

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



APRIL 2022

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40 years on

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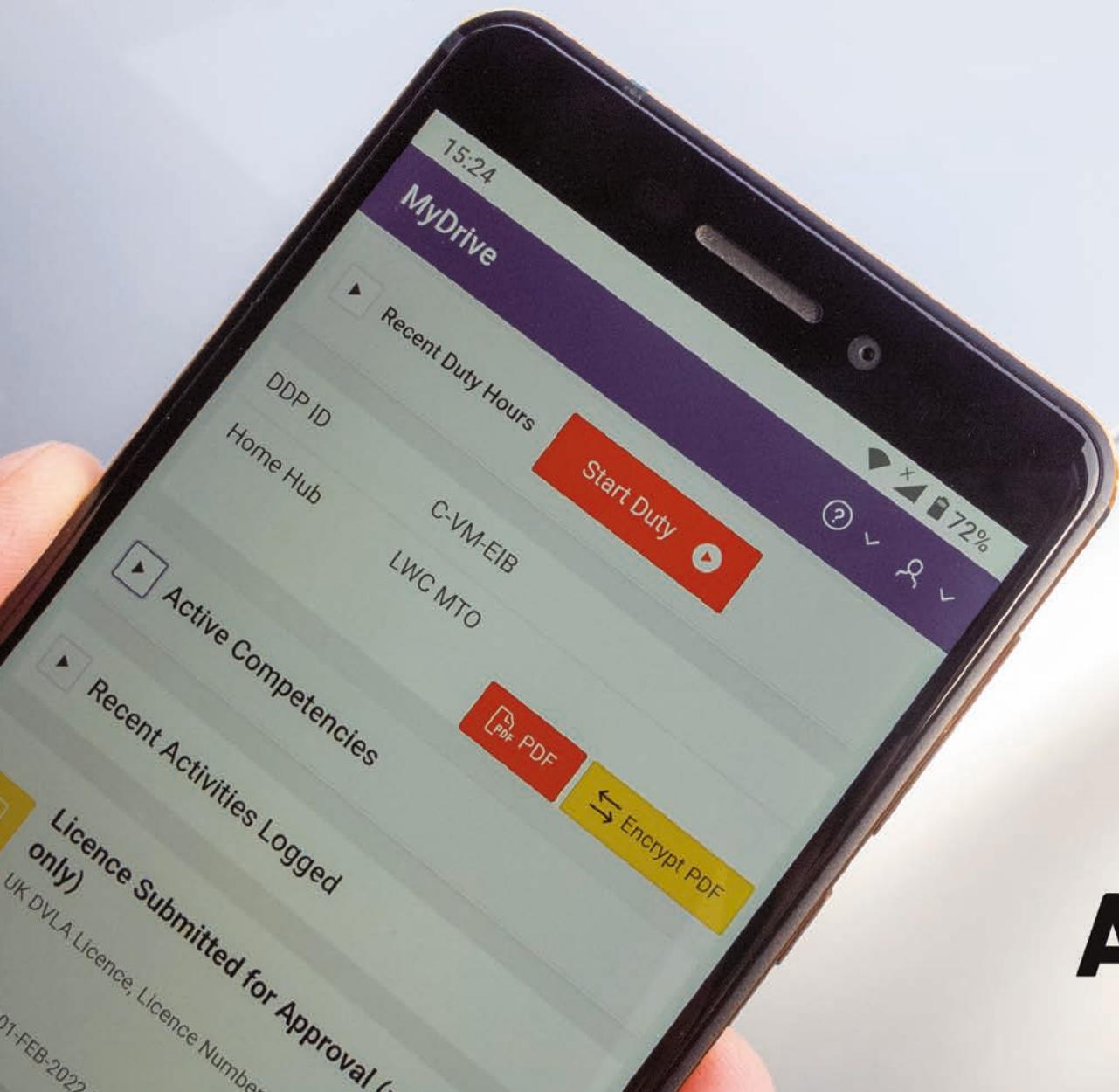
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Variety show



EVENTS in Eastern Europe are reminding everyone of the fact that a military force can never be over-prepared for conflict.

Thankfully, the British Army continues to provide a huge array of training opportunities.

1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles have managed to combine urban and conventional drills and live firing in Sennybridge with tunnel warfare practice in one package (page 27), while the Coldstream Guards were given the chance to explore the potential of drones in, of all places, the Jamaican jungle (page 36).

Innovation has also become the order of the day for one particular gun battery that is now responsible for testing a whole host of new technologies and tactics on behalf of the Royal Artillery (page 32).

The focus on agility, flexibility and openness to new ideas have long been important elements of the Service's training doctrine.

These qualities served the country well 40 years ago, when the Falkland Islands were invaded (page 44) and they have made crucial differences in theatres such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

And with the world currently proving to be as unpredictable as ever, their value has maybe never been higher.

Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

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TROOPS ORDERED EAST

BRITISH personnel have joined Nato colleagues in bolstering the Alliance's eastern flank amid Russia's brutal campaign in Ukraine.

At the time of writing it had been confirmed members of 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery with the Sky Sabre air defence system were bound for Poland.

And in nearby Estonia, a beefed-up battlegroup led by 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh was in place – with UK troop numbers in the state doubled.

Leaders of Nato were also in the process of discussing further defensive measures at a summit in Brussels.

The Sky Sabre deployment came at a request by the government of Poland, which has a border with Ukraine. The move would help protect the Nato member's airspace, explained Defence Secretary Ben Wallace.

Maj John Axcell (RA), 16 Regiment's acting CO, said personnel were focused on the task.

Speaking from the unit's base at Thorney Island, Hampshire, he told *Soldier*: "The troops are absolutely motivated and very keen to deploy – Sky Sabre is a new system and marks a step change from our old Rapier."

Conversion training on the equipment had recently been taking place, with gunners becoming accustomed to the kit and its capabilities, he continued.

Built around a radar, electronics hub and launcher, Sky Sabre can engage up to eight targets at a time while its sophisticated Common Anti-Air Modular



Picture: Cpl Anil Gurung, RLC

Missiles have a far greater range than their Rapier equivalent.

The weapon – which has been operational on the Falkland Islands for several months – can also be integrated with a suite of other allied systems.

Meanwhile, members of 1 R Welsh have begun leading Nato's enhanced forward presence battlegroup in Estonia. The formation has been reinforced with Royal Tank Regiment personnel who are now staying in country having completed the previous winter tour, along with French and Danish troops.

The outfit has 1,200 soldiers – two thirds of them British – plus Challenger II tanks and Warriors.

Lt Col Rupert Streatfeild, CO of 1 R Welsh, said his soldiers were glad to be back after a five-year gap.

"We return a much larger battlegroup, where operating alongside more Nato partners is a cornerstone of effective deterrence," he added.

The personnel and their loved ones have been praised for their resilience – see "Ground View" on page 14.

Boris Johnson hosts a Joint Expeditionary Force summit in London last month as Volodymyr Zelenskyy joins via video link

Picture: Andrew Parsons

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SOLDIER – Magazine of the British Army
Ordnance Barracks, Government Road,
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU.

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



1. FLORIDA SKY DIVERS TEAM UP

THE Tigers and Red Devils parachute display teams took to the skies above Florida as preparations for the new season ramped up.

Personnel from both outfits trained alongside US military counterparts from the Special Operations Command Parachute Team and the Golden Knights as perfect weather allowed for a busy jump schedule.

Capt Oliver Soord-Gurney (PWRR), the Tigers' OC, told *Soldier* each member of his 12-strong squad averaged around

80 jumps during the three-week deployment – an effort that would be impossible in the UK.

"It is vital training for us," he added. "Good weather is guaranteed, and the facilities are superb, with three aircraft continually running."

The Tigers have a full programme planned for 2022 that includes performances at air shows in Bournemouth and Eastbourne, as well as overseas displays in Denmark and the Czech Republic.

2. PERU TROOPS TAKE ON INCA TRAIL

MEMBERS of 3rd (UK) Division Headquarters are embarking on an expedition to Machu Picchu – a Unesco World Heritage Site and one of the so-called New Seven Wonders of the World.

The 14-strong team will tackle the five-day Salkantay trail which takes a scenic route to the famous Inca citadel, some 8,000 feet up in the Andes Mountains.

Climbing close to the snow line and dropping into the sub-tropical forest level, the 50-mile path will test the troops' endurance, resilience and personal administration skills.

Expedition leader WO2 Sachin Thapa (R Signals) said: "The high altitude and fast changing weather conditions will make it a great challenge. The goal of the exercise is to provide an arduous but enjoyable activity in a remote environment, with the secondary aim of developing team cohesion, self-confidence and leadership."



Picture: Shutterstock

Thanks for the memories

Trails End Camp closes
its doors – page 40

1. FLORIDA

2. PERU



3. GERMANY CONCEPT ON TRIAL

RESERVIST Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers teamed up with their Regular counterparts and civilians to help 3rd (UK) Division prepare for this summer's Exercise Defender Europe.

Thirty members of Portsmouth-based 28 Divisional Support Company, 103 Battalion, REME, deployed to Sennelager to trial the "whole force" concept while carrying out a range of maintenance tasks on combat and support platforms.

Under the Future Soldier plan, the station has become a global hub for training. Part of its remit is to provide motorised assets for two battlegroups at short notice.

It was the first time Reserve



personnel had been charged with leading the process and the unit's OC, Maj Abi Brown, said they had "performed superbly."

The unfolding conflict in Ukraine also added a sense of realism and heightened purpose to proceedings, explained Cpl Nick Green.

"It made a real difference," he added. "I think everybody realised this felt a lot more than just another routine exercise."

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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A 20-STRONG team of serving soldiers, veterans and civvies will cycle 850 miles from Stanford Hall to Monaco this month to raise money for the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre Benevolent Fund. To support them visit [justgiving.com/campaign/Pedal2Principality](https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/Pedal2Principality)

4. JORDAN INFANTRY INSIGHTS

PIONEERING Servicewomen have notched up a notable first for the British Army after helping mentor counterparts in the Middle East.

The infantry, from 2nd Battalion, The Rifles' female engagement team, assisted their Jordanian allies in honing skills during a testing desert training package.

The group joined B Company on Exercise Olive Grove and partnered with women from the Jordanian 15th Battalion, King Hussain Bin Ali Brigade.

"We focused on integration and training on urban operations," said 2Lt Emily Smith. "The ladies were initially shy but we soon built up a great rapport."



Picture: Robbie Hodgson

5. ITALY DRONE DRILLS

THE British Army's only Reserve anti-air warfare unit, 106 Regiment, Royal Artillery, have been participating in a Nato counter-drone exercise at an Italian military range in Sardinia.

Ten operators of the Starstreak air defence system teamed up with their Belgian and Italian counterparts to test US, European and Israeli technology.

Capt Tim Bird, an IT specialist on civvy street, said the trials had been an "eye-opener".

"Drones can be very fast and hard to detect so neutralising them can be a real challenge," he added.

"We've evaluated old school tactics like shooting them down with machine guns, and also engaged a quadcopter and a fixed wing UAS using both Skywall net capture and a directed energy weapon."

"I hope tech of the sort we've been evaluating can become part of our arsenal because it's hard to overestimate the threat drones now pose."



6. NORWAY OUTBACK OP

TROOPS from B Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles deployed to Shoalwater Bay, Queensland, to prepare for their rotation to 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team.

They will return to the UK from Brunei in July, swapping places with colleagues from the formation's 1st Battalion (see page 27).

6. NORWAY COLD WEATHER SERIAL WRAPS UP

A MAJOR Nato package in the Arctic circle was drawing to a close as this issue went to press.

Numerous British Army cap badges were represented among 30,000 personnel from 27 countries during Exercise Cold Response, which was staged across Norway on land, sea and air.

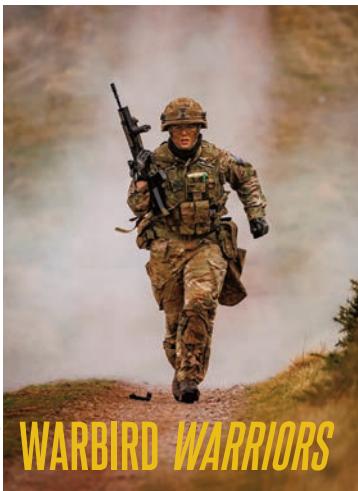
Including build-up training, some troops had been on the ground since January learning how to soldier effectively alongside allies in the harsh cold.



Picture: PO Phot Si Ethell, RN



Picture: Brigade of Gurkhas



WARBIRD WARRIORS

■ PERSONNEL who supply the fuel and ammunition needed for the Apache to fly its missions have been testing their ability to protect themselves while delivering stores in hostile territory.

Exercise Coyote Charge saw members of 669 (HQ) Squadron, 3 Regiment, Army Air Corps practise fire and manoeuvre tactics – on the ground and using vehicle-mounted machine guns – across the rugged Warcop Ranges in Cumbria.

Scenarios they tackled included fighting through ambushes and recovering pilots from downed aircraft.



STORY FROM THE SLOPES...



"I completed a Nordic skiing foundation course at Harz a few weeks ago and it was brilliant. The area was great, the staff and instructors very good and the mountains provided a stunning backdrop. Opportunities for new adventures like this are a big part of Army life. It gives you the chance to experience things you never would as a civilian. And that's definitely a morale-boost."

LCpl Daniel White, REME



FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



SOUTH ATLANTIC SADDLERS

A DUO of ex-sappers who fought during the Falklands War four decades ago are taking to the saddle to salute their fallen comrades. Paul Moore and Charlie McColgan will join former Para Tony McKie and one-time Royal Air Force colleague Phill Damant for an epic pan-UK motorbike trip. Embarking on a 2,660-mile ride of respect next month, the journey



will encompass some 75 memorials dedicated to those who fell during the 1982 conflict. They will also meet family members of those who died. Rides over the last few years have raised more than £25,000. Visit [justgiving.com/fundraising/falklandsrideofrespect2022](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/falklandsrideofrespect2022) for more.



“
As one door closes another opens
”

Home is where the Harz is

German mountain range set to replace Rockies base for AT thrills

THE Army's adventurous training hub in the Canadian Rockies may have shut for good (page 40) but there will be no shortage of adrenalin-fuelled activities on offer in future.

That is the message from the Adventurous Training Group, as it announced its training wing in Harz, Germany would take over from Trails End Camp in serving up a host of outdoor adventures to exercising troops.

"As one door closes another opens," Commander Col Neil Wilson told *Soldier*.

"Much as it saddens us to say farewell to such an amazing facility in the Rockies, we very much hope to be replicating much of what Trails End Camp delivered through our existing wing in the Harz Mountains.

"It is another superb location, within three hours of Sennelager, and can offer huge amounts of challenging, varied and enjoyable AT all year round."

The region has hosted military packages for more than 50 years, but activities scaled back after British units

withdrew from the country between 2010 and 2020.

But with battlegroup training relocated there from Canada and its recent announcement as a regional land hub, the site has seen a resurgence and gone from hosting unit-level events to a range of joint Service and battlegroup packages.

Mountain biking, rock climbing, canoeing and kayaking are all on the menu during the summer, plus Nordic skiing in the winter.

Army AT Centre Commanding Officer, Lt Col Matt Forde (Rifles), said the revival of the latter activity was particularly exciting.

He added: "The Harz is an excellent training venue. All of our courses there develop leadership, mental resilience and coping strategies."

Lt Gen Ian Cave, Commander Home Command, said the facility would secure "a vital component of military training" for battlegroups.

"I am delighted to see this being swiftly put in place," he said. ■



Wessex Storm rages

Pictures: Bdr Murray Kerr, RA



Validation exercise sees troops readied for range of ops

SOLDIERS have been signed off for a crucial high readiness role and are prepared to deploy worldwide after a major training package centred on Salisbury Plain.

Exercise Wessex Storm saw The Light Dragoons Battlegroup test their offensive and defensive mettle. And they were given a clean bill of health across a range of serials.

As well as dealing with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) drills, they projected forces well over 100 miles towards the Sennybridge Training Area in South Wales.

The move saw the soldiers ordered to clear through mock enemy positions – and a fearsome opposing force played by 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland – as they headed towards their new objective.

Personnel from several units, among them 1 Close Support Battalion, REME, 38 Engineer Regiment and 4 Regiment, Royal Artillery, also contributed to the outfit's punch.

Meanwhile, colleagues from 1st

Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment formed a second friendly force alongside which The Light Dragoons operated.

Maj Paul Turner (SNIY), who helped lead the exercise, said troops had performed well and shown they were well equipped for future ops.

