

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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TOP TIPS

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NEED TO
CALL OUT
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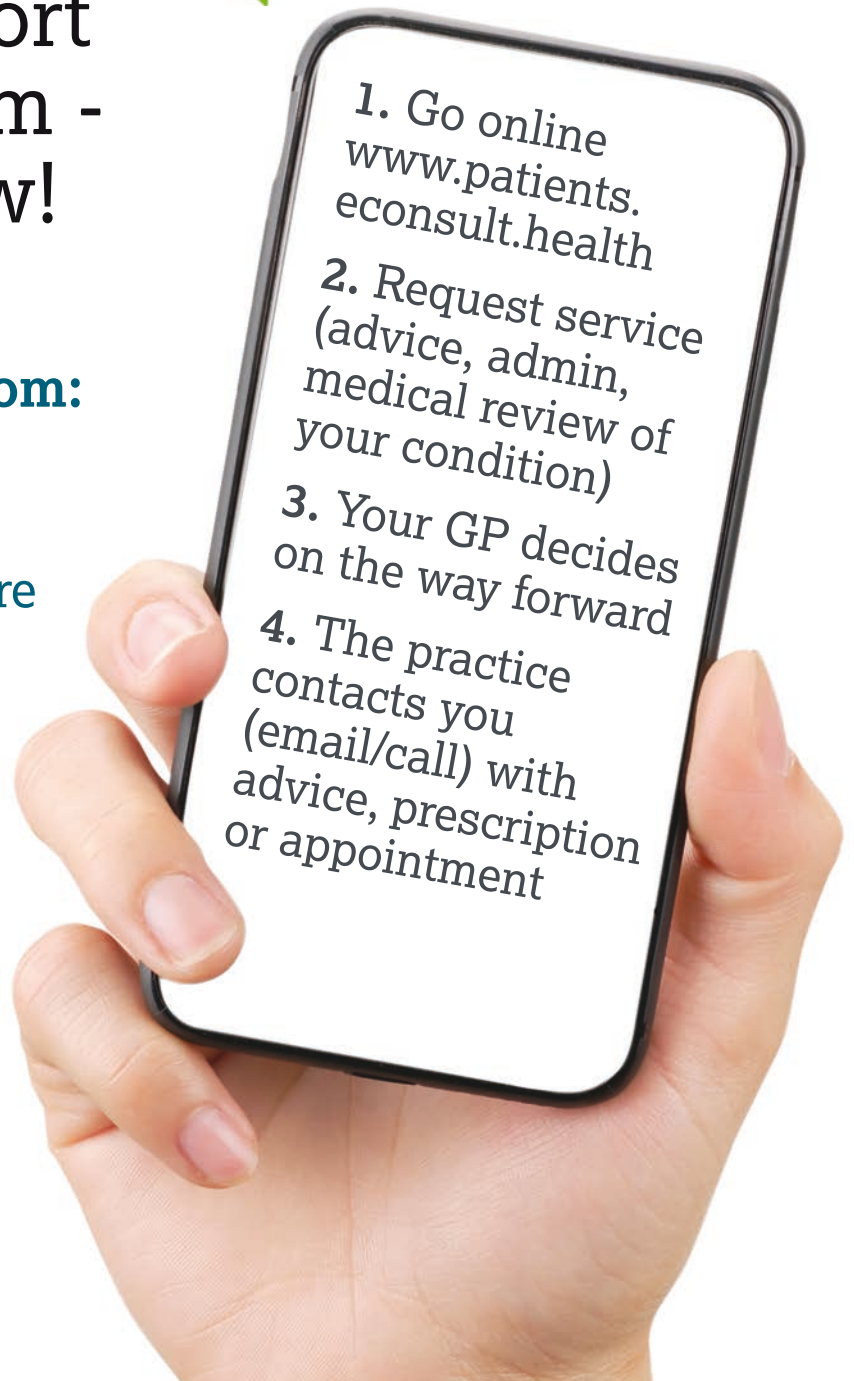
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“These ranges allow us to get back to live firing”

Back with a blast – p37



Returning to a new normal



IT feels as if life is now returning to something approaching normal.

Training has gone back to its former physical self, albeit with social distancing in place, and that's just as well. The requirement to be prepared for deployments such as Op Cabrit does not disappear, even during a national crisis (page 37).

And as good as the latest generation of simulators are, certain skills, including live firing among other things, cannot be developed to an exceptional standard in the virtual world alone.

Such in-depth preparation wasn't available to past generations – as one veteran of the Korean War reveals on page 42. Just over 70 years ago the national service conscript was shipped off to fight against a virtually unknown enemy, almost straight out of training.

It's one of the many aspects of military life that have improved over the years – and they include the way it now deals with racial discrimination. But as members of the Army's BAME Network and one of the Service's top officers tell us on page 50, the time is now ripe for individuals and the institution itself to do even more to counter the scourge of racism.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

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Picture: Graeme Main



Sexism remains an issue in the Army

Commander Field Army Lt Gen Ivan Jones speaks out on tackling inappropriate behaviour

TROOPS of all ranks must play a role in tackling sexist conduct by making sure they call out inappropriate behaviours, a senior officer has said.

Commander Field Army Lt Gen Ivan Jones told *Soldier* he expected the highest standards from all personnel. And this means speaking up if they see anything wrong.

The Service's gender champion said surveys showed inappropriate behaviours are still a challenge, and action is needed to tackle them.

He went on to announce the creation of the Gender Advisory Council, which will help inform top-level decision-making on issues affecting women.

Lt Gen Jones was speaking after allegations of past sexual misconduct in the ranks were levelled by Lt Col Diane Allen in her book, *Forewarned*.

The former Intelligence Corps officer told reporters how she had received an outpouring of grievances after the emergence of the #MeToo movement – when the scandal surrounding convicted film producer Harvey Weinstein broke in 2017.

While accepting progress had been made to eliminate sexism, the author – who retired this year after three decades of Regular and Reserve service – said it remained an Army issue.

Lt Gen Jones shared the sentiment. Allen's experiences, including an episode in which drunken male troops tried to break down her door in the

1990s, were "abhorrent" he said.

The gender champion continued: "We have moved a long way, but we have to be honest with ourselves – there is work still to do and whatever your rank or role, you need to call out unacceptable behaviours."

Lt Gen Jones believes the Gender Advisory Council, which was due to hold its first meeting as this issue went to press, will make further progress on issues affecting female soldiers.

More people with an interest in the debate, including members of the Army's black, Asian and minority ethnic community, as well as the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender networks, will also be asked to bring their experience to the table.

Lt Gen Jones emphasised: "I felt that I needed a closer, more diverse community around me to examine the issues and this is why I decided to create the forum."

"We will also be bringing in the expertise of people such as Col Lucy Giles – currently the president of the Army Officer Selection Board at Westbury – who have promoted the role of women in the Service."

The agenda will likely include managing maternity arrangements both before and after a child's birth, as well as professional development.

"When you think about it, the point at which many women want to start a family coincides with points where

“We have to be honest with ourselves”

(continued on page 11) ➔

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GLOBAL SITREP



1. FALKLAND ISLANDS LIBERATION DAY REMEMBERED

PERSONNEL based in the South Atlantic have marked 38 years since the end of the Falklands War.

The ceremony to commemorate Liberation Day was especially poignant for Sgt Cameron Hume

(RAPTC), whose father Spr David Hume was only 23 years old when he deployed on Operation Corporate as part of 9 Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers. Sgt Hume said he had valued the opportunity to visit the places his father talked about.

"It is almost like a pilgrimage for me," added the 30-year-old. "I am extremely proud of my dad and the small part he played in the islands' history."

RIFLES PLOT A COURSE FOR HOME

FOLLOWING an unscheduled extension to their stint as the Falkland Islands Roulement Infantry Company, soldiers from A Company, 1st Battalion, The Rifles, are preparing to hand over to their successors – the Grenadier Guards.

Their deployment was prolonged by two months due to the Covid-19 outbreak, but despite restrictions on activity during lockdown, they used the time to conduct training behind the wire.

A six-mile navigation exercise (pictured) saw them test their map reading skills across the rugged terrain of Mount Pleasant Complex.



2. GIBRALTAR PEACEKEEPING PROTOCOLS

BRITISH troops have been continuing to train colleagues from South America for forthcoming peace support operations – despite the Covid-19 travel restrictions.

The soldiers, from The Royal Gibraltar Regiment, ventured online to deliver a package on communications and stress management to Chilean troops due for deployment to Bosnia.

Liaison officer Capt Kenny Alvarez helped co-ordinate the training, including classroom-based lectures, while assisted by two Reservists from B Company.

The regiment has been supporting the Chilean Joint Centre for Peace Operations for the past two years. A further online package for Cyprus-bound soldiers from the South American country is also due to be rolled out soon.



