

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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Ordnance Barracks, Government Road,
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU.

All enquiries: Tel: 01252 787107 / 94222 7107

Fax: 01252 787110 / 94222 7110

Email: news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Editor

Sarah Goldthorpe 01252 787096 (7096)
sgoldthorpe@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Assistant Editor

Joe Clapson 01252 787097 (7097)
jclapson@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Assistant Editor

Becky Clark 01252 787099 (7099)
rclark@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Sports Editor

Richard Long 01252 787098 (7098)
rlong@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Art Editor

Tudor Morgan 01252 787100 (7100)
tmorgan@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Designer

Maddie Marchment 01252 787101 (7101)
mmarchment@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Photographer

Graeme Main 01252 787103 (7103)
gmain@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Photographer

Steve Dock 01252 787103 (7103)
sdock@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Managing Editor

Steven Muncey 01252 787095 (7095)
smuncey@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Business Manager

Andy Clarkson 01252 787105 (7105)
aclarkson@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Advertising

Heather Shekyls 01252 787106 (7106)
advertising@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Subscriptions

01252 787107 (7107)
subs@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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ARMY

Season's greetings

ON behalf of the whole *Soldier* team, I want to wish a very happy Christmas to all of our readers.

Thank you for all your contributions to the magazine over the last year, which have helped to keep personnel abreast of Service life.

As those who are not restricted by overseas deployments come together for the month's festivities, we decided to take a closer look at the role of religion in the British Army of tomorrow.

The trusted padre may always be on hand to keep the Haribo and morale in high supply, but is there a future for him or her in an increasingly secular society? Read pages 32-35 to find out what we discovered.

For those looking for a little light relief, turn to pages 45-47 to read seasonal messages of support from some of the country's favourite celebrities. Special thanks goes to BBC Radio 2 DJ Chris Evans, who conveyed his admiration for you via the medium of poetry (yes, really).

In addition to the usual lively selection of sport (pages 81-92), reviews (pages 69-79) and letters (pages 53-57), make sure you also check out this month's articles on training in Morocco (pages 28-30) and Poland (pages 23-26).

If you would like us to feature the work of your unit in 2015 please get in touch using the details on this page. ■

S. Goldthorpe



Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor



THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE OF 1914 – PAGES 41-42



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Celebrity
Christmas
messages



"We have not put cam' nets up in the forest in a long, long time"

Troops learn new skills in Poland p23

"Padres are people of prayer, they are there to help troops"

Soldiers debate the importance of faith p32

"The Germans issued tablets which were essentially crystal meth"

Lifting the lid on the Battle of the Bulge p76

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Picture: Cpl Andrew Morris, RAF



'Courage and tenacity'

Top brass praise UK soldiers for Afghanistan deeds

BRITISH personnel have been praised for their considerable sacrifice and professionalism following the end of combat operations in Afghanistan.

A poignant flag-lowering ceremony was held by UK, US and Afghan troops at Camp Bastion to mark the official cessation of the International Security Assistance Force mission.

Leading tributes to the work of British soldiers over the past 13 years, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said: "Our Armed Forces' tremendous sacrifice has laid the foundations for a strong Afghan Security Force.

"It has set the security context that enabled the first democratic transition of power in the country's history and stopped it being a launch pad for terrorist attacks."

The politician continued: "Although we are ending a significant chapter in our shared history, the UK's commitment to support Afghanistan will continue through institutional training, the Afghan National Army Officer Academy and development aid."

Among those Servicemen and women to remain in the country following the end of Op Herrick are members of 2nd and 7th Battalions, The Rifles who are working as the Kabul Support Unit.

The troops are responsible for transporting personnel across the Afghan capital, protecting mentors and providing a quick reaction force.

Adding his voice to the praise for British soldiers – including the

453 who lost their lives during the campaign – Gen Sir Nick Houghton, Chief of the Defence Staff, said: "Over 13 years thousands of men and women from our Armed Forces have played a hugely significant role.

"It has required remarkable moral courage, tenacity and innovation to achieve our objectives in the most testing environments."



■ THE last major charity event by UK troops in Afghanistan has taken place at Kandahar Airfield.

Set up in memory of LCpl Jay Brynin (Int Corps), who was killed on patrol in 2013, the challenge saw hundreds of personnel amass a total of 7,344 kilometres – the distance from Kandahar to RAF Brize Norton – in 14 weeks of fitness activities.

The final race saw three teams rowing four kilometres (the same distance as a return length of Kandahar's runway), cycling 156 kilometres to represent the months of operations in Afghanistan and doing 453 press-ups to signify the UK troops killed in the conflict.

The winners were 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and the event raised £4,000 for Hounds for Heroes, LCpl Brynin's favourite charity.

Following the flag: Soldiers have shown high levels of sacrifice and professionalism in Afghanistan, defence chiefs have said

IN NUMBERS:



68,000

Visually impaired ex-soldiers who are eligible for specialist help from Blind Veterans UK but who are not receiving it. For details on accessing the charity's support

network visit www.noonealone.org.uk or call 0800 3897979.

RESERVE AGE LIMIT

■ THE government has denied that a decision to increase the upper age limit for joining the Army Reserve is a desperate bid to boost numbers.

Civilians with relevant qualifications or experience can now join until the age of 50. Previously, the cap was set at 45.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Labour MP Kevan Jones said the policy change, which came into force earlier this year, was a ploy to raise the number of recruits.

"The Army Reserve has expanded by just 20 troops in the past year – not the 30,000 promised by the prime minister," he said.

But Julian Brazier, Minister for Reserve Forces, added: "We make no apology for recruiting older people to specialist roles, such as intelligence and medics, where they have specialist skills.

"This is about making the best use of our resources and harnessing the talents of the wider UK society."

A further policy announcement on Reservist age limits was expected as this issue went to press.



THIS MONTH IN MUSIC...



"It's hard to escape the feeling you've heard it all before"

★ ★ ★

PAGES 74-76

RETROSPECTIVE VC 'UNIMAGINABLE'

■ CAMPAIGNERS asking for a Falklands veteran to be posthumously awarded with a Victoria Cross have had their request turned down.

Family members of Cpl Stewart McLaughlin (Para), who led a series of attacks at Mount Longdon in 1982 before being killed by mortar fire, believe he should have been honoured.

But with no record of a citation being written, the former Serviceman remains ineligible.

Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Anna Soubry, said there was no doubt about the soldier's gallantry but that the rules could not be changed.

"It is hard to imagine how in practice the allocation process could fairly be opened to retrospective citations without extending the principle to all. This would be unimaginable," she added.



“
The trip
will go a
long way
to making
them better
soldiers
”



1 CANADA PADDLE POWER

TEN adventurers from the Regional Training Centre (Northern Ireland) have paddled their way through the wilds of Canada's Rocky Mountains on a 14-day expedition.

The group, which included troops from the Royal Irish Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, Royal Signals and Adjutant General's Corps, travelled down the Kootenay River in open boats on Exercise Canpaddy.

The personnel also tried their hands at horse riding, trekking, rock climbing and mountain biking.

"The trip delivered challenging leadership training which will go a long way to making them better soldiers," said team leader Capt Ian McQuitty (2 R Irish).



2 USA MEDICS TESTED STATESIDE

RESERVIST medics tested their skills alongside colleagues from the US Navy on Exercise Integrated Serpent.

Around 200 soldiers from 201 (Northern) and 208 (Liverpool) Field Hospitals travelled to San Diego in California for the training, which focused on post-Afghanistan skills.

In recent years serials have revolved around the purpose-built British military hospital in Camp Bastion but personnel are now returning to treating the sick and injured under canvas, at short notice, anywhere.

Cpl Sara Palmer, of 201 Fd Hosp, said: "We received various levels of simulated casualties and there was specific training related to chemical, biological and nuclear warfare."

The Falkland Islands

EAGLE ACTION

Soldiers make an impact in Poland – pages 23-26



NORTH AFRICAN NOUS

Troops put defence engagement into action in Morocco – pages 28-30

3 BURUNDI FOB LIFE LESSONS

PERSONNEL from The Royal Irish Regiment have returned home after a successful deployment training the Burundi National Defence Force.

The two-week mission was led by Reserves from 2nd Battalion and focused on patrol skills, life in forward operating bases and counter-IED drills.

Troops from 2 R Irish are no strangers to the region and in the last three years they have sent ten teams to Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania.

Their latest effort was to help their counterparts prepare for a one-year tour in Somalia as part of an African Union mission.

IN NUMBERS 112



Teams that took part in this year's **Exercise Cambrian Patrol** – a record for the Welsh patrolling event. One third of the entrants failed to finish the gruelling course. Among the gold winners were troops from **1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, the Brigade of Gurkhas** and the **Royal Tank Regiment**.

EBOLA LATEST

Army continues support to fight deadly disease
– page 11



6 NEPAL

HIMALAYAN HEIGHTS

TROOPS from 4 Regiment, Army Air Corps have embarked on an expedition to climb the 6,476-metre Mera Peak in Nepal.

The ten Apache helicopter operators were due to return from the 20-day Exercise Himalayan Eagle, a trek from the remote town of Lukla, across the Mera glacier and up a technical ice route, as this issue went to press.

"Most of the team had not done much, if any, mountaineering before getting involved in this expedition," said trip leader Capt Tom Stack (AAC) ahead of the adventure.

Among those taking part is LCpl Ian Adcock, who returned from his second Herrick tour in July.

"After the sand and heat of Afghanistan, the snow and cold of the Himalayas seemed like a refreshing change," he commented.

"We've all been doing a lot of fitness training since the end of the tour. I've never done a trip like this."

● On a high – page 13

7 IRAQ

MORE ARMY SUPPORT

BRITISH troops are preparing to step up their presence in Iraq in a bid to support those fighting against Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

During a visit to the troubled country, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said the UK is planning to offer further advisory personnel and training to the Iraqi military including counter-IED packages.

"It's right that we do more to help Iraqi forces take the fight to ISIL on the ground," Mr Fallon said.

The MoD has also confirmed it will deploy more Reaper aircraft to the region.



RECCE COURSE COMEBACK

Troops embark on trial package in Brunei's jungle
– page 17



5 BRUNEI

JUICE IN THE JUNGLE

A HOT and humid forest provided the unlikely backdrop for a mess brunch after a soldier decided to make the most of the Brunei surroundings.

Organised by WO2 Steve Valentine (RE), the event saw troops from Training Team Brunei, the Army Air Corps, Logistic Support and the Royal Military Police swap combat uniform for bow ties and blazers.

"I wondered why nobody had seemed to take advantage of the superb location we were so lucky to serve in," explained the senior NCO.

"I decided there and then that when I took my turn as president of the mess committee I would leave my mark."

“The troops have really been put through their paces”

4 KENYA

PARAS ON THE PROWL

MEMBERS of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment have been honing their battlefield skills on Exercise Askari Storm in Kenya as they prepare for a new role within the Air Assault Task Force.

The soldiers are due to replace their 3 Para counterparts as the formation's lead Infantry battalion and the six-week package tested the battlegroup on the scenarios they may face.

Having focused on their specific skills personnel were brought together for a final mission that included parachute jumps and the airdropping of supplies.

"The troops have really been put through their paces," said regimental sergeant major WO1 Adam Proud (Para).



Picture: Sgt Paul Randall, RLC



"WE WERE NEVER GOING TO RUN A DESERT MARATHON SO WE RECORDED A SINGLE" - MOVE OVER X FACTOR, PAGES 74-75

Pension sense prevails

Widows who remarry now entitled to money

SERVICE widows will be able to retain their pensions for life even if they remarry or cohabit, the government has announced.

From April 1, 2015 all military spouses and civil partners awarded survivors' pensions will no longer have to surrender the money if their circumstances change and they decide to live with someone new.

The overhaul follows a long-running campaign by the Forces Pensions Society (FPS) and War Widows Association to alter the rules.

Maj Gen John Moore-Bick, FPS General Secretary, thanked the prime minister for listening to the "logical arguments" of the cause.

"We applaud the fact that this decision to treat all widows equally recognises that the Armed Forces Covenant has its rightful place in the sector of pensions, with the removal of clear disadvantage to Service spouses and partners," he said.

The organisation had long argued that frequent moves as part of Service life left many wives and husbands unable to build an independent pension pot, potentially leaving them with the impossible choice of either a new relationship or financial security.

Due to come into force with the launch of Armed Forces pension scheme (AFPS) 15, the policy will affect all widows in receipt of a family pension under the AFPS 75, as well as those receiving payments under the war pensions scheme.

However, the new rules will not



Picture: Shutterstock

apply to those who have already surrendered their pensions.

The FPS accepted this but pointed out that if a widow's second relationship ends, she will no longer be subject to a means test to decide if the payment can be reinstated.

Those whose applications were previously declined can also reapply.

Exactly how many people are affected by the change is not clear but the FPS estimates that over the next 40 years some 400,000 people could be freed from the threat of pension forfeiture.

IN NUMBERS

65,000

Forces widows who, thanks to the rule change, won't have to choose between a new relationship and financial security.

OUR WAR RETURNS

■ A SERIES that depicts the battles of Op Herrick using footage captured on soldiers' helmets will return to television screens this month.

Our War: Goodbye Afghanistan will air on BBC Three at 2100 on Tuesday, December 9.

As well as looking back on the 13-year mission, the show catches up with some of the personnel who featured in its previous programmes.

One such Serviceman is WO2 Simon Panter (R Anglian), who recounts the experiences of his platoon in 2007.

"I am glad to have taken part in the programme," he told *Soldier*.

"Shows like this give the general public a good idea of what goes on for troops in Afghanistan.

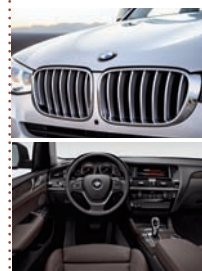
"Some personnel don't talk about what happened when they come home so it's interesting for their family and friends too."



OFF-ROAD RAGE

Soldier gives BMW's latest X3 a good run for its money

- pages 78-79



INBETWEENERS CALL

■ THE stars of television cult comedy *The Inbetweeners* have visited troops in Cyprus to find out what Army life is about.

James Buckley, Simon Bird and Joe Thomas, who play Jay, Will and Simon in the toe-curling show, took on riot training and a PT session with 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment in Nicosia.

"They showed us all of the gear they have to carry and we wore that for about seven minutes and now I have a back injury," admitted Buckley.

"We really wanted to meet the guys and tell them what a great job they're doing. We are proud of them."

EVERY LITTLE HELPS

TESCO has become the first supermarket to sign up to the Armed Forces Corporate Covenant. The retail giant has joined more than 300 other high street names to promise exclusive deals for the Service community. It has also vowed to promote Reserve service among its employees, help veterans and military partners find work with the company and to give special consideration to holiday requests from spouses before, during and after their loved one's operational deployment. For more information about work opportunities with the chain visit www.ctp.org.uk/job-finding/directory/tesco



GOOD
DRILLS

AN Army recovery mechanic has collected an industry accolade for excellence in his field. Sgt Kevin Anderson (REME) was presented with the Society of Operations Engineers' soldier of the year award, which recognises an individual who embodies the ethos of his corps. The judging panel considered criteria such as innovation, technical skills and the candidates' capacity as a role model.



TOP ARMY TALENT

"I DON'T THINK WE CAN BE A SECULAR ORGANISATION" - TROOPS TALK RELIGION, PAGE 94



Boost to Ebola effort

Army trains NHS staff to help thwart deadly outbreak

THE Army Medical Services Training Centre (AMSTC) in Strensall near York has been at the forefront of bolstering the UK's fight against Ebola in Sierra Leone.

Following its role in training Royal Army Medical Corps personnel from 22 Field Hospital and 5 Armoured Medical Regiment to set up a treatment unit and training academy in the country, the hub has been preparing more than 50 NHS workers who have volunteered to help in West Africa.

The soldiers coached the civilians in assessing suspected and confirmed cases of the disease with an intensive nine-day course.

The visitors were taken through infection control procedures similar to those used in Freetown, trained in the correct use and removal of protective equipment and drilled in performing routine tasks in protective suits.

The temperature of the centre was even raised to 30 degrees Celsius to mirror the climate of Sierra Leone.

"We are proud to be able to facilitate preparation of medical staff who have volunteered to help," said Lt Col Jaish Mahan, chief instructor at AMSTC.

A total of 1,000 civilians have so far come forward to boost the effort, meaning hundreds more will pass through the training centre in the coming months.

Among those who have travelled to the troubled region is Dr Roger Alcock, a consultant in emergency medicine at Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Scotland.

"We've had excellent training by the British military," he said.

"Together with the additional experience we've had, it means we'll be able to deal with the situation we will face there."

Tony Redmond, director of UK-Med, which recruits civilians for emergency relief efforts of this nature, added: "The training they get here is absolutely world-class, we're confident about that."



FIGHTING TALK ON FRONT-LINE FEMALES

■ THE debate over women in combat units is intensifying as the Army's expected announcement on its recent policy review looms.

Writing in *The Times*, former colonel Richard Kemp praised the bravery and performance of women serving in front-line roles such as medics and pilots, but said they lacked the "killer instinct" required of infantry soldiers.

"No matter how courageous or physically tough a woman might be, she simply does not fit into this testosterone-charged band of brothers and is therefore likely to reduce the cohesion and fighting effectiveness of a small combat unit," he commented.

Kemp also expressed fears that fitness standards would have to be lowered in order to accommodate females if the rules were changed.

The MoD has been considering the issue since May, with initial findings originally due to be published by the end of this year.

● Do women lack the killer instinct? Give us your views by contacting mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

“
We’ve
had
excellent
training
by the
British
military
”

African aid: An Army nurse delivers an Ebola care training session in Sierra Leone



Picture: SSGT Tom Robinson, RLC

CHARITIES AT RISK?

THE Armed Forces charity sector is in danger of decline, according to new figures. Data published by the Directory of Social Change revealed the number of charitable organisations serving the military community has fallen by seven per cent in the last five years and that their combined annual revenue (in England and Wales) is only £807 million, compared to the £6.4 billion generated by healthcare causes.



A BLUNDER by the *New Zealand Herald* newspaper saw a photograph of the late *Jackass* star, Ryan Dunn, published alongside an article about a soldier killed in Gaza. Kiwi-born Sgt Guy Boyland, who died while serving with the Israeli Army, had posted several pictures of Dunn to his Facebook page. Believing the images to show Boyland, the publication printed them as part of a front-page story on his death. The *Herald's* editor apologised to the serviceman's family for the error.



FACEBOOK FAUX PAS

BAD
DRILLS

Just **one quick beer** couldn't hurt anyone
.... but the dozen that followed it could!



Alcohol - Know Your Limits

For more information visit the **Army Health Promotion website** on the Defence Intranet



"IT MUST BE SO TOUGH BUT WE'RE ALL SO VERY GRATEFUL"

- STAR SUPPORT, PAGES 45-47



ON A HIGH

■ A COMBINED team of Regulars and Reservists from The Royal Welsh have completed a gruelling 25-day climbing expedition to the Khumbu region of Nepal.

The eight-strong group visited Everest base camp and scaled Kala Pattar before tackling the 6,189m Island Peak.

To reach the top, the troops crossed an exposed glacier and negotiated a 45-degree ice wall before cresting onto a narrow ridge that leads to the summit.



EXTRA CASH TALKS FOR BRITISH ARMY SPORTS

■ AN organisation that has given grants worth £239 million to the Armed Forces will continue donating large sums of money to improve troops' lives, its boss has vowed.

Tom Arnot, general secretary of the Nuffield Trust, made the promise as the body celebrates its 75th anniversary, pledging more than £1 million per year to the Services.

"The money is basically for anything the military wants in the areas of sport and recreation which the public's taxes don't pay for," he told *Soldier*.

"For example, every year we provide grants for the purchase of skis, minibuses and mountain bikes."

The trust, which was set up in 1939 by Lord Nuffield, has also helped to pay for capital projects such as the Tidworth Equestrian Centre, sports pitch floodlights for 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards and a climbing wall at Capel Curig training camp.

"It is important to do this because these kind of things make life better for personnel," added Mr Arnot.

For further information on the work of the trust visit www.nuffieldtrust.org

Anyone wishing to bid for a grant should do so via the chain of command.



300

Grants handed out by the Nuffield Trust every year



Five ways that binge drinking could ruin your Christmas break:

- 1 You're more likely to have an accident or get injured when drunk, which could land you in hospital.
- 2 Excess boozing can lead to violent behaviour and to potential arrest.
- 3 Loss of personal possessions, such as wallets, keys or mobile phones.
- 4 Unwanted pregnancies or STIs can be the unwelcome result if you have unprotected sex.
- 5 Alcohol poisoning can lead to vomiting, seizures, unconsciousness and even death.



Picture: Shutterstock

'Troops must go easy on booze'

Health message follows 'worrying' report findings

HAZARDOUS levels of drinking are the norm for Armed Forces personnel, a government study has found.

The House of Commons defence select committee report on the Armed Forces Covenant in action found that excess drinking continues to rise in the military.

It also recommended that the MoD should investigate the link between drinking and increased rates of violence among veterans.

"Research found that misuse of alcohol in the military is substantially higher than that seen in the civilian population, particularly among 16- to 19-year-olds, with males drinking more than twice the hazardous levels and females over three times," the report said.

"In addition, male NCOs and officers are more likely to die from alcohol-related causes than other occupational groups within the general population."

Last year new rules were introduced to allow commanding officers to test troops for drugs or alcohol if they suspect their ability to perform potentially dangerous tasks is impaired.

Anyone found to have prohibited levels in their system is committing an offence.

And if professional reasons are not enough to make personnel

take it easy this Christmas, the study also found that alcohol misuse is linked to criminal offences and violent behaviour.

Responding to the findings, an MoD spokesman said: "As within wider society, there is no quick fix to reduce alcohol misuse in the Armed Forces."

"We are educating personnel on the dangers and have introduced extensive policy and guidance for commanders."

He added: "We have rigorous processes in place to discipline those who make poor choices regarding alcohol consumption, and treatment mechanisms in place for those with problems."

