lewis 3
Gatlin (c) 4	McCormick 5	
Hardy 6	Binskin-Barnes 7	Silcox 8
Kuva 9	Robinson 10	
Dodd 11	Mullen 12	
Lloyd 13	Parker 14	McAuley 15

SUBS: Carr, Wilson, Carbutt, Snead, Latimer, Szczygłowska, Gilbert, Morgan



THE Reds visited the Women's Royal Army Corps memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum as part of their preparations for this season's match with the Royal Air Force.

After leading a tour of the site, yeoman warder Amanda-Jane Clark presented the players with their shirts and gave a motivational speech ahead of the fixture, which the Army won 10-0.

"We wanted to get away from Aldershot and keep the squad together," said manager Maj Don Smith (RLC).

"It was a great opportunity to visit the Arboretum and the WRAC memorial.

"With it being RAF 100 we wanted a foil to that and this was a way of remembering that women have been part of the Army for 100 years as well."



DETERMINED IN DEFENCE

INTER-SERVICES RUGBY UNION

RAF

0

ARMY

10



A DOGGED rearguard display proved decisive for the Army women as they recorded a 10-0 win over the Royal Air Force in their Inter-Services opener.

The new-look Reds withstood a first-half barrage from the hosts, who found themselves camped in opposition territory for long spells without making the breakthrough.

A combination of determined defensive play and the lack of a clinical edge from their rivals helped the cause and, with the onslaught repelled, they struck two decisive blows in the second period to seal the contest.

After a cagey opening spell the RAF set about their work, with the power of their scrum proving to be a potent weapon.

But having set the platform with the forwards the light blues failed to capitalise as a series handling errors thwarted their efforts when they looked certain to score.

A yellow card for Sgt Sarah Mimmagh (AGC (RMP)) added to the Army's woes but, again, the RAF failed to take advantage and the sides eventually headed to

the break at 0-0.

When play resumed, the challengers failed to match the intensity of their first-half display and they were duly punished as the Army attack came to life.

Cpl Lou Dodd (QARANC, pictured above) collected an inside pass from Sgt Amy Robinson (AGC (RMP)) on the hour mark and surged through the lines to score in the corner.

And the Reds' star performer repeated the trick ten minutes later as she ran on to a floated ball on the left before sprinting home to stretch the advantage to 10-0.

With their rivals misfiring as an attacking force the soldiers remained in control during the closing stages to seal a hard-fought win.

"This result comes on the back of a really hard season," skipper LCpl Ellie Gatlin (Int Corps) told *SoldierSport* afterwards.

"We've had games where we've had to do a lot of defending and that paid dividends today.

"This result gives us a great platform as we move forward to face the Royal Navy." ■



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SOLDIERS ON SHOW

BOXER Cpl Alanna Nihell (RLC, pictured above) had set her sights on another Commonwealth Games medal having won bronze in Glasgow four years earlier.

However, the lightweight fighter lost to England's Paige Murney at the quarter-final stage meaning the Northern Ireland ace returned home empty handed.

"I believed in myself and it didn't happen but that's boxing – you win some, you lose some," the soldier said afterwards.

Rifle shooters Cpl Stuart Hill (R Irish, pictured below) and Spr Michael Bamsey (RE) missed out on qualification for the finals of the 50-metre prone and 50-metre three position competitions, although Bamsey was fifth in the ten-metre air rifle final.

LCpl Fern Davies (RLC) endured a disappointing campaign with the Welsh netball team, who suffered five defeats in the group stages before beating Fiji in the 11th/12th place playoff.

Rugby sevens star LCpl Jo Nayacavou (Scots) was part of the Scotland squad that lost 26-0 to Australia to finish in sixth place, while Capt Gemma Rowland (RA) took seventh spot with Wales in the women's competition.