IN NUMBERS £927

Amount raised for The Royal British Legion by members of 14 Battery, 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery during their "Try it On" charity triathlon. The energy-sapping event at Mount Pleasant Complex saw them completing Olympic or sprint distances on the rowing machine, exercise bike and treadmill.

3. GERMANY PREPARATIONS IN PLACE

SENNELAGER Training Centre will be ready to receive exercising troops once travel restrictions ease, the commander for British Army Germany has revealed.

Col Tim Hill said staff had been working hard to make sure the garrison is "Covid secure", both for soldiers and their families stationed there, as well as for visiting personnel in the future.

"We've been busy ensuring we are watertight to protect the workforce and the community, and that we're able to continue delivering business," he continued.

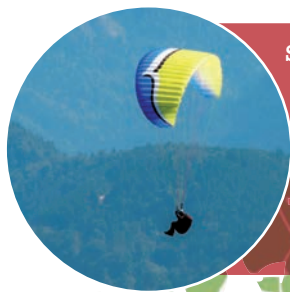
"We have surplus accommodation here, which means we can house people while maintaining social distancing, so we're not expecting a drop in capacity. Being behind the wire, we also have self-contained welfare facilities."

With Germany further ahead than the UK in emerging from lockdown, life in the garrison is gradually returning to normal. The military school has reopened, the Bundeswehr and Germany Guard Service have been using the ranges and troops from resident 23 Amphibious Engineer Squadron are preparing to resume training on the River Weser.

"Providing we continue the downward trajectory, we expect to be busy full time from the beginning of next year," added Col Hill.

1. FALKLAND ISLANDS





SUMMER adventurous training courses for those based in Cyprus and Germany have restarted, with the UK programme set to open up again in the coming weeks. Expeditions in the UK can also resume from July 20, subject to regional conditions and clearance from the relevant land authorities. With Covid-19 restrictions varying across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, expeditors are urged to monitor the situation and visit atga.mod.uk for regular updates. Due to continuing limitations on international travel, overseas expeditions remain suspended until further notice.



4. CYPRUS BACK IN THE SKY

WATCHKEEPER batteries of 47th Regiment, Royal Artillery are back in action after a brief pause due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"All personnel worked from home where possible, and the team came up with lots of great initiatives to keep things going during the crisis," Maj Russ Proctor (RA), officer commanding 10 Battery, told *Soldier*.

"We ran online air safety meetings and crew room discussions on a weekly basis, and completed mandatory training via digital means.

"We also took the opportunity to spend time on important aviation subjects such as human factors and arranged several charity events, within the constraints of social distancing, to raise money for some great causes, including the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund."

Instructors are taking advantage of the summer weather in Cyprus to deliver trained air and ground crews.

"We are extremely excited to return to flying with our partners," added the officer.



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5. BRUNEI SKILLS BOOST FOR GURKHAS

THE restrictions on overseas training have given Brunei's resident infantry unit a chance to increase its instructor cohort.

With troops unable to travel there from abroad, 30 soldiers from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles are currently taking part in a Jungle Warfare Instructors Course (JWIC).

The package, which would usually involve double the number of students, is being delivered within the Covid-19 guidelines stipulated by the Bruneian health ministry and MoD, and will allow the formation to qualify dozens of personnel in one go.

"To train that many JWIs would usually take a number of years and several iterations of the course," said Maj Samuel Boudet-Fenouillet, officer commanding of the Jungle Warfare Division.

"This injection of instructors will be hugely beneficial – the unit's return to the UK has been postponed until summer 2021, so

they still require the expertise to enable them to train themselves in this environment."

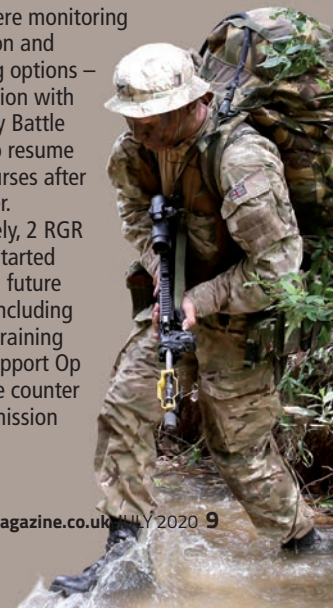
Having imposed controls early on in the pandemic, Brunei was able to keep the infection rate low and while the British community has been observing social distancing measures carefully, restrictions are continuing to ease.

Maj Boudet-Fenouillet said his staff were monitoring the situation and considering options – in conjunction with the Infantry Battle School – to resume regular courses after the summer.

Separately, 2 RGR have also started to focus on future activities, including running a training cadre to support Op Corded, the counter poaching mission in Malawi.



Picture: Steve Dock, Soldier



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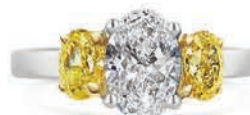
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SEXISM CONTINUED...

careers are usually moving on," Lt Gen Jones added.

"There have been recent concerns in some other areas as well – such as providing support during the menopause – in which we need to make progress."

Lt Gen Jones said the Army he joined 32 years ago had changed significantly for the better, but he urged colleagues not to linger on past achievements.



Q&A

With Lt Gen
Ivan Jones

How have female roles changed during your career?

IJ: I went through the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst back in 1988 when women had different terms and conditions of service. They had to leave if they became pregnant, were restricted in the roles available to them and were trained separately.

How are we progressing with women in ground close combat roles?

IJ: The Royal Armoured Corps was the first to open its doors and we have 50 or more female personnel there now. There are a smaller number of women in the Infantry, but it is good to see them slowly start to come through.

What fires you up about the gender champion role?

IJ: As well as a soldier, I'm also a father with a son and a daughter – I want them both to have the same opportunities in life. Neither should be at a disadvantage.

Has the Covid-19 crisis changed gender attitudes?

IJ: I think lockdown has to some extent. Some soldiers may have had partners who were furloughed while they were still working from home – meaning they have had more exposure to responsibilities such as childcare. I think we may have changed the way we look at each other for the better.



Pictures: Graeme Main



“
You needed
some self
discipline
”

IN NUMBERS

124

personnel completed
training at Pirbright

Eight

weeks that recruits
conducted online
training

60

new troops passed out
at Winchester

New recruits on march

PHASE one instructors and recruits have spoken of their pride in overcoming the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has thrown up.

For a period of around eight weeks during lockdown recruits took part in virtual learning using online conferencing and mobile apps, with Army staff setting their targets.

But the training regiments at Pirbright and Winchester (above) have now completed their first passing out parades since restrictions came in, albeit in eerily empty parade squares and with recorded band music.

Last month 124 recruits completed their training at Pirbright after beginning their course in January, with loved ones watching the ceremony via a livestream video.

Brig Mike Butterwick, head of the Army's Initial Training Group, said they had worked and trained "in a unique and extraordinary way", after their education was interrupted roughly halfway through due to the outbreak.

And after being called back to

barracks in a carefully orchestrated phased return, some 60 recruits became the first personnel to pass out at Army Training Regiment (Winchester) since the Covid-19 lockdown.

Rct Callum Howling (above left) from Nottingham, a former fitter on the railway network who is hoping to join the Royal Armoured Corps and crew a Challenger 2 main battle tank, said the experience hadn't dented his experience of Service life so far.

"I still really enjoyed the training, although you needed some self-discipline to get the most out of it while working from home," he added.

"The courses were planned really well by the instructors – we used Zoom and WhatsApp mainly – and I was surprised at the range of what we covered, such as battlefield casualty drills, navigation and some counter-improvised explosive device work.

"Since returning to Winchester three weeks ago we've completed a lot of marksmanship and PT sessions to ensure we're up to standard."

RESERVIST ROLES WILL BE REASSESSED POST COVID

■ THE role played by Reservists during the Covid-19 emergency will help inform a blueprint on how these personnel could be best used in years ahead.

Ministers said the Reserve Forces 2030 review would examine how the specialist knowledge of part-time soldiers may be deployed to bolster both the MoD and wider government objectives by the end of the current decade.

It would also consider how defence could best partner with business in future. Specialists provided invaluable assistance during the coronavirus pandemic – with troops assisting in initiatives such as setting up the Nightingale hospitals.

Armed Forces Minister James Heappey confirmed that views were being sought from government organisations and commercial outlets. Email People-ReserveForces2030@mod.gov.uk with any contributions.



Ground view

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

THERE is a moment that still lives with me from a tour in Afghanistan.

During a patrol I was leading we came, as was so often the case, under contact. But this time an inexperienced rifleman on his first deployment was with me – and his contribution was vital.

He had our light machine gun and was in a position to tell me which way the enemy was moving. He relayed this back, along with advice on what to do next.