The study concluded that the department must find practical ways to change the drinking culture within the Services, if necessary by reviewing pricing policies and the availability of alcohol on military bases.

Walter Busuttill, director of medical services for Combat Stress, told *Soldier*: "We have found that 75 per cent of those who speak to our charity are suffering with post-traumatic stress disorder and, of those, 69 per cent have a significant drinking problem."

"PTSD, alcohol abuse and depression is the most common combination we see in veterans."

IN NUMBERS:

16-19

Age group with the biggest drinking problem in the military



**“IT’S GREAT FOR MORALE AND I IMAGINE IT
WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME 100 YEARS AGO”**
– THE POWER OF FOOTBALL, PAGES 41–42



Troops on target in new challenge

SERVICE personnel were put to the test in Force Troops Command’s first ever march and shoot competition.

Named Griffin Challenge, the event saw teams from across the formation’s ten brigades showcase their soldiering capabilities in a gruelling series of assessments, including a 13-kilometre speed march, obstacle course and military knowledge test.

The teams included Regulars and Reservists, who took each other on at Pirbright’s Brunswick Camp, with the highest overall points total going to 104 Logistic Support Brigade.

“The day gave an excellent illustration of demanding soldiering activity and Reserve-Regular integration at its very best,” said event organiser Maj Andrew Todd (RGR) afterwards.

“Each team had a Reservist who benefitted hugely from the event and proved their worth at every level. In particular, some of the shooting from them was outstanding.”

Under Army 2020, Force Troops Command will provide combat support and specialist capabilities to the Reaction and Adaptable Forces.

The competition is now set to become an annual event.

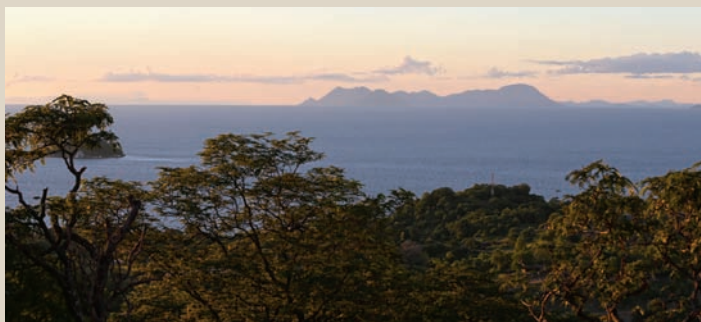


Pictures: Steve Dock

HOME TRUTHS



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



Is the sun setting on wanderlust?

I AM delighted that a solution has been found to the rules around widows’ pensions (see page 10).

This demonstrates how consistent pressure from the Forces Pension Society, families federations and The Royal British Legion can create positive change.

The Armed Forces Covenant has also played its part in achieving this and we use the agreement, plus evidence from families, to show where change will make things fairer.

To that end, we have been asking local authorities to ensure it is made easier for divorcing Army spouses to access social housing by removing the need to have that “local connection”, which is difficult to prove if you have followed the flag.

We are pleased to see that Cheshire West and Chester Council is the first to have accepted this policy and are hoping others will follow.

Understanding how we can use the Forces covenant, community covenant and corporate covenant to remove disadvantage for families is a key part of our work and in 2015 we’ll be contacting more civilian bosses to increase opportunities for partner employment.

The challenges of overseas service is an emotive subject for families, who find themselves struggling financially as a result of rising costs.

Once a popular choice, limited work choices for loved ones and fewer allowances now mean that many are reluctant to accept a posting abroad.

With overseas engagement a key

priority for defence, removing these disincentives is crucial.

So it was good to hear assurances from the adjutant general at our Big Debate that the package for these postings is being considered.

More than one thousand families have also answered our recent survey on disturbance allowances.

Ninety per cent of respondents told us they were left out of pocket as a result of an overseas move.

Some families in Kenya said it had cost them between £5,000 and £10,000, those in Cyprus estimated £2,000 to £5,000 and one defence attache thought the move left the family £35,000 down.

Unsurprisingly, some feel they are bankrolling the MoD’s need to post soldiers abroad.

And crucially, an overseas assignment is likely to see the family existing on just one salary, which makes any additional expenditure particularly difficult.

Living outside the UK can provide a great opportunity to experience life in another country but distance from extended family and children at boarding school or university can add to the reluctance.

Eventually, the compelling need for a second salary may well outweigh the excitement of exploring a new area.

So we’re hoping that we’ll see significant improvements in the current package to ensure families are more fairly compensated.

www.aff.org.uk

“Some feel they are bankrolling the MoD’s need”

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Ministry
of Defence

“HE CAUGHT ME WITH A GOOD SHOT TO THE BACK OF THE HEAD” - BOXERS FIGHT BACK, PAGES 88-89



Surveillance specialists join forces

Service personnel travel to Scotland to boost covert skills

REGULAR and Reserve soldiers aiming to take on one of the Royal Artillery's toughest jobs have completed the first ever integrated surveillance and target acquisition patrols course.

Run by 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery, the 13-week package taught troops to go forward covertly and monitor enemy movements for extended periods of time.

Training for Reservists previously took place separately but for the first time members of the The Honourable Artillery Company undertook the assessment phase and challenging final test exercise alongside their full-time counterparts.

Describing the demands of the last ten days of the course, which was held in Garelochhead in Scotland, OC Capt Chris Mellis



said: “The patrols infiltrated to reach a position from which they could watch the enemy, before constructing and camouflaging observation posts, which they had to live in for up to five days.

“This is a unique skill set that requires significant levels of determination, fitness and mental robustness and it is critical to train, nurture and ultimately select the right soldiers for the role.”

“

DO I REALLY HAVE TO BRIBE AND BEG TO GET CLOTHING ISSUED?

”

Talkback tittle tattle – pages 53-57



Picture: Steve Dock

RECCE PATROL COURSE COULD MAKE RETURN

■ RECONNAISSANCE specialists have been taking part in a trial package aimed at developing their ability to operate in the jungle for extended periods of time.

Run by Training Team Brunei, the 26-day long-range reconnaissance patrol course could once again become a permanent annual fixture on the unit's calendar after an absence of some 15 years.

The pilot, which was nearing completion as this issue went to press, saw six-man sections from eight Infantry battalions practise survival, navigation, communication and river crossing drills as well as an abseil insertion from a Bell 212 helicopter into the rainforest canopy.

Maj Peter Houlton-Hart (RGR), officer commanding Training Team Brunei, said the jungle is an austere environment, where troops must be self-sufficient.

“Low-level reconnaissance skills are heavily depended upon because many surveillance assets cannot penetrate the canopy and fields of view are greatly restricted; as a result a human's sensory perception is vital,” the officer explained.

“Once deployed the soldier must rely on what he can carry on his back and, unlike in Afghanistan, he cannot expect to return to his base for a prolonged period.

“The environment also isolates junior commanders from the chain of command and encourages them to take a more active lead.”

Confirmation on the reintroduction of the course is expected in early 2015.

NEW HINDU NETWORK

■ AN Armed Forces Hindu network has been set up to represent and support all members of the religion in the military community.

The group will serve some 900 followers of the faith, and was launched at an event to mark the festival of Diwali at MoD Main Building in London.

For more details on the network email priyum.patel451@mod.uk

● Living on a prayer – pages 32-35

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



CASH FOR CARE

FORMER Army Air Corps soldier Stuart Naylor is raising money to fund alternative medical treatment for his wife who has terminal cancer. Leigh Naylor (shown) has been responding well to so-called hyperthermia therapy at a German clinic. The technique uses heat to kill cancer cells but combined with additional chemotherapy costs £20,000 per session.



ALWAYS REMEMBERED

TROOPS from 2 and 30 Signal Regiments held various special events, collections and auctions across the North East to raise money for charity. To date, they have raised more than £150,000 for good causes.

BOOK BREAKS BANK

SINGER Bryan Adams has given a cash injection to various charities from sales of his photography book *Wounded: The Legacy of War* (Soldier, January 2014) and tickets to his concert at the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

Money raised:

£136,656

For: Combat Stress, SSAFA and Blind Veterans UK

Get involved:

To help fund Mrs Naylor's treatment visit
www.leighnaylor.co.uk

Money raised:

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For: The Royal British Legion

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"ON THE TRACK IT'S ALL ABOUT GAINING AN EDGE ON OPPONENTS" - FORCES BOOST TO F1 WORLD, PAGES 38-39



SOLDIERS SNAP UP CIVVY CERTIFICATES

■ MORE than 6,220 personnel, including some 300 Reservists, have signed up to a new scheme to convert their military courses into civilian qualifications for free.

Launched in June, the Army skills offer provides nationally recognised accreditation for military training packages – from GCSE to master's degree level.

Among the certificates on offer are City and Guilds accreditations and leadership, management, instructing and mentoring qualifications, which personnel can start accruing after basic training.

"The take-up is good news," said Brig Gary Morris, Director of Educational Capability at Army HQ.

"This is about engaging troops in their own development throughout their careers. But it is also positive for potential employers, who will see that personnel are being progressed to a certifiable standard."

The scheme is funded until May 2016 and further information can be found in **2014DIN07-093**.

Elsewhere, officer cadets at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst will also see their military training recognised on civvy street.

From next month, graduate entrants who successfully complete the commissioning course will receive a postgraduate certificate in conflict and leadership studies from Cranfield University.

Non-graduate direct entry officers will be able to count their commissioning course towards a modular Open University degree in international studies.

IN MOVIES...



"Not too sentimental and not too cold"

★★★★



"There is a lack of wit and coherency"

★★

PAGES 70-71

Another tongue: Recent missions have shown the importance of speaking foreign languages



Language lessons stepped up

Efforts continue to improve soldiers' linguistic abilities

PLANS to increase foreign language skills among Army personnel are continuing apace.

Some 100 soldiers have taken part in pilot courses in level one French, Spanish and Arabic, with further basic training packages to start in the new year for up to 2,000 troops.

Those due to deploy on operations or belonging to brigades with particular defence engagement responsibilities will be given priority and higher-level instruction will be available to the 70 individuals who show the most potential.

Brig Gary Morris, the Service's Director of Educational Capability, said the move was part of the Army's efforts to turn languages into an important military skill.

"Iraq and Afghanistan have taught us that we can no longer rely on others speaking English and if we want to operate alongside allies like France, we need to improve," explained the officer.

"We are taking languages seriously now and looking to build a

long-term capability."

A programme of activities will also begin in the new year at Army education centres for officers looking to develop their linguistic abilities after it was announced that majors would need competence in another tongue to be selected for sub-unit command posts.

"There will be support and courses on offer for those affected," continued Brig Morris.

"Typically, personnel will be assessed as to where they are in terms of a language and on that basis they'll be offered a number of routes, one of which is study through self-supported language packs.

"They will also get tuition from instructors, where required, to teach them military vocabulary and to make sure they're ready for an exam."

Funding exists to train up to 450 officers per year who are affected by the policy.

Troops can access further information on the initiative by contacting a local education centre.

IN NUMBERS

100

Troops to have taken part in pilot courses in **French, Spanish** and **Arabic** as part of the Army's effort to increase language skills among its personnel.

WIN

...A selection of *Soldier's* finest prints

LAST month's spine lines clues were enough to make anyone snap. Inspired by our feature on the 2014 Army photographic competition results, (Cpl Dean) Docwra, (Sgt Gary) Kendall, (Cpl James) McAllister and (Cpl Luisa) Scott are all the names of category winners.

This month we are offering one lucky reader a rare treat of a prize – six framed prints of some of the year's finest images from *Soldier* photographers Steve Dock and Graeme Main.

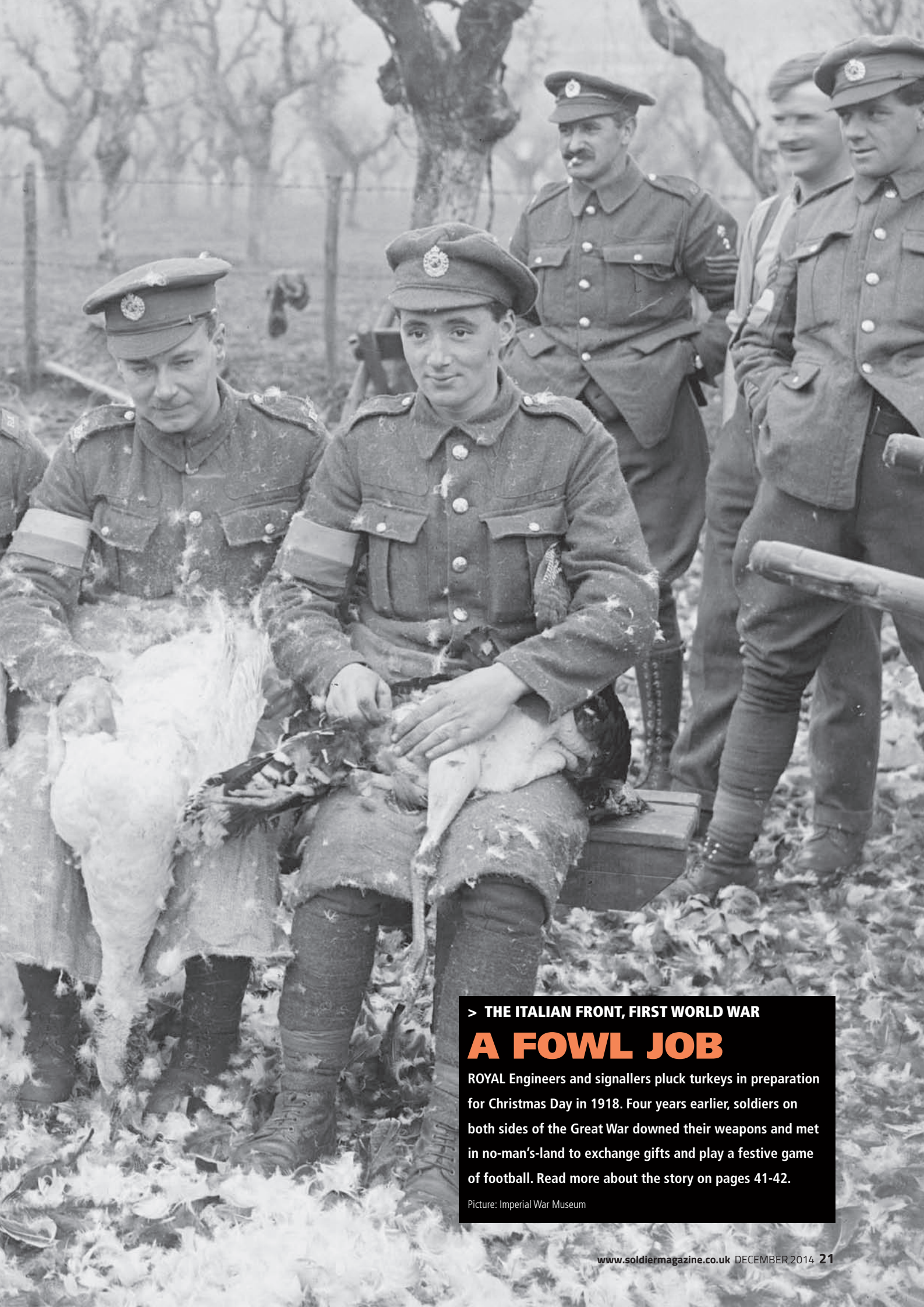
To be in with a chance of winning all six pictures (three of which are shown opposite), tell us what links the words on the spine of this issue.

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



THE BIG PICTURE





> THE ITALIAN FRONT, FIRST WORLD WAR

A FOWL JOB

ROYAL Engineers and signallers pluck turkeys in preparation for Christmas Day in 1918. Four years earlier, soldiers on both sides of the Great War downed their weapons and met in no-man's-land to exchange gifts and play a festive game of football. Read more about the story on pages 41-42.

Picture: Imperial War Museum

A smiling man with short brown hair and blue eyes is shown from the chest up. He has a visible injury on his right shoulder with some redness and bruising. He is wearing a black fabric sling over his right shoulder. He is looking directly at the camera with a warm smile.

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THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

Troops roll into Poland on armoured adventure



Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

AS the crisp morning mist lifted on the Zagan Training Area the unmistakable sight of the Army's Challenger 2 main battle tank suddenly appeared on the horizon as it rumbled towards its morning objective.

Such a scene may not be that familiar to those embroiled in the Herrick cycle of recent years but with the combat mission in Afghanistan now at an end it could well

become commonplace as the Service prepares for future operations.

The manoeuvre stemmed from Ex Black Eagle in Poland, where UK personnel have been testing themselves in what is becoming a familiar show of support to Nato and its allies in the east.

Working alongside their home-grown counterparts troops from The King's Royal Hussars and 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh gained valuable experience as they cut their teeth in the dense woodland and open plains of a vast tank park.

But the exercise was not just aimed at the

Army's front-line capabilities.

Before the first tracks could roll a fleet of Challengers and Warriors had to be transported from locations in the UK and Germany in what proved to be a considerable logistics mission for the battlegroup's strong support cast.

With the majority of platforms not seeing action since 2006 there was a certain degree of nervousness regarding how they would perform but, fortunately, there were no mechanical nightmares – meaning those on the ground could immerse themselves in the task at hand. »

“IN MANY
WAYS THIS
HAS BEEN
THE MOST
INCREDIBLE
TRAINING”



» Lt Col Justin Kingsford, commanding officer of the KRH, told *Soldier* the Polish drills came on the back of a gruelling spell in Batus but he was quick to highlight the importance of the trip.

“In many ways this has been the most incredible training,” he explained. “We have gone from the intense heat and mosquitoes of the prairie to brisk winter mornings.

“The positive aspect of coming out here is the fact it is different and novel; very few of us have been to Poland before.

“Training for Herrick tours was well established but this is like a blank canvas; everyone has had to learn from scratch.”

The package opened with a live firing phase that was followed by joint serials with personnel from 1st Polish Tank Battalion.

It then concluded with a five-day scenario involving a withdrawal to defensive positions and a counter-attack against enemy forces.

While the use of heavy armour marked a diversion from the drills needed for Helmand province, Lt Col Kingsford was eager to stress the training was not a return to what had gone before.

“There are some hard lessons from

the last ten years and we are now in a totally different position to where we were in the mid-1990s,” he said.

“The scenarios we faced in Batus stemmed from the future character of conflict, which will shape what we do for the next ten to 20 years.

“In the past it was a simple case of rolling our tanks across the German plains whereas here we face complex terrain and are operating in built-up areas. We can get our heads around that thanks to our efforts in southern Afghanistan.

“The Infantry companies have been fighting in wooded areas and we have not put camouflage nets up in forests in a long, long time.

“It has also been fascinating to work alongside the Poles and their kit – including the Leopard 2 tank.

“They are a good bunch and share our sense of humour.”

Two companies from The Royal Welsh, along with supporting elements, performed infantry duties on the exercise, where they operated in the Warrior armoured fighting vehicle.

For Fus Ieuan Parsons the training proved to be particularly valuable given his previous light-role background.

“I spent nine weeks in

Clockwise from top: Fus Troy Roberts (1 R Welsh) mans a sentry position; soldiers from The Royal Welsh prepare for action; a Challenger 2 crewed by the King’s Royal Hussars rolls through the Zagan Training Area; Cfn John Jamerson (REME) gets to grips with a maintenance task on a Bulldog

Canada on an armoured exercise in 2013,” he told *Soldier*. “We had 36 days in the field with Warriors and worked on them day-in day-out. I learnt a lot.

“Coming out here has helped me brush up on those skills. I play a lot of sport and I don’t get to spend too much time with my company so this is a good refresher.”

Operating in the Zagan woodland was a new experience for the soldiers and with tasks ranging from night reces to dismounted attacks there was no shortage of action.

“This area is a little restricted in terms of space but we are doing as much quality training as we can,” said Lt Paul Rummig, of A Company.

“We were in Batus last year, and the year before that, and even then we were moving away from the Herrick mentality.

“This hammers that home and we are now working with partnering nations in a more conventional way.

“As an army we will no longer be going to conflicts or different countries on our own; this is what will be happening.”

With the armoured and infantry sides covered, the serials also tested the formation’s attached assets.



Lt Col Justin Kingsford (KRH)



The Royal Engineers were called upon to install a bridge ahead of a crucial river crossing, while recovery mechanics from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers were on hand to deal with any breakdowns.

"The exercise would not have run if we had not put the bridge in," explained LCpl "Wes" Craven (RE).

"This is the first time we have done it for real as we normally practise on soft ground. There wasn't much space to work with so a lot of thought went into what we were doing."

WO2 Justin Simons (REME) was pleased to report that the fleet of armoured vehicles had performed well but there was still plenty of work for his 20-man team.

"There hasn't really been anything out of the ordinary although we've had our fair share of tasks," he added. "It has been a few years since we have done an exercise with Challenger 2 but it has been fairly easy to get back into the swing of things."

With the Polish training box ticked the Army has again proved itself as a worthy member of the Nato family.

Similar exercises are sure to follow and wherever UK personnel deploy next, and with whatever partnering nation they work with, they will undoubtedly rise to the challenge. »



ON THE MOVE

BEFORE Ex Black Eagle could take flight the Army had to transport a plethora of vehicles and kit to Poland.

Personnel from the Combat Service Support Group were called upon to perform the task and with capabilities ranging from logistics and policing to signals and equipment support they ensured proceedings ran smoothly.

"We had to pick kit up in the UK and Germany and move it over a long line of communication," explained commanding officer Lt Col Anna-Lee Johnston (REME).

"It was a test of our convoy drills for large-scale movements. How to load armour on to rail tracks has almost become a lost skill.

"Very few of my guys have done anything like this before so it has been valuable training."