"The weather was pretty atrocious and the soldiers had to face two fierce storms during their four weeks on the ground," the Reservist added.

"But they acquitted themselves well to the taskings – the force projection towards Sennybridge in particular was pretty unusual."

"The CBRN element was also demanding, although the soldiers impressed those from Winterbourne Gunner overseeing the training."

Completing the annual validation exercise means personnel are at 30 days' readiness to deploy as the Army's light recce battlegroup, under the command of 7th Infantry Brigade.

They are also due to carry out further training in Poland later this year. ■

“
The weather
was pretty
atrocious
”



Last year's event
– visit ssafa.org.uk/13bridges22 for more

HARDY hikers are being sought for an unusual ramble across London, in a move to raise funds for military charity SSAFA. The ten-mile walk will take participants across the 13 bridges that connect the capital as a unique way of marking Armed Forces Day on June 25.

SUPERMARKET SWEEP



STAFF at a major defence contractor have helped raise a huge cash sum, which will be put towards assisting serving soldiers and veterans in need. Bosses at food services provider Aramark recently handed over the fruits of last year's fundraising efforts to the Armed Forces charity SSAFA. Employee events, donations from the sale of carrier bags at convenience stores and Christmas card sales all helped to bring in the impressive sum.

Cash raised:
£63,000
For: SSAFA

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LAST month's spine line clues may have been recognised by the Service's airborne history experts.

Inspired by our feature on Mali, (Modibo) Keita, (Alpha) Konare, (Amadou) Toure and (Moussa) Traore are all the names of previous heads of state in the West African nation.

This month, we have teamed up with British watch manufacturer Geckota to offer a Phalanx Special Operations watch.

A 300m PVD coated diver watch designed in collaboration with a consultant who has worked alongside global special operations units, this is a highly capable automatic military watch focused on high legibility and ruggedness.

Full technical details can be found at geckota.com/collections/phalanx

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In addition to the giveaway, milspec watch-strap brand Zuludiver, part of the Geckota group, is offering *Soldier* readers a unique discount code.

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SPINE LINE COMPETITION

“
They felt
everyone
was
watching
”



BACK IN THE POOL

Swimmers return to
action at Inter-Corps
Championships
– page 66



Picture: Graeme Main

Women given critical support

New workshops get thumbs-up from front-line personnel

A SERIES of workshops at Catterick and Tidworth to support women in front-line units have proved a major hit with attendees.

Joanna Harvey, Head of Occupational Psychology at Army Headquarters (pictured left), came up with the idea while working on women in ground close combat projects for the Service.

“I've been involved in this realm for six or seven years and what struck me was that sometimes we had sporty females who were very confident in an athletic environment, but when they were at work – and maybe the only woman in the unit – their confidence could really suffer, particularly during physical tests where they might be heavily scrutinised,” she says.

“The result was they put more pressure on themselves – they felt everyone was watching them and they had to prove themselves more than their male colleagues.”

The workshops tackled some of these issues with presentations by external sports psychologists who focused on areas such as performance and confidence.

“Their advice on how to perform at your best while operating in a high pressure environment really translated well from the world of sport to soldiering,” says Capt Jessica Wood (RA). “I would love to see this concept delivered across the Army as lacking in confidence is not an issue that's exclusive to women.”

The sessions also featured question-and-answer sessions with several Army health support specialists on strength and conditioning, nutrition and menstrual health.

“We asked for feedback on other issues such as tactical dehydration, which many women admit to doing, and menstruation management in the field,” adds Harvey. “And we also invited the Speak Out helpline staff to come along and give a talk about what they can do to provide a human face to their service.

“It was great to get all these personnel together in the workshops and talking to each other confidentially about sensitive issues.

“Not only did it boost their confidence but it allowed them to form networks and share experiences.”

Early feedback on the format was promising enough for the organisers to open the doors to women from all arms after just three of the eight workshops had been staged.

“The response was great overall,” says Harvey. “We had many positive comments and women from many different regiments and cap badges attended – more than 150 in total.

“We're now planning to stage the workshops annually and make them available to Reservists in the future, as well as creating a women's health performance hub on Defence Connect.”

While most females operate alongside their male colleagues fine, there is still work to be done to improve conditions – especially in combat units, adds the scientist.

“When you look at the stats, women in ground close combat units are transferring out at a higher rate than other roles, and at a higher rate than men,” she explains.

“The numbers are small, but there's still a difference and we need to change that.” ■



HELPING YOU MAKE
BETTER CHOICES

In a time of pension transition and complexity there is one way to avoid confusion.

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There have been few periods in the Forces Pension Society's 75-year history when so many in the Armed Forces Community (including many who are recently retired) have been challenged by such pension complexity and change.

The implementation of the McCloud Remedy affecting all those serving on or before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 (including service leavers), will give you the choice between your legacy scheme entitlement and AFPS 15 for the Remedy period.

Additionally, from this month (April), everyone still serving on AFPS 75 and 05 will be transferred to AFPS 15, involving further calculation complexity.

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Ground view

Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Paul Carney, offers his take on Service life...

THERE is an old saying that a week is a long time in politics – only a month has passed but it seems an age since my last *Soldier* column.

Russia's attack on Ukraine has changed the world.

Earlier in the year, when Vladimir Putin's forces were massing on their neighbour's border, I visited troops serving with Nato in Estonia and Poland.

I said then how events were giving a very real meaning to their role with the enhanced forward presence. Now – with a full-scale invasion under way nearby – the alliance is showing its resolve as it unites in the face of an aggressor.

Our personnel are today at the forefront of events in Eastern Europe – and they are continuing to show extraordinary resilience in rising to this challenge.

Most recently we have seen troop numbers doubled in Estonia with the appearance of The Royal Welsh Battlegroup.

The soldiers have shown impressive agility, arriving in country in short order after being out on exercise.

This rapid deployment is not just down to those at the sharp end, but their

colleagues working in less visible roles – such as logistics.

However, this reinforcement also means that those serving with the Royal Tank Regiment on the previous Cabrit tour will not be returning to the UK as planned, which will put more pressure on their families and friends.

It is important to remember that those remaining at home can often have a harder time than the person deployed – they must attempt to continue living a normal life without the single focus and camaraderie of being away on tour.

Under these conditions, the role of regimental welfare officers and others in the rear parties will be important – particularly as communications with those on ops are not as straightforward as a mobile phone call.

It is critical that everyone pulls together to help manage stress.

I recently dropped in on both the Royal Tank Regiment and Royal Welsh here on home soil and it was great to see strong support in place for loved ones.

And to anyone struggling, please don't be afraid to ask for help.

Everyone – soldiers and loved ones alike – are on operations during a deployment.

They have shown impressive agility



Picture: Shutterstock

Holding the line

WE HAVE heard a great deal in the media recently about individuals leaving the UK to join volunteers signing up to fight the Russians in Ukraine.

As soldiers, our responsibility is to our commanders and – ultimately – elected politicians who will make the decisions about military deployments.

It is not for us to act on our own, or travel to

areas of the world where we do not have either the backing or the mandate to intervene.

We should not be heading to Ukraine unless we are told otherwise – nor must we help others choosing to make the journey to procure British Army equipment.

We joined the military to serve – let's work with each other to make the difference.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



Q What do you look for in a good leader?

A Someone who understands their soldiers, personally and professionally

Leading questions...

Q HAVING spent nine months in this role now I have had the privilege of speaking to those preparing for promotion – from troops on the platoon commanders' battle course to the senior officers attending the Army generalship programme.

At every stage, those advancing to the next rung on the ladder have been impressive. We should take confidence from the quality of all those selected.

It has been particularly inspiring to see that our leaders are increasingly reflective – constantly considering their way of working and how they are perceived by others

Mutual respect brings out the best in everyone.



A 2019 leadership course at Sandhurst



Picture: Sgt Donald Todd, RLC

Veteran's efforts recognised

A FORMER military physiotherapist and serial ultra-marathon competitor has been saluted for her efforts to inspire others with a prestigious award.

Maj Sally Orange (ex-RAMC, above right) – who is now an Army Cadet Ambassador – was crowned Inspirational Woman of the Year for defence community work.

The Afghanistan veteran was recognised for her tireless charity efforts in which she has championed the importance of mental well-being.

Having served more than two decades with the Royal Army Medical Corps, the 47-year-old has also raised half-a-million pounds for good causes,

clocking up successes in dozens of marathons and other extreme events.

Maj Orange said she was honoured to have been recognised with the award and would continue to work to promote a personal cause.

She told reporters: "Having fought with my own mental illness in silence for so many years, I hate to think of others having to do the same."

Nominations for the next Inspirational Woman of the Year award are being sought. Run by the Defence Discount Service, it is open to Regular and Reserve personnel, UK-based Nato colleagues, cadets and civil servants.

For further information visit defencediscountservic.co.uk



ASSOCIATION LAUNCH

WHEN The Rifles sound the retreat on Horse Guards Parade in June, it will be an especially important occasion for the regiment's veterans.

The event is being used to launch The Rifleman's Association, bringing together former Servicemen and women from the regiment and its antecedent units. It will also shine a light on the Always A Rifleman programme, launched last year to provide crisis support for ex-soldiers.

Author and broadcaster James Holland will be on hand to narrate the story of the regiment's origins with the help of Napoleonic re-enactors, while the sunset parades in St James's Park will culminate with large fireworks displays.

Visit tickets.theriflesnetwork.co.uk/rifles-sounding-retreat

IF THE VIRTUS FITS...

■ NEW sizes of combat clothing have been launched to provide better fitting protective kit for the smallest personnel.

They will be made available in limited numbers from this month, initially to troops due to deploy.

Four smaller sizes of the Virtus system's scalable tactical vest and a shorter yoke are now on offer thanks to a long-term and ongoing project to develop the gear.

At a fitting trial in Tidworth earlier this year most soldiers were largely positive about the new sizes, although some of the smallest female troops said more work could be done.

"It's a big step in the right direction after all these years," said Sgt Jen Leonard (RLC, below), who is five feet tall.

"Getting up and down from the prone position is still more difficult for me than it could be, but I gave lots of feedback, which is why I'm here."

Leo Docherty, Minister for Defence People and Veterans, who attended a launch day for the equipment at ATR Winchester said: "Women serving – if they're a slightly smaller frame – need to ensure that they are just as well protected in a way that allows them to move and use their weapon."

“
It's a big
step in
the right
direction
”

Dishing out desert drills

AROUND 100 troops from 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team have been in Kuwait to provide specialist training to the Kuwaiti Land Force's 4th Reconnaissance Battalion on Exercise Desert Warrior.

The troops covered a range of expertise included patrolling, observing positions, marksmanship, casualty care and using drones.

4th Bn's Capt Dhari Al-Azmi said: "We have learnt a lot about reconnaissance and how to observe targets and move without being seen."

The month-long exercise was also an opportunity for the British troops to learn from the Kuwaitis' experience of desert operations.

As the British Army's Global Response Force, the Colchester-based unit is held at very high readiness to respond and operate in any environment around the world.





Female Volunteers Needed

for a Human Performance Study

What are we investigating?

The effect of energy and calcium intake during load carriage on bone health.

Who can take part in the study?

- Women
- Both civilian and military
- Aged 18-36 years
- Women not currently using the implant, injection, or taking the 'mini pill'

Where?

Army Health & Physical Performance Laboratory,
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley

Contact:

Dr Tom O'Leary (Thomas.OLeary100@mod.gov.uk) or
Dr Charlotte Coombs (Charlotte.Coombs102@mod.gov.uk)
01264 886795

What do I need to do?

- 3 laboratory visits which include a pre-screen, and two load carriage exercise sessions
- Take a calcium supplement before one of the load carriage exercise sessions
- Blood samples will be taken during laboratory visits
- You will be compensated for your time



Incoming Army chief's daring vision

THE next chief of the general staff says he "cannot bear" Gunners, but the Royal Artillery need not fret – Gen Sir Patrick Sanders only has an aversion to the sort who play football at the Emirates Stadium in North London.

The passionate Spurs fan, who is set to take the reins from Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith in June, is a natural communicator who has not been afraid to air his personal and professional views in the past.

He hit the headlines a few months ago by taking part in an Army campaign to persuade soldiers to seek help for post-traumatic stress disorder.

During a candid video interview that generated numerous headlines in the national press, he revealed how his battlefield experiences in Iraq in 2007 had left him depressed, feeling suicidal and regularly drinking alone before he realised he needed help.

Gen Sanders, 55, has also been vocal about the need to radically modernise the Forces during his tenure as commander Field Army and more recently the head of United Kingdom Strategic Command.

During a speech last year, he declared: "We

must be daring and entrepreneurial because the threat is moving towards us and the technological advantage away from us.

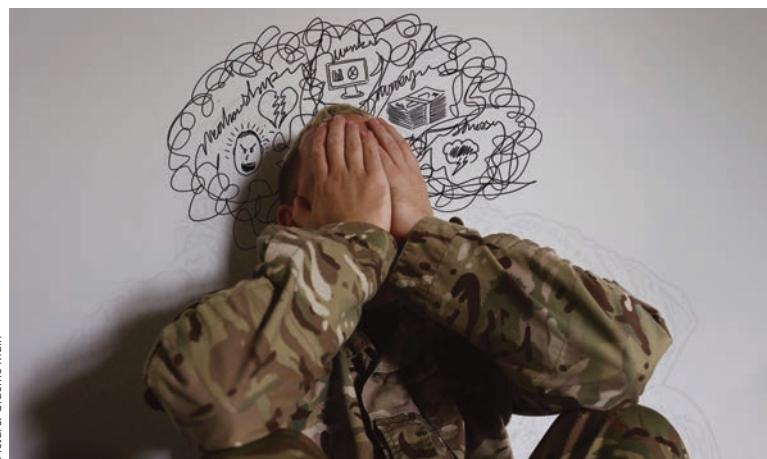
"Human operators will not be able to defend against AI-enabled cyber or disinformation attacks, drone swarms or missile attacks without the assistance of AI enabled machines (...) we will adopt and exploit AI for defence at scale."

Announcing Gen Sanders' appointment, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace described him as an "exceptional military leader".

The senior officer, who started his military career in 1986 with The Royal Green Jackets, said he was "deeply honoured" to be appointed chief of the general staff at such a pivotal time.

"The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a stark reminder that the world is becoming increasingly dangerous and uncertain, with war on land coming to Europe for the first time in decades," he said.

"I am acutely aware of the great responsibility I am taking on."



Is life getting on top of you?

DID you know that April is Stress Awareness Month?

That might sound pretty hollow, but the Army Health Team wants soldiers to use it as an opportunity to seek help if their mental well-being is suffering.

From debt or relationship problems to custody battles, health issues or high workload – there are many reasons why personnel can feel the strain.

But there are a wealth of places they can turn to for help.

The website moneyhelper.org.uk can assist with cash headaches, as can The Royal British Legion's online

Knowledge Base.

Turn to page 22 for more cash advice as living costs rise, which soldiers told us about on page 74.

Troops can also benefit from free access to the *Headspace* app using the QR code opposite.

Army Sergeant Major WO1 Paul Carney said: "As soldiers, we can often have stressful jobs. If you're feeling it, please make sure you talk to your chain of command.

"Commanders will do all they can to help. And if you're still finding life tough, refer to the medical chain. Please don't be too proud to ask."

Please talk to your chain of command



Gen Sir Patrick Sanders

- Colonel Commandant of The Rifles and Honourable Artillery Company

- Speaks French, Spanish and Norwegian

- Married to Fiona Bullen, a successful author, with one son

- Loves cycling, skiing, shooting and whisky

- Hates scotch eggs

OPERATIONS:

Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan

AGC CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

■ THE 9,000-strong Adjutant General's Corps is marking its 30th anniversary with changes to its official insignia and a new memorial.

Personnel from across the formation's seven branches are already wearing new tactical recognition flashes, cap badges and belt buckles to emphasise their individual identity.

The Staff and Personnel Support arm has adopted the current corps cap badge, while the Educational and Training Services, Army Legal Services and Military Provost Guard Service have been given new flashes and buckles.

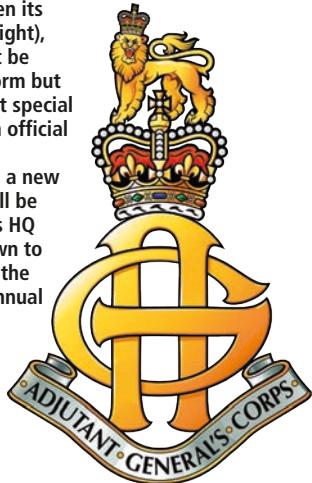
The formation has also been given its own cypher (right), which will not be worn on uniform but will be used at special events and on official paperwork.