At that moment, the fact that I was in command was secondary to his perspective. I had confidence in him, did as he suggested, and everyone came through unscathed. If the situation was repeated, I'd do exactly the same thing.

I have often said that good ideas do not necessarily come with rank. But in the same way we should not be deterred by our own

position, or influenced by anyone else's.

There has been a great deal of focus on equality in wider society recently, so I want to be absolutely clear. Our Army has no place for the likes of elitism, racism, homophobia or sexism. If you are not a decent person, I don't want to serve with you.

But we also need to be in a position where everyone – regardless of who they are – is unafraid of challenging and calling out bad behaviours.

We are not yet at this point. The truth is that there are still some who find it difficult to accept advice or constructive criticism from those junior to them.

So, there needs to be even greater cultural change if troops are to feel comfortable with routinely challenging malpractice. And it is going to need everybody, from new recruits to senior officers, on board.



Time to effect change

SOME positive developments have been made towards the cultural changes that will ensure soldiers feel able to speak up.

The Army's empowerment programme is one example of ensuring troops have a voice. But I am also hoping that changes to the regimental sergeant majors' course will better prepare our senior warrant officers for their important role.

The syllabus needs to cover a lot more and it must be long enough to equip our senior soldiers with the tools to help

them use their rank as an opportunity to do more for their people.

Among other things, we need to look at the soft skills we are not routinely taught elsewhere. As a soldier, I was instructed how to shoot and attack – but nobody showed me how to help somebody with a mental health issue.

The RSM holds a unique position in which they can make a real difference. Their doors should be open to everybody at all times.

The most potent weapon system we have is the British soldier – we must look after them.

“
If you are not a decent person, I don't want to serve with you
”

Outflanking the coronavirus outbreak

■ OVER the past few months we have seen troops undertake a variety of tasks in the Covid-19 crisis – so my thanks to all who have supported NHS colleagues.

Most recently I was out on a mobile testing unit with personnel from 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh – usually they're in an armoured infantry role, but here they were adapting very effectively to a new job.

This versatility has been great to see – and I am still receiving many emails of appreciation from our civilian communities about the Army's efforts.

You should all be very proud.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



Q What are you most looking forward to with the lockdown lift?

A Definitely watching rugby – it's not a sport for social distancing



Musicians deliver with rap diversion

ARMY musicians played to a new beat after they joined forces with rap stars.

Some 15 troops from the Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra, plus the British Army Catterick and Tidworth bands, paired with urban artists for the unconventional collaboration.

Operating within the protocols of lockdown, they worked in teams with emerging talent Sharma, WYS and YC. A series of videos were then showcased in a competition – called *Barz, Bands n Bassline* – screened on Sky television.

A panel including Mark Hill – one half of Artful Dodger – plus soldiers critiqued the work, while the public also had the chance to vote.

An impressive piece from 18-year-old WYS took the top spot –

accompanied by Sgt Matt Hart and LCpl Adi Calef, of the Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra.

Corps of Army Music recruiter WO1 Ben Ruffer – who assisted on the project – told *Soldier* the event opened up a different musical scene for troops.

The battle of the bands-style contest – which had the broad theme of encouraging young people to stay safe amid the Covid-19 outbreak – brought together musicians who would not normally collaborate.

"This was a new experience for the soldiers in terms of the genre," WO1 Ruffer continued.

"But it also showed their versatility in playing different music. A short time before this they had been playing classical scores and military favourites for the 75th anniversary of VE Day."

“
It was a new
experience in
terms of genre
”

FOND FAREWELL TO FORCES SWEETHEART

■ A SERVANT to British personnel across eight decades of conflict and peacetime, Dame Vera Lynn has been remembered with warm words from royals to soldiers.

During the Second World War the Forces favourite travelled thousands of miles across European, North African and the Far Eastern theatres to boost the morale of troops.

Dame Vera – who died last month aged 103 – appeared in *Soldier* many times and had recalled her determination to play her part in helping those fighting.

"It didn't concern me where I was being sent or where I was going," she said during a 2004 interview (pictured).

"All I knew was that I was going out to see the boys, entertain them and talk to them – which, to me, was just as important as actually singing to them."



FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Pedal power

NORMANDY veterans Len Gibbon (96, pictured) and Peter Hawkins (95) completed a static bike challenge on the 76th anniversary of D-Day. The duo recreated their historic journey across the channel by cycling the distance from Portsmouth to Gold Beach – 104 miles.

Money raised:
£8,000
For: Care For Veterans

Setting the pace

SOLDIER'S daughter Macey Foster put her running shoes on to help community volunteers in Catterick Garrison make scrubs and masks for care homes and hospitals. Together with her father, WO2 Mark Foster (RDG), the 11-year-old ran three miles on six consecutive days to raise £1,700 for the Colburn Village Hall community initiative.



Daily drawings

ARTIST Sherin Aminossehe has created more than 70 drawings as part of an isolation art project. The MoD civil servant set herself a sponsored challenge to produce a different work every day, many of which capture her favourite places. Visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sherin-aminossehe

Target:
£2,000
For: SSAFA

EQUIPMENT EXPO DELAYED

■ AN ANNUAL showcase of military kit and vehicles has been delayed until late autumn, organisers have confirmed.

The DVD 2020 event will now be held at the Millbrook proving ground, Bedfordshire, from November 4-5.

The exhibition will explore – for the first time – technologies used by sectors outside of defence.



Picture: Andrew Linnett/Mod

LITTLE TROOPERS REWARD

■ YOUNGSTERS from military families who have shown courage in adversity are being recognised.

The Little Trooper of the Month award – which has been re-launched by the charity of the same name – highlights children who have been brave or inspiring in Forces life.

Past recipients include kids who have had both parents deployed on operations or who have shown bravery during medical emergencies.

Those with a Regular or Reservist mum, dad or step parent are eligible for nominations – winners receive a special gold medal. For more details visit www.littletroopers.net



BOOST FOR VETERANS

■ MILITARY charity SSAFA has been awarded a £295,000 grant to assist Service veterans in countries across Europe as Britain exits the EU.

The sum, allocated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, will support former personnel who may struggle with the paperwork needed to maintain their right to reside in France, Germany and Cyprus.

Email UKVIE.Support@ssafa.org.uk for more information.



Picture: Cpl Oliver Carter, RLC



Iraq mission moves on

THE next rota of British troops deployed on Operation Shader will provide more mentoring and less direct training of Iraqi Army instructors and security forces in the country.

A detachment of Coldstream Guards is about to replace the Irish Guards, who were sent home in March from their six-month stint working with local personnel after the government there ceased activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The change in emphasis has been brought about by the evolving situation in the country, says Maj Gen Gez Strickland (above left), Deputy Commander-Strategy of coalition forces in the region.

"The training role is changing, but the plan always was to step back from delivering this and move on to advising the Iraqis," added the senior officer, who is currently on an exchange posting with the US Army as Deputy Commanding General (Support) of the 3rd Armored Corps.

"When Isis lost the last of its territory in early 2019 it had pre-empted the defeat by preparing to shift back into an insurgent phase again," he continued.

"The situation is very complex, with Isis trying to take advantage of the protest movement in the country and militia groups loyal to all sorts of factions, including Iran.

"Some of these are against our presence and on occasion they have attacked our bases – including the one

that led to the tragic death of LCpl Brodie Gillon (SNIY) earlier this year."

With fighters now hiding and trying to carry out hit-and-run attacks, the coalition has had to adapt and is more focused on providing counter-terrorism skills to Iraqi government forces and the Peshmerga.

"We are doing more specialist work, developing the capability of the country's security forces and advising their military command structures in planning and providing air support to counter Isis in the regions," explained Maj Gen Strickland.

"Our job of training the Iraqi Army to carry out operations against Isis is now done, but we may need to help the Peshmerga for a little longer."

The senior officer believes that while the British contribution to the coalition effort may have altered, the deployment still provides personnel the opportunity to develop a range of highly valuable skills.

"The UK's contribution to Operation Inherent Resolve has been impressive and the professionalism of the British Army has really shone through so far," he said.

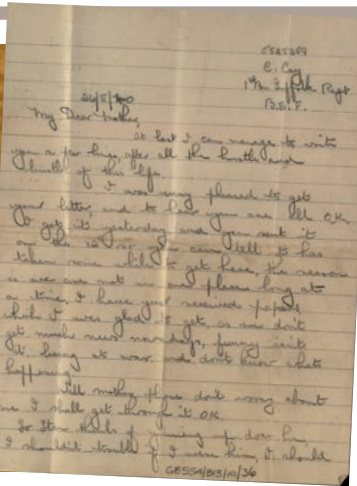
"Our young officers and NCOs in particular will be advising another nation's army in a very complicated situation and in an austere and remote environment, all the while dealing with other cultures and coalition personnel.

"From a command and leadership viewpoint it doesn't get much better than that."