HOT SHOT HITS MEDAL TARGET



"TO GET THE BRONZE WAS QUITE A SHOCK"

MARKSMAN Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) continued his ascent in the world of pistol shooting as he claimed bronze in the rapid-fire competition at the Commonwealth Games.

The Army star was only handed his competitive debut last year but has made considerable strides since – an effort that culminated with a medal-winning performance on the Gold Coast last month.

Gowin forced his way into the Games' test event and the faith of the national selectors was rewarded as he maintained his fine form in qualifying and the finals.

"My score was a competition personal best," a delighted Gowin told *SoldierSport*. "I didn't think that would happen at my first major games."

"I scored really well on the first day but on the second I was feeling a little agitated."

"I was not fully focused and that is a lesson learnt."

"In shooting a lot of what we do is in the head. I was thinking about all sorts of random things

but that can happen; luckily it didn't damage my final score."

Gowin refused to set any goals prior to the competition and that meant the pressure was off as he headed into the final.

"I was just happy to be there," he explained. "It didn't matter if I came sixth as everyone else was better than me on paper."

"That helped me relax. It was so cool to have the television cameras there with a big crowd watching; it was so enjoyable."

"To get the bronze was quite a shock. It got to the point where I was looking at the ranking table and there were only three names left on there so I knew a medal was mine."

The soldier's success has earned him a place at this month's World Cup event in Munich, when he will face the sport's finest talent.

He added: "I've got a few ideas in my head about what I want to work on."

"The world's best shooters go to these competitions and it is almost like a networking event. Hopefully I can pick their brains on a few things; that is where the knowledge is." ■



DOUBLE DELIGHT

TWO goals from Sgt Tracey Montgomery gave the Royal Logistic Corps a comfortable 2-0 win in the Edwards Challenge Cup final in Aldershot.

The striker's brace came during a commanding first-half display against the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and completed a league and cup corps double for the loggies.

However, it wasn't all plain sailing for the champions-elect and they could have easily fallen behind in the 22nd minute as LCpl Jemma Dinning rounded the keeper but fired into the side netting from a tight angle.

Montgomery edged her side ahead on the half-hour mark as she controlled a cross from the outstanding LCpl Kayleigh Oliver (pictured above) and rifled a shot into the roof of the net.

Her second followed ten minutes later as she poked the ball past Cpl Abigail Hamilton in the REME goal and it trickled over the line.

Dinning (pictured below) rattled the cross bar on the stroke of half-time but that was as close as the challengers came to scoring as the loggies controlled the second half to seal the win.



SAPPERS STEAL THE SHOW

WOOLWICH CUP FINAL FOOTBALL

RE

7

AGC

2



AN EXTRA-TIME goal blitz saw the Royal Engineers mount an emphatic defence of the Woolwich Cup as they surged to a 7-2 win over the Adjutant General's Corps.

The sappers scored five times during the additional play with Spr Dan Stoneman and Sgt Jay Hubbard both completing hat-tricks as fatigue hit their beleaguered opponents.

The result was a harsh outcome for an AGC side that proved more than a match for the engineers over the course of 90 minutes and could have easily won the tie had Cpl Corey Pearce converted from close range at the death.

After an early spell of pressure from the champions-elect it was the AGC who took the lead when a long throw from Sgt Mark Bailey was met by the head of Cpl Daniel Kodi.

They came close to doubling their advantage moments later as Cpl Darren Humphries fired narrowly over and Hubbard (pictured above) made them pay in the 21st minute as he tapped-in from close range following good work from Stoneman.

After a quiet spell either side of half-time the game came to

life with a dramatic two-minute burst midway through the second period.

Stoneman looked to have given the sappers control as he raced onto a through ball from Hubbard and coolly slotted into the far corner but their rivals fired an immediate response as another long throw from Bailey caused havoc.

The ball was launched into the area and as the defenders failed to clear Pearce was on hand to head home. The striker came close to a winner late on but his effort was hacked clear by Spr Sam Atkinson with the keeper beaten.