IN NUMBERS

20 Challenger 2 tanks
and
42 Warrior armoured vehicles



transported to Zagan by rail moves from the UK and Germany

690 kilometres from Emden (the German port where vehicles from the UK were shipped) to Zagan

300 wheeled vehicles moved to Poland via road convoys

780 kilometres from Monchengladbach (where the Army's vehicles were loaded) to Zagan



Soldier asked personnel deployed on Ex Black Eagle about the benefits of training in Poland and working alongside troops from a partnering nation

Coming to a new country is a great experience. A lot of people were maybe worried that there would be nothing for us after Herrick so it is good to see that we are getting involved in different things to test our skills and abilities. We are showing what we are capable of as part of Nato and it is good to see how other nations work.

LCpl Kevin Clark (RAMC)



I am a heating engineer but have been helping out with the bridging team. It is a big task where everything comes together on a large scale. It's always good to get away to new places, it breaks the monotony of life on camp and the guys have really enjoyed it.

LCpl Michael Twist (RE)



The training out here is different. Polish forces have been simulating the enemy and that adds a greater degree of realism. We've seen their Leopard 2 tank and what it's capable of; that offers far more insight compared to us using Warriors as opposition vehicles.

Sgt Neal Collins (R Welsh)



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

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

www.forces.tv

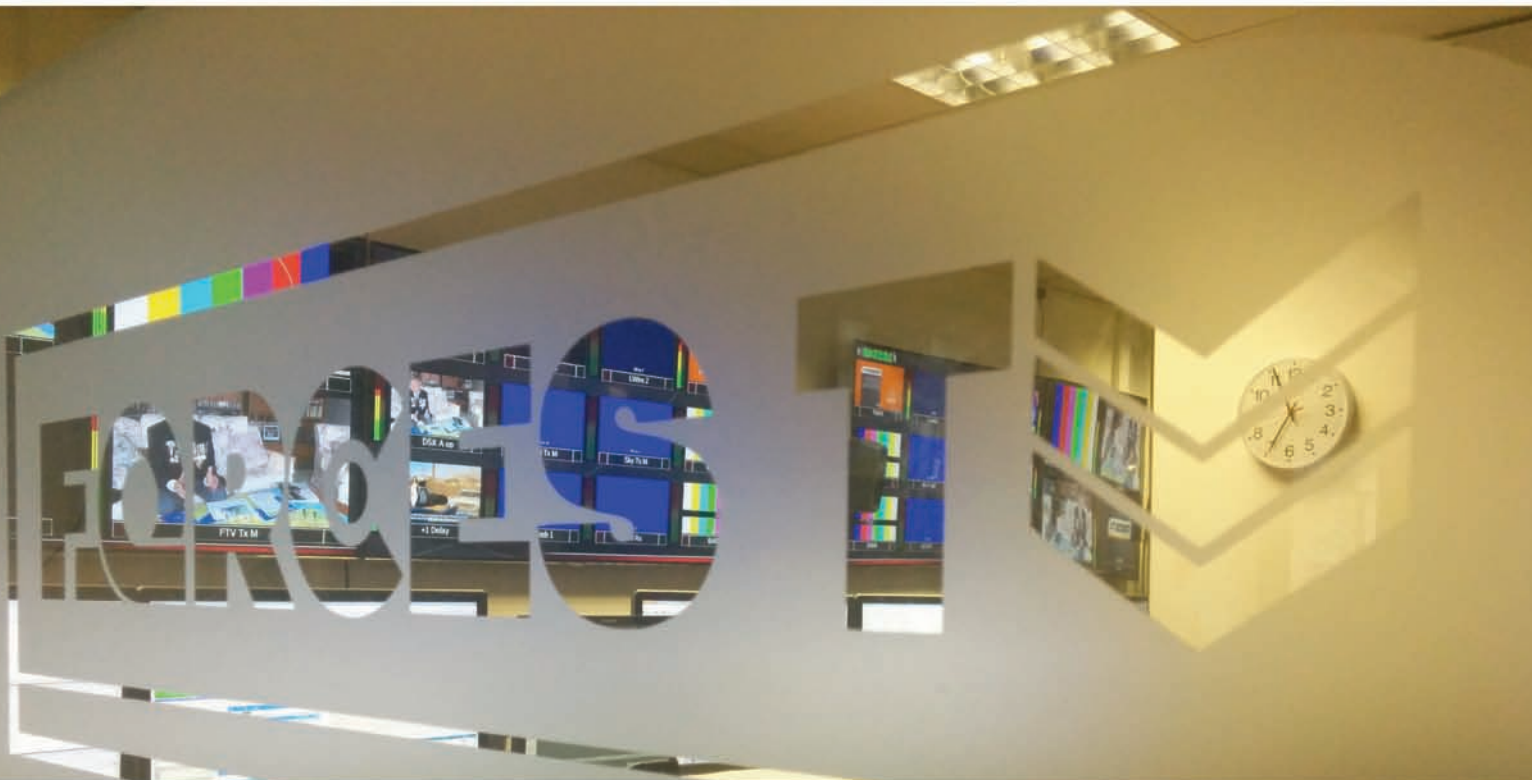


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African allies



Report: Becky Clark
Pictures: Graeme Main

WITH an increasing emphasis on global defence engagement under Army 2020, any British troops concerned about a lack of challenging overseas deployments in the post-Afghanistan era need not worry.

A key part of the reform programme sees elements of the Service aligned with specific regions of the world, a move aimed at developing specialist knowledge of given areas within certain formations.

For members of The Light Dragoons, along with the rest of 4th Mechanized Brigade, the plan means increasing their understanding of the geography, culture and languages of North Africa.

A recent training package in Marrakech – Exercise Jebel Sahara – was the first opportunity for some 170 soldiers from the regiment to work with counterparts from their allocated country.

Together with personnel from their paired Reserve unit, the Queen's Own Yeomanry, as well as The Royal Gibraltar Regiment and 154 Scottish Transport Regiment, the troops spent three weeks teaching and operating alongside Moroccan soldiers from the country's 22nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade d'Infanterie Parachutiste.

Explaining what the serial was designed to achieve, commanding officer Lt Col James Senior (LD), said: "Defence engagement gives us the opportunity to learn from each other and build alliances of the future.

"We are aligned with Morocco and Mauritania, so through this exercise we are taking those words and translating them into deeds.

"We've done some great training for ourselves and the

Moroccans have done the same, but most significantly, in partnership, we've learnt an awful lot from each other and made some extremely good military friendships.

"And certainly our exposure to their army has provided a superb insight into a fascinating part of the world."

Following a programme of basic weapons handling drills, collective training from section to squadron level and live firing, the troops deployed together on a final test exercise to combat a fictional opposition force that was threatening the city of Marrakech.

As a light cavalry unit, The Light Dragoons carried out a close target recce before providing fire support from Jackal and Coyote armoured vehicles for the Moroccan infantrymen moving in on foot to assault enemy positions.

"I worked with the Moroccans during the dry and live drills and they've been good," said Tpr John Blacklock.

"We did a bit of compound clearance and section attacks and they picked up the skills quite easily, which was positive to see."

Helping with the inevitable language barrier throughout the exercise were two Army linguists, including Lt Rachel Farnham (AGC (ETS)).

The 25-year-old was drafted in for her proficiency in Arabic and French and the cultural knowledge she gained during nine months spent in Morocco as a university student.

"My role out here has been wide-ranging, anything that helps the two sides to work better with each other," the officer commented.

"One of the things I've been able to do is give some of our soldiers a flavour of colloquial Moroccan Arabic – which is very different from classical Arabic – little things like asking for directions and ordering tea and coffee.

The Light Dragoons put Army's international partnering plan into practice in Morocco



“A couple of the guys who were teaching the local troops were incorporating a few words into their lessons and the Moroccans thought it was absolutely brilliant that they had made the effort.

“It makes the difference by elevating that relationship from just being sat in a classroom together to being invited to have tea, which is when you know you’ve been accepted in Moroccan culture.

“Defence engagement is completely crucial in my view in that it gives us the opportunity to build relationships with other armies and learn from them.

“One of the main things I’ve taken from this army is that they have foreign languages and culture embedded in them early on, which is a lesson we could take on-board.”

With the exercise scheduled to take place every two years in the future, The Light Dragoons will have further chances to increase their ties to their Moroccan counterparts and the rest of the country.

The concept of specialising in a particular area of the globe is one that C Squadron’s Sgt Tony Duncan said had been well received within the regiment.

“We were told that our region of interest was going to be North Africa and the lads have really taken heed,” said the 32-year-old.

“Every couple of weeks we’ll get study periods and intelligence briefs from higher up to let us know what’s going on in this part of the continent and further towards the Middle East and how that all interlinks.

“The guys have increased their knowledge, and what better way to do that than to come out here and train and get a real understanding of how the Moroccans and North Africa work.” ■



Steady hand:
Cpl Lee Turner (RG) takes a Moroccan soldier through weapons handling drills

IN NUMBERS
350

number of British and Moroccan troops who took part in Ex Jebel Sahara

Release the hounds



Jackal and Coyote let off the leash for the first time since Operation Herrick

AS well as the opportunity to build links with foreign allies, Exercise Jebel Sahara represented the first major deployment of Jackal and Coyote armoured vehicles since they were brought back from Afghanistan.

Around 30 of the platforms were shipped from The Light Dragoons' base in Swanton Morley to Marrakech via Marchwood and Casablanca.

The regiment switched to their new mode of transport from the CVR(T) in 2012 when they converted to a light cavalry role.

While some personnel from B Squadron had used Jackal and Coyote during Herrick 16, others were using the opportunity to develop their skill set, including Sgt Tony Duncan (LD).

"My knowledge within the field has increased massively," he explained to *Soldier*.

"It's come as a big change to move from CVR(T) to wheels but from what I've seen they're a good reliable asset.

"The terrain out here has been pretty relentless and a shed-load of experience has been gained by all members of the squadron, certainly in terms of upkeep and maintenance.

"We've suffered a few flats due to the sharpness of the ground but it's all good learning because the lads are fully trained and it's no problem to fix it.

"The guys could either go and train in the UK to learn all about the vehicles or come to a place like this, somewhere new and challenging.

"Less the few issues we've had they're all over it and have taken it in their stride."

WO2 Chris Homewood agreed that having access to a different training area paid dividends for the cavalrymen.

"This is one of the first opportunities we've had to utilise an environment like this specifically for mounted ranges," said the squadron sergeant major.

"Quite often we're in places like Warcop and Castlemartin, where the ranges are very scripted, but out here the lads have had freedom of movement so wherever they thought a decent fire position was they were able to take that up.

"Everyone's getting to grips with what their role and capability is.

"The terrain and programme has allowed us to get back to the basics of post-Afghanistan, recce-style tasks, which is what we are renowned for." ■

“
My
knowledge
within the field
has increased
massively
”

Sgt Tony Duncan (LD)



Zeroing in: Troops from The Light Dragoons and the Queen's Own Yeomanry set up an observation post to monitor enemy movements

ON THE MOVE

● 2014 has proved a busy year for The Light Dragoons with previous training packages in Kenya, Gibraltar, Ukraine and Slovenia and a deployment to the Balkans as part of Operation Elgin – the British contribution to the European Union mission in Bosnia.

2015 promises a similarly packed schedule, including the formation's move from Swanton Morley to Catterick, celebrations to mark its 300th anniversary and a stint on high-readiness for C Squadron, which will be supporting the Army's Vanguard.



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LIVING ON A PRAYER



In an increasingly secular society, what's the future for religion on the front line?

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe
Pictures: Steve Dock

"HE repeated the Lord's Prayer over and over," recalls ex-captain David Wiseman of the moment in 2009 when a medic desperately fought to save his life in Nad-e Ali.

A Taliban bullet had struck the Serviceman's chest and despite his comrade's best efforts, he was bleeding to death.

"There was not much else he could do for me medically, but I drew from his great strength and I moved my lips in time with his own, though I did not have the breath to keep up with the words," the former Yorkshire Regiment soldier continues in his book, *Helmand to the Himalayas*.

"I reached under him and weakly held the gold crucifix that my Auntie Jane had given to me before I deployed to Iraq. I held the icon in my bloody fingers."

Such a desperate act of faith may be familiar to those who fought at the sharp end of Operation Herrick – a conflict where 453

British troops lost their lives and countless others came perilously close to the same fate.

But ask these personnel if they are committed Christians – whether they regularly worship at church, read the bible and pray – and the answer is likely to be no.

As the military comes together to celebrate Christmas this month, a debate has been simmering among senior troops about the role of

IN NUMBERS:

Royal Army Chaplains' Department

There are currently

145

Regular and

55

Reservist padres serving the British Army.

Of those,

8

are female.

religion in the Army.

The UK may still be described as a Christian country, but in an increasingly secular society some think the Service should reconsider its use of priests on the front line.

Lt Col Laurence Quinn (RE), who until recently was working at the helm of the drawdown effort in Afghanistan, is one such individual.

Controversially, he wants to see padres replaced with non-religious "moral counsellors" who are not linked to any single belief.

"For some time I have felt ill at ease with the way religion is tied up in what we do in the Army," the officer explained to *Soldier*.

"Troops should be able to practise their religion, and I think we should facilitate that, but it shouldn't be bound up in our business.

"I regularly attended vigils in Afghanistan and they were so sad. But when we pray and say 'the Lord is with you', for me that represents a made-up narrative.

"It also seems insensitive to other belief systems.

"When I was a commanding officer I came to appreciate chaplains – I think they do an invaluable job – but I think we would be better served by them being secular.

"We should learn from the Brownies [who took the mention of God out of their promise]."

However, for many Servicemen and women the old adage that "there are no atheists in a foxhole" is one that

has proved to be true.

Over the centuries, personnel faced with highly traumatic situations, even death, have frequently turned to prayer – including those who would not ordinarily declare themselves as the religious type.

Even Lt Col Quinn, who has gone as far as writing a secular alternative to the Army's Christian remembrance ceremony, admits he has tried talking to God when under pressure.

"I served on Operation Telic in 2006 and it was a tough tour," the Serviceman explained.

"I found myself praying. It was bizarre, and I wondered why I had done that."

According to Chaplain General Rev Dr David Coulter (pictured below) – who became the Armed Forces' most senior padre this year – the clergy are as important to modern-day combat operations as they have ever been.

And whether the Christian priests of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department that accompany soldiers into battle are Church of England, Anglican, Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, Methodist or Baptist, their role extends far beyond a single set of beliefs. They help everyone.

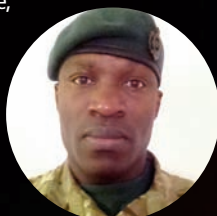
"Nationally, those declaring a religion may be dropping but I am not hearing evidence from chaplains that soldiers' faith needs are any less – and I am certainly not hearing that COs no longer want us," the officer told *Soldier*. »



SHOULD THE SERVICE END ITS AFFILIATION WITH CHRISTIANITY?

NO

THE core values which are the backbone of the Armed Forces are a true reflection of Christianity – selfless commitment, loyalty, discipline, respect for others, integrity and courage. The moral courage to stand your ground to do what is right, even though your best mates are convincing you to do otherwise, are things the bible encourages us to do. It also says 'greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends'. Every soldier knows this without being aware that it is the kind of sacrifice Jesus talked about two thousand years ago.



Cpl Afriyie Frank, RE

YES

OUR affiliation is counter to our values and it's about time we stopped turning a blind eye to the hypocrisy. For example, a chaplain must be able to look a gay soldier in the eye and tell him that it doesn't matter what the holy texts say, it's perfectly acceptable for him to love another man. If I believed in God and knew that my religious rituals excluded some comrades, I would stop, as I would want them to feel included in our group – especially in acts of remembrance. If politics should be left at the camp gate, so should religion in my opinion.



Lt Col Laurence Quinn, RE

» "However, I think the debate is a healthy one to have."

According to Rev Coulter, having religious symbols and ceremonies on the front line – and more importantly, someone to confide in about life and death – is crucial to troops' wellbeing, not least as a way of finding hope in tough situations.

"The foundations of the British Army are Christian and it's part of our heritage and culture, but the chaplain is a neutral friend, someone there to provide pastoral care, spiritual support and moral guidance – whatever the faith of the soldier," the chaplain general added.

"Padres are people of prayer; they are there to help troops who may be trying to reach for something spiritual but perhaps don't really know how to articulate it.

"In battle, soldiers may have seen or done awful things and have to wrestle their conscience.

"Padres represent the Christian values of trust, faith and forgiveness.

"Soldiers come to us seeking support and we can offer a moment of reflection to look for something beyond themselves."

During Operation Herrick 15, Army chaplain Rev Peter King conducted a study into the importance of religious belief on combat operations.

Included in the many anecdotes he collected from the front line was the story of a soldier who saw a shadow of the Virgin Mary while on sentry duty and another who said he felt the presence of a protective figure while being evacuated with an injury.

Almost half of those questioned said they carried or wore symbols of faith while deployed.

And a similar proportion also acknowledged praying while on tour.

Rev King's 2013 study concluded that, although religion may be playing less of a role in wider UK society, cynicism towards priests is rare in the Forces.

And stories from the front line would seem to back that up.

"On my tour to Afghanistan I was in the church at Camp Bastion when an infantry soldier came rushing into the tent," Cpl Sarah Komen (AGC (SPS)) told *Soldier*.

"He looked a little disorientated, maybe confused, and asked to see the padre.

"This search for the chaplain during crisis is a common reaction.

"It seems as though, when all else has failed, there's a hope that the padre could help in a search for divine intervention.

"For some it's the first line of defence and for others the last, but whatever the case, I think Christianity has got its role correct in the Army."

At times of extreme stress, anxiety or grief soldiers often find they want to reach out to something more.

And whether that "more" is a quiet chat, a brew or a prayer – chaplains are on hand to provide it all.

Whatever soldiers' beliefs and wherever they are this Christmas, a trusted padre will be there serving alongside them. ■

❖ Final word – page 94





Faithful friends of the First World War, Clockwise from top left: A British chaplain writes home for an injured soldier during the conflict; A padre takes the funeral of a nursing sister killed during a hospital bombing at Etaples, France in June 1918; Troops and their padre gather at the graveside of an Australian killed in Becourt Wood in 1916; A chaplain writes a postcard for a wounded man in Noyelles, France in October 1918; King George V presents the Victoria Cross to Rev Theodore Hardy in August 1918 for the Serviceman's repeated disregard for his own safety while tending to the wounded on the front line.

Pictures: Imperial War Museum



BIBLE BASHED

The weird story of how the Christian text saved a First World War soldier from death...



THERE are several bizarre stories of troops being saved by their bibles – literally – during the ferocious fighting of the Great War.

One of those was Australian serviceman LCpl Elvas Jenkins who, under intense bombardment at Gallipoli, was struck directly over his heart by a lead ball from an exploding shell.

However, the projectile hit the New Testament that he carried in his shirt pocket, piercing all the way through to Acts.

His life spared, the committed Christian went on to fight in the Battle of the Somme, but was shot by a German sniper and died soon afterwards.

TRUSTED FRIENDS



● TO find out more about the history of padres in the British Army visit the Museum of Army Chaplaincy at Amport House in Hampshire. Admission is free and to book a visit contact curator David Blake on 01264 773144 (ext 4248) or email dblake.afcc@defenceacademy.mod.uk

A new firm has taken over the running of Service families' accommodation. So what changes can personnel expect to see in their houses? *Soldier* finds out more...

A FAR more efficient support service is being promised to Army families under a new contract that comes into force across the UK this month.

Firm CarillionAmey has taken over the management of Service families' accommodation (SFA) from Modern Housing Solutions and, although troops could find the same workmen attending their home, they will be operating under fresh terms.

Here, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation – the body that oversees the defence estate – outlines what the change will mean for personnel.

› So what is the plan?

To provide a more comprehensive housing service that includes managing allocations and the provision of furniture as well as maintenance and improvement work.

› What will be different?

Personnel will be able to access services through a single telephone number and website (see end of article). They will also be able to report maintenance issues online.

Another key difference is that residents will sign off repair work and, therefore, they will be able to highlight when this does not meet the required standard.

There will also be clearer definition of common standards for move-in and move-out.

› How will it improve things for Army families?

Rather than deal with numerous points of contact, customers should receive a more joined-up service – from application through to allocation, move-in (including furniture), maintenance, improvement and move-out.

Having a single point of contact will make reporting any issues more straightforward.

And under this new contract, SFA will be prepared for the next tenants at the point of move-out, which should make more homes ready for allocation at any given time.

› Will anything more be expected of Service personnel living in SFA?

They will have a greater responsibility for agreeing that work has been undertaken to the required level.

Customers will be asked to sign for services in order to confirm this. For example, to say that the property has met the move-in standard at the move-in appointment, or that a repair has been completed properly.

› Are the changes in place now?

Yes. They have been introduced in two stages over the last few weeks.

› How do we contact the new contractor?

The national helpdesk – the new single point of contact – is **0800 707 6000**. Maintenance assistance is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and occupancy services (allocation, move-in and move-out issues) are on hand from Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1800.

Customers who need to call from overseas or mobiles can use the alternative telephone number **0151 728 1630**.

The website www.carillionamey.co.uk is full of extra information.

There are also 27 customer service centres located around the country providing face-to-face assistance.

Personnel can also visit www.facebook.com/carillionamey





“

Under the new contract we are aiming for a fix-it-first-time approach

”



Air Cdre Ian Tolfts, Head of Service Delivery Accommodation at the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, explains more about the changes...

“ THE fact the housing contract was up for renewal gave us an opportunity to look at the whole way that we deal with housing and to address recurring complaints from customers living in SFA.

Niggles have tended to focus on appointment times, where people have had to wait around or when it has taken numerous visits to resolve a problem.

However, under the new contract arrangement we are aiming for a fix-it-first-time approach.

The need to provide a better service for boiler problems has also been recognised. We've got rid of the so-called 'heating season', which previously meant broken boilers were only treated as an urgent priority between November 1 and mid-April.

We also recognise that some boilers

are nearing the end of their useful life so we are looking at how to inject more funds into this area to replace them with modern, efficient ones.

Furthermore, engineers who visit houses will also be able to look at other problems too while they are there, which will save time.

As far as appointments are concerned, we've narrowed the windows down to four hours so people won't have to wait around all day and we've also introduced a text messaging service to remind customers about visits.