“
The training
role is
changing
”



Picture: Suffolk Archives



Hero's letter 80 years late

THE family of a soldier who died 80 years ago has finally received the last letter he wrote home.

Pte Harry Cole, of the Suffolk Regiment (above), penned it just before he was killed by a German sniper during the British Expeditionary Force's retreat to Dunkirk during the early stages of the Second World War.

It was among 50 written by soldiers that were at a local headquarters for checking by censors when it was overrun by the German Army.

A Wehrmacht officer found and kept them until 1968, when he took the works to the British embassy in Bonn.

They were forwarded to the Suffolk Regiment Association in 1969, where staff set about trying to trace the intended recipients but only nine families were found.

The other 41 remained in the

archives of Suffolk County Council.

A researcher, Heidi Hughes from Hasketon, working on a local history project, recognised Pte Cole's letter, which was addressed to a house in her village. She knew fellow resident Clemmie Cole, 87, and asked if he was related to Harry – he confirmed that the soldier was his older brother.

"It's unbelievable that such a thing could happen," said Mr Cole, who has a surviving brother, Derek. "I was really moved to read his words."

Prophetically, Pte Cole wrote: "Don't worry if you have to wait a long while for a letter or card sometimes as we can't always write for days at a time."

Extracts from Pte Cole's letter and others sent by these troops can now be viewed through an online exhibition, *With Love From Dunkirk*.

Visit www.suffolkarchives.co.uk



Pictures: Cpl Danny Houghton, RLC

RETURN TO THE RANGES

■ THE Welsh Cavalry has handed over its coronavirus commitments and returned to its core business of soldiering.

Troops from 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards have been back out on the windswept ranges of Stanta, practising fire and movement skills on the general purpose machine gun following their stand down from the Covid Response Force.

In April, reconnaissance specialists from the Swanton Morley-based regiment were tasked with running mobile testing units and providing drivers in support of the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Jackal 2 vehicle commander Cpl Jared Rose (QDG, below), who deployed as an ambulance driver and delivered testing kits to care homes during the pandemic, said: "All the lads were really happy to be doing our bit for the country, just in a different way to what we do as soldiers. We were well trained and I was impressed with how everyone pulled together."



“I was moved to read his words”

Online training is 'here to stay'

RESERVISTS from The Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry are planning to continue training in the online world after witnessing its success during the lockdown.

With the Covid-19 crisis putting physical exercises on hold, personnel from the UK's newest combat unit still managed to spend weekends "in the field" with the VBS3 military simulator.

The software allowed them to practise the key skills required of light cavalry soldiers with accurate representations of weapons and vehicles such as the Jackal.

"It allows you to do things you can't do regularly in live training,

like having direct interaction with artillery or close air support," said Capt Gregor Deeming, leader of E Squadron's Eagle Troop.

"We can't replicate that on a regular training night. It lets troops see the effects of a fire mission.

"It's a very good complement to live field training and for Reservists with limited time."

The training was watched by officers from allied militaries, including America and Australia, who are now considering using similar programmes.

The unit has plans to create a digital training suite at its base in Redford Barracks, Edinburgh.





Delivery service

TWO soldiers who helped deliver babies on separate occasions during the coronavirus pandemic have been commended by the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Sjt Wayne Delahunty and LCpl Dan Ells (both Rifles) were working on separate shifts with the Covid Support Force when they were called into urgent action.

Tasked as part of a rapid response team to provide emergency paramedic support from Tredegar in South Wales, LCpl Ells described the moment a baby arrived ahead of the expected ambulance crew as both "exciting and very humbling".

"The umbilical cord was wrapped around its leg so the paramedic I was with asked me to help untangle it," he said. "When you join the Army, the idea of being at the birth of a newborn is something you never imagine."

Sjt Delahunty (pictured) described the evening his team got a call to help a woman in labour at home as "a pretty remarkable night".

"One of the paramedics said I'd been lucky to have witnessed a birth because sometimes years pass before they see one," he added. "It was a magical experience to be involved in."

PORTER AT THE PARK

■ A SOLDIER whose Army career was put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic has been helping with the fight against the virus by volunteering in his local intensive care unit. Anton Newcombe was under instruction at Catterick's Infantry Training Centre but preparing to transfer to the Royal Logistic Corps when the outbreak began.

With his plans stalled, he moved to Mike Jackson House in Aldershot and started working as a porter at Frimley Park Hospital. "It gives me a sense of fulfilment," he said.



Nightingale task takes its toll

A RESERVIST who spent nearly two months away from his son while working at London's Nightingale hospital has spoken of the emotional burden of separation.

Sgt Jamie Jones (RAMC, pictured left) was forced to distance himself from 16-month-old Thomas during his seven-week stint caring for patients who were gravely ill with Covid-19.

Having been furloughed from his civilian role as a health and safety adviser for TV production companies, the NCO knew his clinical skills would be in demand during the virus fight.

As an operating department practitioner, he is trained in critical care, resuscitation and the use of ventilators, but volunteering to help came at considerable personal cost.

"It got tougher with every week that went by," he explained.

"I was able to see Thomas daily on Facetime but as a toddler it's difficult

to keep him interested.

"He's at an age where he changes so quickly, so it was really hard to miss out on that. When I finally saw him again, he knew exactly who I was – it was very emotional."

Sgt Jones, a former Regular and qualified combat medical technician and paramedic, faced further heartache when his grandmother passed away and he could only attend her funeral via video link, but the 41-year-old hopes that his experiences will one day help his son understand the nature of civic duty.

"I'm starting a memory box for when he is older," the soldier, of Colchester-based 161 Squadron, 254 Medical Regiment, continued.

"I want to show him that his dad did something – that when life gets demanding you can cope in difficult situations – and for that to act as a moral compass for him."



“It got tougher with every week”

● THREE soldiers who helped build the Nightingale Hospital at Birmingham's NEC have been rewarded for their efforts by Commander Home Command, Lt Gen Tyrone Urch.

During a visit to HQ 11 Signal and West Midlands Brigade, the senior officer presented a recognition card to Sgt Robin Gurung (QG Signals, pictured), who took charge of the copper oxygen pipe layout.

Capt Chris Parsons and WO2 James Jamieson (both RLC) received commander's coins for their efforts to ensure vital kit was obtained and ready for use when the site opened.



SMOKES

As from Monday next, 23 July, soldiers in these parts will get 15 fewer cigarettes a week on the NAAFI ration; that is, 60 instead of 75. The free issue of 50 a week will continue as heretofore.

Reasons ?

NAAFI is moving into Burma in a big way and needs to build up stocks for the boys there; and Lease-Lend smokes (14% of what we've had so far) are finished.

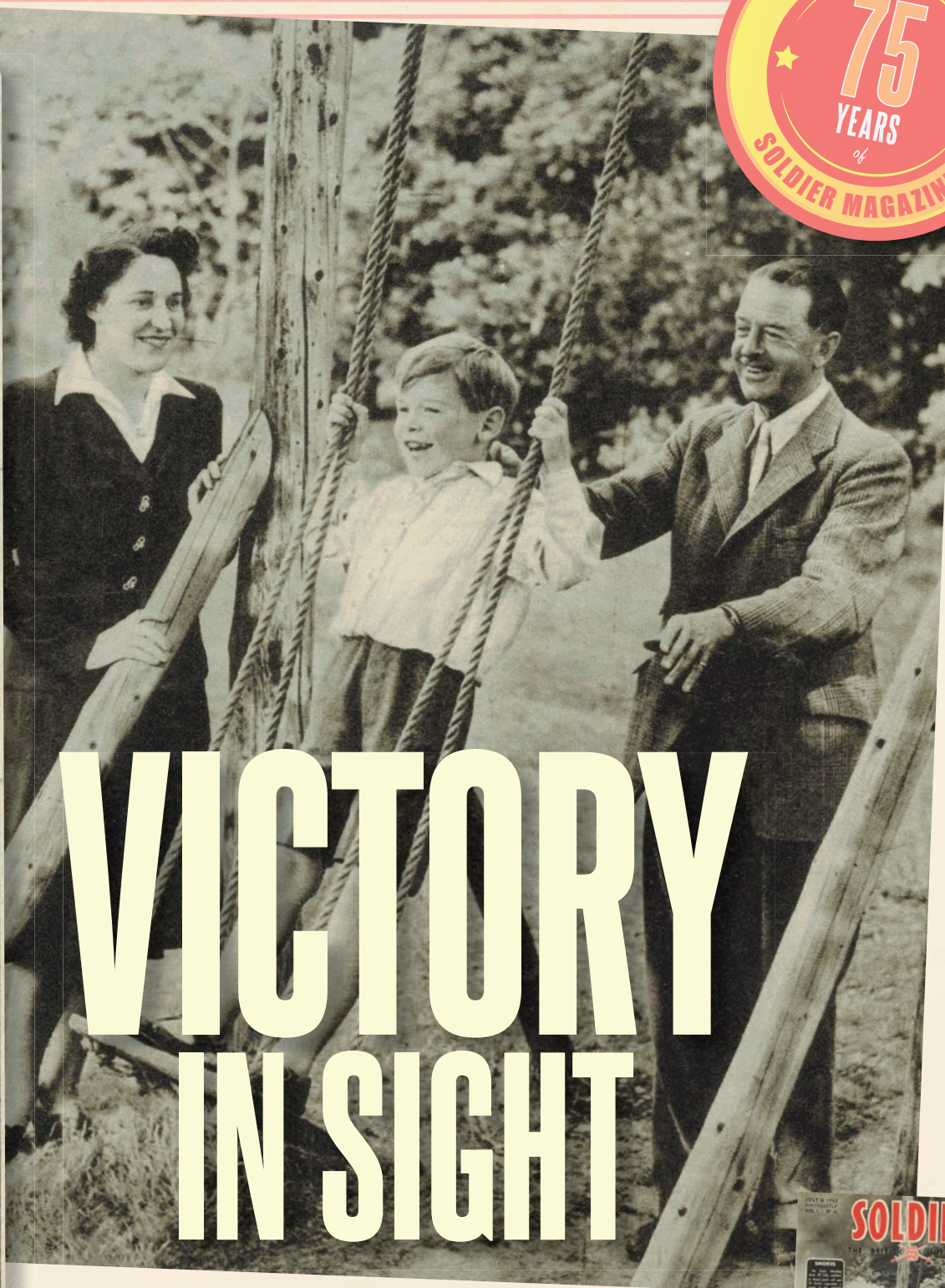
These are the facts; they will be fully understood.