In addition, a new monument will be unveiled at its HQ in Worthy Down to coincide with the formation's annual Triple Crown military skills and shooting competition at the end of this month.

The statue features the corps motto and a compass to symbolize the worldwide service of its personnel.

"Celebrating our 30th anniversary is important to the AGC because we are a young formation," said Corps Colonel, Col Vicki Whiting.

"Our branches undertake distinct specialist roles and it is essential that we take every opportunity to all come together on these key dates to acknowledge our achievements, our richness and diversity, our special contribution to defence and to foster esprit de corps."



NEED TO

KNOW

SKILLS & DRILLS / EXPERIENCE / CASH / NEXT STEPS

Can YOU kick it?

How to slot a potentially decisive penalty in the pressure cooker of a sell-out Twickenham



► AFTER an absence of three years, the Army-Navy match returns to Twickenham Stadium on April 30.

With an 80,000-strong crowd cheering the teams on, the players will be performing in an intense spotlight, meaning their ability to execute skills under pressure will be more important than ever.

Those who feel this most keenly are the goal kickers, with their accuracy from the tee potentially forming the difference between victory and defeat.

Fortunately, the Army have a past master at the helm in the shape of head coach Capt Mal Roberts (RLC).

A ten-time Inter-Services champion as a player and former Reds captain, he is no stranger to slotting kicks at the home of English rugby union and here he talks through the pressure of the occasion and the methods he used to ensure his efforts with the boot hit the mark...



'It's a matter of pride'

Troops' passion for history and mechanics breathes new life into vintage kit

► NEARLY 40 years after being abandoned at Port Stanley, an Argentine Panhard has been restored to its former glory thanks to personnel determined to preserve Army history.

The armoured vehicle is among around 50 so-called gate guardians – from the Falklands and other conflicts – that former corporal Steve Cleator and a team of serving volunteers have spruced up.

Having begun his unconventional career in the Royal Engineers, the self-confessed tank geek transferred to The Queen's Dragoon Guards and then the Royal Tank Regiment to spend more time hands on with his biggest passion.

But an injury sustained in Afghanistan saw him return to his roots in the sappers before being medically discharged in 2017.

Finding himself at a loose end, he began fixing up old military kit as a means of keeping busy, calling on restoration skills he learnt while volunteering at the Imperial War Museum's Duxford branch as a young soldier.

Word spread, and now the 43-year-old coordinates a small empire of amateur and professional mechanics who dedicate their spare time to saving rusty relics from the march of time.

Here, he and two fellow history enthusiasts – Sgt Marv Tranter (REME) and LCoH Harry Day (LG) – explain the ethos behind their efforts...

“I oversee the projects, but the guys do the majority of the work. The idea behind it is that they learn new skills – like painting, metal smithing and welding.

As well as saving the Army having to pay a civilian company to do the work, the units don't want the guys sat in their rooms every evening – they want them to do something constructive and enhance their practical skills.

Then there's the historical factor. People have fought and died in vehicles like this and it's important we maintain the monuments to our past exploits.

Whether it's a T-55 from Iraq, or a Saladin, or a Daimler Dingo from the Second World War all these vehicles are historically significant and should be looked after.

There are all these little stories behind them – on the surface they don't seem important but when you dig deeper, they are really interesting.

We did a Challenger for HQ 3rd Division and it turned out to be a demonstration model, with a Challenger 1 chassis mounted with the first ever Challenger 2 gun.

With the Panhard, the Argentine platoon commander got in touch saying this was one of his tanks.

He was in their armoured corps and was on the last plane out of Stanley as a casualty, having been quite badly injured by artillery fire.

As the first Argentinian I've



Steve Cleator
(ex-RE, QDG and RTR)



spoken to about the war, it was really humbling to talk to a genuinely nice person who didn't care about the politics but was grateful we were doing something to preserve the vehicle.

I still get a lot of pain in my leg from my injury. There are days I don't want to get out of bed, but people are relying on me, so I drag myself there.

I'd rather be doing this than sitting on the couch getting fat.

And it's a matter of pride. My son, who is also in the Army, did the Sherman that's outside the Royal Tank Regiment and every time I drive past it, I look at it and smile. »

“ As a metal smith, fixing things and fabricating is my day job. The challenge with old kit is there aren't many genuine spare parts and you have to make everything by hand. But you don't have any information at the start of the process about how a piece looked or what it was for. For example, a mud flap – was it bolted or welded on? I've had to do a lot of research by looking at pictures and going to the Aldershot Military Museum. It's also been good to get the lads involved, take them out of their day-to-day work and teach them new skills. ”



Sgt Marv Tranter (REME)
10 Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, Light Aid Detachment



“ I've been into vehicles since I was a kid but when I joined the Household Cavalry I discovered a passion for armour.

This is my fourth restoration project. It's a Panhard, which was an armoured reconnaissance platform the Argentinians used in the Falklands.

After the surrender it was left in Port Stanley and The Blues and Royals brought it back.

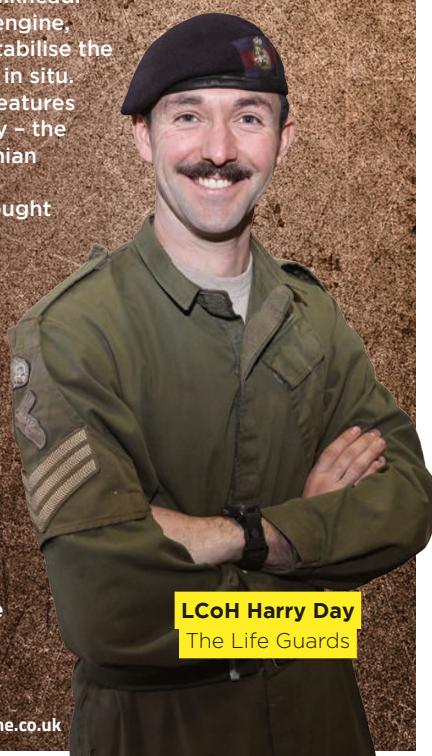
But it had been sat at Combermere Barracks since the mid-80s and when we started the work, we found out that water had rotted out certain parts really badly and that there was asbestos in the bulkhead.

So, we had to lift out the engine, gearbox and turret to rust stabilise the inside and seal the asbestos in situ.

We also found nice little features to do with its military history – the spare wheel had an Argentinian repair sticker on it.

When it was originally brought back it still had its radio kit, paperwork and a notebook in Spanish, which is all in the regimental museum in Windsor.

These vehicles symbolise what the regiment has done in the past. It may be an inanimate object, but you can learn history through it and in 20 years' time, when I'm old and crusty, it will be one of the things I've left behind – my little part of the regiment. ”



LCoH Harry Day
The Life Guards

Finances Tight?

Read this to find out how to tap into extra cash

► SPIRALLING food, fuel and energy costs, coupled with this month's national insurance hike are hitting Brits in the pocket.

But serving troops could be losing out on additional financial support through lack of awareness.

Two examples are universal credit and the Serve and Protect Credit Union – here's why both might be worth considering if you're feeling the pinch...



Need extra help?

Contact Maj Anselm Allen (Yorks), one of the Army's life skills advisors on anselm.allen551@mod.gov.uk or look up your local Hive information centre via army.mod.uk/hives



Universal credit

What is it?

A monthly payment for those on low income or out of work, which replaced a host of previously separate allowances such as child tax credits and housing benefits.

Who is eligible?

Anyone living in the UK who is over the age of 18 (with some exceptions for 16 and 17-year-olds) needing help with living costs and with less than £16,000 in savings.

Could you claim?

Personnel may assume they are ineligible because they are in full-time employment, but this is not necessarily the case – entitlement depends on an individual's household circumstances.

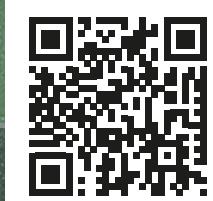
The calculation is based on things like your monthly housing expenses, number of children and childcare costs.

These examples were correct as this issue went to press:

- A 21-year-old parent to two children, who earns £1,400 per month after tax and NI deductions and spends £400 on rent, but whose partner does not work could be in line for an award of £692, plus £152 in child benefit.
- The same soldier, whose spouse takes home £600 per month after deductions, but for whom £350-worth of childcare is also taken into account, would receive a £712-allowance, plus the £152 in child benefit.

The bottom line

It is always worth checking if you are entitled to claim. Use this QR code to access the government-approved benefits calculators:



The Serve and Protect Credit Union

What is it?

A credit union is a financial co-operative that provides savings, loans and a range of other benefits to its members. Serve and Protect is open specifically to the military and other uniformed Services.

What it offers borrowers

Personal loans of between £500-£25,000, including for those wanting to consolidate debts. Emergency loans to those who do not have access to affordable credit are also available. Repayments can be deducted from your salary.

Who can apply?

Those aged over 18 with a regular source of income are more likely to be accepted. A credit check will be carried out but income, expenditure, level of debt and ability to repay are also considered.

What is the APR like?

Depending on the amount you borrow it will vary from eight

per cent on larger loans to 13.5 per cent on smaller ones. A government study in 2013 found credit unions offer consumers some of the best rates. And even the most expensive credit union loan in Britain is eight times cheaper than a pay day loan charged at their cap.

The bottom line

Serve and Protect may be able to help you if you need access to additional funds. Above all, avoid pay day lenders who will charge you considerably more in APR as well as fees for missed payments, which could lead to debt and negatively affect your credit score.

For more information visit:



Among friends



Infantry soldier to care home worker – is it such a bizarre career move?

► **THE Royal British Legion is on the hunt for care home staff – and it's got outgoing soldiers in its sights as potential candidates.**

The sector might not offer mega-bucks, but according to former infantryman Matthew Mitchell (ex-PWRR) it is actually brilliantly suited to those hanging up their uniforms.

Most troops miss the buzz when they come out of the Army," the former private tells *Soldier*. "So they either join the police or get a job in security. They need to think on their feet."

But having been in various civvy street roles for more than 20 years, Mitchell now works as the facilities and hospitality manager at RBL's Mais House in Bexhill-on-Sea.

And although he admits it is a far slower pace of life than many Service-leavers would be comfortable with, the comradeship he has discovered among elderly veterans has made it his most rewarding job yet.

"Until you spend some time in these homes it is hard to convey," he continues. "But you can pick that camaraderie back up again."

"At first it was kind of intimidating because some of these residents had seen and done stuff I hadn't."

"But many don't share their military experience with their families. However, with other veterans they do."

"To share those stories – you couldn't ask for anything better."

With six sites across the UK, RBL roles up for grabs at the time this magazine went to press included chef, kitchen assistant, housekeeping assistant, care assistant and nurse.

But Mitchell says the rewards reach far beyond individual job descriptions.

"When I sit down and ask the residents how life is going, we start talking like we are best buddies because we are both from that world and have that common frame of reference," he says.

"The reason ex-soldiers go to reunions is because they interact with people who know what they had to put up with – and it's the same here. It's almost as if I'm one of their platoon."

Care homes hardly have the best reputation for rates of pay. However, Mitchell has an important message about this issue.

"People are always looking for better money, but that means most are in jobs they don't enjoy," he adds.

"Yes, my job could pay more. But my advice is to come in with an open mind."

"I was an infantry soldier for a long time and the buzz is not always the good thing. Quality of life is important."

"I think if vets saw this job for what it really is, they would definitely take a look – it's a privilege to do."



● For more information on roles at RBL care homes visit rbl.org.uk/carejobs



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The Duke of York's
Royal Military School

GOING DARK

Subterranean serial
puts infantry to the test

WITH an overdue stint in Brunei looming this summer, 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles have been making the most of what the UK training estate has to offer. In July the troops will relieve colleagues from the formation's 2nd Battalion in Tuker Lines, Seria – a rotation that, thanks to the Covid pandemic, is two years behind schedule.

But in the interim they have been busy honing their skills in the cooler climes of Brecon, Corsham and Salisbury Plain.

Exercise Kukri Warrior saw more than 400 soldiers being put through urban and conventional drills, as well as live firing in Sennybridge, before venturing underground for what many deemed the most challenging phase of the package.

A world away from the lush rainforests of Borneo, a dank and sprawling underground tunnel system stretches beneath the Cotswold hills.

Parts of the former quarry became a munitions store during the Second World War and these days its labyrinthine infrastructure provides the perfect venue for a stern test of subterranean soldiering.

Picking their way through a darkness so complete that even night vision devices (NVDs) struggle to penetrate, the infantrymen were forced to quickly modify their tactics and procedures.

"Night vision is good for operating at night, but in the tunnels there is no light at all, so it has trouble working properly," said Rfn Sudesh Rai. »



“It is disorientating in the pitch black, so all of our commanders within the platoon also took pictures of the maps on their phones, which we could look at in our safe areas without using a head torch. It means you can zoom in and focus on one thing – it made it much easier to keep our bearings.”

With a total of 150 rooms to clear over the course of four hours, there was no time for the troops to slacken the pace or allow their minds to wander.

But the sheer scale of the underground facility is as disconcerting as the depth of the gloom.

Seemingly endless corridors stretch into the void, broken up by doorways to former offices, accommodation blocks, railway sidings and other remnants of the site's past.

However, as Rfn Rai went on to explain, there were more practical obstacles to consider than the unnerving atmosphere.

“In my role as radio operator the tunnels are challenging because the walls are so thick, which makes comms difficult,” he continued.

“We therefore have to rely more on touch – we give signals to the man in front when it is time to move by squeezing or tapping his shoulder, depending on what the section commander decides.

“There is a lot to think about. It is very complex.”

While one company was put through its paces in the mine, another was undergoing a live-fire programme that integrated support weapons such as mortars, snipers and WMIK vehicles.

A third serial featured a night attack and subsequent defensive phase at Sennybridge's urban village, before the whole battalion came together on Salisbury Plain for a final test exercise.

All told, the package was the largest they had conducted since pre-deployment training for Operation Toral in 2018 and was designed to ensure personnel remained competent and current for their role as the Strategic Reserve Force within 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team for Nato's Kosovo mission. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

Quarrying for Bath Stone in the Corsham area dates back to Roman times. By the time mining stopped in 1940, there were more than 60 miles of tunnels across a 3,000-acre network, at depths of up to 100 feet below ground. In the 1930s parts of it were identified as suitable ammunition stores by the War Office and later repurposed as a nuclear shelter.

'When to go SILENT and when to go VIOLENT'

Troops explain how tunnels test tactics...

Rfn Sudesh Rai

When using NVDs you can get tunnel vision and your situational awareness decreases. But other senses like hearing, touch and even smell increase. So we have to listen carefully to the footsteps of our fellow troops and our radios or rifle firing sounds.



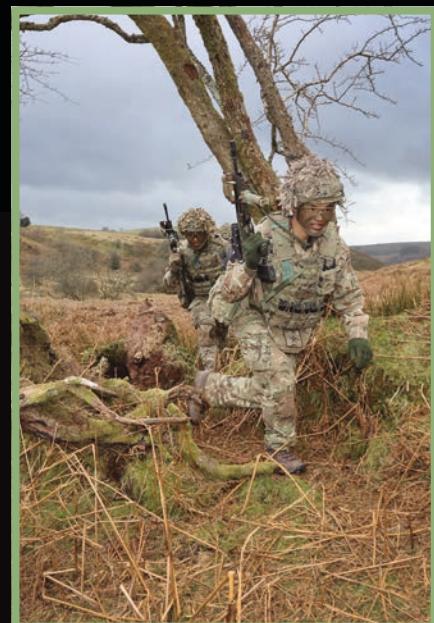
Cpl Umesh Malla

We have to practise when to go with lights and when to go dark, when to go silent and when to go violent – that's the principle I came up with. Basically, you have to be quiet because if you shout or make a noise you are giving away your position to the enemy. But as soon as you or the opposition start firing you can shout; then once you've taken the position you go silent again. Discipline is paramount.



Rfn Dipendra Ale

You can hardly see anything and the radios barely work in the tunnels, so you have to stick really close to each other and hold onto the person in front of you, as well as using a link man to run from one end to the other to pass information.



» Although they will hand over the tasking prior to their move to Brunei, the need to be ever ready was illustrated last September, when the unit was called away from an exercise in the Balkan state to help resettle former Nato employees fleeing Afghanistan.

Alongside British Embassy staff they worked to process around 2,000 former contractors and their families following the fall of Kabul to the Taliban.