On the customers' side there is a bit more responsibility because we are asking them to be really diligent in signing off work in their home.

When troops and their families move into accommodation we only want them to sign it off if the building meets the expected standard.

This is a very different style of service but it is much more customer focused and in keeping with the 21st century.”

HOUSE CALLS

● SURVEYS to establish the new charges for SFA are under way at family homes across the defence estate.

Between now and the end of next year, a wide range of properties will be assessed by the MoD to establish what pricing bracket they will fit into under the new combined accommodation assessment system, which comes into force in April 2016.

Some troops will receive letters asking for housing specialists to have access to the property. Other assessments will be made on empty homes in order to limit disruption.

An estimated payment will then be sent to occupants around July 2015 to help them plan, with the final charge being confirmed in 2016.

The new levies are designed to be simpler and to reflect things such as condition and broadband speed.

For more information about how it will work read 2014DIB/55.

FAMILY ACCOMMODATION

45,000

SFA properties in the UK

22,000

boilers replaced in England and Wales in the last eight years – more than 50 per cent of total SFA stock



4

length, in hours, of the new appointment windows for maintenance and repairs

IN NUMBERS



OPTIMUM

ARMY EXPERTISE KEEPS FORMULA ONE TEAM ON TRACK

Report: Joe Clapson



WORKING at high speed while under intense pressure is something that British soldiers are well accustomed to.

And in the world of professional motorsport the requirement is exactly the same.

So it would seem that Rfn Matthew Scroggs has found the perfect mix of careers – his civilian job is with Formula One racing team Williams while in his spare time he serves with 7th Battalion, The Rifles.

After studying human biology and working as a chiropractor, the 29-year-old craved more excitement so decided to look into life as a Reservist.

"I was hunting for a challenge but initially I didn't think I could combine the Army with my career in performance healthcare," the Serviceman told *Soldier*.

"I did some research and discovered an open day at my local Infantry regiment – fortunately for me this was The Rifles.

"After speaking to an NCO, now a good friend, I learnt that I could do both, and that was it."

In 2013, four years after first donning Army uniform, Rfn Scroggs' was headhunted

by Williams and recruited as a human performance specialist – a job that sees him provide physical and mental training to the team's pit crew.

It is a role that takes the Serviceman to race events across the world, where he deploys secret techniques to keep his colleagues' body clocks in check and ensure they are working at their best in tough temperatures and humidity.

The team's efforts changing a 14-kilogram wheel in scorching climates, for example, could be the difference between a win or loss and for that reason Rfn Scroggs has a crucial role.

And in many respects the tasks expected of him in the military have helped to get him into shape for the job.

"There are huge similarities between Formula One and the Army," the Reservist explained at Williams' headquarters in Oxfordshire.

"On the track it is all about gaining an edge on opponents, right down to the finest degree.

"There's a lot of pressure involved and the precision that's required is immense.

"We're working in measurements of tenths of a second and that brings huge responsibility, but I absolutely thrive on it.

"The Army has given me a chance to hone my leadership skills, operate under this sort of strain and make tough decisions."



PERFORMANCE

He continued: "Risk management is essentially what the military does and that can also relate to professional sports and multi-million pound industries, of which Formula One happens to be both."

"The job's great craic and the whole team are brilliant lads."

"There are no egos at all and the guys aren't averse to going down the pub either – just like in the Army."

The positive influence of a military mindset on this exciting and unusual career is clear.

But, conversely, the benefits of having more specialist knowledge brought into the Service from a growing number of Reservists are not lost on the soldier's boss, Brig Andrew Hughes.

"People like Rfn Scroggs can bring a lot to the Army," said the commander of 11 Infantry Brigade, part of the Adaptable Force.

"The military can provide all sorts of training that will benefit employers, from driving to communication skills."

"But it's also about the people. Reservists want to give their time and expertise to the Army so they are very special individuals – net givers rather than net takers."

Now working towards a commission as an officer, it seems that Rfn Scroggs' military career could soon be in the fast lane too. ■

Pole position: Reservist Rfn Matthew Scroggs (Rifles) is a crucial member of the Williams Formula One team and says his military skills help him to stay ahead



Picture: Steve Dock

“

THERE ARE HUGE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN F1 AND THE ARMY

”

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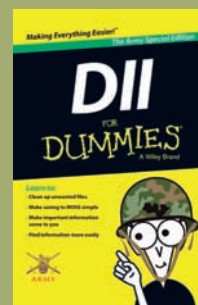
Army Information Forum

4 February 2015

The Army Chief Information Officer (Assistant Chief of the General Staff) will lead an Army Information Forum at Army Headquarters in Andover on 4 February 2015. The forum is targeted at Senior Information Officers (SIOs) who should attend and Information Managers (IMgrs) who must attend; if they are to effectively execute their duties in this critical enabling area. In order to maximise participation, SIOs and IMgrs who are unable to attend in person can do so via VTC.

The aim is for personnel in key information positions to be informed on all business environment enhancements and be clear on their roles in better exploiting Army information. The day will also provide updates on a suite of DII enhancements that are soon to be fielded; a new Office Communication System (OCS) with a 'Skype' style facility for enhanced users, Windows 7, Office 2010, new laptops (more powerful and capable than DII desk tops!) to replace the current ageing fleet and a plan to Choose Your Own Device (CYOD) for enhanced mobile working.

To sign up, please contact Sgt Asante on 01264 886798, 94393 6798 or e-mail him at ArmyIS-Info-IM-SA@mod.uk



ARMY

Army Information Forum

4 February 2015

THE CALM WITHIN THE STORM

Remembering the Christmas truce of 1914

Report: Richard Long

In among the bloodshed and catastrophic loss of life that characterised the First World War there is one story that stands alone as a beacon of humanity in what were truly horrific times.

On Christmas Day, 1914, soldiers in both trenches downed their weapons and met in no-man's-land for a truce that saw them exchange gifts, pose for photographs and even play impromptu games of football.

While the ceasefire offered some much-needed respite for those battling on the front lines it was sternly frowned upon by high command on both sides, who feared such behaviour would undermine the men's fighting spirit.

Romanticism may have exaggerated the exact events of the day but there is no doubting the fact that the truce – in whatever guise it assumed – would have provided a welcome injection of morale as the harsh winter began to take hold.

Alan Wakefield, head of photographs at the Imperial War Museum and author of *Christmas in the Trenches*, argued this point when he spoke to *Soldier* about the front-line festivities of 1914.

"The weather before Christmas was pretty appalling and there was a lot of rain," he explained.

"Trenches were poorly constructed at that stage of the war and were basic at best. In Belgium the countryside was flooded and a lot of those structures were collapsing.

"The truth is the Army was not really geared up for a long war and they lacked the specialist equipment that was needed

for life in the trenches."

As the winter weather continued to deteriorate the intensity of fighting declined as the men struggled to keep warm and dry.

And with the days ticking down towards December 25 it was the Germans who seem to have made the first move towards the now-famous ceasefire.

"They started putting up lights along their trenches," the historian said. "At first the British thought it was a trick so they started shooting at them but the lights kept coming.

"At midnight the Germans began to sing carols and patriotic songs and our soldiers joined in.

"On Christmas Day the troops started coming out of the trenches and gifts were exchanged. The Germans wanted to get hold of some bully beef and they offered the cigars they had received from the Kaiser in return.

"In some accounts there is talk of the British meeting Germans who had lived and worked in London

before the start of the war."

One of the common beliefs surrounding the truce is that the two sides also downed their weapons to play a game of football in no-man's-land.

While this may well have happened historical evidence suggests there were no formal matches staged between the rival personnel.

"The whole football story is very debatable," Mr Wakefield explained. "There are no irrefutable accounts of organised games taking place. »»



Shell-hole scoff: Troops tuck into their Christmas dinner in 1916, exactly two years after the truce

Picture: Imperial War Museum

» "There were a couple of letters published in newspapers from guys who were home on leave who said they had played. There are also stories of soldiers kicking a can around and others getting out of the trenches to play but it is all pretty vague.

"They probably would have had a mass kick-about but the idea of organised matches is stretching it a little bit."

While those serving on the front line enjoyed the festivities there appeared to be little Christmas cheer among the high command, where a decidedly different view was taken.

Believing such fraternisation would damage morale they did their best to ensure similar truces were not repeated in later years and two officers from the Scots Guards were court martialled for their part in such an event in 1915 before eventually being acquitted.

Mr Wakefield said: "They thought that if soldiers saw the enemy and realised they were just like them it would be difficult to get the war started again.

"However, British personnel viewed it as a timeout; they knew they had a job to do and the fears the senior officers had were just not true.

"Commanders of battalions knew they would get in trouble so they talked it up as an intelligence gathering exercise.

"They argued that they could have a look at the regiments they were up against and see where the machine gun posts and snipers were. They were obviously trying to cover themselves."

With around 40,000 British troops killed by Christmas it is easy to see why those on the front line would be eager to escape such violence, even if only momentarily.

Unfortunately, these acts of humanity were not repeated on such a scale during the remainder of the war, leaving December 1914 as a symbolic moment of peace in one of the most brutal conflicts in modern history. ■

● Watch a recreation of the truce in this year's festive advert from Sainsbury's at www.youtube.com/sainsburys



Time out: German soldiers of the 134th Saxon Regiment with men of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in no-man's-land on the Western Front

Picture: Imperial War Museum

● **THIS month the Army's footballers will lock horns with the German Bundeswehr in a match to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Christmas truce.**

Soldier spoke to some of the Service players involved to get their thoughts on the fixture and how important the ceasefire – as well as a simple game of football – would have been to their forebears.



Capt Gavin Smyth (RA)



The centenary of the war is massive for the Army. It is not necessarily a celebration but it's important we reflect on what happened.

For one day they agreed to celebrate the fact they were all humans, they were just doing a job under someone else's command.

The truce would have been great for morale. The soldiers could relax, have a drink, write a few letters and enjoy a day of happiness in what were terrible conditions.

We are really looking forward to the game.



I'm in the Royal Signals and have been away to Afghanistan but we have some Infantry guys on the team who have done three or four Herrick tours, as well as Op Telic.

It is brilliant that their regiments let them get away to play football, it is great for morale and I imagine it would have been exactly the same 100 years ago.

This match takes our game to a different level and everyone will want to win.



LCpl Sam Agar (R Signals)



Sig Ryan Paddock (R Signals)



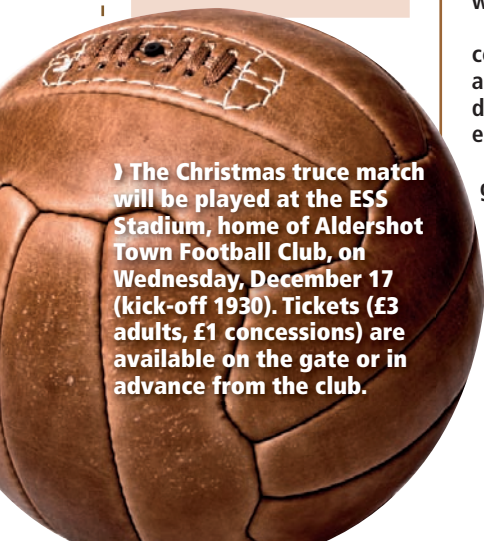
As soldiers this game is massive for us given the links to the First World War. It is great to be part of it and represent the Army against our old rivals.

I think it is amazing how those troops went from trying to kill one another to downing their weapons and playing a game of football together.

That would not happen in this day and age. Back then there was a lot of respect between the two armies but I don't think that would exist now.



» The Christmas truce match will be played at the ESS Stadium, home of Aldershot Town Football Club, on Wednesday, December 17 (kick-off 1930). Tickets (£3 adults, £1 concessions) are available on the gate or in advance from the club.



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'For Valour' – about the book

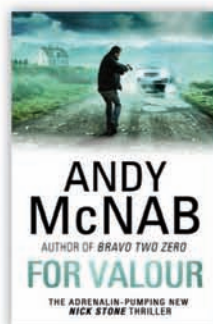
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Season's greetings *from the stars*

Big names line up to send festive wishes to Service personnel



“ We wanted to send the entire British Army our love and admiration this Christmas, particularly those stationed abroad. The sacrifices you make on behalf of all of us are unbelievable. We support and stand by you, and hope you stay safe.

Una, Vanessa, Rochelle, Frankie and Mollie (The Saturdays) ”

“ I have the utmost respect and admiration for everything you do for us. Merry Christmas and stay safe.

Alan Shearer, ex-footballer and BBC Sport pundit ”

“ Our troops do an incredible job for us right through the year so I want to say a massive happy Christmas to all those who are on duty and away from home this December. My thoughts are with you; stay safe and come home soon. God bless you all.

Lewis Hamilton, Formula One driver ”



“I don't think we'll ever quite realise how incredible a job you are doing. Take care and have a wonderful Christmas.”

Freddie Flintoff, cricketer



“Thanking all of our troops for all that they do. Thinking of you all this Christmas. You are all so brave and so incredible. Lots of love.”

Gemma Atkinson, actress

“To all the men and women of our Armed Forces, I wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and a very, very happy New Year. Many thanks for your endeavour, bravery and self-sacrifice. God bless you all.”



“I think it is very important that everyone in our country remembers those at Christmas who don't always get to spend time with their families. I send my utmost respect to everyone in the British Army and thank them for continuing to do a great job. Merry Christmas.”

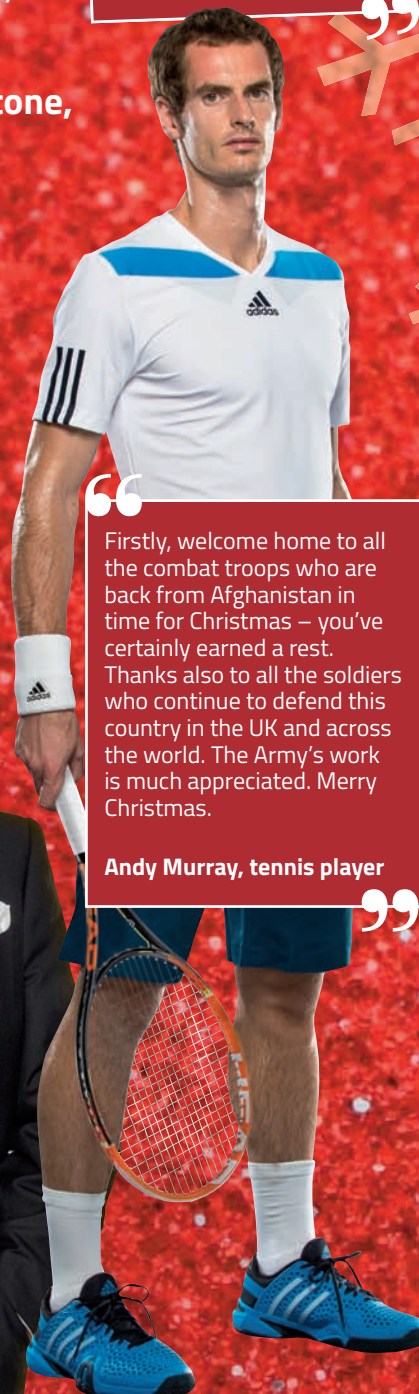
Gary Cahill, Chelsea FC player

“Hey guys,
Here we are again;
Another year on,
Another year gone;
Big 12 months for you lot,
But then when's it not;
A huge shout out to all
vets as well,
Those still here to tell;
Of wars now past,
The bloodiest to the last;
Merry Christmas and thanks,
To you and all your tanks.”

Chris Evans, Radio Two presenter



Ray Winstone, actor



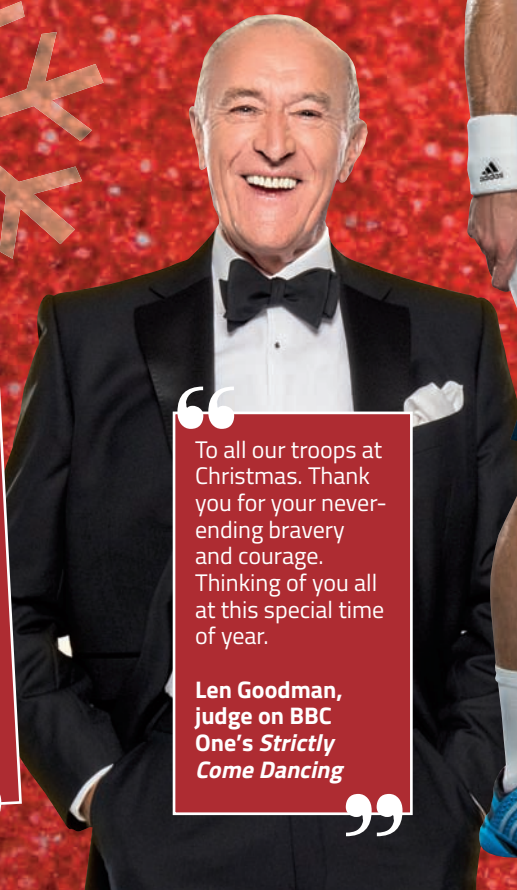
“Firstly, welcome home to all the combat troops who are back from Afghanistan in time for Christmas – you've certainly earned a rest. Thanks also to all the soldiers who continue to defend this country in the UK and across the world. The Army's work is much appreciated. Merry Christmas.”

Andy Murray, tennis player



“I hope you are with your family this Christmas. There's no more powerful moment in the Radio Two calendar than the programme where loved ones send wishes to the soldiers who are away but now many of you have come home after months or even years in war zones. Your families will be grateful to have you back. I, and I think everyone who listens to my show, are hugely grateful for what you have done.”

Jeremy Vine, BBC journalist and Radio Two presenter



“To all our troops at Christmas. Thank you for your never-ending bravery and courage. Thinking of you all at this special time of year.”

Len Goodman, judge on BBC One's Strictly Come Dancing



“I would like to send my full support and best wishes to all the members of the British Army over the festive period. They courageously serve this country and have to miss out on seeing their loved ones over Christmas, which must be very difficult. I want to thank them from all at Chelsea Football Club for the great job they do.”

John Terry, Chelsea FC player

“I admire and respect all the men and women in our Armed Forces for all the sacrifices you make every day to keep us safe. God bless you all and merry Christmas.”

Sharon Osbourne

“Thank you for your valour and dedication in keeping us all safe. Without you we wouldn't have our freedom. Merry Christmas.”

Ozzy Osbourne



“Thank you to each and every one of you reading this message. You are all doing a wonderful job, wherever you might be in the world, and I hope you are back home safe and well with your loved ones very soon. Merry Christmas and all the very best for 2015.”

Michelle Keegan, actress



“Wishing all our troops and their families a very merry Christmas. Your courage is so admirable and appreciated by us all. Keep safe.”

Ellie Goulding, singer-songwriter



“A very happy Christmas to all our troops serving overseas this festive season. It must be so tough being away from your families but we're all so very grateful for the work you do for us. Our thoughts are with you all, stay safe and best wishes for the New Year.”

Kym Marsh, actress



“Everyone at Arsenal Football Club wishes all members of our Armed Forces all the best this Christmas. If you're serving away from home stay safe and look after each other. We're all immensely proud of what you do.”

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Arsenal FC player



“We never ever take it for granted what you all do for our country every single day. I have the utmost respect for each and every one of you, putting your life on the line for us all. Love you all dearly.”

Danny Dyer, actor



“I would like to wish all troops a very merry Christmas. The respect I have for you is amazing especially after having a small insight into your world by filming the BBC series *Our Girl*. Thank you for all you do and stay safe and get home soon. Lots of love.”

Lacey Turner, actress



From a winter break to the latest outdoor kit, *Soldier* has plenty of tasty treats on offer in our Christmas giveaway. Read on for your chance to bag a prize...

WIN



A WEEK'S STAY AT A FRENCH SKI RESORT

THANKS to our friends at Snow Nation (www.snownation.co.uk), we have a seven-night stay up for grabs at the smart Hotel La Roz – a resort in south-east France with stunning mountain views that is popular among UK troops. The prize – worth more than £450 – includes half-board accommodation based on two people sharing.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "Snow Nation" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

* Airfare not included; subject to availability; excludes transfers, ski hire and lift passes; excludes w/c February 14 and April 4, 2015; prize must be taken before w/c April 11, 2015

A THREE-DAY MOUNTAIN GETAWAY FOR TWO



ENJOY a stay in Morzine, France, from March 18 to 20, 2015 courtesy of luxury catered ski chalet provider Chilly Powder (www.chillypowder.com). The prize includes three nights' half-board accommodation – including daily breakfast and afternoon tea plus two five-course dinners with wine. Winners get to enjoy full use of the site's facilities, including hot tub and Wi-Fi.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "Chilly Powder" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

* Airfare and ski hire cost not included

£4,880
total value of
the prizes up for
grabs in this year's
Christmas comp

CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY

AN ACTIVITY BREAK IN CORNWALL

GET stuck into a two-night adventure at the surfing Mecca that is Fistral Beach. Thanks to Newquay Activity Centre, we are offering a break for two people to the Carnmarth Hotel (www.carnmarth.com), which enjoys a great position overlooking the seafront. The prize includes a shared room, group surfing/bodyboarding lesson and group coasteer plus free wetsuits, surfboard and bodyboard for the duration of the stay.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "Newquay Activity Centre" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

* Prize must be taken by June 1, 2015 and does not include transport to Newquay



ESCAPES

JEWELLERY GALORE

LOOKING for something special for the woman in your life? Thanks to high street jewellers Warren James (www.warrenjames.co.uk), we have two striking sets from Swarovski Elements to give away. Worth more than £250 each, the colourful packs provide the perfect jewellery box makeover for 2015. Each one includes six stunning necklaces, three pairs of earrings, a bracelet and sterling silver ring.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "Warren James" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

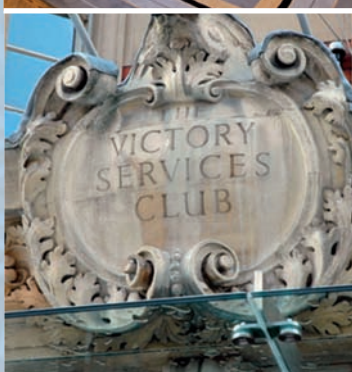


A GLITZY WEEKEND FOR TWO IN LONDON

ESCAPE to the glamorous capital for a two-night stay at the Victory Services Club. The prize includes a delicious three-course dinner with a bottle of wine, full English breakfast and two tickets to a top London show.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "VSC" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

* Prize must be redeemed within 12 months of notification; accommodation and theatre ticket options dependent on availability





CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY

THE RULES

❄️ Deadline for all entries is midday on December 31

❄️ Readers may take part in as many of the different competitions as they like, but only one entry per person is allowed

❄️ Winners will be notified within the first two weeks of January, with prizes being distributed by the end of the month



RUGGED CHARGER

FANCY getting your hands on one of these state-of-the-art power packs to boost your camera, smartphone, iPad or GPS on the move? We have teamed up with www.powertraveller.com to offer three lucky readers a waterproof Powermonkey Extreme charger worth £120.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "Powermonkey" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

d30 PROTECTION



WHEN it comes to safeguarding your kit from high impact, you could do a lot worse than the orange shock absorbing material that is d3o (www.d3o.com). And we have three sets of protective gear – including a smartphone case and footwear insole – worth £100 to give away to readers.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "d3o" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk Please also include your phone type and shoe size.