With the AGC running on empty their opponents seized control in extra time. Hubbard put his side ahead within seconds of the restart as he beat goalkeeper Cpl Chris Wing to the ball and rolled it into an empty net.

Stoneman added his second as he cut in from the byline to fire into the net and Hubbard completed his milestone as he sprinted clear to expertly finish.

Atkinson played a one-two with LCpl Jay Tomlinson to add the sixth and Stoneman completed the rout. ■

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SPORT SHORTS

Picture: Align Photography



Saints seal Mobbs win

PREMIERSHIP outfit Northampton Saints proved too strong for the Army senior side in rugby union's annual Mobbs Memorial Match.

The hosts ran in eight tries on their way to a 54-21 victory over the soldiers, who came into the fixture on the back of a disappointing loss to the Royal Air Force in the Inter-Services.

Gnr Senitiki Nayalo (RA) claimed the Reds' opening try and scores from Bdr Pete Austin and Sgt Ken Dowding (both RA) boosted the tally.

"There are a lot of bruised bodies in the changing room and some boys have really put their hand up as we prepare to face the Royal Navy," said coach Capt Andy Sanger (RE).



Riders pass Italian test

THE Army cross-country mountain bike team travelled to Italy for an intensive weeklong training camp and marathon race.

Riders from the Casteltrosino Superbike team put the riders through their paces in a series of challenging hill climbs, with the athletes scaling more than 1,600 metres per day in searing heat.

The Service outfit also locked horns with their rivals from the Italian Army in a national marathon series race and claimed four of the top five places in the military standings.



ALL EYES ON THE FORCES PRIZE



"THEY HAVE BEEN PUSHING REALLY HARD"

THE Army's karate stars stepped up their preparations for this year's Inter-Services campaign with a punishing three-day training camp in Aldershot.

Physical fitness was the primary focus, although the athletes were able to test their technical skills on the mat in a series of fighting drills.

"We have had some big sweat sessions and the guys will certainly know they've been here by the end of the week," team captain Pte Chris Rowan (Para) told *SoldierSport*.

"It is about encouraging new talent to come along and have a go. From here we will select the squad for the Inter-Services.

"The Army won all but three or four categories last year, including the men's team prize. Our aim is to go to RAF Cranwell

and retain those titles."

A second training camp will be staged in the build-up to the Forces showdown and four newcomers have been invited to return to the fold.

"They have been pushing really hard this week," said kata coach Cpl David Johnstone (AGC (RMP)). "We've had Reservists and guys in phase two training.

"As we move forward there will be a greater focus on kata (pattern) and kumite (fighting) drills as we work out who goes forward to represent the team.

"Army karate is in a really strong place. We are a dominant force on the British scene and come back from each tournament with five or six gold medals. We are also recognised by different federations around the world; everyone knows who we are." ■

● A SUCCESSFUL title defence in this season's Inter-Services campaign has seen 13 Army players included in the latest UK Armed Forces football squad.

Star striker Cpl Calum Wilkinson (RLC), who scored twice in each fixture this year, heads the list along with skipper LCpl Rob Farkins (R Signals) and goalkeeper LCpl Luke Cairney (RE).

The team takes on the Defence Forces of Ireland later this month before going on to face the German Armed Forces in June.



MONTH IN SPORT

May's key fixtures...



WHAT: 118th Army FA Cup Final
WHEN: May 2 (1500)
WHERE: Aldershot
NEED TO KNOW: Football's showpiece fixture

returns to the Aldershot Military Stadium as 3 Royal School of Military Engineering Regiment lock horns with 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment



WHAT: Army v Royal Navy, Inter-Services Rugby Union
WHEN: May 5 (1500)
WHERE: Twickenham Stadium
NEED TO KNOW: The Reds will be looking for a win after losing to the Royal Air Force in their opening clash and prove full house at Twickenham will generate inspiration. The women play their match at Knellar Hall in the morning



WHAT: T20 Inter-Corps cricket
WHEN: May 8-10
WHERE: Larkhill, Tidworth, Aldershot
NEED TO KNOW: Half centuries from LCpl Spice Narayan and Pte

Tade Carmichael fired the Royal Logistic Corps to a convincing win in last season's final. Who will be the kings of the crease in 2018?