SOLDIER Magazine, on behalf of its readers, makes it clear to all concerned that this cut is accepted with something more than good grace. No grouches at all come from BLA on this score.

SOLDIER goes further and says, "If, 14th Army, you want anything which we have here and you have not got — take it with our good wishes. Here we have finished our fighting — in the sense that we aren't squeezing the trigger any more. You are still at it. Some of us have brothers and sons with you. Some of us may even be joining you. All of us think of you, and in the way that only soldiers can. What is ours, chums, is yours."

**An American
Tribute to the
British O.R.**

Page 4



In Europe there were more startling discoveries about Nazi weapons, while in the Far East the Japanese were prepared to fight to the death...

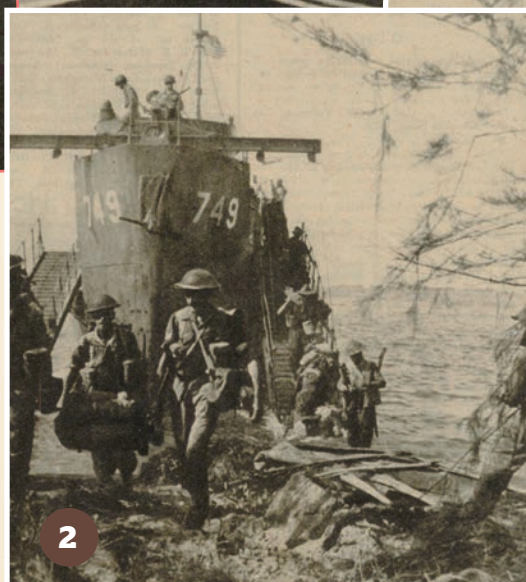


BORNEO LANDING FIRST PICTURES

Another step towards Tokyo has been taken by the Allies in the Pacific by the Landing of Australian troops on Borneo. Here are seen first photographs. (1) Smoke from the inshore bombardment of Labuan obscures the coast line as transports go in with assault troops. (2) Gunners come ashore from an LCI. (3) Split-second firing by 25-pounders revealed in this night picture showing three simultaneous gunflashes. (4) One fewer Japanese to hold up the advance as a tough Aussie, rifle and bayonet in hand, enters a Labuan estate. (5) Signallers laden like pack-mules can still smile as they stumble ashore.



1



2



4

5



THE disparity between the situation in Europe and the Far East could not have been more stark than it was 75 years ago this month.

While demobbing from military service and resuming something approaching an ordinary civilian life was becoming the new normal for many who'd recently arrived in the UK from mainland

Europe, thousands of troops were still fighting a bitter war in malaria-ridden Asian jungles, monsoon rains and on remote islands in searing tropical heat against a tenacious and often brutal Japanese enemy.

The Allies' 14th Army, commanded by Lt Gen William Slim, were slowly pushing back Japanese forces in Burma, the Australians had landed on Borneo, while the Americans fought from island to island through the Pacific towards the Japanese mainland.

Victory seemed to be inevitable, but at what cost? »

You've Earned It, You're Owed It

Take a moment to think about the difference a £2,500 bump to your bank balance would make right now. You could pay down a debt, build up your savings or splash out on something unforgettable for the family.

From getting through tough times to dreaming of better days, RIFT believes in reaching out and making connections

With our tax refund customers end up £2,500 better off on average when they claim with us, we love hearing what you've been doing with the money. Here's a top-five list of the favourite little indulgences our customers have been treating themselves to this month: In the past few weeks alone, the UK's online treat shopping has skyrocketed by 240% - and why not?

- ✓ Beer selection boxes.
- ✓ Coffee maker and syrups.
- ✓ Games consoles and software.
- ✓ Special food hampers.
- ✓ New clothes.



This is your money, and it'll all go to waste if you don't claim it back. We all need a little boost once in a while to brighten our days, and a tax refund from RIFT is as simple as a phone call and a few work and travel details.

You've earned it, you're owed it - now let RIFT get it back for you.

£2,500

Get started today!

Highly Recommend...

"Rift Refunds were excellent at clearly guiding me through every step of the process, from the documentation through to after care with HMRC. The clarity and assistance they provide gave me trust in the system they provided and a result in the delivery of my refund - I would highly recommend even an enquiry for anyone."

★★★★★ by Arthur, MOD

I trust Rift...

"As always, year in, year out I trust Rift to get it right for me and I'm very grateful. It gets more efficient every year."

★★★★★ by Graham, MOD

ABF

THE SOLDIERS'