WINTER JACKET

FOR comfort in temperatures right down to minus ten degrees Celsius, Snugpak's SJ9 is a great piece of kit for this time of year. We have teamed up with the British clothing specialist to give away two of the all-weather jackets.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "Snugpak" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Please also provide your preferred colour choice, olive or black, and size, XS to XXL.



MAGNUM BOOTS

NEW to the market, the Viper Pro Leather Waterproof EN from Magnum (www.magnumboots.com/uk) have a standard retail price of £89.99 and are breathable and slip resistant, with foam ankle roll pads for added protection. We have five pairs up for grabs.

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, shoe size, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "Magnum" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

* UK and Republic of Ireland residents only; subject to size availability (3-14); if a size is out of stock a different style may be offered



MAXPEDITION BAG

COURTESY of outdoor kit store Heinnie Haynes (www.heinnie.com) we have three Maxpedition bags up for grabs – a Monsoon Gearslinger single shoulder pack (RRP £141.95), a Jumbo Versipack (RRP £88.95) and a Larkspur Messenger (RRP £136.95).

❄️ **TO ENTER:** Email your full name, rank and cap badge (if applicable), address and daytime telephone number with "Heinnie" in the subject line to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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TALKBACK

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

'Give me cash for the classroom'

I HAVE HAD NO RESPONSE OR SUPPORT

I AM a Reservist and have been looking into training courses provided by The Royal British Legion. I was advised I was entitled to standard learning credits of up to £175 a year – the same as a Regular.

However, after repeatedly asking my regimental careers management officer about this I have had no response or support. – **Name and address supplied.**

Lt Col Jo Burgon, S01 Operations, Directorate of Educational Capability, replies: You are correct in that from April 1 this year the offer of standard learning credits was extended to Reservists.

This means that you may be able to claim back 80 per cent of your course fees, up to a maximum of £175 per financial year for eligible courses, which can cover

anything from a GCSE to a degree or a professional qualification.

Applications need to be authorised in advance and can be arranged through your local Army education centre (AEC).

You may also be interested in the Army skills offer (see page 21), which provides access to nationally-recognised qualifications and is free until 2016.

These additional development opportunities mean Reservists will be able to enhance their educational and vocational achievements, benefitting the Service, the individual concerned and employers.

I would encourage you and your



unit to make contact with your local AEC as it can provide up-to-date information on the whole range of opportunities available.

For more online information go to: www.army.mod.uk/training_education/25782.aspx or read ABN 95/14. You can find details on learning credits in JSP 898.

I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT RESERVES IN MY POSITION WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR THIS EXTRA PAYMENT



Counting the cost: Allowances can be tricky to calculate for Reservists

● I WAS lucky enough to go to Canada recently on a training exercise as a member of the Army Reserve.

I was told prior to going that I was eligible for longer separation allowance (LSA) and local overseas allowance (LOA).

I was expecting my pay to include both but I only received the latter.

I queried this and was told the

Involuntary shortfall

Reserves are not eligible for LSA.

I looked at the Reserve Forces Act 1996 and it clearly states that we are entitled to this payment under high readiness or compulsory mobilisation.

The exercise was classed as my mandatory annual camp, so I'm due this money, surely.

Also, having built up 980 days of LSA from past tours and operations, I would have thought Reserves in my position would be eligible for this extra payment when they go on exercise with Regular soldiers, who already receive it.

I have spoken to one or two of my colleagues and they have all come across similar problems, and some of them also believe the allowance should be paid for the annual camp because it is a compulsory mobilisation.

Can someone put me straight on this please? – **Cpl Kevin Hume, RLC.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: Commitment to annual camp is not compulsory, although it is a requirement under the Reserve Forces Act 1996.

You are expected to attend unless you have a compelling reason not to but as it does not

require formal mobilisation you are not entitled to LSA.

Absence without leave issues apart, non-attendance also has implications for the sign-off of your certificate of efficiency, annual bounty and Voluntary Reserves Service Medal.

LSA exists primarily to compensate for involuntary separation but training such as the exercise you mention is classified as voluntary training other duties.

It is the optional nature of the activity that removes your eligibility for the allowance.

Mobilisation, however, renders Reservists involuntarily separated, hence your previous entitlement to it while operationally deployed.

The new employment model incorporates work to develop the terms and conditions of service for Reserves to better reflect their increasingly dynamic and integrated use alongside Regulars.

It is our intention to ensure they receive entitlements that are fair and match their increased commitment to training.

The outcome of this review will not be made public for a while yet.

DIGITAL DOSSIER

Your views from the web...



@soldiermagazine

#EBOLA

@Josephine_KK

To soldiers serving in Sierra Leone on Op Grit Rock, good luck on tour. Hope that time passes quickly and a safe return home ASAP

@wexsim

Ebola treatment facility built by the British Army! What a fantastic place, well done!

@swallowsbird

Bloody brilliant work re #ebola that the British #army are doing in Sierra Leone. Well done lads and lasses



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

XMAS TRUCE ADVERT

Dawn Malloy

I love it, very respectful. Depicts the true story without commercialising it. Well done Sainsbury's and the chocolate proceeds are a fab idea

Nora Charter

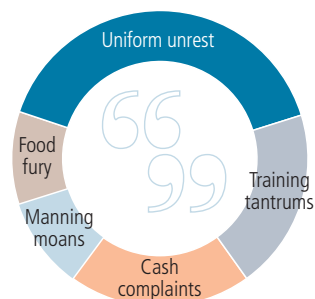
I think this is disgraceful, please respect our fallen, not in an advert to boost profits, come on Sainsbury's that is all you are doing

Sam Cole

I didn't think it was disrespectful at all. I think it actually brings much more awareness of the 1914 Christmas truce, and furthermore, the First World War. And also, it answers the question of "Can good men be found on both sides of a bad war?"

SLICE OF SERVICE LIFE

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



GOT A GRIPE?

news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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“

INDIVIDUAL
UNITS
SIMPLY
DON'T
KNOW HOW
TO DEAL
WITH FTRS
PERSONNEL

”

Training advice leads nowhere

I AM frustrated with the conflicting and confusing information surrounding my full-time Reserve service (home commitment) contract.

First, I cannot obtain confirmation of my annual training requirements.

I've been advised I only need to do military annual training test six but colleagues have told me they believe the entire set should be completed.

We're also confused about whether we should be doing combat and personal fitness assessments without access to Army medical services.

In addition, I'm looking for clarification on how much time is considered reasonable to spend away from my base location since my contract states that I should work at one specific place.

I feel this lack of clear direction has arisen because individual units do not know how to deal with FTRS personnel.

– Name and address supplied.

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: Military annual training test six must be completed by all FTRS personnel every year but

Army Reserve regulations state you are also required to carry out additional training as demanded by the unit.

Any completed tests are recorded for future reference in case the individual concerned returns to part-time service.

Policy states that when applying these drills commanding officers must take into account the fact that you are not entitled to medical care from Service sources except in an emergency.

Regarding reasonable time away from your base, compulsory detachments are restricted to training periods such as annual camps, weekend exercises or regional operational events which should be specified in your job specification and commitment.

I'm sorry you think units do not know how to deal with FTRS staff but full information can be found in chapter ten of the Army Reserve regulations, available on the defence intranet and in hard copy form from your unit.



PRAISE FOR THE POPPIES

● I THOUGHT the cover design you produced for the remembrance issue of *Soldier* was absolutely stunning.

The way the vivid red of the poppies stood out against the monochrome image of the Tower of London was fabulous.

And, to be honest, now that I've read the mag itself I'm thinking of framing the picture.

So a sincere well done to the *Soldier* team... you really have captured the essence of the poppy installation and all that it stands for. – Gnr Ian Williams, RA.

‘If you want to wear it, join it’

As a former member of the Royal Regiment of Scotland I have become utterly confused with who is who within our military units due to the increasingly common adoption of Scottish dress items.

The Tam o’ Shanter was designed for Scottish Infantry regiments in 1915.

The Glengarry has also been common headwear for these units for many years, so can someone please tell me why we now have some Royal Signals, Royal Logistic Corps and Royal Artillery formations all cutting about with these pieces of clothing and, strangely, even kilts that don’t have a military pattern?

In my opinion, if you want to wear it, join it. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, responds: The Scottish bonnet worn in the 19th century became known as the Tam o’ Shanter and a khaki variant of the same name was introduced for Scottish Infantry in the First World War.

Since then it has become associated with these formations but various other units have also been authorised to wear it, as well as the Glengarry in parade orders of dress, as a visible mark of national distinction.

Highland and Lowland units have also been permitted to don a variety of tartans as kilts, trews or patches to show particular affiliation with a clan or region.

All requests to wear items of national identity as part of the British Army uniform are carefully scrutinised by the Army dress committee and, in fact, many are turned down.

“I HAVE BECOME UTTERLY CONFUSED”



BOOTS POLICY ON WRONG TRACK

● WHY is it that after 20 years of service in the Army I cannot get replacement boots issued to me?

I am currently based at MoD Abbey Wood and have been trying to obtain a pair since October 2013.

At my current posting there is no workable clothing issue or replacement service.

The online system does not cater for the full scale of garments – and brown boots are out of stock.

The local units we are supposedly affiliated to are not interested in supporting us either.

When I consulted the chain of command to see what could be done, I was told to “call in a few favours” to get new boots.

Seriously, is this what the Army has come to? Do I really have to bribe and beg to get clothing issued?

I have even contacted the defence clothing project team directly but I was told there are no boots available unless I’m deploying on operations or in phase one or two training.

They suggested I wear barrack dress but my job entails deploying abroad and in the field on various equipment trials and a pair of black shoes are not really acceptable in those circumstances.

While I appreciate I’m not a priority when compared with deploying troops, it’s still a dire state of affairs when a serving soldier cannot obtain a set of standard-issue footwear. – **Name and address supplied.**

Lt Col Simon Blake, SO1 Availability Management, Logistical Support, replies:

It is correct that the brown boot range is not listed on the online service but, generally, combat boots are and the supply response is driven by availability.

From initial roll-out, there has been a surge in demand for the brown boot over and above the original forecasted figures.

To manage this, extraordinary measures have been in place to ensure those on operations and recruits in phase one and two have been fully supplied, ensuring that the bulk of the Army’s capability footwear needs can be sustained.

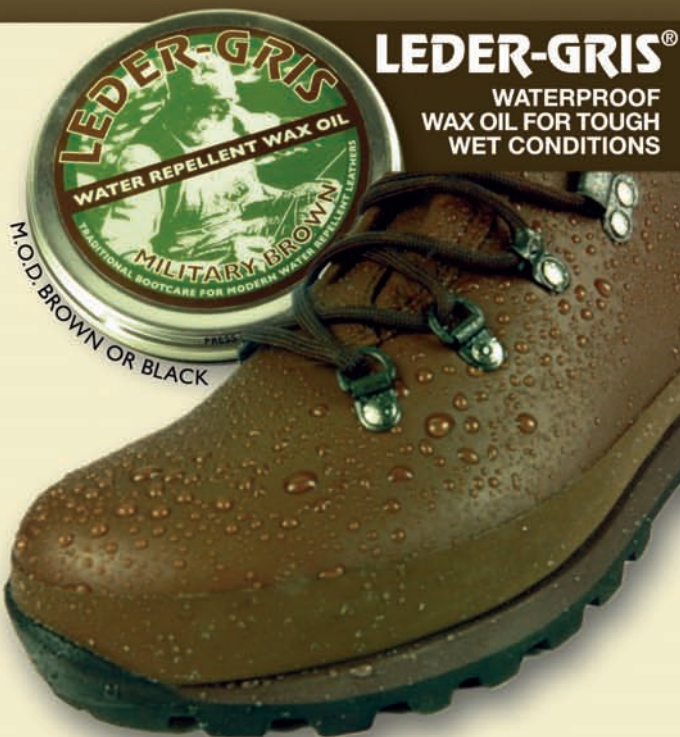
With demand now starting to be satisfied, the focus is turning to all Service personnel, although the original intent to have a choice of boot for all five categories, especially the high liability boot, will still have to be managed closely.

In the meantime, in order to ensure soldiers are kept up to scale with new-to-service items local units have, on several occasions, made bespoke bulk deliveries of certain kit such as Future Army Dress and lightweight MTP waterproofs.

Other options being considered include permanently assigning a supporting unit to personnel at your location.



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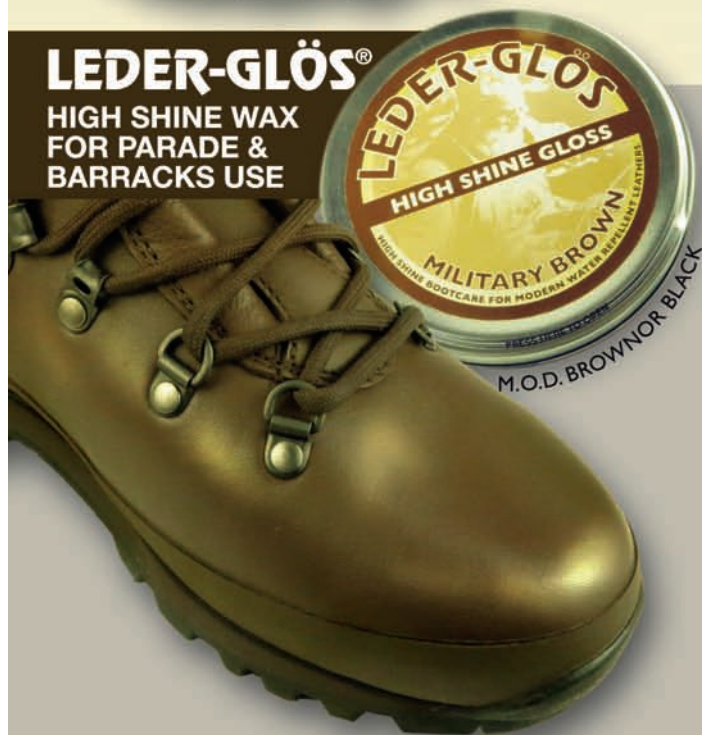


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“

WHY AM
I BEING
PENALISED
FOR BEING
TALL?

”

Lofty lady left short of dress

WHEN I joined my first unit back in 2009 I was measured for my number two dress but was told there would be a delay because I am relatively tall for a woman at 182cm and the Army doesn't tailor the standard outfit to my height.

Three years later, and after time off due to maternity leave, I am now at my second unit and still without the uniform.

Just before the last Remembrance Day I tried to get it sorted out again but once more I was informed that as the Service does not cater for tall women I would have to wait for a special order to be fulfilled.

We completed the relevant paperwork and my garments eventually arrived.

However, they were for the maximum standard size outfit, which is designed for a female soldier who is 178cm tall.

The sleeves were halfway up my arms and the skirt was nowhere near long enough so I refused to take them.

I was also told I would have to purchase my own peak cap and shoes.

I am now five months away from completing my sixth year in the Army and, unbelievably, I'm still without

number two dress.

To rub it in further, the clothing store said they would happily make adjustments for overweight or



pregnant females if needed.

Before I leave the Service it would be nice to be able to attend at least one memorial service in the correct kit to pay my respects with my current regiment. – **LCpl Victoria Horne, RE.**

Lt Col Simon Blake, SO1 Availability Management, Logistical Support, responds:

Regrettably, it appears you have been either misadvised or the paperwork was incorrect.

There are clear processes in place for soldiers who are not within the standard size range.

You are right in stating that the tallest height for standard female Army number two dress is 178cm. The correct procedure is for your unit quartermaster to submit forms AF8620 and AF111.

They should be faxed to the defence clothing team at Bicester.

They in turn will place a special order for a jacket and skirt with the current contractor. The process should not take more than 14 weeks.

Also, under no circumstances should a soldier be instructed to purchase dress items or accoutrements which should be provided through the defence supply chain and facilitated by unit quartermaster staff.

Units can make authorised purchases from approved commercial clothing suppliers in extreme circumstances.

The logistic support chain of command exists to manage all these procedures.

'WILL FEMALE FITNESS GO UP A GEAR?'

● **WITH** regard to the debate on females possibly being allowed to carry out front-line combat duties in Infantry units, can someone tell me whether the fitness requirements will be adjusted if they are permitted to fill these roles?

Currently, other regiments give women a little extra time on aerobic assessments and require them to do fewer press-ups, for example.

When both sexes are deployed to do the same job they should hit the

same requirements physically, in my opinion, just as we would have to on all other courses.

And if we do make physical assessments gender neutral for the Infantry then why not apply that to the rest of the Army?

Surely, it would enhance our overall combat effectiveness and I know that other Nato armies now widely use such assessments. – **Name an address supplied.**

Lt Col Sheff Appleby, SO1 Physical Development, D Trg (A), responds: Only our basic personal fitness assessment takes into account age and gender.

This test is used by the Army mainly to gauge an individual's commitment to personal

conditioning. But gender-neutral testing does apply with the annual fitness test (AFT), which contains an eight-mile loaded march over varying terrain in two hours carrying weights determined by career employment groups, which are cap badge and trade specific.

The AFT measures basic military-specific fitness for employment and role and is the stop check for progression onto training for operations.

Once that next stage is under way you are again assessed on a gender-neutral basis.

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	= Ranking of Boarding Schools
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	= Overall National League Table Ranking

1	95%	Cardiff Sixth Form College	1
2	91%	Wycombe Abbey School	2
3	81%	Concord College	9
4	80%	Queen Ethelburga's College	10
5	76%	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	18
6	75%	Brighton College	24
7	74%	St. Swithun's School	27
8	74%	St. Mary's School, Ascot	28
9	70%	Wellington College	33
10	70%	d'Overbroeck's College	34
11	69%	Ruthin School	35
12	69%	City of London Freeman's	38
13	68%	Headington School	43
14	66%	Queen Margaret's York	47
15	65%	St. Mary's Calne	49
16	65%	Caterham School	50
17	65%	Badminton School	51
18	65%	St. Catherine's, Bramley	52
19	64%	Oundle School	54
20	64%	Marlborough College	55
21	64%	Hurtwood House	57
22	62%	Dulwich College	60
23	60%	Benenden School	64
24	59%	St. Leonards-Mayfield	72
25	59%	Warwick School	74
26	59%	Rugby School	75
27	58%	Bromsgrove School	82
28	57%	Malvern St. James	84
29	57%	Canford School	87
30	57%	Bishop's Stortford College	88
31	57%	Loughborough Grammar	91
32	57%	Royal School, Haslemere	93
33	56%	King's School, Canterbury	94
34	56%	Kingswood School	97
35	55%	Marymount International	98
36	55%	Ockbrook School	99
37	55%	Chigwell School	101
38	55%	Queenswood	102
39	55%	Uppingham School	103
40	55%	Woldingham School	105

41	54%	Royal High Sch Bath	108
42	54%	St. Peter's School	110
43	54%	Sherborne Girls	116
44	53%	Mount School York	119
45	53%	Haberdasher Mon. G	120
46	52%	Merchiston Castle	121
47	52%	Dauntsey's School	123
48	52%	Christ's Hospital	124
49	52%	Bury Grammar Girls	126
50	52%	Leweston School	127
51	52%	Bedford School	129
52	51%	Prior Park College	131
53	51%	Christ College	134
54	51%	Clifton College	141
55	50%	Ashford School	142
56	50%	Burgess Hill Girls	146
57	49%	The Leys School	147
58	49%	Bootham School	148
59	49%	ACS Cobham Int.	149
60	49%	Merchant Taylors' B	151
61	49%	Wells Cathedral Sch	152
62	49%	Surbiton High School	156
63	48%	Kent College	158
64	48%	Bellerbys Brighton	160
65	48%	St John's School	164
66	48%	Cheltenham College	165
67	47%	Rodean School	169
68	47%	Haileybury	172
69	47%	St. Teresa's, Effingham	173
70	47%	St. Leonards	174
71	47%	New Hall School	175
72	46%	Oakham School	176
73	46%	Brentwood School	177
74	46%	St. Mary's, Shaftbury	180
75	46%	St. Mary's, Cambridge	181
76	46%	Bellerbys Cambridge	182
77	46%	Ampleforth College	183
78	46%	Moreton Hall	184
79	45%	The Godolphin Sch	185
80	45%	Gresham's School	186
81	45%	Reed's School	187
82	45%	Mill Hill School	189
83	45%	Welbeck College	190
84	44%	King William's College	192
85	44%	St. Francis' College	193
86	44%	Kelly College	198
87	44%	Lord Wandsworth Col	200
88	43%	Monmouth School	201
89	43%	St. Michael's School	202
90	43%	Sidcot School	203

91	43%	Talbot Heath School	206
92	43%	St. George's Edinburgh	208
93	43%	Downside School	209
94	43%	King's Ely	210
95	42%	Ipswich School	213
96	42%	Queen's College	214
97	41%	Bradfield College	218
98	41%	Chetham's Sch. Music	220
99	41%	Harrogate Ladies' Coll.	223
100	41%	Stamford High School	226
101	41%	Kimbolton School	227
102	40%	St Margaret's Bushey	228
103	40%	Lincoln Minster School	230
104	39%	Kirkham Grammar	231
105	39%	Royal Russell School	232
106	39%	Wellington School	236
107	39%	Loretto School	237
108	38%	The Oratory School	239
109	38%	Leighton Park School	240
110	38%	Royal Sch. Dungannon	242
111	38%	Ashville College	244
112	37%	Stamford School	248
113	37%	Trent College	249
114	36%	Battle Abbey School	250
115	36%	St. Edmunds Cantbury	251
116	35%	Bede's Senior School	254
117	35%	Langley School	255
118	35%	Ratcliffe College	257
119	35%	Sutton Valence Sch	258
120	35%	Worksop College	259
121	34%	Box Hill School	263
122	34%	Hampshire Collegiate	265
123	34%	Glenalmond College	266
124	34%	Wrekin College	267
125	33%	Woodhouse Grove	269
126	33%	St. George's Ascot	270
127	32%	St. Edmund's College	274
128	32%	Barnard Castle Sch	276
129	32%	St. John's College	277
130	31%	Pocklington School	279
131	31%	The Purcell School	280
132	31%	Saint Felix School	281
133	30%	Stonyhurst College	283
134	30%	Culford School	285
135	30%	St. Bees School	287
136	29%	St. James Senior B	290
137	29%	CATS College London	292
138	29%	Tring Park Perf. Arts	293
139	28%	Dover College	294
140	28%	Oswestry School	295

BULLET POINTS

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Ex-Military Careers is a free-to-use job board listing more than 10,000 vacancies for former Service personnel. For more information visit www.ex-militarycareers.com



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winners: WO2 Simon Lamen, Upavon, Wiltshire; John Wall, Llanrumney, Cardiff; Mike Booth, Arnold, Nottinghamshire; John Southward, Amble, Northumberland; SSgt Andrew Stiles, Lichfield, Staffordshire; Linda Coleman, DM Kineton, Warwickshire; Stephen Stockman, Carronshore, Falkirk; Sharon Jackson, Army Reserve Centre, Kempston; Peter Fisher, Harestock, Winchester; Capt Christopher Lucas, Rusholme, Manchester.