RACE IN NUMBERS

MEMBERS
IN THE TEAM
RIPPLE
EFFECT
CREW

4

THE TIME,
IN HOURS,
THAT THE
ROWERS
WILL TAKE
TO THE
OARS FOR
BEFORE
RESTING
FOR TWO
HOURS - THE
CYCLE THEN
REPEATS

2

THE LENGTH,
IN METRES,
OF THE
BOAT BEING
USED FOR
THE VOYAGE

7

YEARS
SINCE THE
FIRST GREAT
PACIFIC
RACE WAS
STAGED

4

ROWING



PACIFIC RECORD IN SIGHT

ROWER Maj Anna Kirkin (RE) is hoping to lead her team to a new world record when they tackle the punishing Great Pacific Race next month.

The 2,400-nautical mile challenge sees crews row unsupported from California to Hawaii in around 50 days as they battle the elements of the Pacific Ocean.

Kirkin, who served as a Regular for 15 years before joining the Reserves, was a late addition to Team Ripple Effect after a previous member withdrew but has lofty ambitions for the event.

"As a crew we are all quite competitive," she told *SoldierSport*. "The world record for an all-female team is 50 days and nine hours and we think that is achievable."

"We are looking at marginal gains. We will not carry any kit that we don't need; it is about keeping things simple and not having any excess."

"Our aim is to keep the boat

moving at all times – that is the way to beat the record."

The officer only joined the crew in December and her focus now is on ensuring she takes to the start line in the best shape possible.

"It has been a quick turnaround," she added. "The other three have been working together for six months."

"For me, it is all about building my strength. I've spoken to other ocean rowers and when you row for 12 hours a day, over the course of 50 days, you lose a lot of weight so you need to start strong."

Kirkin needs to generate £20,000 to cover the cost of her entry and hopes to raise a further £20,000 for the Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre as well as Ascend Afghanistan, a charity that uses climbing to develop leadership skills in young Afghan women.

To donate visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/anna-kirkin ■



TITLES MOUNT UP

THE Army team saw seven fighters progress to the finals of this year's Amateur Boxing Association Elite Championships.

Victory for LCpl Chez Nihell (PWRR) was the sole success for the men but three champions were crowned from the squad's impressive female contingent.

Cpl Steph Wroe (REME, pictured above) claimed her third ABA title when she defeated Laura Stevens in the 69kg final and there were wins for Gnr Karris Artingstall (RA) at 57kg and Gnr Tori Ellis (RA, pictured below) at 51kg.

"Karris absolutely delivered," said Nathan Pearce, secretary of Army Boxing. "If she keeps progressing she is really going to make a name for herself."

"For Steph to win a third title, when the competition keeps getting better and better, is exceptional – 69kg is now an international weight and that means more fighters are migrating to that division."

"The girls have always been a quality bunch and they proved that here."



NIHELL BOWS OUT AS CHAMPION



**"I HAD
THE
BELIEF
THAT
I HAD
GOT
THE JOB
DONE"**

IT WAS a case of sixth time lucky for superheavyweight LCpl Chez Nihell (PWRR) as he finally claimed an Amateur Boxing Association (ABA) elite title on a triumphant day for the Army at York Hall.

The fighter was one of four soldiers to top the podium at the country's premier competition and saw him cement his status as one of the best in his division.

Nihell previously suffered two defeats in the quarter- and semi-final stages and has also been a beaten finalist, so he was determined to go one better in what was his final tournament in Service colours.