CHARITY

The Army's National Charity

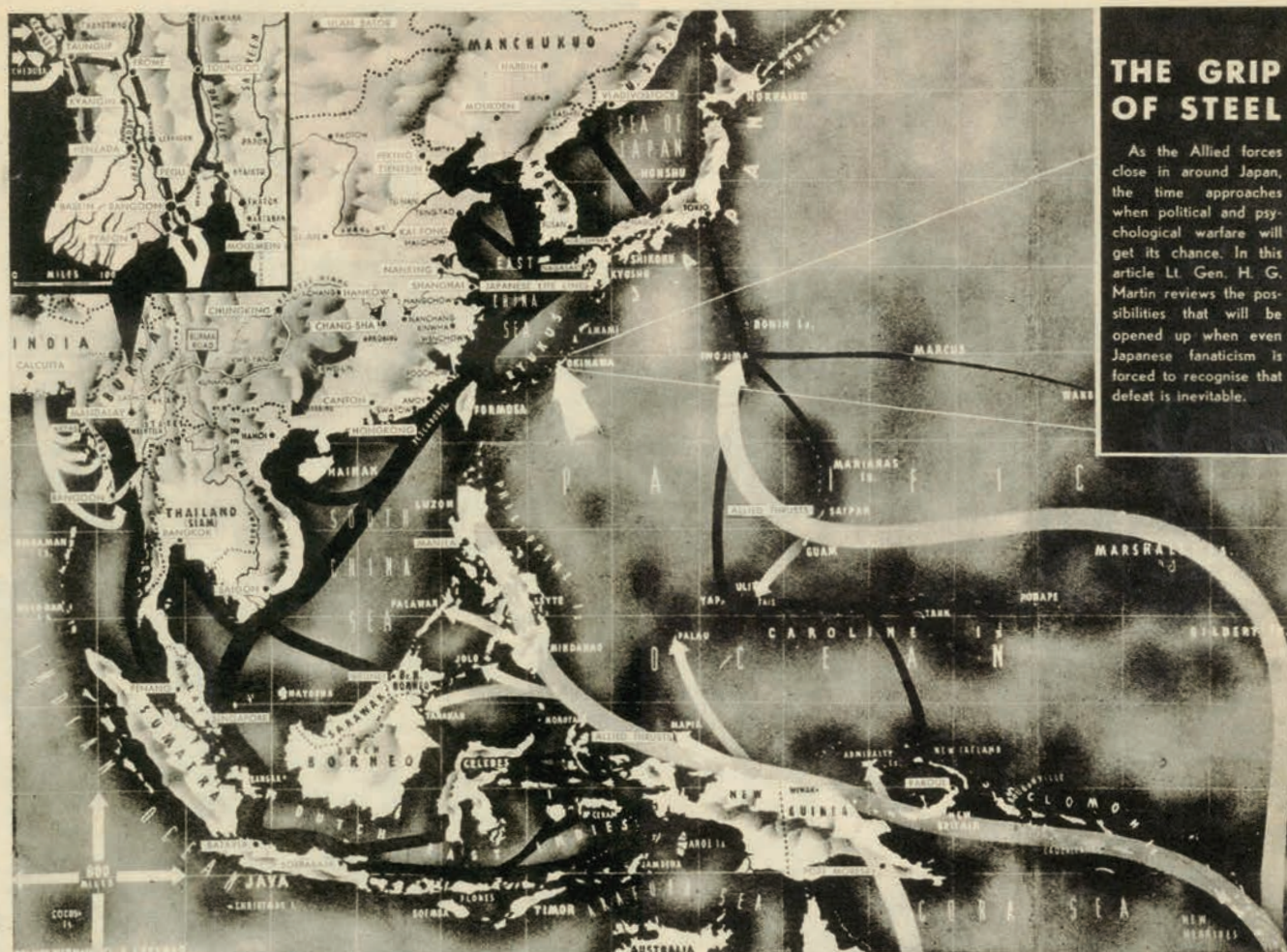


Details of the legislation RIFT claim under can be found on www.HMRC.gov.uk under section 336-339 of ITEPA 2003. We operate under this legislation to ensure that no one is exposed or receives a refund they are not entitled to.

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THE GRIP OF STEEL

As the Allied forces close in around Japan, the time approaches when political and psychological warfare will get its chance. In this article Lt. Gen. H. G. Martin reviews the possibilities that will be opened up when even Japanese fanaticism is forced to recognise that defeat is inevitable.

The huge distances of the Pacific are no longer a shield behind which the Japanese may mock the Allies. The home islands are closely invested, and the scattered garrisons are either making, or preparing to make, their last stands. This map shows how the flexible Allied thrusts, supported by immense resources in machine and man-power, have torn Japan's defensive front wide open, and enabled the Allies to dictate the strategy on which the war is being fought.

HOW THE JAP WAR MAY END

by Lt. Gen. H. G. Martin, CB, DSO

THE military situation of Japan is desperate. The Japanese Navy has been beaten. The air force is in decline. Only the army remains extremely formidable, but even the army — by spreading itself far and wide across East Asia — has dissipated much of its strength. Above all, the initiative rests wholly with the Allies.

When they are ready, General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz — joint commanders-in-chief of the US Pacific Command — may either invade Japan itself or land in force on the China coast, or else do both, according to the decision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff back in Washington. Meanwhile the Allied fleets and air forces in the Central Pacific will continue to blast the industries, airfields and communications of Japan and Korea with an ever-growing weight of air bombardment, and to destroy Japanese shipping by mine, bomb, shell and torpedo; operations in which the British Pacific Fleet is already playing its part — with British air forces in all likelihood soon to follow. Nor is this all: away to the south, in SEAC and the South-West Pacific, British and Australian forces are converging — to cut off great Japanese armies and to reopen the Malacca Straits.

For their part, the Japanese can do little to affect the course of these events. True, they can try, in face of immense difficulties, to withdraw their outlying forces from their farthest conquests — in order to concentrate these forces in defence of their "inner zone" of Japan and the adjacent mainland. But, for the

rest, they must just sit down and "take it."

What, then, is the Japanese attitude of mind to all this? In their own view, we must always remember, the Japanese are a chosen people, dedicated to the service of the Emperor, whom they worship unquestioningly as the Son of Heaven. The Americans are now close enough to Japan to pick up the radio programmes meant only for home consumption. In these, there is no talk whatever of surrender. Rather are the Japanese taught to believe that their land is under attack by an enemy capable of the most unspeakable barbarities; in such circumstances, death in defence of Emperor and country is a duty glorious as it is welcome. When the invader lands, so the people are told, they must build in his path a wall of their own bodies, just as their forefathers once built a human wall to stay the Mongol invader. Every Japanese knows that story — how, after the Mongols had withdrawn to their ships, weary with killing, the Divine Wind blew — and the enemies of Japan were scattered.

As long as this spirit persists, so long will the Allies look in vain for wholesale surrender to end the fighting either inside Japan or out of it. In the latter stages of the war in Germany, German soldiers in their thousands surrendered on their own initiative. Not so the Japanese. With them, the decision to quit must come from above. Meanwhile, obedient

to orders, the vast majority, not only of the Japanese armed forces but also of the Japanese people, will fight to the death. General Blamey, commander-in-chief of the Australian and Dutch forces in the South-West Pacific, has said, "When you engage a European army and break up its organisation, you have won. But when you fight the Japanese, every man becomes a combat unit on his own and continues to fight. There is no end to such fighting until we have killed them all off."

Killed them all off — yes, but unfortunately that is a biggish order. There are four million soldiers, actual or potential, in Japan today, and three million more overseas; while altogether the Japanese people number nearly 100 millions — more than twice the 45 millions of Great Britain. What, then, is the alternative to slaughter on this scale? The answer seems to be this: for the Japanese people reprieve may come either through their Government or directly from their Emperor.

For their part, the Allies have made their position perfectly clear. They mean to finish once and for all with Japanese aggression. Any other course would be criminal folly. Therefore they demand unconditional surrender. Moreover, they will require Japan to disgorge all her conquests, including Korea.

All this is eminently just. None the less it adds up to a pretty stiff price for any Japanese Government to pay. It is

by no means certain that any Government could or would pay it. If, however, a Government could be found which would pay and look pleasant, then that should end the war everywhere. The Emperor, advised by his Cabinet, would issue a rescript that all resistance must cease. There would be all the difference in the world between a surrender ordered in this manner from above and a surrender which must begin from below.

If on the other hand a Japanese Government could not screw its courage to the sticking point, there would still be the Emperor himself. He is a fairly enlightened man, who has seen something of the world; he cannot wish to watch his people utterly destroyed. If, therefore, in course of time he should find an opportunity to act, he might be inclined to take it.

What it comes to is this, then. The Japanese have lost the war. The Allies have still to win it — to win it, that is, by a clean-cut decision as opposed to a gigantic process of mopping-up, as long-drawn-out as bloody. To this end, the Allies are preparing everywhere — from SEAC to the Pacific — to redouble their blows and so to break once and for all the will to resist of the Emperor and his Government. It is for the Emperor to give the word that would end the fighting everywhere.

H. G. Martin

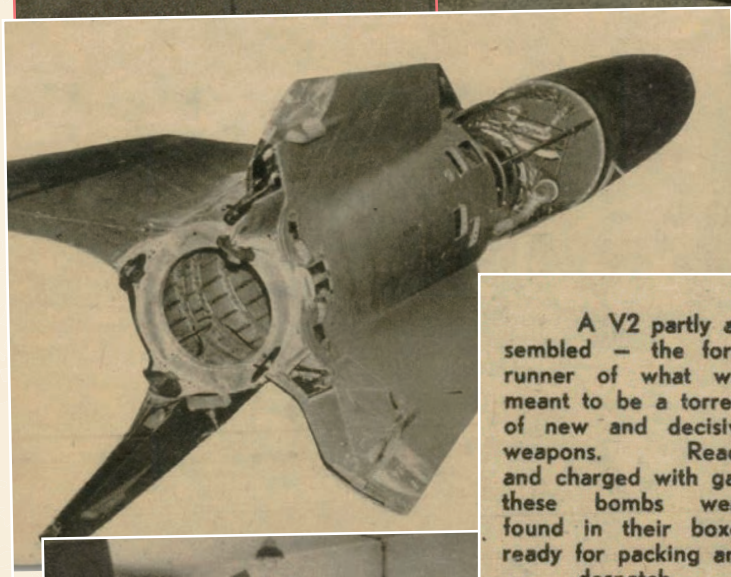
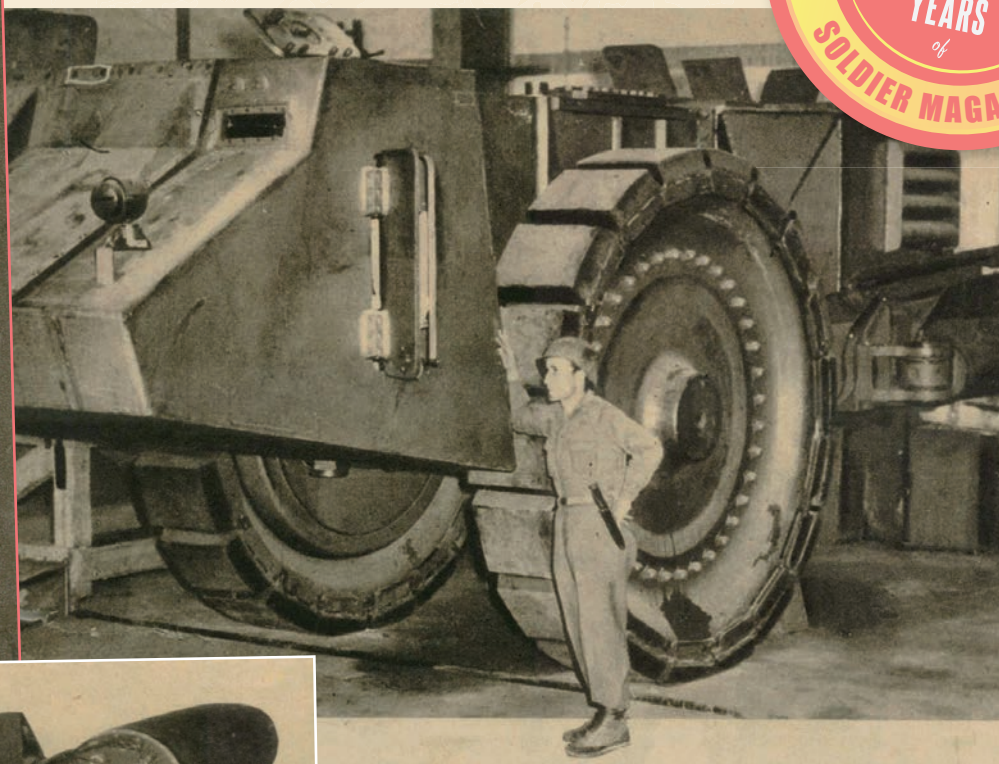
Lt. Gen. Martin is Military Correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph" and is now writing also for SOLDIER.