300 – Rise of an Empire DVD: Cpl Adam Blackburn, Shefford; Ian Yates, Clitheroe, Lancashire; Simon Matthews, Laindon, Essex; LCpl Jennifer Avis, Luton, Bedfordshire; Steve Smith, MoD Corsham, Wiltshire.

Close Combat: Michael Malin, Priorslee, Telford; WO1 Simon Attwater, Chilwell, Nottingham; Robert Smith, Uckfield, East Sussex; Marc Fogerty, MoD Boscombe Down, Wiltshire; Cfn Stephen McKernon, Marne Barracks, Catterick; Maj Euan Mathieson, Army HQ, Andover; LCpl Martin Gale, RAF Scampton, Lincoln; Aaron Hodgson, Worthy Down, Hampshire; John Card, Beacon Barracks, Stafford; David Woolmer, Whitehaven, Cumbria.

Primus Stove: Rev Gary Birch, Wyvern Barracks, Exeter; Maureen Smith, Redruth, Cornwall.



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ABF The Soldiers' Charity:
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Armed Forces Buddhist Society:
Chaplain 020 7414 3411;
www.afbs-uk.org

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

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

Armed Forces Muslim Association: Chaplain 0207 414 3252; www.afma.org.uk

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Blind Veterans UK: (formerly St Dunstan's) 0207 7235021;
www.blindveterans.org.uk

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association:
0208 590 1124; www.blesma.org

Career Transition Partnership:
0207 4696 661

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

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

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

Family Escort Service:
0207 463 9249

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

Forces Pension Society:
0207 820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

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

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

Remount: 01451 850 341;
www.remount.net

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

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

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

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

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

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

Single Person Accommodation for the Ex-Services 01748 833797
www.spaces.org.uk

Stoll: (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation)
0207 385 2110; info@stoll.org.uk;
www.stoll.org.uk

The Not Forgotten Association:
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www.nfassociation.org

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

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

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

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



INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 158/14: Changes to Army

Reserve recruiting process

ABN 157/14: Common military syllabus – Initial Training Group roadshow

ABN 156/14: Armed Forces continuous attitude survey 2015

ABN 155/14: Army public information campaign

ABN 154/14: Transferring civilian pension benefits into an Armed Forces pension scheme

ABN 153/14: Army occupational wellbeing survey

ABN 152/14: JPA developments

ABN 151/14: Reserves transfer to Regular Army

ABN 150/14: Combined accommodation assessment system: Service families' accommodation

ABN 149/14: Op Fortify – exploitation

ABN 148/14: Army Reserve phase one training

ABN 147/14: New generation estates contract

ABN 146/14: CGS Army Reserves – update

ABN 154/14: Army Reserve late entry officer commissioning course

ABN 144/14: Army command review

ABN 143/14: Remembrance parades and services

ABN 142/14: Changes to application process to Welbeck College

DIN 2014DIN01-206: Individual electoral registration

DIN 2014DIN01-205: Process for the conversion of those on long-term temporary promotion to band B or senior civil service pay band 1 to the higher substantive grade

DIN 2014DIN01-204: Information and Knowledge Excellence Awards 2015

DIN 2014DIN01-203: Action required regarding change to policy for Service personnel joining Armed Forces pension scheme 2015 in relation to transferring pension benefits from previous non-public sector employment into an Armed Forces pension scheme

DIN 2014DIN01-202: Late entry commission in the Corps of Royal Engineers

DIN 2014DIN01-201: Arthur Barratt Memorial Prize 2014

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

INTELLIGENCE CONTINUED

DIN 2014DIN03-027: Impact to outputs of Joint Electronic Warfare Operational Support Centre due to essential building electrical repair programme

DIN 2014DIN04-220: Amendments to operational medical modules contents (September-October 2014)

DIN 2014DIN04-219: Support to military training and exercises

DIN 2014DIN04-218: Declaration of obsolete Swiftzoom

DIN 2014DIN04-217: Declaration of obsolete Stabiscope

DIN 2014DIN04-216: Declaration of obsolete naval night vision aid

DIN 2014DIN04-215: Declaration of obsolete general purpose night vision goggles

DIN 2014DIN04-214: Declaration of obsolete DMC V6 binoculars

DIN 2014DIN04-213: Declaration of obsolete mortar fire data computer and artillery fire data computer

DIN 2014DIN04-212: Service families' accommodation in the UK

DIN 2014DIN04-211: Provisioning of NSN: 6810-99-220-3461 water, thrust augmentation: demineralized. Defence Standard 68-253

DIN 2014DIN04-210: Equipment care inspection question sets 2015

DIN 2014DIN04-209: Management of ground fuel cards

DIN 2014DIN04-208: Air Commodities Project Team, avionics repairables section restructure

DIN 2014DIN04-207: Change of format of Air Commodities Team technical information

DIN 2014DIN04-206: Removal from service of cartridges, illuminating/signal, one-inch

DIN 2014DIN04-205: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2014DIN04-204: Replacement programme of obsolete dehydrator purging equipment

DIN 2014DIN04-203: Generator, smoke, type 120 W6 Mk 2

DIN 2014DIN04-202: Declaration of obsolete – special tool sets for high pressure pure air, equipment table scale 06210F

DIN 2014DIN04-201: Removal from service of flare kit stabilised illuminating device L78A1 and flare kit stabilised illuminating device IR L79A1

DIN 2014DIN04-200: Declaration of cryptographic equipment KG-255, KG-46B, KGV-11, KGX-28, KIR-23A and MYK-5 as being obsolete, by Crypto Services for Defence

DIN 2014DIN04-199: Declaration of cryptographic equipment BID/430, BID/750, BID/790, BID/2250, BIDD/300 and BIDD/4000 as being

obsolete, by Crypto Services for Defence

DIN 2014DIN04-198: New arrangements for the supply of BID/2020 roll-feed thermal paper

DIN 2014DIN04-197: Nato Functional Area Services software distribution

DIN 2014DIN06-017: Guidance on bringing a common law claim for compensation against MoD

DIN 2014DIN07-165: Maritime air defence course – calling notice for attendees

DIN 2014DIN07-163: Joint Counter-Terrorism Training Advisory Team Op Verditer visitors' course

DIN 2014DIN07-162: Incremental staff required for Adventurous Training Group (Army)

DIN 2014DIN07-161: Volunteers for 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Op Battery, Royal Artillery

DIN 2014DIN07-160: Op Comet City and Guilds security qualifications resits

DIN 2014DIN07-157: Snow Warrior Concentration 2015

DIN 2014DIN07-156: Updates to the operational deployability record

DIB57/14: Change of pensions policy for Armed Forces widows, widowers and civil partners

DIB56/14: New employment model programme update

DIB55/14: New employment model introduction of combined accommodation assessment system



REUNION

Operating Theatre Technician

reunion, March 6-8, 2015. All serving or retired Royal Army Medical Corps operating theatre technicians, operating department practitioners and operating department assistants are invited to attend the next event at the North Stafford Hotel, Stoke-on-Trent. Guests welcome. For further details and booking form contact Ken Hannah at ottreunited1@gmail.com or visit <http://ottreunited.com>

Martinique Battery reunion

on April 18, 2015 at the Copthorne Hotel, Merry Hill, Dudley. For details email k.brooksusher@hotmail.co.uk

The final School of Electronic and Aeronautical Engineering RFC annual dinner and President's

XV on May 8, 2015 at Arborfield. All serving and former members involved in the club are invited to attend. Please register your interest by contacting SSgt Kennedy via mark.kennedy@seae.mod.uk or Lesley Lallament on 01189 763663.

NO. 877

JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

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£100

TEN details have been changed in this picture from the *Soldier* archive of Christmas puddings being mixed for the Forces to enjoy during festivities in 1938.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 877, Soldier**, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road,

Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by December 31, 2014.

A photocopy is acceptable but only one entry per person may be submitted.

First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win £100; the second and third will receive £25 gift vouchers. The results

will be announced in the February issue. Usual rules apply.

October's winner: Nicki Skelding, Brompton Barracks, Chatham.

Runners up: Sgt Jeremy Forrester, RMA, Camberley and Cpl Yogesh Pun, Gale Barracks, Aldershot.



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REVIEWS



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MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH: I AM ALI

CHAMPION FATHER

DOCUMENTARY REVEALS ANOTHER
SIDE TO 'THE GREATEST'

Review: Joe Clapson

FINDING a fresh angle on Muhammad Ali was a tough task given that every movement of "The Greatest" has been chronicled since he took the heavyweight crown in 1964.

But although Clare Lewins' documentary does, inevitably, go over ground already covered in previous films, TV programmes and countless written words, her feature does provide a revealing insight into the famed pugilist's family life.

Lewins gained exclusive access to the acclaimed boxer's inner circle of loved ones and friends to enable them to tell the world about Ali at home.

These interviews, coupled with remarkable private audio journals that the most recognisable man on the planet created with his children, shine a new light on the living legend.

"In the history of the sport there are arguably better boxers than Muhammad Ali but no one has captured the public imagination in quite the same way," said the documentary's director.

"I wanted to get to the heart of what it is about Ali that makes him so special."

The audio clips made by Ali for posterity provide the narrative spine of the film and are played as simple sound waves move across the screen.

One recording shows the "Louisville Lip" talking to his 11-year-old daughter, Maryum, about her career plans.

"Do you want to go to college?" he says. "You haven't found your life purpose yet."

An interview with the icon's brother, Rahaman, provides some background to the character who beat Sonny Liston under his "slave name" of Cassius Clay and then remained the biggest draw in sport until the present day.

"He said, 'Rudy, one day I am going to be the most famous man on the planet'", Rahaman explains on film, describing a childhood chat.

"And he did it, he did it."

Unfortunately the title does verge on becoming a hagiography because nobody has a negative word to say about the three-time world champion and civil rights symbol.

Lewins does acknowledge the talented orator's infidelity as a husband but the focus is on the way he remained a strong father figure to nine children.

Ali's hurtful comments in the name of showmanship aimed at "gorilla" Joe Frazier are also highlighted, but forgiven by Smokin' Joe's animated son, Marvis.

For boxing fans there is plenty of stunning archive footage of Ali in training, which is interwoven with fights such as the Rumble in the Jungle and this cannot fail to excite.

Ring legends also assemble to describe Ali as far more than a sportsman, which speaks volumes.

A glassy-eyed Mike Tyson comments: "You can't really explain what Muhammad Ali is, no word can really explain it as far as his achievements are concerned."

On his former opponent, George Foreman adds: "Not only did I lose the boxing match, I lost to the greatest man I ever met."

Footage of the 72-year-old star, who now suffers with Parkinson's disease, doesn't feature but as a testament to his life as a family man, boxer and inspiration Lewins does a decent job. ■

VERDICT: Unheard recordings and exclusive interviews give new insight into "The Greatest" ★★★★★



ALL CHEERLEADERS DIE out now

INSPIRED by previous high school horror movies like *Jennifer's Body* and *The Craft*, this film depicts a group of girls retrieved from a fatal car crash by a pagan-leaning classmate who brings them back to life. The film starts with found footage of Alexis, whose death during a human pyramid started a deadly chain of events. The undead cheerleaders tear into the local population but there is a lack of wit and coherency.

Capt Damien Hern, AGC (SPS)

VERDICT: A horror flick that starts well but has little substance ★★★★★

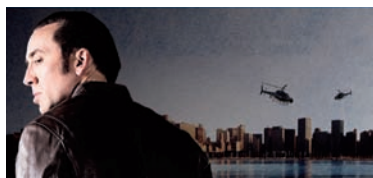


MISFIRE out now

DRUGS enforcement agent, Cole, descends into the dangerous underworld of Tijuana, Mexico in search of his ex-wife who he believes has been abducted by a cartel boss with aspirations for public office. This low-budget film is terrible; it doesn't flow, the acting is awful and it's plain boring. If this was on-screen in a guardroom I would volunteer for an extra stag. I highly recommend you never watch this movie.

Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

VERDICT: More dull than most things I've experienced to date ★★★★★



TOKAREV out now

I'VE never been a **Nicholas Cage** fan and this lacklustre film only reinforces my aversion to his work. Reformed criminal Paul Maguire (Cage) calls in his cronies to exact revenge after his daughter is murdered. There are car chases, fist fights, shoot-outs and a mounting death toll but the movie manages to remain dull. By the time the end came I was not interested in who was still alive or "whodunnit".

SSgt Mike Owens, RE

VERDICT: Drivel of the highest order – steer clear ★★★★★



ALLIES out now

THIS felt like watching a *Dad's Army* film because although there is a great cast the storyline is weak and looks like a bad re-enactment. The movie is based on the true events of a secret British-American mission in the Second World War, but it is not convincing. There is lots of action as troops fight their way behind enemy lines and although I'm not squeamish the gore was too much for me.

Kim Barclay, Army wife

VERDICT: Strong British cast but it's one to give a miss ★★★★★



THE KILLING FIELDS out now

TO celebrate the 30th anniversary of its original release this classic has been re-issued. A photographer is trapped in Cambodia during tyrant Pol Pot's bloody "Year Zero" cleansing campaign, which claimed the lives of two million civilians. It has good balance in that it's not too sentimental and not too cold. Great acting and cinematography make for a gripping and entertaining war film.

Samantha Frere, Army wife

VERDICT: Great film – highly recommended viewing ★★★★★



WIN... LET'S BE COPS

LOSER pals Ryan (**Jake Johnson**) and Justin (**Damon Wayans Jr**) pretend to be policemen to gain female attention. The falsehood turns sour when they have to fight crime armed with fake guns. *Soldier* has teamed up with Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment to offer copies of the DVD, which is released on December 26, to four lucky readers. To be in with a chance of winning tell us which TV show the co-stars both appeared in. Send your answers to the usual postal address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: December 31

GAMES

PICK OF THE MONTH:
ADVANCED WARFARE

FUTURE FIGHT

CALL OF DUTY'S SCIENCE
FICTION FORAY

Review: Richard Long

HAVING blazed a trail in the first-person shooter market for the best part of a decade it would be understandable to think that inspiration for the latest instalment in the mighty *Call of Duty* saga would be thin on the ground.

But thankfully the brains behind the record-breaking franchise have had no such difficulties and the next chapter in the all-action format – *Advanced Warfare* – embarks on a brave new path into the unfamiliar world of science fiction.

Unlike previous offerings, the storyline this time round seems a little more plausible as US Marines are dropped onto the streets of South Korea's capital Seoul to stem an invasion from North Korean forces.

With the events unfolding in the 2050s the developers have avoided the prediction of any imminent real-life attacks and you are immediately introduced to the futuristic feel as our new heroes don their strength-enhancing exosuits and spring into action.

Assuming that we are now well versed in the game's basic commands, the design team have ditched the lengthy tutorial in favour of a basic introduction to the new kit before allowing players to join the fight.

The opening missions set the scene for an impressive campaign mode but the plot takes an unexpected twist when lead character Jack Mitchell leaves the brotherhood of the Marines behind to join private security corporation, Atlas.

As *Call of Duty* now boasts such mass appeal its creators were able to draft in Hollywood A-lister Kevin Spacey to play the role of the organisation's head, Jonathan Irons, and his lifelike transition is an impressive tribute to the technological advances in the console domain.

From here, Mitchell embarks on a flurry of fast-paced missions that involve the usual globetrotting formula and there are thrills aplenty courtesy of an array of cutting-edge weaponry and breathtaking sequences.

However, certain elements are repeated from previous incarnations – such as the familiar sight of the gruff-voiced and hardened British counterpart – and that only serves to underline the fact that this is not the truly original experience it could be.

Having said that, the campaign still packs a punch and taking around seven hours to complete there is plenty to enjoy.

Further excitement can be found in the game's famed multiplayer modes. The maps now boast a slightly different format as the new exosuits see the battlegrounds adopt a more vertical feel.

Fans will be pleased to witness the return of the Hardpoint mode – last seen in *Black Ops* – while the Exo-Survival cooperative mission challenges teams of four to repel wave after wave of drones and turbo-charged foes.

Yet again, *Call of Duty* delivers on every level and the title's place at the top of the combat tree is safe for another year. ■

VERDICT: A must-have release for any gamer's Christmas stocking ★★★★★

F1 2014

for Xbox/PS3/PC

RETURNING to the grid for 2014 the latest *F1* offering is both decent and frustrating. Sporting good graphics the game accurately features the tracks, teams and technical innovations of the current season. There are a variety of single and multiplayer options but, annoyingly, it is all pretty much the same as last year. Worse still, two of *F1 2013*'s better game modes (F1 classics and the young driver challenge) have been dumped altogether, making this rather disappointing.

Stephen Smith, MoD Corsham

VERDICT: Not terrible but poor value compared to *F1 2013* ★★★★★



BORDERLANDS THE PRE-SEQUEL

for Xbox 360/PS3/PC

FOR all you *Borderlands* fans, welcome to the new high for this franchise. Once again 2K Games brings the *Mad Max*-style theme, crazy enemies and cartoon-like animation that we have come to love. 'Why is it a pre-sequel?' I hear you ask. Well this is the backstory of Handsome Jack and his rise to become the villain we loved in *Borderlands 2* and a totally new dimension is added as you explore the planet of Pandora. With a range of new characters this is a real winner.

Sgt Craig Backhouse, Coldm Gds

VERDICT: Brilliant; a different game despite very few changes ★★★★★



JUST DANCE 2015

for Xbox/PS3 and 4/Wii

THERE may be other games that are better equipped to show off the power of the next-generation consoles but the visuals on *Just Dance 2015* do exactly what they need to do. The controls are solid, especially on the Xbox One's Kinect 2, and each move is accurately measured and recorded. There is even an opportunity to upload your dances to the internet – much to your friends' horror. With a modern track list, and a few classics thrown in, you'll soon be bopping along.

W02 Graeme Russell, 39 Engr Regt

VERDICT: Cast your cynicism aside and enjoy this fun offering ★★★★★



THE EVIL WITHIN

for Xbox/PS3 and 4/PC

WELCOME to the world of Sebastian Castellanos, a police detective sucked into a terrifying nightmare realm by a psychotic apparition. This is horror in the classic style of *Resident Evil*, full of monstrously deformed zombies and bosses that are almost impossible to destroy. As always, ammunition is in short supply so scavenging through drawers and cupboards for extra rounds is a top priority. If you're a genre fan or a zombie hunter awaiting the apocalypse this is for you.

Cpl Adam Jackson, Para

VERDICT: Lock yourself away, turn off the lights and fight the hordes ★★★★★



SHADOW WARRIOR

for Xbox One/PS4

THIS is a remake of a 1997 cult-classic shooter. I haven't played anything this funny and entertaining in a long time. It is a great blast from the past and is wonderfully cheesy, like an 80s action movie. Without giving the plot away, you play as Lo Wang, who ends up fighting a host of demons using guns or a katana. The combat is fast-paced and while the controls are sometimes mildly difficult they are worth mastering just to hear the one-liners that are shouted as our hero does battle.

Sgt Mike O'Neill, RLC

VERDICT: Cheaper and better than many next-gen releases on sale ★★★★★



WIN... WAR IN THE WEST

THE most ambitious and detailed game to chart the campaign in Western Europe during the Second World War has arrived on PC. *War in the West* features the summer invasions of Sicily and Italy in 1943 as well as combat missions in France and the drive into Nazi Germany. *Soldier* has teamed up with Matrix Games to give away five copies of the strategy-based offering. To be in with a chance of winning one tell us the date on which the Allied invasion of Normandy took place. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or via email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: December 31



MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH:
ROCKIN' AT CHRISTMAS

FRIENDLY FIRE

SOLDIERS EYE FESTIVE
NUMBER ONE

AS Christmas rolls round the record-buying public will undoubtedly be bracing themselves for yet another festive number one from the impending *X Factor* winner.