And with an influx of brand-new riflemen having recently joined the battalion from basic training, the latest package was the ideal chance to bring them up to speed with their more operationally experienced colleagues.

Cpl Prassanta Rai, who as a youngster deployed straight from Catterick on Op Herrick 12, said learning in slow time was the preferred option.

"We gather the new boys around trying to teach them step-by-step how we do stuff," he added.

"They've done basic infantry training but at battalion they need to take it up a notch.

"It's no longer just about their section commanders telling them to do something – we want them to use their initiative.

"They will learn to polish their skills and do things more efficiently than they might have done in training, for example admin-wise – they need to cope with the weather, so they don't get a climatic injury.

"In Brecon it's very windy and cold – it hasn't rained much but the ground is undulating and there are streams, and you get wet from the dew in the prone position.

"It's important they experience all that otherwise they'll never know what it's like. But I can see they are really keen and enthusiastic to learn."

The chill of South Wales may soon be a distant memory amidst the heat and humidity of Brunei, but the battalion can be confident that each of its number – junior or senior – is at the top of their game for whatever challenges their equatorial assignment holds. ■



“
We gather the
new boys and
teach them
step by step
”



IN NUMBERS

496

SOLDIERS ON EXERCISE
KUKRI WARRIOR

3

DURATION OF THE PACKAGE IN WEEKS

150

NUMBER OF ROOMS TROOPS
HAD TO CLEAR DURING
THE UNDERGROUND SERIAL

51

VEHICLES DEPLOYED ON
SALISBURY PLAIN PHASE



FIRING UP THE GOOD IDEAS

Artillery troops put their stamp on innovation



Report: Steve Muncey Pictures: Sgt Jon Bevan, RLC; Sgt Si Longworth, RLC; Sgt James White, RA

UBURBAN streets are not the traditional home of heavy ordnance but that could change thanks to the Royal Artillery's newly-formed innovation and experimentation team – 34 (Seringapatam) Battery.

The 14th Regiment outfit used to be responsible solely for training support. But now, thanks to the Future Soldier initiative, it is also charged with shaping the way the artillery will fight in the years ahead.

As a result, some major rethinks of techniques, tactics and procedures are taking place.

"The nature of warfare has become asymmetric – there is no defined front line with guns positioned at a set distance anymore," says Battery Commander Maj Glyn Forster-Haig (pictured below). "That means the speed with which we can fire and shift location, while remaining hidden and not engaged by the enemy, is more vital than ever.

"We've been assessing splitting light gun troops in half and operating them like a soldier might do when providing a colleague with covering fire. That makes them more manoeuvrable and harder to find.

"It also means the crews have to fire twice as fast to provide the same effect, so obviously they'll need to be fit enough to do the job.

"But this is all part of our new role – to look at how we could use current assets to be more effective on operations."

With the unit drawing its manpower from across the Royal Artillery on two- to three-year postings, 34 Bty has quickly become a melting pot of ideas (see page 36).

The most promising ones are stress tested and put forward for alterations to tactics and doctrine across the regiments.

One current priority is exploring how to operate light guns and AS90s to maximum effect in urban areas.

"For a long time we've trained mostly in the rural environment," explains Maj Forster-Haig. "Yet every indicator is now telling us that future battlefields will be congested, contested, connected, urban or an urban-rural mix.

"However, for guns, which like space and the freedom to move, these areas carry a very high threat. We haven't perfected operating there yet so that's what we're leading on at the moment."

The challenges in managing towed 105mm howitzers and the AS90 leviathan, with its huge 155mm gun and noisy V8 diesel engine, in built-up areas with anything resembling a stealthy profile are immense. But being as discreet as possible really matters.

"One priority for us is understanding how we can protect our assets," adds the officer. "It's difficult to physically conceal a gun in an urban environment or disguise yourself against an enemy's wide array of sensors. »





TAPPING INTO APPS

Killer coding skills show promise

I'd been interested in computers for ages and had already started teaching myself coding when I realised an app could easily replace all the long-winded paperwork around the live firing of light guns.

This was back in 2020, but when 34 Bty turned into an experimentation and innovation unit my superiors really backed the project and gave me time to refine it.

Detailed firing records have to be logged for every gun because they require a major service after 750 live rounds and a re-barrel after 8,000. Barrel wear must also be measured regularly and logged. This all helps with planning and maximising training time.

I'm doing a presentation on my app to the commanding officers next month. It's reckoned it could cut 40 hours – or a standard working week – every year just from form filling for the firing sergeant alone.

I'm still developing it, but my aspiration is for the app to eventually link to James – the joint asset management and engineering solution – so the fitters can see the status of every gun at the touch of a button and plan their schedule accordingly."

Bdr Sam Smith

“ ”





BOXING CLEVER

Bright idea on urban cover

“Our battery commander pushed us to come up with ideas about how to operate more stealthily in the urban landscape.

I immediately thought of the command post, which is always a major target, and how it could be disguised in an urban environment if we could fit the appropriate equipment into a vehicle common to the country we were in. The CP needs to move around innocuously, and the main problem with ours is that they are normally in Pinzgauers or Bulldogs. Even a civvy van with the large Bowman antenna can be a giveaway.

I have a background in comms so we decided to adapt a commercial van's regular radio aerial so it could be used instead – and it worked. The next stage is to look at how we can adapt a modular dismounted operations room – a mobile box of kit that was developed for Afghanistan and is mostly sitting in storage these days – and use that in our CPs.

It would be great to reutilise equipment that's lying around unused. The unit is working out the best way to fit it into virtually any commercial vehicle.

There are power considerations, of course, but potential solutions being explored include plugging in extra battery packs. The goal is that if we deployed abroad we could ship this equipment out in a small box, purchase a vehicle locally, and install the kit so we have a CP that blends into the local environment and is up and running very quickly.”

Sgt Marin Redhead

“We're looking at how we can use ISO containers, for example, to move about unnoticed, and how effective concrete-look tarpaulin covers or thermal cam nets are.

“During recent trials in locations such as Imber Village on Salisbury Plain we've been assessing how to move and hide light guns and AS90s, and in the near future we'll be practising firing out of urban areas too.”

With intricate city streets slowing down a gun battery's fire and manoeuvre tactics, the issue of communication speed has been high on the battery's agenda.

“We have been testing digital fires frequently because we are still largely dependent on voice,” Sgt Marin Redhead (RA) tells *Soldier*.

“It can take around 20 seconds to use the radio to communicate a mission, but that's reduced to a fraction of a second when we use data.

“The AS90 already has the tech installed for it but it's not used often enough. The light gun, meanwhile, will get data comms functionality in the next few months so it's important we develop the procedures now and be really forward thinking in that area.”

The electronic footprint of a weapon system is also a point of vulnerability – and this is another area where data systems come into their own.

“In reality, all artillery needs to do to be more lethal is to be around longer,” explains Maj Forster-Haig. “With near-peer opponents the major threat is counter-battery fires.

“As soon as we launch we'll be unmasked, but even before that happens turning on a radio is like putting a huge spotlight on yourself.

“If you're using voice comms you are turning that light on for a protracted period, but data systems allow us to send packets of information in a blink, and that information can be relayed from the observers directly to command posts at the gun line and on to the guns themselves.”

The personnel of 34 Bty are already using the knowledge and insight they've gained through their innovation work to support experimentation and help develop new platforms.

One of those is the successor to the AS90, which they are cooperating on with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Defence Equipment and Support and the Royal Artillery Trials and Development Unit.

“We are providing the scientists with the end-user viewpoint, so they can smell the cordite, feel the weight of the round, and talk to young gunners about how they operate these systems in real-time conditions,” adds Maj Forster-Haig.

“It's vital our equipment is soldier-proofed – it must be made robust enough for the challenges that operations and training present.

“Often, talking to us is a dose of reality for the boffins and it's great to see a young soldier telling someone with lots of degrees and doctorates exactly how and why they should improve or change their kit.

“Our people have areas of expertise that scientists just cannot acquire but really need, so we have to have an environment where ideas and challenge are welcomed, regardless of rank – and I think we've created that.”

Pictures: Shaun C Connors, Dominic King

EARNING THEIR STRIPES

Guards make gains beyond the jungle canopy

WITH Exercise Red Stripe drawing to a close last month, Number 2 Company, Coldstream Guards have been able to reflect on a job well done in resurrecting Army training in Jamaica.

But their Caribbean deployment was not purely limited to mastering the art of operating in the jungle. Defence engagement, forging relationships with the local community and embracing technological advancements were also firmly on the agenda.

Here, *Soldier* looks at the other success stories from the Service's return to the island after an absence of 14 years...

Back to school

Troops offer a brighter future for Jamaican pupils

WHILE honing the skills needed to thrive in a jungle environment was the core aim, the Coldstream Guards were also determined to leave a lasting footprint in the community where they were based.

As part of the platoon rotation phase, they swapped their webbing and weapons for paintbrushes and rollers as they set about adding a touch of colour to two schools in Port Antonio.

Classrooms, fences, playground equipment and walls all received a much-needed lick of paint as the infantrymen – along with their counterparts in the Jamaican Defence Force (JDF) – showcased their decorating talents in a project that formed a key objective for those charged with planning the exercise.

“The first priority is the training and making sure it is

arduous enough, so we are better for it,” Number 2 Company’s second in command, Lt Matthew Paynter, tells *Soldier* as we shelter from the afternoon sun at Port Antonio Infant School.

“But we want to connect with Jamaica as well. One way of doing that is through projects such as this.

“Walking around the local community we have got to know people and they have become used to seeing us in town.

“Yes, we have come here to exercise, but it is important to give something back.”

Given the fact Red Stripe was last staged 14 years ago, the work took on added importance as it underlined the Army’s effort to establish itself in the community once more after such a long time away.

And while Lt Paynter admits there were a few confused expressions among troops when the idea was first mooted, its benefits were quickly realised.

“Being in the Army you need to be selfless in the way you go about things,” he continues.

“This is something the schools would love to do themselves, but they do not have time – that is where we come in.

“Because we haven’t been here for so long, we have had to restart these relationships. Whoever comes next will have those relationships in place and the JDF will have experience of how this works.

“The British Army always wants to give something back to the community and we have had some great feedback from the schools, who are so grateful for what we have done.

“They get improved facilities, and our soldiers get the enjoyment of being able to help them.”

The value of the mission struck a particular chord with those who have young families themselves.

“We have older members with kids at home,” Sgt Kevin Edge, platoon sergeant of 6 Platoon, explains as he takes a break from painting a climbing frame (pictured right).

“They are happy to be here. We’ve had a game of football with the children, and it is nice to see something close to

Back to school



normal family life going on.

"We have other lads who have never been away before and they now realise how lucky they are at home. It has given them a chance to speak to locals and see how different cultures live.

"Jamaica takes education very seriously and it's great that we can help with that. We've given things a lick of paint, but the children have come running over as if it's all brand new.

"I don't think anything like this has been done for a long while. You see the teachers finishing in the classroom and then start cleaning when the school day is done, they just don't have the time to do it."

Corps engagement

Medics tested on hospital front line

WITH only routine injuries to deal with, the jungle deployment proved something of a formality for the Coldstream Guards' medical contingent.

However, the Service's return to Jamaica created a valuable defence engagement opportunity for these soldiers before the drills got under way.

A five-strong team from the Royal Army Medical Corps travelled to the Caribbean ahead of the start date to complete a week-long placement at the Kingston Public Hospital – where they worked alongside their host counterparts in the facility's emergency department.

With aspirations for Red Stripe to become a regular exercise for British troops, the visit was an opportunity for medical personnel on both sides to work shoulder to shoulder and share best practice.

The placement offered valuable experience for the UK contingent – three of whom were combat medical technicians – as they treated a host of patients with varying issues, including gunshot and machete wounds.

The team integrated quickly, and the attachment showed how defence engagement can strengthen the bond between the two nations.

"Only one of our CMTs had done a Herrick tour, where

“
The children
have come
running over
as if it's new
”

Corps engagement



“I've not seen much major trauma before”



» those types of injuries were happening,” explained Maj Grant Milne (RAMC), regimental medical officer for the Coldstream Guards and the doctor who organised the Kingston hospital visit.

“While they are not particularly junior, the fact we have not had kinetic tours since 2014 means they haven't seen cases like these before, which is the same for the corps as a whole.”

LCpl Jordan Frow (RAMC, pictured below) has served for six years but Red Stripe was her first infantry exercise in that time.

Before deploying to the jungle, she was excited to have the opportunity to test her range of medical skills in a clinical environment.

“I've not seen much major trauma before,” the junior NCO added.

“We've been taught how to deal with it, but I've never seen it in real life, so this was a chance to work with experienced Jamaican colleagues and put the skills I've learnt over the last six years into practice.

“I now feel much more confident.”



High-fliers

Drone capability tested in the jungle

LATOON commanders on Exercise Red Stripe benefited from enhanced reconnaissance capabilities as the Coldstream Guards stepped up drone trials in the Jamaican jungle.

Parrot Anafi devices were issued to the three platoons operating under the canopy in what was a new move for Number 2 Company in its quest to embrace technology and the positive impact it can have for those working on the ground.

The initiative was led by LSgt Tim Parkes (pictured far right), who completed a drone operators' course in the build-up to the deployment and then delivered training to pilots in country.

“Initially, it was about building everyone's' confidence so they could fly them over the canopy



High-fliers

and water and get used to launching the devices by hand,” he explained. “There have been challenges with the weather, particularly the heavy rain, but they have done well.

“This is all about seeing how drones can be utilised in the jungle and using them to do the hard work – therefore saving effort for soldiers.

“For instance, instead of sending out a patrol over a few kilometres, the drone can be up and out in minutes, which saves on fatigue.”

The NCO described how the new assets have allowed platoon commanders to identify supply routes in and out of the jungle, clearings, potential sites for water patrols and the location of enemy camps.

“They have been really impressed with the quality of footage and how clear it is,” he added. “Being under the canopy means you radiate heat, and the thermal imagery capability allows the drone to pinpoint individuals.”

“There have been some limitations but identifying those is what this test phase is about.”

The drive to incorporate the technology came from Company

Commander Maj James Howlin, who understood the potential value after using UAVs in a brigade recce role earlier in his career.

“There have been a lot of hurdles to get through and this is not a novelty,” he told *Soldier*.

“It is great from an Istar perspective as these drones can be used to identify enemy positions and pick up heat signatures.”

“They are a complementary asset and have offered more capabilities to our platoon commanders.”

Gdsm Ewan Thompson was one of the pilots trained to fly the drones and said they proved relatively easy to master.

“You only need about 20 minutes with them to understand what you are doing,” he added. “I think it is good that the Army is looking at things like this, although it is more kit to carry.”