WE HAVE BEEN WARNED

In the last year of the war the Germans talked threateningly of secret weapons of tremendous power which would turn defeat to victory. We were sceptical, and when V1 and V2 arrived they were neither accurate nor powerful enough to turn the tide. But that was only a curtain-raiser to a full-length programme loaded with menace.

SOLDIER Magazine rarely reprints articles which have appeared elsewhere. The article on this page is an exception. It was written by the Military Correspondent of "The Times" — a newspaper which is not readily available to soldiers in BLA. Its importance is great. Its authenticity is unquestioned.

A super-tank which the Germans were producing at an experimental station. The track wheels are over eight feet high.



A V2 partly assembled — the forerunner of what was meant to be a torrent of new and decisive weapons. Ready and charged with gas, these bombs were found in their boxes ready for packing and despatch.



» It's a question that was explored by Lt Gen Hugh Gray Martin in the pages of *Soldier* magazine in July 1945, (pictured opposite), and after his sober analysis of the Japanese forces' attitude to defending their home soil he concluded that a long campaign of attrition costing a great many lives on both sides was probably the only logical outcome.

He couldn't have foreseen the dropping of the atomic bombs that brought about the end of the war — and these lethal devices had also been a part of Nazi Germany's weapons programme, along with other futuristic military hardware that was still being discovered as the Allies took full control of the country's administration.

These included rocket-assisted shells, a piloted version of the V1 and a winged variant of the V2 to make them more accurate. Among their other finds were radio controlled air-to-ground and air-to-air weapons, jet-powered U-Boats and even plans for a satellite to concentrate the sun's rays at ground targets.

But perhaps the most menacing discovery of all was chemical weapons, finished and packed in boxes, ready to be dispatched. Had they reached combat units and been attached to V-weapons the consequences would have been almost too terrible to contemplate — and may have even led to a different outcome to the Second World War.

The Allies really had defeated the Nazis in the nick of time. ■



NEED TO

KNOW

FITNESS | HEALTH | NEXT STEPS | EXPERIENCE | SKILLS & DRILLS

Lose that quarantine

How to get back in shape after lockdown

► STRESS, boredom, dangerous proximity to the biscuit tin – there are stacks of reasons why so many of us have piled on the pounds during lockdown.

And with indoor gyms still closed for the time being, it may be a while before Service personnel can resume their favourite pre-pandemic fitness sessions.

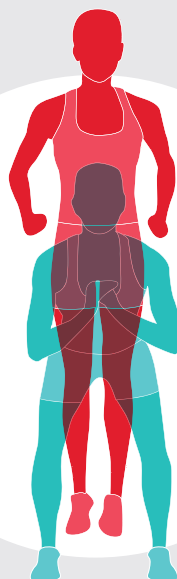
So how can you start to lose your “quarantine 15” (as some people have dubbed the weight gain caused by weeks of being cooped up)? Here are some things to think about...

Repeat three times,
resting for no more
than two minutes
in between sets

1 5 Jumps on the spot



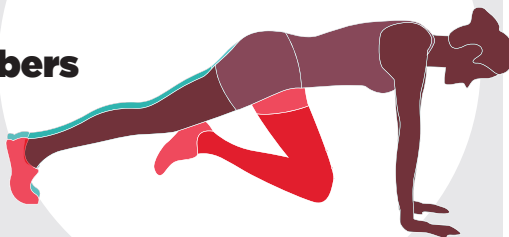
2 10 Star jumps



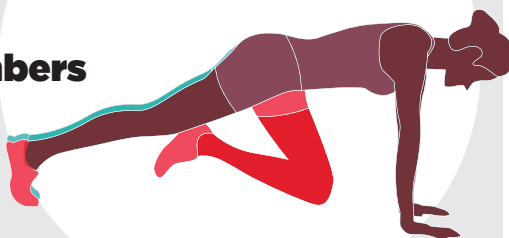
3 10 Mountain climbers



4 20 Star jumps



5 20 Mountain climbers



FITNESS

Get inspired

Bored by the thought of yet another run? Outdoor gyms are reopening on July 4, or if that doesn't appeal, get online and find something that does. The NHS Live Well website ([nhs.uk/livewell/fitness](https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/fitness)) has lots of inspiration for those lacking gym equipment, including the hill workout (left) for an injection of cardio

Embrace routine...

If your pre-Covid gym workouts were always religiously diarised, try doing the same with your current exercise regime. Have a set time of day where you do it, and stick to it

...and do the same for food

If you're continuing to work from home and guilty of day-long grazing, reintroduce set meal and snack times and try to stick to them. It's easy to lose track of how many calories you're consuming when you never stop munching

Cleanse the snack drawer

Extend your new-found levels of cleanliness to your kitchen cupboards too. After all, if they're not loaded down with Snickers and Kettle Chips in the first place, you can't eat them. Have plenty of fresh fruit to hand for a daytime energy hit. And stock up on other munchable items like rice crackers, hummus, breadsticks, nuts and seeds

Hit up the PTI

You may not have seen them in person for a while but don't forget they are there to support you. Get in touch with yours and ask for advice on a workout to help shift that lockdown belly

Nature's Stressbusters

Five holistic remedies to soothe anxiety

► **LOCKDOWN** is finally easing off and while many welcome the gradual return to normality, others are dreading going back to work and worried about a second wave of infections. If you're struggling with anxious thoughts, these natural remedies could help take the edge off...

Lavender

The scent of this plant is a popular relaxant, with studies showing it relieves anxiety and insomnia. Mix a few drops of essential oil into your bath or spritz your pillow before going to bed to help you drift off

Valerian

This root was used by the ancient Greeks and Romans to cure sleep and nerve disorders and today remains a common ingredient in natural supplements for conditions such as insomnia, anxiety, headaches and heart palpitations. Often dubbed "nature's Valium", research has suggested it boosts a neurotransmitter called gamma aminobutyric acid, which in turn calms nervous activity in the brain

Herbal teas

These come in a multitude of flavours and varieties but among the most beneficial for stress are camomile, which helps relax muscles, calm nerves and reduce headaches; lemon balm, a common sleep aid in traditional medicine; and green tea, which contains L-theanine – an amino acid said to curb a rising heart rate and high blood pressure

Meditation

This is a useful tool to manage stress because it can help to slow racing thoughts. There are a wide range of methods, including mindfulness and yoga-based practices. Apps such as *Calm* and *Headspace* can get you started if you are new to meditation

Exercise

A tried and tested form of stress-relief, exercise releases good endorphins which in turn can boost your mood – the so-called runner's high. For a low-impact option, why not give yoga a go? Alternatively, a peaceful walk is enough to increase your energy levels, especially in natural surroundings. The sights and smells of woodland have been shown to lower stress hormones – the Japanese even have a name for it: "Shinrin-yoku", or forest bathing

Bear in mind...