While Rage Against the Machine spectacularly broke the trend in 2009 it was business as usual last year as Sam Bailey reigned supreme but pop's latest pretender can expect a military challenge once this month's countdown gets under way.

Army band Firing Blanks have already released their contender for the top spot – *Rockin' at Christmas* – and with the Service community getting on-board they hope to become genuine rivals for the coveted prize.

"We wrote down a checklist of all the things a Christmas song should be and we did our best to include those on this track," singer-songwriter Maj Fraser Dowling (AGC (ETS)) told *Soldier*.

"It's like something from Slade or Wizard in that it is a bit cheesy but it has some musical integrity as well.

"We have done this entirely on our own. It is a lot purer than anything produced by winners of the *X Factor*, who just have to turn up to get a Christmas number one."

The band was formed on the back of a successful weekly music club held for personnel at the home of 11 Training Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Arborfield.

With the sessions proving popular a platform was created for the soldiers to showcase their talents and a regular stream of gigs followed.

Their biggest success to date was an appearance at the Party in the Park festival in Cyprus, where they performed to more than 4,000 people.

"You do not get a following as a covers band, it is all about fun and enjoyment," Maj Dowling said.

"But we wanted to do something a bit different while raising money for charity. We were never going to run a marathon in the desert or anything like that so we decided to record a single instead."

Ex-soldier Si Pavitt formed the club in 2012 and more than 50 troops have passed through the doors, which has led to seven different incarnations of the band.

"We have taken people with no experience or musical knowledge whatsoever while also finding a lot of hidden talent," he explained.

"The idea for this record stemmed from our show in Cyprus.

"I have always wanted to push the club into being something bigger and the only thing we could think of was to release a song.

"It is great to get this far. There are a lot of guys out there who would be sitting in their room playing alone but having a group like this gives them an outlet." ■

● *Rockin' at Christmas* is available to download now via iTunes and the band's website www.firingblanks.co.uk

Proceeds from each sale will be donated to The Royal British Legion and the National Foundation for Youth Music.

Hesitant Alien by Gerard Way

WHISPER it quietly, **Gerard Way**

(ex-frontman of **My Chemical Romance**) must be a closet fan of Brit Pop. This is his first venture since leaving the band and is a complete departure from his usual sound. *The Bureau* opens proceedings with a stomping chord arrangement reminiscent of **Supergrass** while *Drugstore Perfume* could easily be a throwaway track from a later **Oasis** album. But rather than just pay homage to his influences he has managed to pull it off by still sounding fresh.

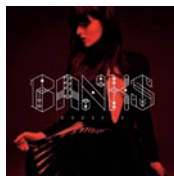


Capt Damian Hern, AGC (SPS)

VERDICT: An excellent effort that signifies a bold new direction ★★★★★

Goddess by Banks

AMERICAN singer-songwriter **Banks** hit the big time with the single *Before I Ever Met You*. The tune put all the emphasis on her voice – husky and rough around the edges but with a dark angelic quality. She has since teamed up with a number of fashionable producers to record her debut album. When it works it is very effective – her **Aaliyah**-like vocals sit beautifully on the murky underlying track in *Goddess*. But the backing music seems too heavy for the soft approach on *Waiting Game* and that fails to do her talent justice.



Musn Tom Greenhalf, CAMUS

VERDICT: An artist with potential but this doesn't strike gold ★★★★★

Appetite for Democracy: Live

IN November 2012, with a team of 3D cameras rolling, legendary act **Guns N' Roses** took the desert by storm as they performed a blistering set at the Hard Rock Casino in Las Vegas. The show includes all of the band's biggest hits and is their first concert film since 1992. With a vast selection of live performances and added extras it is by no means a rehash of old material. This really is a no-brainer; any fan is going to be adding this absolutely amazing DVD release to their collection.

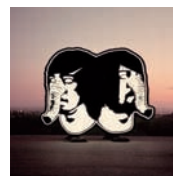


Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

VERDICT: Simply phenomenal – one not to be missed ★★★★★

The Physical World

A DECADE after the release of debut album *You're a Woman, I'm a Machine* Toronto duo **Death from Above 1979** return with follow-up *The Physical World*. Like its predecessor, it is packed with loud, fast, short songs and only a couple of tracks stray past the three-minute mark. As a fan of the original record I must admit to being a bit nervous when I heard this was on the way but they clearly haven't forgotten the pounding thrash that made them so awesome first time round.



Cpl Adam Jackson, Para

VERDICT: More a continuation than a follow-up ★★★★★

Man on the Run by Bush

IT'S pleasing that whenever I start to feel old there's a plethora of aged rock stars on hand to restore order. And so, 20 years after the release of the band's debut album, **Bush** have returned with *Man on the Run*. Although it's hard to be particularly enthusiastic about the majority of tracks *The Only Way Out* and *The Golden Age* were the pick of the bunch and almost provoked some interest. I'm sure the group's fans will approve and the production values are high, but this is no Christmas cracker.

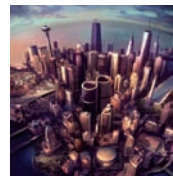


Maj Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)

VERDICT: Fine for the fans but not one for my stocking ★★★★★

Sonic Highways by Foo Fighters

STADIUM rockers **Foo Fighters** celebrate their 20th anniversary with the release of their eighth studio album – *Sonic Highways*. It boasts an interesting concept in that each track was inspired by and recorded in a different US city. *Something from Nothing* is the highpoint but the prevalence of trademark riffs and guttural vocals means it is hard to escape the feeling that you've heard it all before. Fans would be better advised to tune into the superb accompanying documentary series on BBC Four.



Richard Long, Soldier

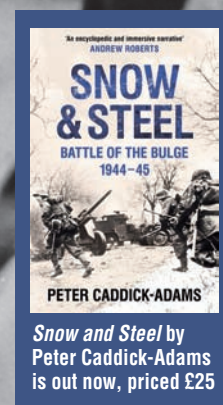
VERDICT: More of the same from rock's mainstream masters ★★★★★

BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH: SNOW AND STEEL

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

HISTORIAN REVEALS NEW INSIGHTS 70 YEARS
ON FROM THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE



Interview: Becky Clark

AS thoughts turn to cosy Christmas evenings, it is easy to forget that 70 years ago this month thousands of American, British and German soldiers were locked in a grim encounter in the freezing forests of the Ardennes.

The so-called Battle of the Bulge, Hitler's surprise counter-offensive, would result in more than 160,000 casualties on both sides and prolong the war by around two months.

In his new book *Snow and Steel* military historian Peter Caddick-Adams re-examines the clash in encyclopedic detail.

"The campaign is overlooked socially and culturally in the UK because it was predominantly a US battle but professionally, from a soldier's point of view, it is of great interest," he said.

"D-Day was extensively rehearsed but the real test is when something goes wrong suddenly, as it did in the Ardennes.

"That's what command and soldiering is all about – reacting to the unexpected and overcoming adversity."

And conditions in Belgium that winter were certainly adverse. The war-weary Allied personnel fought in sub-zero temperatures for more than a month without any of the cold-weather gear that today's troops take for granted.

"It was absolutely miserable – every bit as bad as in the trenches of the First World War," commented Caddick-Adams.

"It was minus 20 degrees Celsius. Some of the soldiers had been fighting for years at that point, they were under-equipped and living off rations for a long time so they succumbed to frostbite, trench foot and pneumonia in huge numbers."

A Reservist major in the Media Operations Group and lecturer at the Defence Academy, Caddick-Adams first visited the Ardennes as a schoolboy in 1977.

It was a journey he would repeat many times over the years in his role as a battlefield guide – latterly alongside friend and mentor, the late Prof Richard Holmes.

But despite his extensive knowledge, the process of writing the book unearthed some startling new information.

"I discovered the Germans issued their troops with tablets, which were essentially crystal meth," explained the author.

"They'd been drugging them to heighten their performance. That shows they were really scraping the bottom of the barrel.

"The Allies thought of them as this superhuman army emerging from the mists but that was nothing but propaganda.

"In reality, Hitler found the troops for the surprise attack from among the very young, the old and those who had been re-rolled from the navy and the air force so they had little training.

"They were never going to achieve anything other than a localised tactical success."

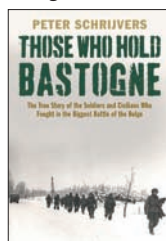
At some 850 pages long, *Snow and Steel* is a weighty tome, both literally and in terms of the fresh insights it reveals.

From the legacy of the battle in shaping Western Cold War doctrine to its possible impact on conflicts in the Middle East and even how Hitler's obsession with Wagner and the Romans may have played a role in the campaign, Caddick-Adams leaves no stone unturned in his analysis.

This book will surely feature high on the Christmas wish-lists of military bookworms. ■

Those Who Hold Bastogne

by Peter Schrijvers



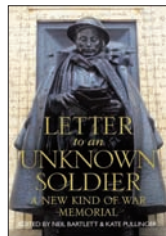
HERE is a warts and all report on the Battle of the Bulge, the largest campaign fought by the US Army in the Second World War. While detailing the great gallantry shown by those who took part, the author does not leave out some of the failings of soldiers in the field and their commanders at divisional level. Unfortunately, though, the British contribution has been more or less airbrushed out. Nonetheless this is a well-written book with the actions laid out and described clearly.

Andy Kay, ex-RS

VERDICT: Drops points for ignoring the efforts of the British ★★★★★

Letter to an Unknown Soldier

by Pullinger and Bartlett



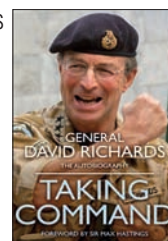
NOT a book in the normal sense, this is a collection of letters compiled earlier this year when the nation was given the opportunity to write to the "unknown soldier", whose statue can be found on platform one of Paddington Station. The diversity of the authors – teachers, writers, schoolchildren, soldiers and Service families – is matched by the variety of their messages. A touching insight into the nation's deep-seated respect and admiration for the Armed Forces.

WO1 Steve Curry, REME

VERDICT: Not a gripping read as such but interesting nonetheless ★★★★★

Taking Command

by Gen David Richards



MEMOIRS by retired senior officers are many but this autobiography by Gen Sir David Richards shows exactly why he had such a distinguished career. From his early exploits in the Far East to the corridors of Whitehall – and nearly every conflict inbetween – his account conveys a real sense of compassion and understanding. Some called him cavalier, others forward-thinking and resourceful but, either way, Richards comes across as one of the modern era's finest generals.

SSgt Mike Owens, RE

VERDICT: A must-read insight into an impressive leader ★★★★★

Wellington Portrayed

by Charles Wellesley, Marquess of Douro



THIS refreshed iconography of the First Duke of Wellington comes in perfect time for next year's bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo. Originally published in 1935, the lavish revision is not only a valuable academic resource, but an intimate portrayal of one of Britain's finest heroes. In an age of vacuous celebrity it is easy to forget that the heroes of the past gained their fame through hard work and ability.

Susan Coulthard, HQ London District

VERDICT: A magnificent, if rather specialist, tome ★★★★★

Win... A set of 2014's top titles

SOLDIER is spreading some festive cheer by giving away three sets of ten literary releases that featured in these pages in the last year. The selection includes this month's top pick by Peter Caddick-Adams, the latest books by Jeremy Paxman, Bernard Cornwell and Patrick Bishop, and mission memoirs by former soldiers Steve Heaney and Chantelle Taylor. James Holland brought us an officer's wartime diaries, while Jack El-Hai delved into the Nazi psyche. Allan Mallinson's *1914 Fight the Good Fight*, the British Army Military Book of the Year, completes the prize. For the chance to bag one of these bumper packs tell us the code name of the Iraqi interpreter who appeared in April's edition. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: December 31



TOP GEAR



PICK OF THE MONTH: BMW X3

ALL THE OFF-ROAD RAGE

COMPACT SUVs ARE SELLING LIKE NEVER
BEFORE AND THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST

AT this time of year owning a four-wheel drive car can seem very appealing. Negotiating snowdrifts, lashing rain, fog and icy roads seems a little less daunting while perched up high in a chunky off-roader but many people are put off these vehicles because of their reputation for truck-like proportions and handling.

However, the majority of car manufacturers now offer so-called "compact" sport utility vehicles.

Essentially, these are jacked-up estate cars with four-wheel drive systems and many of them are as easy to operate and as nimble as a hot hatchback.

BMW's X3 was one of the first of the breed and over a ten-year period it has been refined to the point where it is a very capable machine on- or off-road.

There are many versions to choose from, encapsulating a wide variety of power outputs and price points.

The base two-litre diesel X3 provides a gutsy 190bhp engine and costs a relatively reasonable £30,865, for example.

However, we were lucky enough to test the top-of-the-range xDrive35d M Sport, priced at a whopping £46,000

This version accelerates from standstill to 62mph in a sports car-like 5.3 seconds yet its official average fuel consumption is a meagre 47 miles per gallon.

In real-world driving you will probably see ten miles per gallon knocked off this figure but it is still relatively economical for the type of vehicle, especially as it is powered by a high-performance three-litre turbo diesel engine pushing out 317bhp.

The X3 range has just undergone a mid-life update to include new super-efficient engines, fresh styling changes inside and out and lots of new standard equipment.

Our model came with some very tasty treats like 19-inch alloys and an eight-speed automatic gearbox with paddleshift controls on the steering wheel.

With five doors and 550 litres of rear load space (1,600 litres with the back seats folded down) it is undoubtedly a practical vehicle and its high driving position gives a great view ahead.

Downsides include its willingness to wallow through the corners due to a high centre of gravity and, for some people, the fact this latest iteration has lost the boxy, tough-looking design of its predecessor.

But it feels fairly nimble to drive, accelerating very swiftly with no vibration at all through the steering wheel or floor.

New technology abounds inside with a digital dashboard display, electronic parking brake and switchable economy and performance gearbox settings.

It's also worth considering upgrading from the standard six-speed manual to the eight-speed automatic gearbox for £1,600.

It may be pricey but the gear changes are ultra-slick, you will see improved economy and the residual value of the car will be higher when the time comes to sell.

However you specify it, though, the X3 is simply a great all-round machine. ■

...TRIED AND TESTED...TRIED AND TESTED...TRIED AND TESTED...TRIED AND TESTED...

WHAT WE LIKED...

EFFICIENT ENGINES

The best-selling two-litre diesel automatic achieves 56.5 miles per gallon while pushing out a mere 131g/km of CO₂. BMW claims the top-of-the-range 35d M Sport model we tested can attain 47mpg and 157g/km.



STANDARD EQUIPMENT

A selection of new treats such as an automatic tailgate, two-zone air conditioning, Nevada leather and USB/Bluetooth technology alongside established standard kit such as heated front seats, cruise control and park distance sensors make this car very user-friendly.

DASHBOARD

The X3 now displays 3D digital graphics in full colour. It tells you how efficiently you're driving, how your 4x4 system is performing and an optional satnav display shows you the reversing camera images.



WHAT WE DIDN'T...



PRICE

It is hard to justify the premium in price the 35d M Sport model commands over the lesser-powered versions, although it costs about the same as similarly specified high performance rivals from other prestige manufacturers, such as the Porsche Macan S and Audi SQ5.

HANDLING

Not as car-like as you might expect with some definite wallow detected when pushed hard around bends. But the X3's handling is certainly still respectable for a high-riding off-road vehicle of this size.



OVERALL VERDICT: There is plenty to like about this sport utility vehicle. Some decent pricing options and new technology make it worthy of consideration.

★★★★★

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SOLDIERSPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long

Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Call to arms: LCpl Semesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) became the first soldier to be capped by England since 1999 when he lined up against world champions New Zealand last month. Read more on page 85...



GRID guide



Endurance

Format: Races last between three and six hours

Riders: Two to three per team, operating in a relay system

Competition: ACU National Endurance Series featuring rookie, clubman and national 600 and 1,000 categories

Season: Runs from March to October with an average of one event per month

Top performers: The pairing of Sgt Richard Spencer-Fleet (REME) and WO2 Wayne Morgan (PWRR)



Sprint

Format: Races last between eight and 14 laps

Riders: 12 take to the grid with results from the top eight counting towards team totals in the Inter-Services

Competition: Thundersport GB Race Series which hosts the Forces championship within its national events

Season: Runs from April to October and features nine rounds including Donington Park and Brands Hatch

Top performer: WO2 Kris Sanders (RE)



Picture: Will Collins

On the right track

AS the chequered flag came down on a highly successful season for the Army Road Race Team their attention immediately turned to next year's campaign and the bid to make the adrenalin-fuelled sport even stronger.

Spread across two disciplines – endurance and sprint racing – the motorcyclists have achieved Inter-Services glory and tested themselves against full-time professional outfits at national level in 2014.

With an impressive trophy haul safely gathered the soldiers are now looking for more personnel to join the ranks so that the success story can continue.

SoldierSport met the riders during some well-deserved downtime at Tidworth to reflect on this year's efforts and to discuss their hopes for the future...



“**The main aim is to push the message out there and get more people involved**”

WO2 Peter Brown (REME)

» THE Army caused quite a stir in the 2014 Auto-Cycle Union National Endurance Series as the pairing of Sgt Richard Spencer-Fleet (REME) and WO2 Wayne Morgan (PWRR) secured top honours in the rookie and clubman 600 categories.

They were one of three Service teams to take to the track in nine energy-sapping rounds and manager WO2 Peter Brown (REME) has warmly received their results across the board.

He was one of the military set-up's founding members and having compiled a five-year plan to expand the sport he has been delighted with the progress to date.

“When it started it was just an ex-soldier and myself taking part; I wanted to race but there was not a lot of input from the Army at the time,” the senior NCO explained.

“It grew from there and

we now have five serving personnel and four ex-Servicemen or Reservists involved with the group.

"At the start of the season our aim was to potentially win the rookie class in the 600 and 1,000 series, while claiming the odd podium at clubman level.

"But we have outdone what we thought was possible.

"The main aim now is to push the message out there and get more people involved, whether they are riders,

mechanics or pit crew.

"Our long-term goal is to get guys competing at European and world superbike events. We would like to achieve that by 2018 as part of our plan."

Funding from the British Army Motorsport Association and individual sponsors has helped the cause but the riders still face a significant financial burden.

However, their love of the sport offsets such hardships and the opportunity to compete at tracks such as

Brands Hatch and Donington Park makes it all worthwhile.

"The majority of us are motorcycle enthusiasts," Brown said. "A track day will give you an initial insight into what your bike can do and racing is the next step.

"It is an adrenaline rush but now I'm getting a little bit older I get a thrill from other people doing well.

"Seeing Spence and Moggy achieve so much has given me as much satisfaction as gaining a podium myself." ■

PACE setters



» DYNAMIC duo Sgt Richard Spencer-Fleet (REME) and WO2 Wayne Morgan (PWRR) scooped an array of trophies as they stormed their way to the front of the grid during the 2014 campaign.

The pairing won the rookie and clubman 600 categories in the ACU National Endurance Series and have been elevated to the competition's upper echelons for next year.

"We met for the first time at the opening round this season and we clicked straight away," Spencer-Fleet (pictured left) said.

"The step up is going to be a challenge and we will be racing against bigger and better teams.

"If we could finish in the top three it would be an amazing achievement."



Sprint kings power home

» WHILE success at national level was the highlight of the endurance season the Army's sprint team achieved their main aim of claiming the Inter-Services title.

Having opened a healthy lead over their Forces rivals the soldiers saw the gap closed after a disappointing penultimate round at Donington Park.

However, a return to form in the final race of the campaign saw them claim the military's top prize, with WO2 Kris Sanders (RE) securing the individual honours.

"It all went down to the last event on the calendar," team member SSgt Andy Kewley (RAPTC) told *SoldierSport*.

"The Royal Air Force had a good start to the year, we caught them up and then managed to get ahead.

"But we had three guys crash out at Donington, where they scored well, and the gap was suddenly closed.

"However, we did enough at Mallory Park and went on to win the Inter-Services."

The races are staged as part of the Thundersport GB series and while personnel are keen to push themselves against civvy



Picture: Ian Boddy Superbikes

teams beating their military rivals is the true driving force.

"We look at lap times and scores but our main goal is to see how well we are doing compared to the other Service set-ups," Kewley added.

"There can be a grid of 40 riders in the 600 series. You are racing against 39 guys but you are also looking to score points for the team.

"We have friendly banter but once we get out on the track it is quite competitive.

"We've had a great season and our aim is to come back next year and have Army riders in the top three positions."

SOLDIERSPORT SITREP

Likes on the Team Army Endurance Racing Facebook page

411

The winning margin, in points, for the Army sprint team in the 2014 Inter-Services

Top speed, in miles per hour, of the Yamaha R6 bike used in the endurance series



Game brief

Date: November 11, 2014

Competition: Remembrance match

Venue: The Recreation Ground, Bath

Combined Services

Terry 1	Dwyer 2	Manning 3
McNally 4	Cormack 5	
Fairbrother 6	Jope 8	Mundy 7
Stephen 9	Dixon 10	
Wessels 12	Nacamavuto 13	
Gillespie 11	Mann 14	
	Humphrey 15	

Front-row feedback

The boys understood the significance of the game and put everything out there with 100 per cent effort and commitment.

I think the scoreline flattered the Barbarians. In the second half we were a little disorganised in defence and they managed to capitalise on a few errors.

We had a really good team dynamic this year. There was a lot of military banter flying around but there were no egos on show.

This fixture is still massively important to us, especially as it's the 100th anniversary of the First World War. It is an honour to be involved.

LSgt Matt Dwyer (WG)



Barbarians claim Services scalp

Remembrance match

Combined Services 15
Barbarians 31

ABRACE from former teammate Josh Drauniniu condemned the Combined Services to a 31-15 defeat against the world-famous Barbarians in rugby union's annual remembrance fixture.