"Winning the ABAs has always been a dream of mine," the former Army team captain told *SoldierSport*. "It is the holy grail of amateur boxing."

"I've always got to the latter stages but fell short; this year was my year."

"I perform better under pressure and I knew this would be my last shot at that title."

"I've been more disciplined than ever this season so if I didn't win it would have been

a case of me not being good enough – but I went out there and got the victory."

Nihell's route to the top did not come easily. His first step came with success at the Inter-Services and he then negotiated tough bouts in the quarter- and semi-finals before defeating Courtney Bennett on a split decision in the final.

"I faced him when I defended my English title belt and he didn't really commit to that fight," Nihell, who has now won his last 12 encounters, explained.

"But this time he really brought it. He is a big guy and tried to bully me but I knew I was getting the cleaner shots off."

"I had to work hard, it was no surprise to see it go to a split decision but I had the belief that I had got the job done."

Victory at the ABAs was also the last time Nihell represented 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

He will transfer to 27 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps this month and hopes to make his professional boxing debut later in the year. ■

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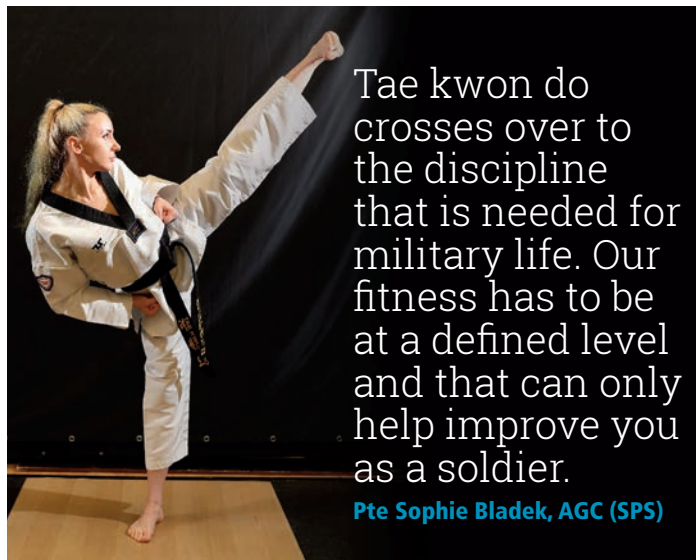
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Pte Sophie Bladek, AGC (SPS)



I'm involved in selecting the tae kwon do team for the Inter-Services, which means I have to lead some sessions. If you can stand up in front of people and give orders it adds to your confidence.

LCpl Jonny Hainsworth, Yorks



Kendo is a sport that does not have height, weight, age or gender categories – you fight the player in front of you. It is an open, even playing field and that is something that we should seek to emulate within the Armed Forces.

Capt John O'Neill, AGC (RMP)



In shooting there is a focus on core strength and building the muscles in our back, shoulders and calves. It drops the heart rate, which makes competing easier. This adds to the fitness built in the military.

Cpl Stuart Hill, R Irish



Travelling the world as a boxer I have met a lot of different people and experienced different cultures and that plays a big part in the work environment.

Cpl Alanna Nihell, RLC



Being involved with kendo enhances your physical and mental robustness and you have to be alert to what is happening around you, all of which have obvious military benefits. Additionally, it helps you become a more rounded individual.

LCpl Scott Brown, Int Corps

TEAM TALK

Soldier asked troops what benefits their sport brings to a military career

In my sport we learn to be positive, logical, methodical and to use our initiative to get things done. It is about sharpening the mind to cope with pressure, and that's really useful when it comes to dealing with the stresses of work.

Sgt Sam Gowin, RA





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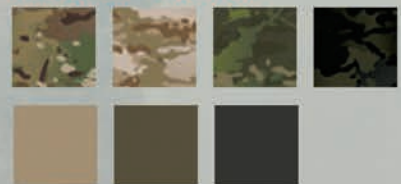


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