“As a platoon we have been going about our business normally, but the drone gives us an extra recce capability.” ■

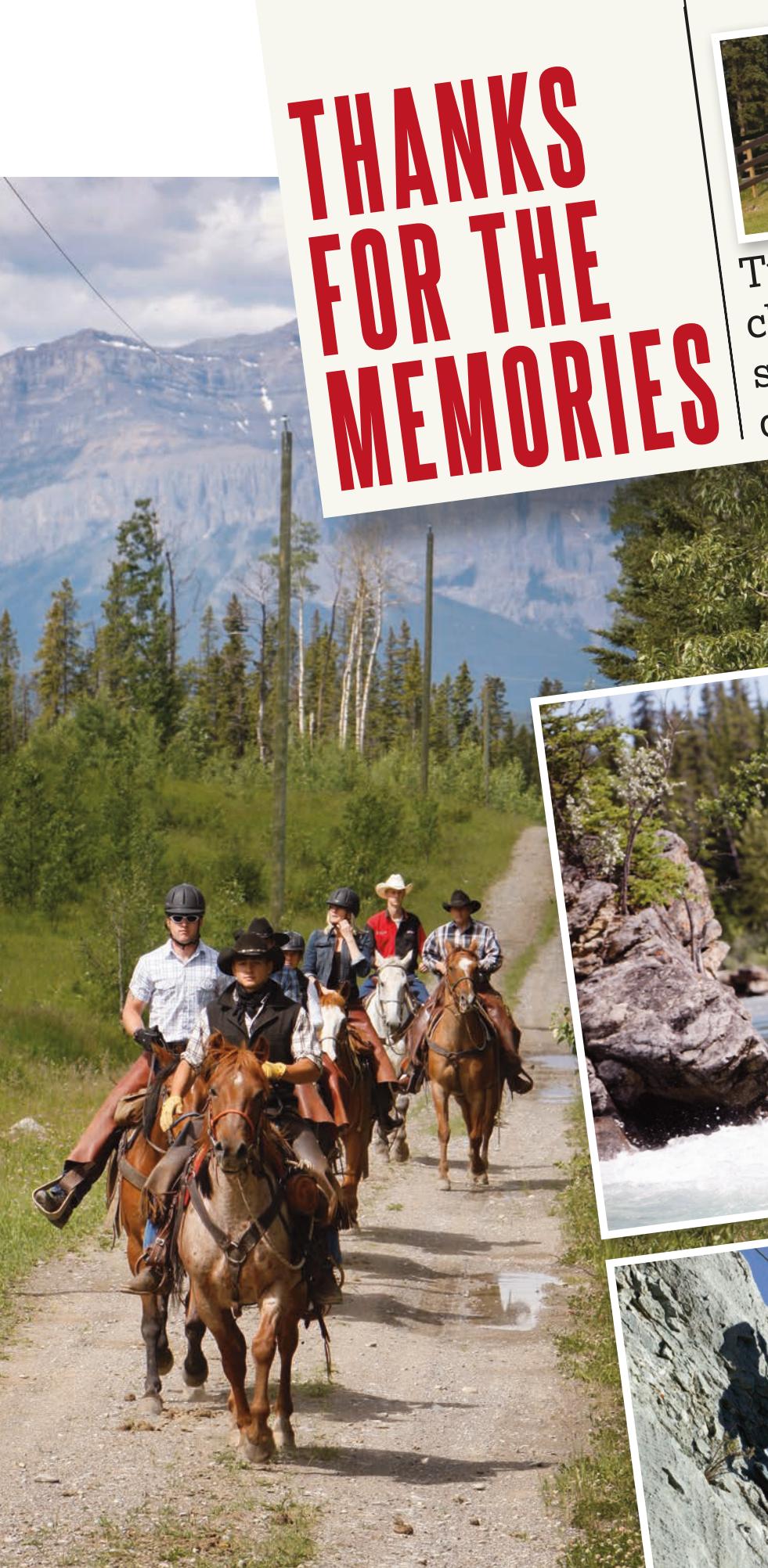
“This is about using them to do the hard work”



THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES



Trails End Camp closes its doors, sparking some dazzling recollections





IF YOU'VE been knocking about in the British Army for anything more than three or four years, you'll probably know about Trails End Camp (TEC).

Located at the Lazy H Trail Company ranch in the Canadian Rockies – about three hours from the Batus training area – the outdoor centre has offered up the ultimate in adventurous training for exercising troops in Canada since it sprang up in Alberta in the late 1980s.

From parachuting, mountain biking, horse riding and white water rafting to the more wintry pursuits of dog sledding, ice climbing and skiing, the site has been responsible for some real career highlights for numerous soldiers.

Add to that the warm reception provided by Lazy H owner Richard Blair and his team, and a few bizarre stories about encounters with wild bears, and you have an altogether remarkable location.

After TEC permanently closed its doors to give way to AT opportunities elsewhere in the world (page 10), Soldier dug into the archives to relive the memorable moments it gave British troops... »

“
**One of the best postings
I've had since I've been
in the Army**”

Sgt Ian Duncan, RLC
Soldier interview, 2017





“It’s as far away from R ‘n’ R as is conceptually possible. The terrain is remote and wild, and the dangers from the activities and even animals are significant”

Chief Instructor WO1 Si Naylor, RAPTC
Soldier interview, 2017

YOUR MEMORIES...

READERS RELIVE TEC

“

"Not a day went by there without me being pushed to the limits of my nerves. We slept in tents but weren't allowed to have food in them as it may attract bears!"

SSgt Mike O'Neill, RLC

Cpl Preston (second from left) on Mt Athabasca



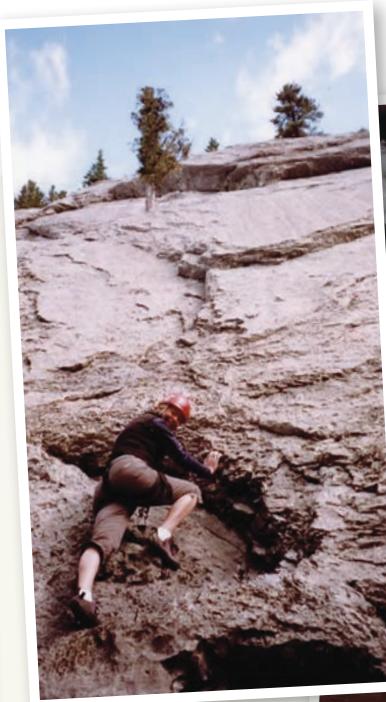
"In 2002 I was staying in TEC and climbed Mount Athabasca for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, 25 years to the day after my father did the same for the Silver Jubilee."

Cpl Nick Preston, Rifles

"Within weeks of being there I fully understood exactly what AT gives to the Army in terms of leadership skills. Soldiers came from different walks of life, and many would never have got the opportunity to see the Canadian Rockies. It helped with retention and mental well-being, and gave troops an



A small camp that provided a massive output for the British Army is how its last OC Maj Russ Bailey (above) describes Trails End Camp



"The activities were always adrenalin-fuelled – even the horse-riding, which many soldiers remember as one of the most terrifying activities"

experience they would never forget. And it made them better soldiers. Of course, it is sad to see TEC go, but it gave troops something they probably still talk about today. It was a small camp that provided an absolutely massive output for the British Army."

**Maj Russ Bailey, RAPTC
Last OC at Trail's End Camp, 2017-21**

"I was serving as a second lieutenant on the TEC permanent staff team when the 9/11 terrorist attacks happened; we watched events unfold on a tiny TV set in the staff common room, not realising it would change



everything in the rest of our military careers. Battlegroup personnel would arrive there from Batus with aspirations of catching up on sleep and a beer in the Cowboys Nightclub in Calgary. But on the agenda was parachuting, white water rafting, canoeing, ice-climbing, horse riding and rock climbing.

One highlight on the water-based packages was the 'widow-maker' where you would jump into the Kananaskis River from a ledge – akin to jumping into a washing machine – and get spewed out the other end, gasping but wanting to do it again. I remember many bear sightings too – they would often come into camp, looking for easy access to food. Everyone sleeping outside on AT packages would carry pepper spray in the event of an attack. I have no recollections of anyone having to use it, though.

Many soldiers will remember the horse riding as one of the most terrifying activities at TEC. The ranchers would take a group off deep into the Rockies – miles from civilisation – and the horses were wild. There was no controlling them, even for the best horseperson."

Capt Michelle Norman, RA (above)

”

FALKLANDS WAR 40 YEARS ON **SPIRIT OF THE SOUTH**

A conflict over a tiny British territory continues to have a huge resonance – four decades on



Report: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Paul Haley



THE sudden appearance of the Falkland Islands – after a grinding 20-hour flight from RAF Brize Norton – is a surreal experience. Droning over the infinite South Atlantic, the ear-popping descent and landfall is a welcome relief. The ocean gives way to a brown-grey landscape of rocks and occasional evidence of human settlers.

“You can picture the troops fighting down there during the war,” whispers one of the passengers as we collectively peer through the windows.

The sight is Mother Nature at her rawest – foreboding but majestically beautiful.

This stark landscape – the hallmark of a British overseas territory 8,000 miles from home – has long been familiar to soldiers. A venue for tours, exercises and adventurous training, it has become a home-from-home across the generations.

Turn the clock back 40 years, however, and the situation was very different. At the beginning of 1982, many troops had never heard of the Falklands – a vestige of the British Empire with around 2,000 settlers. And then, on April 2, they were invaded by neighbouring Argentina.

The aggression literally changed the status quo overnight – news that British territory had been seized and photos of the defending Royal Marines being taken prisoner after a

Gen Leopoldo Galtieri

IMPLICATED in human rights abuses and presiding over a crumbling economy from the outset of his tenure as Argentina's president, Gen Galtieri's uncompromising military government had become unpopular with the people as the 1980s began.

But his occupation of the Malvinas marked a brief turnaround in his political fortunes as he was greeted by cheering crowds in the capital Buenos Aires.

Having taken the lead of a three-man junta in 1981, his decision to invade was heavily influenced by hardline naval colleague Adm Jorge Anaya.

But the dictatorship did not envisage a robust response from the UK and public support soon gave way to anger as the tide of the conflict turned.

Defeat – and the return of democracy in Argentina – saw Galtieri imprisoned, although he was released after serving part of a 12-year sentence.

He lived in near-obscurity in the country's capital until his death aged 76 in 2003.





fierce battle were met with public outrage.

While Argentina – which had long claimed the islands it calls the Malvinas as its own – had been negotiating with the UK over the territory, a military junta led by Gen Leopoldo Galtieri had ordered the attack to bolster flagging domestic popularity. His gamble would have disastrous results.

The leader had underestimated the resolve of then British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, whose government swiftly ordered the assembly of a Royal Navy-led task force to recover the southern outpost.

It was an audacious undertaking. Troops had to be moved from one end of the world to the other, using the midpoint of Ascension Island as a staging post. The well-documented battle that followed under the banner of Op Corporate was brutal – a conventional land, air and sea campaign that claimed the lives of 255 British personnel, 649 Argentines and three islanders.

It would also forever change the near-forgotten Falklands as they were rapidly transformed into a fortress.

Soldiers still patrol around the settlements of the territory today. The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment are the most recent of the Army arrivals, providing personnel and firepower for the islands' Roulement Infantry Company.

Colleagues from 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery are also on permanent rotation. Responsible for air defence, the gunners have recently taken delivery of the

formidable Sky Sabre missile system. And all the while, the deployment is bolstered by Royal Air Force Typhoon fast jets and a host of naval assets.

But Stephen Badsey, professor of conflict studies at Wolverhampton University, stressed the legacy of Op Corporate extends beyond the ongoing defence of the islands and continues to inform military thinking.

"In hindsight you can see the Falklands campaign as an early example of modern power projection," he told *Soldier*. "Back 40 years ago defence thinking was focused on Europe and the threat from the Soviet Union.

"But when the Argentine forces invaded, personnel and equipment had to be moved over large distances – suggesting that in the future forces might be called to do anything, anywhere in the world."

Badsey highlighted that the recent creation of the 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team, with its helicopter support and ability to move swiftly, could be traced back to the defence reorganisations stemming from the Falklands conflict.

"The concept of more agile forces, which can be rapidly deployed, was developed further in the defence reviews of last year," the academic added.

The fighting of 1982 also marked a new era in the public's relationship with the military, Badsey argued.

"Although many people would at first have been unable to point to the Falklands on a map, they were interested in all that was happening," he continued. "There was a 'rallying around the flag' effect."

"The way the public saw the war was also different, with journalists reporting from ships at sea – although you could also argue that this was the last great conflict where the newspaper correspondent had primacy."

Elsewhere, the academic suggested the conflict may have influenced the wider Cold War picture. With Soviet forces embroiled in their decade-long occupation of Afghanistan, he believes the Kremlin watched the UK's response to the Argentine invasion carefully.

Some commentators even took the view that Russian leaders saw British resolve and reassessed their outlook of Nato.

With liberation, the islanders developed a vibrant economy, based on fishing, oil and tourism. But the outpost has also provided an unmatched opportunity for troops to carry out training with tri-Service colleagues as they prepare for the campaigns of tomorrow. ■

Margaret Thatcher

BRITAIN'S first female prime minister had already faced a tough three years in office by the time Argentine forces landed and seized the Falklands.

Rising unemployment, strikes and riots across UK cities had dominated the headlines at home while a belligerent Soviet Union – which had invaded Afghanistan early in her tenure – was at the centre of a concerning international picture.

But Thatcher had demonstrated an uncompromising attitude to those bent on using violence to achieve their ends. In 1980, when terrorist gunmen seized control of the Iranian Embassy in South Kensington, she sanctioned Op Nimrod and deployed special forces to end the siege.

In her autobiography *The Downing Street Years*, the former leader reflected on the Falklands: "We were fighting for our honour as a nation and principles of importance to the whole world, above all that aggressors should never succeed, and international law should prevail over the use of force."

Margaret Thatcher – who died aged 87 in 2013 – eventually served 11 years as PM before continuing her political life as a baroness in the House of Lords.



FALKLANDS WAR 40 YEARS ON THE GATHERING STORM

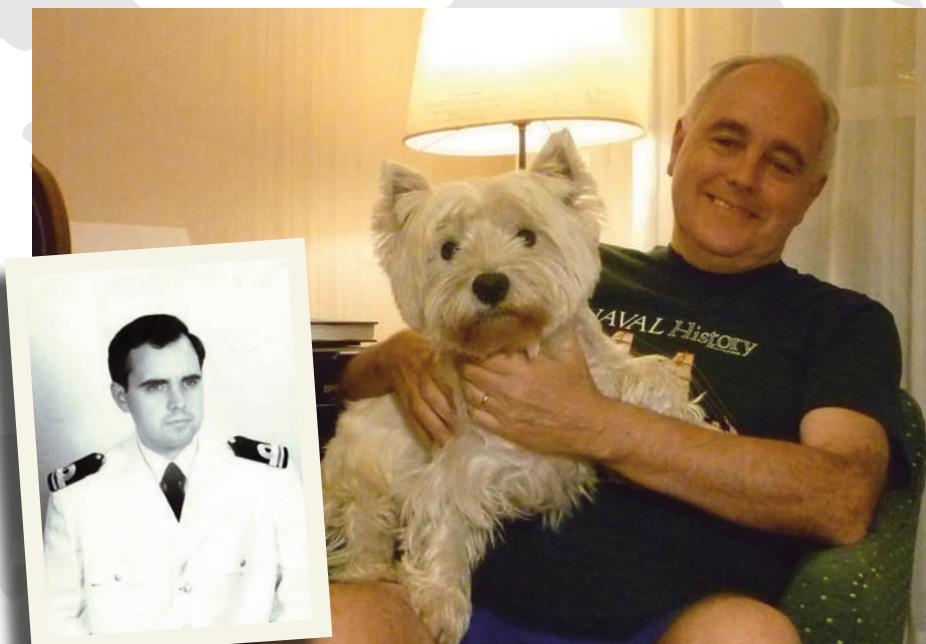
In 1982, as Argentina celebrated the capture of a territory it had long claimed, the UK was readying for battle...

EORMER Argentine Navy medical officer Eduardo Gerding remembers the fervour at reports of the Falkland Islands being wrested from British control. Lying some 300 miles off his country's southern tip, the Latin American state had long laid claim to the windswept territory it knew as the Malvinas. Now – on April 2, 1982 – news of their capture was met with jubilation.

"There was enthusiasm and the media fuelled the hopes of the population," the retired lieutenant commander recalled of the crowds that gathered following the rapid seizure of the territory by the country's then ruling military government.

"The issue of the Malvinas is very deep-rooted in Argentina and is taught in school – the public mood 40 years ago reminded me of the enthusiasm described after the outbreak

Report: Cliff Caswell



FALKLANDS WAR APRIL 1982 TIMELINE

April 2 Argentine forces land and capture the Falkland Islands

April 6 Argentina's 9th Infantry Brigade arrives on the Falklands to reinforce the captured territory; 5th Marine Infantry Battalion arrives soon after

April 9 The Liner SS Canberra departs Southampton with 40 and 42 Cdo Royal Marines and 3 Para on board

April 12 A 200-mile maritime exclusion zone around the islands – earlier announced by the UK government – comes into effect

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April 3 The South American country's marines occupy South Georgia – a dependency to the east. British PM Margaret Thatcher announces the dispatch of the Royal Navy task force to the South Atlantic

April 7 Fleet replenishment ship RFA Stromness leaves Portsmouth with most of 45 Cdo Royal Marines on board. Argentina's Brig Gen Mario Benjamin Menendez appointed the territory's military governor

April 11 Argentine 10th Infantry Brigade begins deploying to the Falklands





of the First World War in Europe."

Dubbed Operation Rosary, the occupation of the islands had followed a ferocious battle between a detachment of Royal Marines and South American troops. The following day, the Falklands dependency of South Georgia was taken.

While Lt Cdr Gerdig did not take part in the action – watching from a distance – he had already served on the front line of a military escalation with neighbouring Chile some years previously. Now the threat of armed conflict seemed ever present again.

The euphoria erupting in Argentina was in direct contrast to the situation 8,000 miles north in the UK. There the public was largely in the dark about the location of the tiny island chain, or even that it existed at all.