The ex-Royal Navy star crossed twice in a devastating second-half burst to tip the contest in his side's favour after the military men battled their way to a slender lead at the interval.

A bumper crowd packed the stands at Bath's Recreation

Ground for the game and it was the Baa-Baas who struck first when flanker Jon Edwards surged home from a lineout during the early exchanges.

But the setback failed to deter the Services and after Spr James Dixon (RE) saw two penalty attempts sail agonisingly wide they opened their account with a superb breakaway try.

With the Barbarians probing deep inside opposition territory Army centre LCpl Peceli Nacamavuto (RE) ended the foray when he intercepted a stray pass and sprinted under the posts for a converted score.

Dixon extended the lead shortly after the break with a well-struck penalty and the Forces outfit looked to be in firm control.

However, Drauniniu restored parity when he touched down in the corner following a prolonged spell of pressure and the Worcester man delivered a killer blow moments later as he ghosted to the line after intercepting the ball inside his own half.

Replacement Lt Luke Robinson (29 Cdo Regt, RA) fired an immediate response as he rounded off a strong forward drive to offer the Services hope but further efforts from man-of-the-match Charlie Walker-Blair and Alan Brown sealed the win for the invitational side.

Dixon caught the eye with a strong display at fly half while Army stalwart LCpl Chris Budgen (R Welsh) took to the field for a late cameo in Barbarians' colours. ■

Minute by minute: Army points



23

LCpl Peceli Nacamavuto snares an interception and sprints to the line



Spr James Dixon slots a penalty to add to his earlier conversion

41



Lt Luke Robinson bundles home

63



England's debut man

RUNNING out in front of a full house at Twickenham is nothing new for Army star LCpl Semesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) but last month's appearance at the world-famous stadium had a decidedly different feel.

Instead of locking horns with military rivals from the Royal Navy the 27-year-old faced a much sterner test in the shape of the fearsome All Blacks in the opening fixture of England's autumn internationals.

Unfortunately, the Bath flier was starved of possession on the day, meaning he was unable to unleash the attacking repertoire that has made him one of the deadliest finishers in the Aviva Premiership.

But after drawing high praise for his defensive efforts in the narrow 24-21 defeat the Serviceman was unfortunately ruled out of his adopted nation's clashes with South Africa and Samoa due to a hip injury.

With the squad for the Australia test due to be named as this issue went to press it remained to be seen whether Rokoduguni would return to action in time but with the Six Nations campaign looming on the horizon further opportunities are sure to follow.

His call to arms capped a remarkable rise for a player who was only given his first taste of professional rugby two years ago and speaking to *SoldierSport* during a busy month he said an elevation to the game's upper echelons was never part of his original career path.

"At 19 I made a plan to join the Army so I could send money home for my family; but things change," Rokoduguni added.

"My rugby was going well, I joined Bath and now I have an England call.

"I am confident in my abilities. I've got pace and strength out wide and hopefully I can have an impact on the team."

Inevitable comparisons were drawn between the pressures of international rugby and front-line operations in Helmand province but for the Warminster-based soldier there was one glaring difference.

"Out in Afghanistan you have to be up to speed with your skills and drills, you have to have discipline and be alert at all times," he said.

"If you mess up out there it can cost a life but if you make a mistake on the rugby pitch there is always another game. But it is a big step up."

The Herrick veteran stems from a proud military background and his father is in the Fijian Army while his brother, Rupeni, serves with 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

And it was a former Service teammate – Apo Satala (ex-Scots) – who formed the inspiration for his impressive progress on the field.

"He travelled the world playing rugby for Fiji," explained Rokoduguni, the first serving soldier to be capped for England since Tim Rodber (ex-Green Howards) in 1999.

"He was the one I really looked up to. He said that one day I'd be like him and here I am." ■





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Quality. The OU is ranked amongst the top UK universities for the quality of its teaching.



Riggers plot new course

THE Army's outrigger canoe team is striving for further success on the water after a promising debut season in 2014.

As newcomers to the scene the soldiers embarked on their very first race during the summer when they travelled to France for La Roquebrunaise Cap Martin – an arduous 35-kilometre event off the country's south coast.

With the River Thames used for regular training sessions the change of scenery offered a new challenge for the squad but they managed to complete the course in a time of 2hr 45min.

"For many of our guys it was their first time paddling at sea and it was a totally different environment compared to what we are used to at home," said team co-founder Sgt Tony Luciano (AGC [SPS]).

"But the crew did well. Even though we didn't win any trophies we gained a lot of experience and definitely grew as a squad."

A further test followed in the shape of London's River Marathon, which attracted more than 300 boats in a variety of classes.

The 21.6-mile route passed a number of the capital's famous landmarks and the

Army vessel reached the finish line in 2hr 43min.

"The biggest challenge was the sheer number of crews on the water," Luciano explained.

"The first half of the race seemed to pass quite quickly but it was only when we got out of central London that we managed to get enough space and really start making up some ground." ■



For more information on how to get involved in outrigger canoeing email hcmr-syscoord@mod.uk or call 94631 2858.



Downhill delight

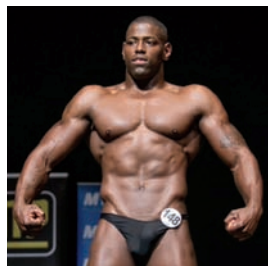
ARMY riders produced a blistering display on two wheels to secure their second successive Inter-Services downhill mountain biking title.

More than 50 riders descended on the Revolution Bike Park in Wales for the event, with LCpl Chris Borrowdale (RE) clinching a narrow victory over teammate Sgt James Heal (RTR) to claim the individual crown.

The Reds repelled a strong challenge from the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy to take four of the top five spots.

See the Army Cycling Union page on Facebook for more details on how to get involved.

SPORT SHORTS



Simon shapes up

BODYBUILDER Bdr Shane Simon (RA) is looking to make the step up to national level in 2015 after an encouraging debut year.

The soldier recently missed out on elevation to the elite standard as he finished fourth at a qualifying event but with more competitions to come he hopes to make the grade.

"I'm happy with my performances and if I push myself harder I know I can excel," he said.



Picture: Ian Robertson

Kinloss calling

THE Scots Camanachd shinty team is hosting a training camp in Kinloss in a bid to attract newcomers to the sport.

Staged at the home of 39 Engineer Regiment, the sessions will run from February 26 to March 1 and are open to males and females, from novices to experienced players.

There will also be an opportunity for soldiers to feature in the first Inter-Services six-a-side tournament and to qualify as a shinty coach.

Email robertstoddart@hotmail.com for more information on the event.

Ring report

Date: October 29, 2014

Competition: Army Boxing Night

Venue: ATR Pirbright

Results

Pte Kyle Morrison beat Nathan Grey – unanimous

Pte Megan Reid beat Zoe Hunter-Smith – unanimous

Spr Patrick Malloy lost to Freddy Newbry – split decision

Pte Shaun Young beat Mark Desmond – unanimous

Cpl Matt Wells beat Ben White – unanimous

LCpl Byron Kenway lost to Adam Barker – split decision

Spr Marc Truslove beat Lee Jenkins – technical knockout

Pte John Marvin beat Chris McCormack – unanimous

Coach's comment



It was a great win with some phenomenal performances.

Patrick Malloy could have nicked his fight and that would have made it 7-1.

We controlled things from the centre of the ring and we looked strong. It was a brilliant team effort and it would be unfair to single out any individuals.

The lads are developing well, they want to improve and push towards the elite squad. They are adapting to the new scoring system and are stepping forward to take charge.

Gnr Jimmy Randall



ATR Pirbright Boxing

**British Army 6
Southern Counties 2**

THE new-look Army boxing team produced some inspired form in the ring as they swept past the challenge of the Southern Counties in impressive style.

With a number of fresh faces joining the squad this season head coach SSgt Jason Browning (RAPTC) has been keen to see his fighters gain more experience and a 6-2 win at ATR Pirbright underlined their potential.

Lightweight Pte Kyle Morrison (RLC) gave the Reds the perfect start as he

defeated Nathan Grey via a unanimous decision.

After an encouraging opening round the soldier picked up the pace in the second and with the hook and jab proving to be effective weapons he took the bout with relative ease.

Pte Megan Reid (RLC) proved to be too strong for Zoe Hunter-Smith as she triumphed in the only female contest of the evening but Spr Patrick Malloy (RE) was unfortunate not to follow suit as he squared off against Freddy Newbry.

The welterweight prospect showed superior fitness and looked to hold the advantage but the victory was handed to his rival on a split decision.

Pte Shaun Young (Mercian) ensured the team's

disappointment didn't last long as he recorded a comfortable win and the superb LCpl Matt Wells (REME) stretched the lead to 4-1 as he outclassed Ben White.

Middleweight fighter LCpl Byron Kenway (R Anglian) suffered a narrow loss to Adam Barker after three tight rounds but the Service's light heavyweights ensured the match finished in style.

Having forced a standing count just moments after the opening bell Spr Marc Truslove (RE) landed another brutal right hook to defeat Lee Jenkins via technical knockout.

And Pte John Marvin (PWRR, pictured) brought the curtain down with a demolition job on his rival that included two standing counts and a barrage of brutal blows. ■

Tale of the tape



2
Standing counts inflicted by Spr Marc Truslove in his victory

Officers, recruits and guests in the crowd at ATR Pirbright – the event is designed to introduce Service newcomers to the art of boxing

550



Boxers selected from a pre-season training camp

32



Novice Natty's title win

SUPER heavyweight LCpl Natty Ngwenya (Gren Gds) led the Army's charge at the England Boxing Development Championships as he defied the odds to claim a national title.

The Serviceman surrendered a 16-kilogram weight advantage to his opponent but his considerable ring craft saw him take the contest via a unanimous decision.

Ngwenya faced two punishing bouts on his way to the B Category final and the experience held him in good stead for another challenging match.

"He was not a typical super heavyweight," the fighter told *SoldierSport*. "He weighed in at 114 kilograms – whereas I was only 98 – and he was strong with it."

"In the first round I looked to work the body but he caught

me with a good shot to the back of the head.

"He was a tough opponent. I could see he was starting to struggle so I upped the tempo in the third and managed to out work him and get the win."

"I don't think it has really sunk in yet – I'm now a national champion."



Bouts fought by LCpl Natty Ngwenya (Gren Gds) – resulting in 14 wins

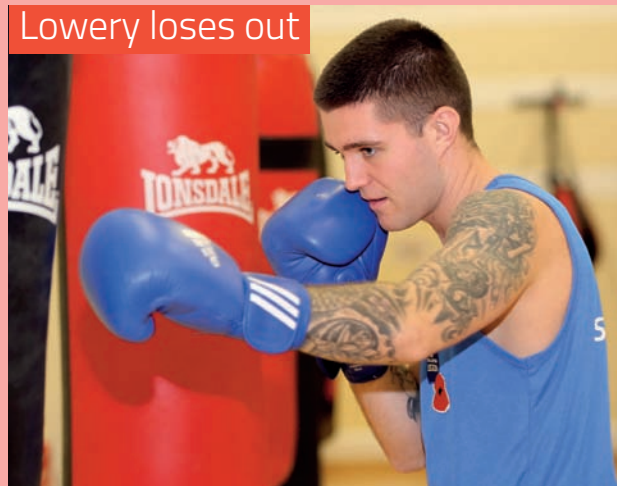
The victor is planning on dropping down to heavyweight and wants to push for a place on the Army team at next year's Inter-Services clash.

He is also targeting a return to the national championships at elite level.

"I'm only looking at short-term goals at the moment," Ngwenya explained. "It's important that I don't jump the gun."

"I think I would be a lot quicker and hit harder at heavyweight, so that is what I'm looking to do." ■

Lowery loses out



» **TEAMMATE** Fus Joe Lowery (RRF) came close to emulating Ngwenya's success but the light heavyweight tasted defeat in his Category A final.

Rival Knmalicar Wright benefited from a height and weight advantage but the soldier gave a good account of himself in what proved to be a tight contest.

"I was obviously disappointed to lose," Lowery said. "He was a strong guy. I did my best to get inside him but then I found out how good he was at close range."

"It turned out to be a bit of a brawl late on and I got a few cuts; it was probably the toughest contest I've had."

The fighter was selected for the Service squad after catching the eye at last season's Army Individual Championships and is now looking to become a firm fixture in the set-up.

"This tournament has been a great experience for me," he said. "I want to earn a place on the team and reaching the final has hopefully cemented that."

"I'm now going to drop down to middleweight as my last bout really highlighted the size difference between myself and my opponents."

"My goal is to be involved for the next season or two and progress from there. I'm fortunate to come from a boxing battalion so I have their full support."

Route to the final

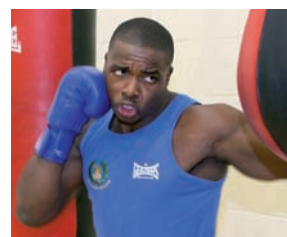


FUS JOE LOWERY – LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

QUARTER FINAL: Defeated Lee-Adam Boney (Balham)

SEMI FINAL: Defeated Charlie Forte (Clacton)

FINAL: Lost to Knmalicar Wright (Tigers)



LCPL NATTY NGWENYA – SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT

QUARTER FINAL: Defeated Courtney Gileard (Hurlingham)

SEMI FINAL: Defeated Tom Welch (Brighton)

FINAL: Defeated Ryan Fuller (Vulcan)

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Men in the middle: Maj Ollie Ormiston (R Anglian, left) and Col Dave Wakefield take charge at the Newbury Tens



Referees take the whistle

WITH more and more players taking to the pitch at the start of the new rugby season there has been an increased workload for those charged with officiating the game.

Thankfully, the Army Rugby Union has all bases covered due to a flourishing refereeing scene that boasts more than 400 members and is among the biggest in the country.

Three entry-level courses are held in Aldershot each year for aspiring officials and with further events in Andover, Cyprus and Brunei there is no shortage of soldiers willing to pick up the whistle.

A total of 106 referees were trained during the 2013/14 campaign and 18 have already qualified this season – meaning the talent

pool is as well stocked as ever.

Newcomers were put through their paces at the Newbury Tens competition earlier this year and with more games to come their experience will soon grow.

“As a back-row player becoming a referee is a bit like going over to the dark side,” said the newly qualified Maj Ollie Ormiston (R Anglian).

“But if you bring your passion for the game as well as your playing experience you can really make a difference, and ensure the guys have a safe, enjoyable and fair match.

“My biggest lesson from doing the course was how many grey areas there are for the referee to manage and get right – it’s a testament to their ability that they largely get it correct.”

Fellow referee Tpr Matthew Prentice, a Reservist in The Royal Yeomanry, took charge of his first match at Newbury and having enjoyed the experience is now looking forward to his next game.

“I had two colonels helping me so there was no pressure,” he said. “Being out there is so intense and you don’t want to let the players down.

“After the game one of the captains was kind enough to say he hadn’t realised it was my first time refereeing, which was a great boost.” ■



For more details on Army refereeing and how to get involved visit www.armyrugbyunion.org/aru-referees or email johnvoss1@hotmail.com

MONTH in sport

December’s key fixtures...



WHAT: British Army v Royal Navy boxing

WHEN: Tuesday, December 2 (Dinner and boxing from 1900)

WHERE: The Grosvenor Hotel, London

COMMENTS: Having lost to the Senior Service earlier in the season the new-look Army team will be seeking revenge as they return to the ring



WHAT: Army women v British Fire Service/Police rugby union

WHEN: Wednesday, December 3 (1430 kick-off)

WHERE: Imber Court, London

COMMENTS: With victories against Exeter University and Cardiff Quins to their name this season the Reds will be looking to continue their winning run



WHAT: Army v German Bundeswehr football

WHEN: Wednesday, December 17 (1930 kick-off)

WHERE: Aldershot Town Football Club

COMMENTS: Match to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the First World War Christmas truce

Hoare hits Hawaii



TRIATHLON star Cpl Becky Hoare (REME) pushed her endurance limits to the extreme by competing in the World Ironman Championships in Hawaii.

The 24-year-old tackled a 2.4-mile swim in the Pacific Ocean followed by a 112-mile cycle stage and a full marathon to finish sixth in her age category.

The soldier trained for more than 20 hours a week in the months prior to the gruelling challenge and was delighted with her performance in what were tough conditions.

“The wind was particularly difficult during the six-hour cycling phase; you have to be mentally tough to get through it,” the athlete explained.

SPORT
SHORTS

Loggies' cup win

THE Royal Logistic Corps have been celebrating success on the court after they took top spot at the Inter-Corps Netball Championships.

An 8-6 victory over the Adjutant General's Corps saw them lift the division one trophy, while the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers claimed the division two crown.

The Army's elite players return to action in January as they begin preparations for the Inter-Services competition.



Deen delivers

BOBSLEIGH star LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) continued his fine start to the season by piloting Great Britain's four-man crew to a gold medal at the America's Cup.

The soldier helped the team to a combined time of 1min 36.66sec from their two runs – an effort that saw them finish ahead of their American and French rivals.

The event is seen as an opportunity to test new kit and strategies ahead of the World Cup, which gets under way this month.

→ Team of the month

Army Surf Kayak Team



THE Army's paddle stars conquered their Forces rivals – as well as the testing waters of Saunton Sands – to be crowned the Inter-Services surf kayak champions for 2014.

Challenging surf levels of between four and five feet created a succession of large waves for the competition but the soldiers held firm and some fantastic individual displays saw them finish more than 300 points clear of their nearest rivals.

Maj Alex Burt (AGC [ETS]) took top honours in the long boat class with teammate Capt Ed Martin (RE) – who cut his final run short to rescue a surfer from the rip current – coming third.

Further success followed in the short boat, where CSjt Marty Aldrich (Rifles) and Capt Ash Jeyes (R Signals) finished first and third respectively, while

newcomer Sgt "L-Jay" Perry (REME) took third place in the women's competition.

The wave ski also proved to be a happy hunting ground, with Maj "Gib" Barclay (RA) and SSgt "Mac" McConnachie (RAMC) claiming second and third.

The Service fielded a 12-strong team for the competition but skipper WO2 Mark Whittington (AGC [SPS]) told *SoldierSport* fresh talent is also needed.

"We had 75 competitors at the Army championships and that is the biggest turnout we've had for a long time," he said.

"It is important those people come back. We have got a few stalwarts but we need younger paddlers to take things forward.

"We have boats available for anyone wanting to come and have a go. All disciplines have felt the hit of

operational commitments in recent times but now there is a big push on sport and adventurous training.

"It is a real adrenalin rush and a newcomer getting in the boat for the first time will be riding waves by the end of a week with us."

For more details visit the Army Sport Control Board page on MOSS and click on the ArmyC anoe Union tab.



Inter-Services Surf Kayak Championships – Saunton Sands, November 15

1. Army – 785
2. Royal Navy – 464
3. Royal Air Force – 396

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Final word

Following debate about the British Army's links to Christianity, we asked troops for their views on religion and service...



LCpl Craig Arnold (REME)

Christianity should stay in the Army, although we cater for everyone. I was baptised on exercise. The padre was in our location and it sparked up a bit of debate about what he does. In times of trial, I think everyone turns to religion for guidance, especially on ops when people are facing death. It can be a comfort.



Sgt Tony Duncan (LD)

I wouldn't say I'm religious but I believe in faith. It's important during operations and peacetime because, irrespective of where you are in the world, it gives food for thought. Joking aside about the padre and his Haribo supply, if he gives a good service people might walk away trying to conduct themselves in a more positive manner.



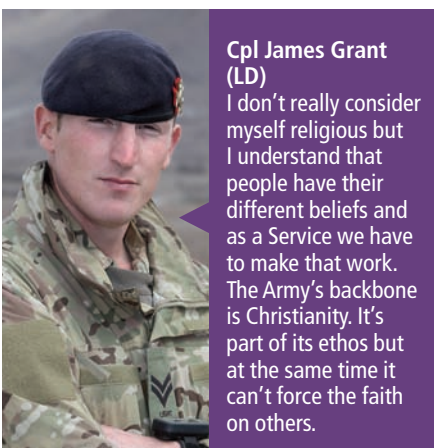
Tpr John Blacklock (LD)

Christianity still has a massive role in the Army. I'm Roman Catholic and although I don't practise as such, I try to abide by the rules. When I'm on ops it's a bit more important. I'll go to church and carry a crucifix on my dog tags. During the more scary times I think about it more – it's like a good luck charm.



Lt Mike Hague (RTR)

I like the Army's Christian traditions but at the same time I can totally respect those who think it's a bit too "God-bothery". The padres get some stick but everyone likes them coming round because they're nice people to talk to. It would be a shame to lose that. Faith is more important in the Army than in a civilian organisation because it can be life or death. Faced with dying, I'm sure very few people would like to think there is nothing afterwards.



Cpl James Grant (LD)

I don't really consider myself religious but I understand that people have their different beliefs and as a Service we have to make that work. The Army's backbone is Christianity. It's part of its ethos but at the same time it can't force the faith on others.



Capt Naveed Muhammad (R Sigs)

I am the co-chairman of the Armed Forces Muslim Association and my view is that there is definitely a place for religion in the military – I don't think we can be a secular organisation. There is space for the Christian traditions to continue around repatriations and remembrance. If there was a repatriation of a Sikh or Muslim soldier it would be inappropriate for him to have a Christian ceremony but the different faith organisations within the Army could accommodate that. I don't think there should be a stepping down of Christianity but perhaps a stepping up of the other religions so everyone is on a level playing field.

Maj Alex Jess (RADC)

The military has been predominantly Christian-based in the past and personally I think that should endure. It unites us under one flag. The padres' services are founded on Christianity, yes, but the basis of it is love for all. They will welcome anyone who comes to them for emotional and pastoral care.



Cfn Thomas Davies (REME)

I'm Church of England on my dog tags but in reality I don't believe in anything especially. I'll listen to other people's views but I don't like being preached at. Personally, if someone started praying for me it wouldn't mean much, but it might give some people hope – if they pray to a higher power they feel safer.



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