But as images from the aftermath of the invasion – including British personnel captured by Argentine forces – appeared in the newspapers, there was outrage.

Gus Hales, an NCO serving with 9 Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, was on Easter leave when the news broke. Along with colleagues he received a telegram telling him to return to barracks in Aldershot.

"My brother had served with the Royal Navy during the late 1970s and had been to the Falkland Islands while on HMS Endurance," he recalled. "But while I knew of the place and where it was, I did not know there was an Argentinian threat – or British citizens were living there."

"At that time, I had done a couple of tours

of Northern Ireland as well as serving in Germany, which was then the routine in which the Army was involved.

"I felt that we were all as ready and prepared as possible for whatever unfolded." ■



April 30 A total exclusion zone around the Falklands, imposed by the UK government, comes into effect

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

April 25 Operation Paraquet sees Royal Marines recapture South Georgia; Argentina garrison surrenders; 2 Para head for Falklands aboard Ferry MV Norland



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'Give us access to chargers'

WHY DOES the MoD not allow an abatement of cost or even free use of electric vehicle (EV) charging points for private cars?

Individuals are buying hybrids and EVs in greater numbers, but they cannot be charged on a defence site unless there is a cost recovery system in place, as defined in JSP 850.

The department also states that only specific chargers can be used (so no use of general three-pin sockets), and charging infrastructure cannot be installed for use by private vehicles.

However, the Armed Forces introduces an employee benefit when it believes it is justified – look at the continuity of education allowance for example.

The MoD are landlords and they direct certain employees to live on site. For the large majority this will be in single living accommodation (SLA) so it could quite easily include an EV charge as part of the rent. At domestic off-peak rates the actual cost would be very small.

Also, public funds could be used for hardware installations, as they are for many other items such as TVs in SLA – and they are allowed to use MoD electricity, so why not car chargers?

This may not be the ideal long-term solution for when EVs are ubiquitous, but making personal car charging possible on defence sites could support those who want to be green now.

I fully accept some controls need to be applied, but this can be worked through and implemented – the first step is that EV charging should be made free and heads of establishments should be permitted to install charging

infrastructure for private vehicles without the need for a chargeback function.

I challenge the Army to support and encourage its employees to go green.

– Name and address supplied

Bhavana Carson, Strategy and Plans team, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), replies: A study has been commissioned by the DIO to look at the entire estate and the optimum delivery of charging facilities for MoD-owned or leased vehicles, for single living-in personnel, for Service family accommodation occupants, contractors and for those who are daily commuters.

This work will take some time – and the embryonic Sustainable Road Transport team is liaising closely with us in relation to defence fleet vehicles, as this work develops.

The immediate priority is to get to a point of being able to charge the MoD fleets because we are under a government remit to achieve 25 per cent ultra-low emission cars by December 31 and have 100 per cent zero-emission cars and small vans by the end of 2027.

The DIO-led electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy does not consider staff using electric vehicle charging points at no cost because conventional petrol or diesel private vehicle users have to pay for fuel.

For non-fleet vehicles, the idea of charging from MoD infrastructure on a repayment basis is part of the mix.

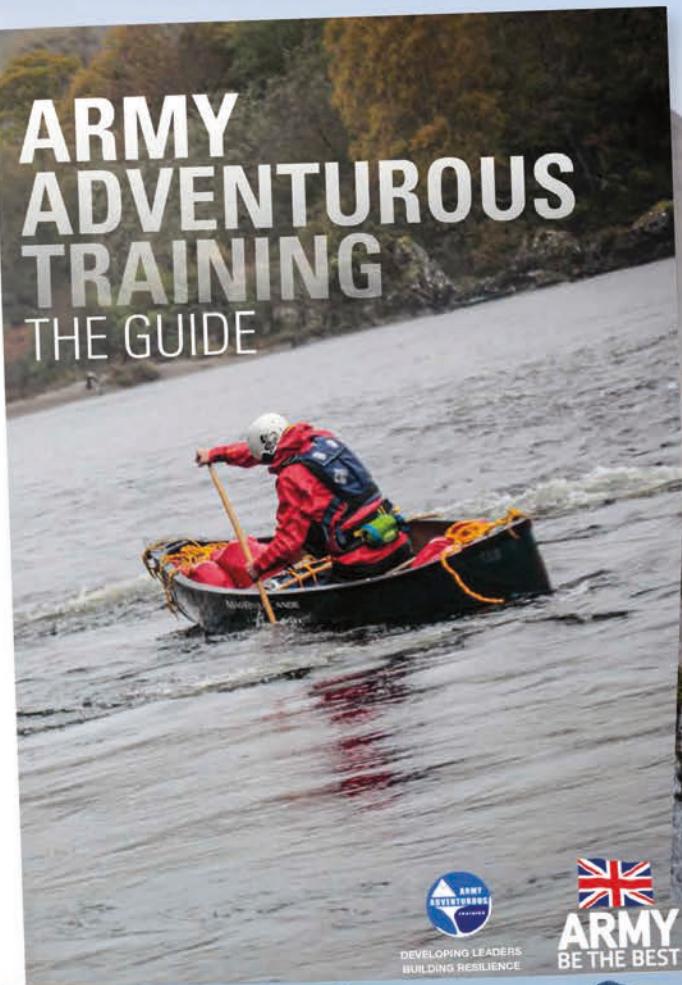
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COVID CLASH

● A MARCH 2020 mentality towards Covid-19 restrictions still seems to dominate at the Army's training establishments: unlike virtually every other Army posting, mandatory masking while indoors still applies.

Overzealous interpretations of social distancing rules result in absurdities such as every second urinal in the men's toilets being taped off, or gyms being reduced to half capacity due to roped off equipment.

While this may have once been necessary, the fact that social distancing is clearly no longer being adhered to in classrooms, lecture theatres, or the cookhouse makes a mockery of this.

Given the success of the UK vaccination programme, the current dominance of less-dangerous variants of Covid-19, and the virtual end of pandemic restrictions in the civilian world, surely these rules have now become a greater impediment to education and training than they are a benefit to the Service? – Name and address supplied

Lt Col Dan Rawlins, Chief of Staff at Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command, replies:

During the last 24 months we have delivered recruiting and basic training activities to meet mandated outputs – achieved through stringent force health protection measures and the sustained self-discipline of the whole force.

These were reviewed regularly as the national situation, associated government direction and national vaccination programme evolved.

On occasion our regulations were set at a level higher than national direction. This was informed by an assessment of basic training delivery risks – high tempo, concentrated training audience, shared accommodation and ablutions, limited isolation facilities etc. These sought to minimise the risk of Covid-19 outbreaks at basic training sites and reduce the impact of isolation periods on recruits and close contacts, the well-being of training delivery staff and enablers, the Army's reputation and the quality and quantity of our outputs.

“Several units are now struggling”

DO WE STILL HAVE THAT RESERVIST SKI INSTRUCTOR'S PHONE NUMBER?



‘Reserve policy on a slippery slope’

I GAINED my qualifications to teach soldiers to ski over a period of more than 40 years as a Regular soldier and then as a Reservist.

I turned 60 earlier this year and was retired from the Reserve. I was planning to carry on as an adult volunteer in the Army Cadet Force and was booked on several expeditions, so it came as a surprise to me that the regulations have recently been re-written so that adult volunteers are excluded from adventurous training – including taking instructing roles.

It seems a bit short-sighted to be throwing away all that experience. Several units are now struggling to get suitably qualified instructors and may have to look at the more expensive option of hiring civilian experts.

For me, it's not about claiming Reserve Service days – I love teaching soldiers to ski and would continue doing so for free.

Can somebody review this recent change and maybe put in an amendment to allow suitably qualified adult volunteers to teach on Regular and Reserve expeditions? – Kearn Malin, Col Cmdt, Norfolk ACF

Col Andrew Griffiths, Assistant Head, Professional Development, Army Headquarters replies: The Joint Service Adventurous Training (JSAT) scheme is designed to develop people from foundation-level courses through to leader and instructor awards, to support unit expeditions and training.

While it is recognised that many veterans will have accrued significant JSAT qualifications and experience while serving, current joint Service policy precludes civilians (including adult volunteers) from holding this award.

Military adventurous training qualifications are no longer valid once a person leaves the service.

Many veterans do have knowledge, skills and experience of military AT which could be of use to the Army and are encouraged to convert their JSAT qualification to a civilian award via the relevant national governing body.

Any change to this policy is a matter for the Joint Service AT steering committee.

FLAGGING UP A FAUX PAS

● PLEASE let those who need to know that the Union flag is displayed with the broad white band to the top left and not as shown on the front of your March issue under the coverline “Seaborne Success”.

When it is flown with the thin white band to the top left it is either a deliberate insult or a sign of distress.

At both the Winter Olympics and Paralympics even the Union flags in the audiences were correctly displayed.

However, despite this I'd like to congratulate the rowing crews concerned and we look forward to hearing from the



SEABORNE SUCCESS
Force Atlantic stars tell us all

Salty Sappers on their return to Ripon

I've enjoyed reading *Soldier* immensely for years – keep up the good work!
– Kenn Hart (ex-RE), Ripon

BULLET POINTS

Bite-sized data to keep you in the know



CAREERS

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service is recruiting veterans to join its ranks through its Advance into Justice fast-track scheme. The initiative is open to those who have left in the last five years and are not in full-time employment. Full training is provided, with travel and relocation contributions available. Visit [advance-into-justice.service.justice.gov.uk](https://www.advance-into-justice.service.justice.gov.uk) for more.

The Officers' Association and **RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity** are combining to create a single charity providing career support to all Service leavers and their families throughout the UK. The new organisation will be called Forces Employment Charity, and is expected to be formally established by April.

Forces Families Jobs is a platform designed to help partners into meaningful employment. Visit [forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk](https://www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk)



COMPETITIONS

January 2022 HOAY winners:
Darren Childs, Cornwall; Sue Manning, Tyne & Wear; Jayne Hawkes, Hereford; Milli Jeffrey, Dorset

Spinelines winner: Tim Carpenter, Dorset



DIARY

Until May 6: Brothers in Arms.
A National Army Museum exhibition charting the story of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry – an elite British tank regiment whose men fought their way across north-west Europe during the Second World War. For more details visit [nam.ac.uk](https://www.nam.ac.uk)

June 8-9: CTX Counter Terror Expo. The UK's definitive showcase of the capabilities, technology and expert knowledge to protect nations, businesses and people from terrorism and serious security threats. The event is a platform for those from the public and private sectors tasked with sourcing and delivering a robust defence against terrorism. With multiple theatres and demo zones, visitors can learn from the best minds in counter terrorism. For more details

on attending go to [ctexpo.co.uk/visit](https://www.ctexpo.co.uk/)

Until August 2024: Foe to Friend. Germany has been at the heart of the British Army's story since 1945. After the Second World War, the Army helped rebuild a devastated and divided nation. It provided protection during the Cold War, and later used Germany as a base from which to deploy troops across the world. This major exhibition follows the lives of soldiers in Germany over the past 75 years. It looks at the changing relationship between Britain and Germany over the decades and charts the gradual transition from foe to friend. Free entry. For more details go to [nam.ac.uk](https://www.nam.ac.uk)

Until further notice: World War 2: War Stories. An exhibition at The Tank Museum, Bovington telling the story of the Royal Armoured Corps. Visit [tankmuseum.org](https://www.tankmuseum.org) for more information and opening times.



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020 7901 8900;
soldierscharity.org

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

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

Armed Forces Muslim Association:
afma.org.uk

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

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

Army LGBT Forum:
armylgbt.org.uk

Army Libraries:
01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall, now **Togetherall**:
togetherall.com

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

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

Care After Combat:
careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

Centre for Veterans Health, King Edward VII Hospital:
020 7467 4370;
cdunne@kingedwardvii.co.uk

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

Combat Stress:
0800 323 4444;
combatstress.org.uk

Defence Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination 24/7 Helpline:
0800 783 0334

Erskine:
0141 814 4569;
erskine.org.uk

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

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

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

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988
forcespensionsociety.org

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

Heroes Welcome:
heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
highground-uk.org.uk
07951 495 272

Humanist, Atheist and Non-religious in Defence Network:
defencehumanists.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01252 787574

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or
0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group):
mutual-support.org.uk

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

PoppyScotland:
0131 557 2782;
poppyScotland.org.uk

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

Remount:
01451 850 341;
remount.net

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

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

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

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

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

Speak Out – the Army's confidential bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline:
0306 7704656

SSAFA:
0845 1300 975;
ssafa.org.uk

Stoll: 020 7385 2110; stoll.org.uk

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

The Poppy Factory:
020 8940 3305;
poppyfactory.org

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

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

Troop Aid:
0300 1020215 or 07306 087443;
troopaid.info

uk4u Thanks!:
01798 812081;
uk4u.org

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

WVRS: 02920 232 668



REUNIONS

The Cheshire Yeomanry Association is planning a dinner in Chester on April 23 to mark the outfit's formation 225 years ago. Email kingsbr@gmail.com for info.



The Forces Pension Society – an independent, not-for-profit

membership-funded organisation that acts as a pension watchdog – is staging a number of roadshows. Log on to forcespensionsociety.org/news-events/events for more information about the events.

The Army Engagement Team has resumed face-to-face events. For further information email rc-aeg-mailbox@mod.gov.uk

The next roadshows are:
April 5 – St Albans
May 4 – Lincoln
May 5 – Liverpool

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TEN details have been changed in this picture of London District Garrison Sergeant Major, WO1 Andrew Stokes, inspecting F Company, Scots Guards and signing them off ready for ceremonial duties for the rest of the year, which will include the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Circle all the differences on the left image and send the panel to HOAY 960, *Soldier*, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU with your full contact details, including email address, by no later than March 31.

A photocopy is acceptable but only one entry per person may be submitted. Alternatively, email a photograph of the image highlighting

the differences to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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The winner's name will appear in the June 2022 issue. All the usual competition rules apply.



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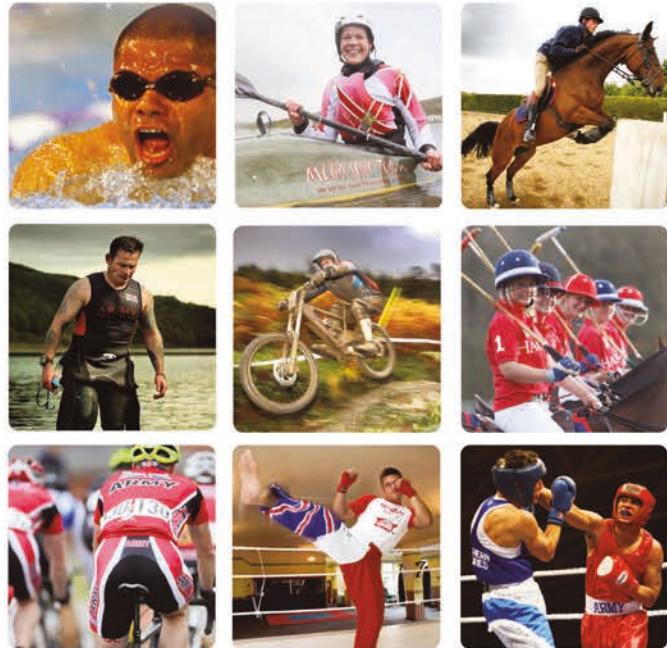
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REVIEWS



P59
BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH:

ASSASSIN'S CREED: THE EZIO COLLECTION

Remastered series has welcome renaissance

› WHEN the original *Assassin's Creed* first appeared on the then cutting-edge Xbox 360, it set a new standard in the concept of open world gaming.

Launched in late 2007, the title's astonishing recreation of a Middle East during the Crusades and a living, pulsating realm made it a defining hit for the French publisher Ubisoft – and it rapidly racked up an enormous following.

While players took control of Altair – an enigmatic sword-for-hire – a parallel backstory revealed him to be an ancestor of modern-day barman Desmond Miles.



GAMES

▶ This mild-mannered nobody had been kidnapped by members of a dodgy multinational conglomerate, who were plugging him into a machine that could reveal his ancient relative's memories.

A succession of sequels followed, with the popular franchise providing a canvas for different historical periods.

As the modern-day conspiracy plot thickened, *Assassin's Creed II* saw Miles recast as Ezio in Renaissance Italy – a place no less brutal despite the progression of art and culture.

And it is this era of the series that is the latest to be worked and released in new form on Nintendo Switch – pleasingly making the transition to handheld gaming in the process.

As well as the immediate sequel, *Assassin's Creed: The Ezio Collection* bundles together two other games – *Brotherhood* and *Revelations* – respectively set in Rome and Constantinople as the adventure continues to unfold.

Placing players in the shoes of Miles – who has been enduring ruthless psychological experiments on a machine known as the Animus – the first title begins with his dash for freedom from a lab where he has been held.

Rescued by members of a group that tell him more about the outfit that was holding him prisoner, he is coaxed into another series of mind-bending shenanigans – this time to unearth the real intentions of his ex-captors.

Plunged deep into his subconscious by the Animus, players are soon cast in the colourful garb of an Italian alter-ego – with a new adventure involving a near-Shakespearean combination of combat, sex and treachery.

An immersive jaunt from the outset, the remixed *Assassin's Creed* experience does not disappoint and will no doubt bring great delight to a new gaming generation.

The environments of the series were outstanding when the titles were first released – and they have lost nothing of their impact in this latest remaster.

Perfectly capturing the colourful, yet dark, mood of the Renaissance era, the day and night incarnations of the cities are stunningly rendered, from towering spires of Roman Catholic churches to the houses of the streets below. Running across the rooftops and climbing the peaks is as exhilarating as ever.

The settings are populated by a host of characters, from sombre members of religious orders to merchants, noblemen and thugs.

All react differently to Ezio – with events influenced by the player's interactions – and there are plenty of missions aside from a central story.

Controls have been well reworked to suit the



experience of the Switch, while the soundtrack is suitably impressive, particularly with a good pair of headphones.

Features have been optimised for the console's small screen while two bonus videos provide a behind-the-scenes look at the games.

Although the animated sequences – particularly the cut scenes – show their age, this does not detract from three products that remain highly polished.

It all adds up to a solid package and a collection that has been perfectly remixed to keep

the games as compelling as they were at the time of their original release.

Style, as they say, never dates ■

VERDICT:

A solid remaster of a classic game series



REVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, SOLDIER

Enjoyed life as Ezio? You might also like...

Assassin's Creed: The Rebel Collection



THOSE preferring a slightly more modern take on the well-established series would do well to consider this Switch double feature – which has a distinct maritime theme. *Black Flag* is set during the classic age of piracy in and around the Caribbean, while *Rogue* sees players sailing for North America. It's well worth snapping up – particularly if found in the Nintendo Store bargain bin.

Immortals: Fenyx Rising



A SIMILAR outing to *Assassin's Creed* – though with less of an adult theme – this mythology romp is a fun affair. Available on all formats, *Immortals* sees players fighting to keep the ancient Greek gods safe from a deadly enemy. Released to significant critical acclaim in late 2020, the title has since been freshened up with plenty of downloadable content.



PICK OF THE MONTH:

Kidnapped by the Junta

Argentina's Dirty War and the roots of the Falklands conflict

ALMOST 40 years ago, as British troops steeled themselves to defend the Falkland Islands from Argentine forces, ITV journalist Julian Manyon endured a terrifying kidnapping at the hands of the ruling military junta.

Together with two of his crew, he was snatched at gunpoint off the streets of Buenos Aires, where they had been reporting on the build-up to war.

Though they were released a short time later, shaken but unharmed, the experience was a chilling insight into the fate of the so-called "disappeared" – thousands



of political opponents, government critics and assorted innocents tortured and murdered during Argentina's "Dirty War".

Four decades on from briefly becoming part of the story he had been covering, Manyon (pictured below) has revisited the ordeal as part of his new book examining the brutal campaign.

Kidnapped By the Junta describes how the bloodshed would eventually set Gen Leopoldo Galtieri's government on the path to an ill-fated confrontation with Britain over a rocky outcrop in the South Atlantic.

Fascinatingly, it also gives form to the career criminal turned Secret Service enforcer responsible for the author's abduction.

It was only with the release by the Obama and Trump administrations of thousands of previously classified CIA documents relating to the era that he was finally identified as one Anibal Gordon.

As well as exposing his crimes, Manyon reveals the varying degrees to which he and his contemporaries subsequently faced justice – a

process that rumbles on to this day.

In a fresh approach to many British-centric titles, this book focuses less on the military action, instead combining the personal with the wider political context.

The result is a genuinely enlightening account of the conflict from the other side of the hill.

Soldier spoke to the now retired foreign correspondent to find out more...

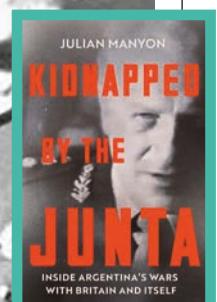
Q&A – Julian Manyon

What is meant by the "Dirty War"?

Since the latter part of the 1970s Argentina had been at war with left wing revolutionary movements operating there and in other Latin American countries. In 1976 a military junta seized power to restore order, they claimed, but employing extremely savage methods, including interrogation and torture, to do so.

How many people died?

Estimates vary wildly from 8,000, up to 30,000. But what's important is that for



• *Kidnapped by the Junta* by Julian Manyon is published by Icon Books and priced £20



» several years a lot of people were tortured or killed without anything resembling a legal process.

What are the recollections of your own kidnapping?

The thing I remember most clearly is the fact that these people really knew what they were doing. When I was lying on my back in the well of a car with a cloth over my head and a pistol pressed to my head, the one thing I saw was that they had a leather thong that had been made specifically to attach the door handle to the window knob and make any movement of that impossible. You couldn't kick your way out even if you wanted to. And that's when I thought, "we're in trouble – these guys have done this before".

When and how did you find out who was behind it?

Not until 2018. An Argentine newspaper did a story about the fact we were mentioned among some 53,000 pages of CIA reports. I set out to get hold of the documents and came to the conclusion it would make a good theme for the book. It emerged that the leader of the kidnap gang was someone who played a very important part in the Dirty War and claimed to have killed 1,000 people himself. His name was Anibal Gordon. He served in the Secret Service and his identification enabled me to get up close to the sort of person he was and who carried out these terrible actions – though he was far from alone.

It must have given you the chills to read about your abduction

There were two things I found telling – one was a document from a few weeks before our kidnapping that said the 601st Intelligence Battalion, which Gordon was associated with, had drawn up plans to murder some 500 British citizens resident in Argentina if Britain engaged in full-scale hostilities. I also found chilling the personal accounts of kidnap victims who survived and how they describe what happened to them because I recognised quite a lot of the details.

How does this play into the Falklands War?

There's a direct connection – the junta launched the invasion because of the trouble they were in as a result of the Dirty War. They knew two things; one was that their economic losses – which were leading to unrest – were continuing, and that they couldn't go on suppressing opposition. But if they lost power, they knew they would face prosecution for the atrocities they had carried out. And so they came to the conclusion that the best way to solve



A member of 3 Commando Brigade stands guard over Argentine prisoners after the surrender on June 14, 1982

the dilemma was to seize the Malvinas, as they call them, because it would make them the heroes of the nation, not the ruthless bunch of torturers and kidnappers they were.

What made them think the plan could work?

Perhaps understandably they thought the British lion had lost its roar. Mrs Thatcher had not got into her stride and we were divesting ourselves of the weaponry that would prove necessary in the retaking of the islands – for example HMS Invincible was nearly sold off the year before. They were also prone to arrogance – the foreign minister Nicanor Costa Mendez, who I interviewed several times, told Galtieri: "They will never send the fleet". We know that turned out to be just about the worst advice imaginable.

What's the legacy of the war in Argentina?

The Malvinas are still an absolute national cause and the current president, Alberto Fernandez, is carrying out a diplomatic offensive at the moment, which the Chinese government has come out in support of. They also have a great deal of backing from elsewhere in Latin America. Their air force is a mess, but they are seeking to rebuild it and the British government is keeping itself informed of the technology they are trying to acquire. From a military point of view, we are far better placed, but this is not going to go away. ■



Gen Leopoldo Galtieri and Brig Gen Mario Benjamin Menendez, governor of the Falklands during the Argentine occupation of the islands

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, SOLDIER



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- Large f8 aperture benefits results in low-lighting environments
- Weather-sealed design for reliable use in punishing conditions

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SOLDIER SPORT



SHARP SHOOTER

NEWCOMER Pte Lo Tuigau (RLC) made her mark at the Inter-Services Netball Championships as the Army's open team defeated the Royal Air Force on their way to another title. Read about a successful three days on court – that included a hat-trick of trophy wins – on page 73...



NAVAL TEST LOOMS

TWICKENHAM Stadium awaits the Army men's and women's teams this month as Inter-Services rugby union returns to the home of the English game for the first time since 2019.

Both sides were in action against the Royal Air Force in Gloucester as this issue went to press and will be hoping for a successful end to their campaign as they take to the hallowed turf to face the Royal Navy on April 30.

The occasion will be particularly special for SSgt Jade Mullen (AGC (SPS), pictured above), who will captain the women as they make their debut at the iconic venue.

"It's a massive deal for us, and something we've been building towards for years," she said. "But this is not just about the 2022 squad, it is for all the players who have helped get Army women's rugby to where it is today."

● Ahead of kick-off, match organisers have launched the **#BringYourAGame** campaign to remind those in attendance to respect players, officials, fellow fans, and local residents. Efforts are also being made to make the day a more family-friendly event, with a specific zone designated to such supporters.



Picture: Cpl Alex Morris, RLC

AIR FORCE TRIUMPH IN ARMY'S BACKYARD

THE Army women suffered a 2-0 loss in their opening fixture of the Inter-Services Football Championships – a result that saw their Royal Air Force rivals crowned champions.

The visitors, and defending champions, headed into the contest on the back of a 2-0 victory over the Royal Navy and emerged as deserved winners following a dominant display in Aldershot.

Philippa Wilson gave the light blues the perfect start when she rose unmarked to head home in the tenth minute and the Reds were indebted to the form of goalkeeper Sgt Kinga Globiowski (RA) – who delivered a string of fine first-half saves – for restricting the score to just 1-0 at the break.

She produced a smart stop to deny forward Rachel Griffiths from close range and then thwarted Zara McIntosh with a finger-tip save

after the striker ran clear.

However, Globiowski's best work came on the stroke of half-time as she reacted superbly to divert a point-blank shot on to the crossbar and was then rewarded as Griffiths was flagged offside after rifling the rebound into the net.

Cpl Kelly Davis (REME) had the Army's best opportunity, but fired straight at RAF goalkeeper Hannah Hale following a slick counter attack, and the pattern of play was repeated in the second half.

Midfielder Catherine Beaver went close with two efforts from corners and substitute Jeorgia Carr fired into the side netting after a smart turn-and-shot in the area.

The knockout blow was delivered in the 73rd minute as fullback Bethan Jewitt cut inside and curled a superb strike from distance into the top corner. ■

**"IT'S A
MASSIVE
DEAL
FOR US"**



● OLYMPIC bronze medallist boxer Gnr Karriss Artingstall (RA) added another accolade to her haul when she was named the UK Armed Forces sportswoman of the year. The Army had further cause to celebrate at the ceremony as the women's rugby league squad (pictured) was named team of the year following their run to the final of the Challenge Shield.

Picture: Phil Mingo/PRAUK

MONTH IN SPORT

April's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services eRacing Championships
WHEN: April 5 and 6
WHERE: Online platform Zwift
NEED TO KNOW: Initially launched as a virtual alternative during Covid, the competition has endured and Service cyclists will be pushing for honours in time trials and road races



WHAT: Inter-Services Basketball Championships
WHEN: April 7 to 9
WHERE: RAF Cosford
NEED TO KNOW: Army players returned to the court at the Inter-Corps Championships in September and will now be looking to secure the military bragging rights in Shropshire



union stars take on a Northampton Saints XV in the historic annual fixture commemorating First World War hero Edgar Mobbs

WHAT: Mobbs Memorial Match
WHEN: April 13
WHERE: Franklins Gardens, Northampton
NEED TO KNOW: After a two-year hiatus, the Army's rugby



Pictures: Cpl Alex Morris, RLC

REDS MADE TO SUFFER IN OPENING TIE



AHAT-TRICK from Royal Air Force striker Sgt Michael Campbell ended the Army's hopes in this season's Inter-Services Football Championships.

The forward's exploits helped his team to a 4-1 win in Aldershot, a result that saw them lift the coveted trophy on the soldiers' turf following a 2-0 victory over the Royal Navy earlier in the competition.

While the score suggests the fixture was one sided it was anything but as the Reds took the lead early on and created clear-cut chances throughout.

The breakthrough came in the seventh minute when Cpl Sean Thomson (REME) fired into the top corner after a drive from Spr Scott McCarthy (RE, pictured above) hit the post.

And the hosts came within inches of extending their advantage moments later as ATpr Scott Hynd (AAC) met a corner from the left only to see his header hit the crossbar.

The miss proved costly as the RAF immediately countered and when Cpl David Webb played the ball back from the byline, Campbell

converted at the near post.

The duo combined for the visitors' second in the 21st minute as Webb's header from a deep cross allowed Campbell to nod home.

But the Army responded well and were unlucky not to equalise before the interval. Cpl Sean Woolley (RLC) stung the fingertips of RAF keeper Cpl Christian Paulett-Brigg with a rising shot, before he saw a low effort from the same position drift past the far post.

The Reds continued to push after the break as McCarthy went close with a shot across goal and Thomson was thwarted by a last-ditch tackle.

And their wastefulness was punished on the hour mark as the outstanding Webb linked with Cpl Jake Gosling to release Campbell in the area, who completed his hat-trick in style. Gosling rounded off the scoring in the 68th minute as he drilled the ball into the top corner at the end of a slick passing move.

The Army had chances late on, but as the final whistle sounded it was the RAF who celebrated a famous win. ■



INFANTRY MAKE WAVES AS CORPS CLASH RESUMES

THE INFANTRY enjoyed a day to remember at the Inter-Corps Swimming Championships as they posted three new competition records on their way to securing another team crown.

Pte Kieran Preston (Para) clocked a time of 2min 17.81sec to post a new best in the men's 200-metre individual medley – beating the previous record, which had stood since 2008, by almost three seconds.

And there were further highlights in the relays, with the 4x50-metre breaststroke and 4x50-metre freestyle teams both eclipsing the record times formerly held by their rivals from the Royal Marines.

These efforts helped the infantryers to a tally of 100 points, which was enough to defeat the challenge of the Royal Engineers, who finished on 92. They also claimed the overall relay title ahead of the same opposition.

"We knew the sappers would be a threat," Maj Marcus Roberts (Scots), secretary of Infantry Swimming, told *SoldierSport*. "We were confident but did not expect to do quite so well."

"It has been challenging for us to come together as a team, not just because of Covid. We have a strong following in The Parachute Regiment, but with them deploying on Op Pitting and being held at high readiness it has been difficult for everyone to get involved."

"While numbers were down slightly this year, we still saw a lot of good swimmers and a lot of good swims."

"People were willing to jump in the pool and compete, and that epitomises the Infantry spirit. There were those who were swimming on the Thursday who had taken part in the water polo and diving earlier in the week – they wanted to get in the water and represent the team."

Roberts, who was victorious in the 100-metre backstroke and took silver the 50 metres, was also pleased to see fresh faces coming to the fore.

"There were a few experienced swimmers in there, but this is almost a completely new team," he added. "Kieran is new to the Army, and this was his first Inter-Corps Championships, so it was great to see him do so well."

Another notable performer was Pte Lucia Gomez (PWRR), who competed in the 50-metre breaststroke and butterfly, along with the 200-metre freestyle, to become the first female swimmer on the Infantry team.

"She was very impressive and picked up a silver medal," Roberts continued.

"We should have had another three women involved, but they were otherwise engaged, which would have been enough for a relay team."

"We now want to get more



females onboard – they are breaking ground, and this is a big step forward. It is a slow process as we are limited by the numbers joining the Infantry, but we will get there over the next few years."

The women's competition was won by the Royal Logistic Corps, who finished ahead of the Royal Engineers, and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers – results that were repeated in the relay standings.

It was the first Inter-Corps Championships since 2019 and organiser WO1 Emma Argue (REME), who was at the helm for the last time before she leaves the Service, said there was a real sense of enjoyment at being back in the pool after a lengthy break.

"We saw a really good level of swimming, and the standard was better than we thought it would be," she added.

"They were slightly off the pace in terms of timings, but only very slightly, and there were so many new faces involved.

"It was great to see a female from the Infantry, and there was another from the Royal Armoured Corps. The fact they came along and took part shows we are moving in the right direction.

"The future is looking encouraging. We are trying to change the calendar so it is more in line with what is happening in civilian swimming, which means we can only get better." ■



HOCKEY IN NUMBERS

**TITLES WON
BY ARMY
TEAMS
AT THE
TWO-DAY
CONTEST**

4

**GOALS
SCORED BY
THE WOMEN'S
SIDE AS THEY
DEFEATED
THE RAF
AND NAVY**

15

**WINS FROM
TWO GAMES
FOR THE
UNDER-
25S, MEN'S
MASTERS
AND
WOMEN'S
MASTERS
OUTFITS**

2

**DATE, IN
MAY, OF THE
OPENING
DAY IN THE
SEASON-
ENDING
INTER-
CORPS
CLASH IN
ALDERSHOT**

9



Picture: Cpl Alex Morris, RLC

FORM RETURNS IN TITLE RUN

FTER returning empty handed from the Inter-Services Indoor Hockey Championships earlier in the season, the Army found their form at the outdoor clash as they claimed all but one of the titles up for grabs.

After battling their way to a 3-2 win over the Royal Air Force, the Army women hit the goal trail against an under-strength Royal Navy and a 12-1 victory saw them seal the silverware in style.

The men's and women's masters' teams secured their respective trophies, and there were positive signs for the future as the men's under-25 squad added another prize.

However, there was disappointment for the men's senior outfit, who lost their

opening match with eventual champions the RAF before scoring in the final seconds of the game to down the Senior Service 6-5.

Sgt Aidy Worth's (REME) goal proved to be a rich reward for the soldiers, who put their earlier defeat behind them to end the tournament on a high.

"We let them get into the match in the first quarter, which gave them confidence, but we showed great resilience," said skipper Capt Tom Bolton (AAC).

"While we lost to the RAF there were a lot of positives in the performance.

"As a team we are in a transition phase, we've had quite a few debuts here and they can use this experience as we move forward." ■

● BIATHLON star Sgt Amanda Lightfoot (AGC (SPS)) has announced her retirement from the sport. The soldier represented Team GB at the 2014 and 2018 (pictured) Winter Olympics and was a regular at World Cup level, an event in which she recorded a top-20 finish earlier this year – the highest ranking by a British athlete since 1989.



Picture: Andy J Ryan/Team GB

ARMY CYCLING

MOUNTAIN BIKE 2022 SERIES

Great news! Army Cycling are planning to hold 6 events in 2022, open to all serving personnel, Regular and Reservist.

These races are for all levels of experience, from beginners to seasonal racers, which are held on terrain that all riders can manage, but will be challenging at speed.

All riders will experience the exhilaration of a 1 hr MTBXC race and will compete to win prizes or beat personal bests. A minimal fee will be charged on the day, details of which will be contained in the race series Admin Instruction.

So save the dates, keep monitoring Defence Connect for up to date information in case of cancellation and join the ACMTBXC team on race day.

XC Dates and Venues

Round 1. 30 Mar 22 Sherwood Pines

Round 2. 27 Apr 22 Catterick

Round 3. 18 May 22 Wimbish

Round 4. 08 Jun 22 Pippingford Park

Round 5. 29 Jun 22 Woodbury Common

Army Champs. 20 Jul 22 Exeter - all welcome!

ONLINE ENTRY - Follow the QR code or visit cycling.

armysportcontrolboard.com for more information.

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» WATER POLO



POLO PUSH HELPS SOLDIERS CLIMB THE LEAGUE

THE Army men's water polo team has been making waves at national level with a string of impressive performances in the British Water Polo League.

Just one defeat in seven matches saw the soldiers finish third in the Division Four ranks, an effort that saw them qualify for the resulting Championship Three competition.

And after winning four of their seven fixtures in that contest they ended the season in fourth spot – their highest-ever finish in the domestic standings.

Manager WO1 Luke Illingworth (REME) told *SoldierSport*: “We are getting better because we are playing more.

“Our exposure to the national league has allowed us to unearth new talent and we now have people joining the Army to play water polo.

“We have players who have represented Great Britain at under-19 and under-21 level join us in recent years, and we are

getting a lot of support from the University Officer Training Corps and the Reserves.

“The aspiration now is to start a development team as we have so many numbers on the books. Hopefully, that will bring through the next generation of talent who can push those in the starting line-up.

“We want to see competition for places at all levels.

“There are not many national league teams that have used as many players as us this season. There are 13 in a team and over the ten or so games we have played, we have used 21 players. So, a development team would really help.”

Illingworth was speaking at the Inter-Corps Championships (pictured), which saw the Royal Engineers and Royal Logistic Corps claim the men's and women's crowns respectively.

The competition marked the latest stage of the sport's successful resumption after the pandemic, with the Army team

only returning in September.

“The impact of Covid was as bad for us as it was in any other sport,” the senior NCO continued. “Because this is a close-contact team sport, played indoors, we were one of the last to come back.

“There was nothing for more than a year, but Project Restart went well, and, in the end, we hadn't lost much ground to our civilian rivals.

“We assumed they would have worked harder than us as we were limited by when we could get together, so we tapered our expectations. But when we beat York 21-4 in our first game, we realised we could keep the aims we had before Covid.”

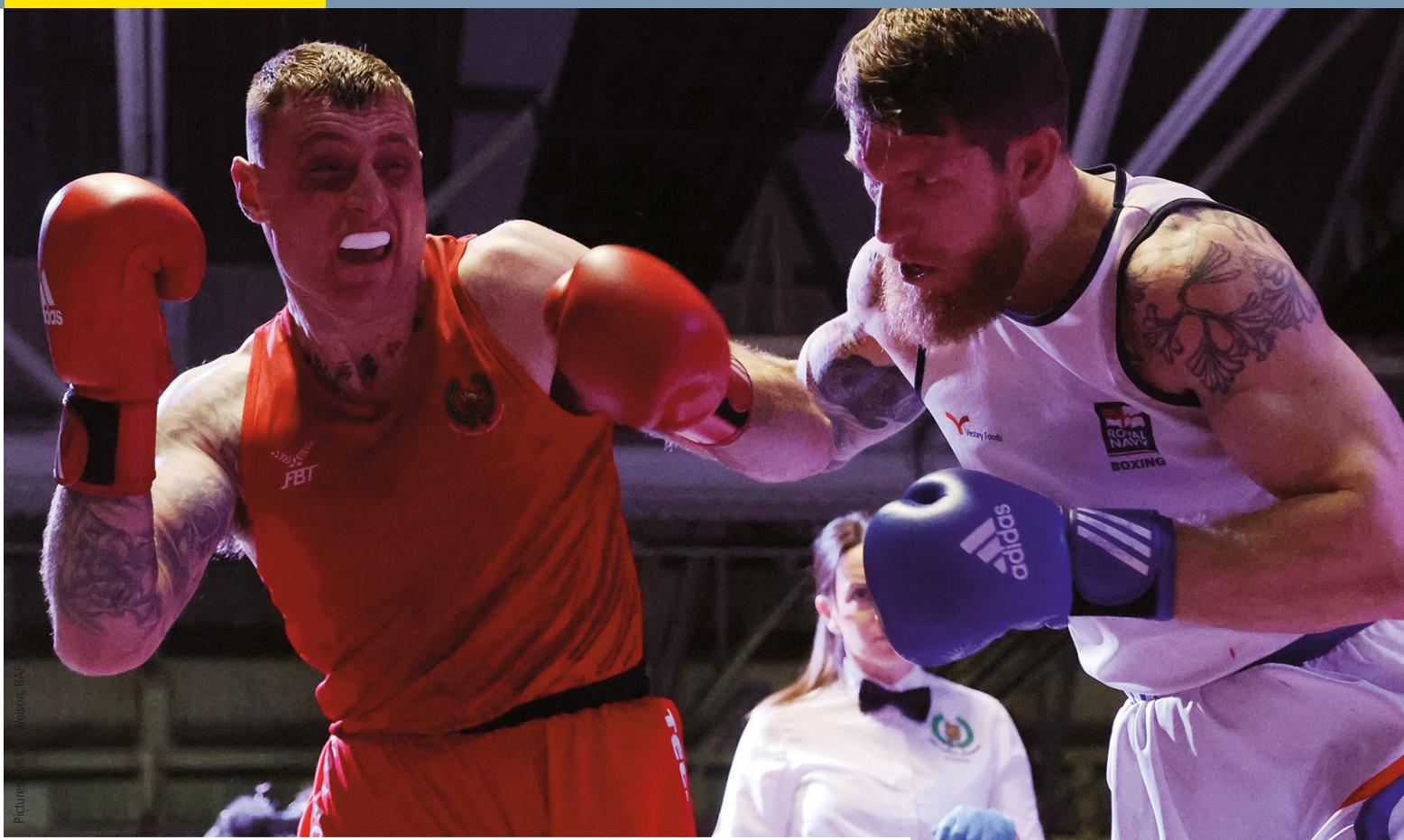
With the league season now complete the focus will switch to the Inter-Services in July.

“We are the current champions, which came after a long reign by the Royal Air Force team,” Illingworth concluded.

“We are confident we can go and defend that title.” ■



**“WE ARE
GETTING
BETTER
BECAUSE
WE ARE
PLAYING
MORE”**



Picture: RAF



RETURNING AT THE TOP

BOXERS CLAIM ANOTHER CROWN AS FORCES BATTLE RESUMES AFTER THREE YEARS

T WAS business as usual at the UK Armed Forces Boxing Championships as a combination of walkover victories and success in the ring saw the Army secure another title.

RAF Halton staged the first military showdown since 2019 and the soldiers had one hand on the trophy before a punch was thrown. Pte Owen Karau, Sgt Shamim Khan, Pte Peter Nevison (all RLC), LCpl Jack Power (RE) and the returning Cpl Chez Nihell (RLC) were all awarded wins as their rivals failed to field fighters in their respective weight categories.

They then made the perfect start inside the ropes as Pte Lewis Harvey (RLC) triumphed over experienced Royal Air Force opponent Cpl James Thompson in the 60kg ranks.

There was little to choose between the two in a close opening round, but the soldier landed strong left shots in the second and third as he took the contest on a split decision.

"I think I was busier than him," Harvey (pictured right) told *SoldierSport* as he reflected on the result.

"The one thing that really made me want it was the fact he's had a lot more fights than me, that he was more experienced. He may have doubted me, but I was relaxed and wanted it more."

"Words cannot describe it – it is an amazing feeling and a dream come true. I've had so many split decisions go against me, so it was great to get one in my favour."

Harvey was part of the Army development team before Christmas and said he is relishing being involved in the

senior ranks.

"I look up to all the coaches we have here, I listen to what they say and want to be like them," he added.

"It has really made me think about my boxing. I'm living and breathing it, eating the right way, and training three times a day. I have really improved.

"Now, I cannot wait for the National Amateur Championships. People will probably underestimate me and I'm looking forward to proving them wrong."

The Reds' first setback came as Pte Connor Sommerville (Para) found himself on the wrong side of a split decision in his 63.5kg clash with AC Blaine Lambert (RAF).

However, they immediately hit back through Pte Jordan Shaw (AGC (SPS)), who secured a unanimous verdict over SAC Taylor Andrews (RAF) in the 67kg division.

"I was landing the cleaner shots and was more willing to work," the fighter, who beat Mne Callum Shaw (RM) in the semi-finals two days earlier, said.

"I was quite nervous; this is the biggest event on the calendar, but I felt well prepared. I had no idea what my opponent was going to do, and my plan was to box in a way that would impress the judges.

"Boxing for the Army is a massive opportunity. I enjoy the training; it is hard graft, and you have to work to keep your spot on the team as there are other lads waiting to come in.

"There is a great camaraderie, and we stick together. I feel confident going into the first round of the national championships and want to see how far I can go."



"IT IS AN AMAZING FEELING AND A DREAM COME TRUE"

With two wins from three bouts the Army were firmly on top as they headed into the interval, and it looked as if they would maintain the momentum as Rfn Leon Harris (Rifles) produced an impressive display against SAC Bradley Axe (RAF) at 75kg.

Harris, a former national junior champion, landed strong scoring shots in every round – with the left-right combination proving particularly effective – but it was his opponent who claimed the win on a unanimous verdict.

LCpl Josh Plummer (Coldm Gds), who had been out of the ring since April 2019, returned to the fold to fight at 86kg but his relative inactivity showed in his unanimous defeat to SAC Emry Parry (RAF).

His opponent, a two-time Welsh junior champion, edged the opening round before picking up the pace in the second – when he forced a standing count.

The strong shots, especially the right, continued to land in the third, meaning there was little doubt in the outcome.

However, the Army managed to end the night on a high as LCpl Jack Hindmarch (Rifles), another fighter to progress from this season's development squad, outclassed Lt Kyle De-Banks (RN) in the 92kg ranks.

The soldier started with a high tempo and bossed the first two rounds before both fighters tired in the third, but his efforts were enough to take the bout on a unanimous verdict. ■

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REDS SWEEP THE BOARD IN STUNNING COURT RETURN

IT PROVED to be a memorable three days on court for the Army as they completed a clean sweep of the silverware on offer at the Inter-Services Netball Championships.

The open, development and masters' teams all recorded back-to-back wins over their respective Forces rivals as the soldiers left Portsmouth with a 100 per cent record from the first military showdown in two years.

The former started their campaign with a battling performance against the Royal Air Force that led to a 48-39 victory – a result that was followed by a 45-29 success against the Royal Navy.

Both sides made a high intensity start and some ruthless finishing at the net saw them locked at 11-11 at the end of the first quarter.

But the Reds made their move after the interval as the attacking duo of Sgt Ellie Nawe (AGC (SPS)) and Pte Lo Tuigau (RLC) plundered 15 goals between

them. With the RAF only posting four points in return, the defending champions established a decisive 26-15 lead as the half-time siren sounded.

With the teams trading equal blows in both periods of the second half the Army were able to celebrate a job well done.

Tuigau (pictured right), one of four newcomers in the squad, enjoyed a stunning debut – scoring 37 of the Army's 48 goals – much to the delight of head coach Lt Col Laura Ellis (REME).

"I was absolutely thrilled with her performance," she told *SoldierSport*. "She is completely new to Army netball and did so well considering it is her first Inter-Services.

"There are always areas we can work on as a team, but I'm very pleased.

"We do not face the RAF or Navy during the regular season, it's only at the Inter-Services, so it is a case of playing what is in front of you.

"We've had different people

coming in and out throughout the season due to operations and injuries. It has been very difficult at times, so I am pleased just to get here.

"But our performances have proved that the depth in the squad is there – everyone got on court and contributed, they all bring something different."

The Army faced international opposition in the form of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland earlier in the campaign, opportunities that Ellis described as "being too good to turn down".

As coach, she has also been determined to grow the development team and create a clear pathway between that set-up and the open squad.

"It was good to get two teams of 12 players here," she added. "We want to create a proper development team, rather than just a second team. It is important players with potential can come through and push for a place in the open squad." ■

INTER-SERVICES NETBALL

ARMY

48

RAF

39



Final Word



I live in Swansea and just can't afford to go back from Tidworth as much as I did. Only having microwaves in the block can make it expensive to eat, and the shop on our camp is quite pricey, but I budget a lot. I give myself set spending limits each day and whatever is left at the end of the week I put into savings. I quit smoking too, which was the biggest money-saver for me.

Pte Aurian Hildrup, RAMC



Coming from Nepal we need to look after our family back home, so that's the main expenditure for many of us. I'm a single person and don't have a car or anything so it's not as hard for me as those who live in a house with children.

Rfn Nabin Thapa, RGR



I live in Service family accommodation. The price of our gas has more than doubled in the last couple of years, and that's before the next increases. I've also got a van, which is expensive. Last time I filled it up it was £80, and that wasn't even a full tank! I am stingy. I shop in charity shops, love a bargain, and I don't drink, so that helps.

Cpl Kewe King, QARANC



I live in Service family accommodation and I've noticed prices going up but I don't track expenditure too closely. Fuel especially is so high now, but as I live 30 miles from work we get home-to-duty travel allowance, which helps. My son is still small so my food bills aren't too bad for now.

Cpl Umesh Malla, RGR

Interviews: Sarah Goldthorpe and Becky Clark Pictures: Graeme Main



I'm single and living in the block so I'm not affected as badly. I'm eating in the cookhouse and I don't drive. I spend money on my personal development and my family back in Nepal.

Rfn Anish Karmacharya, RGR

How much?

As living costs rise we asked troops where they are feeling the pinch, and what they do to soften the blow...

I don't know too much about the cost-of-living situation, but I am engaged and I'm saving to bring my fiancee from Nepal to Brunei when my battalion moves there later this year. Other than that I spend money on my education and military kit.

Rfn Pimba Bhote, RGR





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