Some herbal supplements can interact with conventional medication, so always read the label and check for side effects. And don't be tempted to order from overseas. All holistic remedies sold in the UK must be approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and also display the Traditional Herbal Registration, or "THR" logo, on their pack



Touting a tale

Ever pondered penning a book?
These tips could help your work get noticed

Remember
If you are writing about defence topics your manuscript will have to be security cleared by the Ministry of Defence prior to publication



CV: Alan Smith
An academic and now a full-time writer, Smith's work has included lecturing in prisons and writing a national newspaper column

about his work with inmates. Find out more about his latest project on Twitter @paperchains5

► WITH plenty of stories to tell – from a lifestyle off-limits to the public at large – it is unsurprising that some Service personnel have forged successful second careers as writers.

The briefest glance at the bestseller rack in any online or high street bookshop will show there is still a healthy appetite for action yarns – with ex-soldiers leading the genre.

But is it possible for anyone to follow in the considerable footsteps of Andy McNab or Chris Ryan?

We asked writer and lecturer Alan Smith – who has recently launched the Paperchains project to record the thoughts of Servicemen and women and other less-heard voices of the Covid-19 crisis – for his tips on putting pen to paper...

Work from experience

It is often said, and it sounds cheesy, but the best piece of advice is to write about what you know. You will have a huge amount to consider if you set out to create a Tolkien-esque fantasy world or a sci-fi setting – so begin with something more personal

Free your mind

Another technique called “free writing” is a useful way to start. Sit down for ten minutes or so and pen whatever comes to mind – even if it is about where you are, what is happening, or the weather. It will seem a mess, but it will get you past the intimidating blank page stage and there's a chance you will produce a phrase you'll like and use again

Know the audience

If you want your work to sell, it is important to properly know your genre – and which outlets will take it. The *Writers' and Artists' Yearbook* is your bible in this respect – it lists the details of publishers and what they are looking for from authors. Most libraries should have a copy if you don't want to buy it

Cut and prune

Editing is a skill in itself and it can take a while to learn – I leave a finished story a couple of weeks before trimming it. Take out anything that doesn't move the plot forward and think of other ways you can develop characters with fewer words. Proofing is a different skill again – reading to weed out typographical errors – but is equally important

Plan your attack

The world of the internet has opened up lots of paths to get your work out there. People are self-publishing, as well as taking more traditional routes. There are two cautionary notes here – first, be wary of sharks charging the earth for their services. And in all cases, it is important that you make sure any story is fully proofed to maintain your credibility

Confidence is currency

Always remember, writing is personal – it should be fun and if what you are doing excites you it is worth pursuing. While you must expect criticism, believe in yourself and present your work with confidence to anyone else



'If we don't do it, no one will'

Serviceman gears up for superhuman effort to help daughter battling rare illness

► **THIS month Maj Chris Brannigan (AGC (SPS)) will walk 600 miles barefoot from Weymouth to Aberdeen to raise money for a gene therapy that will help his eight-year-old daughter fight Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS). Here, he reveals how the genetic condition affects her and the extra challenges his family have faced during the coronavirus lockdown...**

HASTI suffers from an extremely rare genetic disorder that affects around 400 people in the UK.

As children with the syndrome approach puberty they can develop severe mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, which can lead to self-injurious behaviours that may cause permanent damage and mutism.

I have registered a charity called Hope for Hasti to raise £400,000 to develop a gene therapy in partnership with The Jackson Laboratory, in the United States. This is their speciality and in just two years they hope to create the first ever effective treatment for this condition.

Children are born with CdLS – it results from a random gene mutation that can happen to any child, but Hasti was only diagnosed relatively recently.

When she was young, she had lots of medical problems and it was a real battle for the first couple of years of her life with constant trips to the hospital.

She also has growth hormone issues and learning difficulties and needs extra support in the classroom.

Hasti is not physically disabled, she is just smaller than other kids. She loves ballet, reads books and wants to be a chef when she grows up. But communicating is difficult, so it is hard for her to make friends and, without a therapy, she will not be able to achieve her dreams.

Her future will only get worse and if we don't find a treatment there is a 99 per cent chance she will need care for the rest of her life.

The therapy will deliver a working copy of her mutated gene, into her body. It will not totally fix Hasti, but it will dramatically improve her health and development. For her it will be the difference between an independent life, or a life where she is dependent on us.

There are no current remedies for CdLS. When we started to research it, we realised that gene therapy is performing miracles for people with other genetic conditions.

This is really new science and cutting-edge medicine. The team at The Jackson Laboratory are supremely confident this will be a success.

As a dad, when someone tells you that a therapy can be created for your little girl's condition, you have no choice but to do everything you can to make it a reality, even if it means raising £400,000, becoming the project lead for a scientific research programme in your spare time and sacrificing your family's privacy.

If it had been ten years earlier, we would have just got on with it, as no treatment would have been possible. Ten years from now there would probably already have been a solution. But right now, if we don't do it, no one will.

I work at Joint Military Command South West and have been helping to coordinate the military's support to the NHS in the region during the Covid-19 crisis.

When the operation started, we were so busy, and working from home was proving difficult to manage. Hasti was classed as vulnerable to the virus – she has had respiratory problems in the past – so I got a room in camp at Tidworth, leaving my wife at home in West Byfleet to work full-time and juggle three children, as well as being their teacher.

It was really hard. Being away from home is nothing new for soldiers but the difficult thing was that Hasti didn't understand why. Every night she would ask if I was coming home tomorrow, and she was heartbroken every day when I said no.

My wife would send me pictures of the book she was reading so when she called, I was able to listen to her, and help with her reading.

We are lucky to live in an age where we can speak to and see people at the touch of a button.

The key difference between this and a conventional tour is that normally you know where your enemy is, but that is not the case with Covid-19. Initially, I was moving a lot between work and home and the threat came from not knowing if I was bringing the virus home on my hands.

Hasti really missed me while I was away. Now, she is really

glad that I am back home, and we are getting back into the normal routine. Work is still very much operationally focused, and I am fortunate to be able to take five weeks off for what will be a really challenging endeavour.

I wanted to make this difficult by walking barefoot and hopefully draw attention to our charity.

There is almost no official funding for research into rare diseases and 95 per cent have no treatment options at all.

So, with a condition like CdLS, it is up to parents and small charities like ours to find solutions and get our children the treatments they deserve.

Throughout the walk I am also going to be wearing a mask that says 'I cannot speak' and will be largely communicating using other means, as the majority of children who suffer with this struggle with social interaction, and many are non-verbal.

I want to highlight how difficult life can be for a person living with an invisible disability and without something so fundamental as the ability to speak to another human being.

Thanks to the kindness of others – often total strangers from within our amazing military community who have done amazing things – we have already raised £150,000.

Hopefully this walk can boost that total and get my little girl the treatment she deserves.”

More details on the campaign can be found on the Hope for Hasti Facebook page. To donate visit www.justgiving.com/campaign/hopeforhasti



Keeping the peace

Reservists reveal their key takeaways from Operation Tosca

IT MAY not be your standard operational tour, but a stint on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) comes with its own challenges.

Amid the decades-long standoff between Greek and Turkish forces, a careless word or misjudged act could easily escalate into a full-blown diplomatic incident, potentially derailing the fragile ceasefire.

We asked troops from the 7 Rifles Battlegroup – the current UNFICYP Roulement Regiment – about the skills they are calling on during the delicate mission.



Name: 2Lt Darren Burt (RRF)

Age: 31

Profile: Having first served from 2012-14, 2Lt Burt re-joined the Reserves in 2019. A Metropolitan Policeman in civilian life, his role on Op Tosca is as a platoon commander

International relations

We have regular contact with individuals from lots of different countries including Slovakia, Canada, Australia, Argentina and Ireland. The soldiers also have to communicate daily with locals and the opposing forces. We patrol the buffer zone to de-escalate any situation, so we have to be very careful with our language to not aggravate any situation. This has helped all of us develop communication and diplomacy skills.

Leadership under pressure

Recently, a large fire spread rapidly over several kilometres of the buffer zone, posing a risk to people and buildings. As the commander on the ground I had to communicate with the Cypriot fire services, UN police and opposing forces to ensure the blaze was put out and civilians were safely extracted, while maintaining the integrity of the demilitarised area. Due to the fast response and work of all the various agencies, the fire was extinguished without any casualties.

IN NUMBERS

250

strength of the battlegroup, which comprises members of 7th Battalion, The Rifles and 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

6

length of the tour in months

93

percentage of the formation who are Reservists

56

years since British troops deployed to the country under the UN mandate





Name: Pte Georgina White (RAMC)

Age: 33

Profile: A Reservist since 2016, the medic's civilian role is as an accounts associate for a small venture capital firm. Op Tosca is her first operational tour and has seen her patrolling as part of a rifle section

Impartiality

I've learnt the importance of neutrality and the need to understand different perspectives on the same issue. We cannot afford to be seen to act in the narrow interests of one side or the other, so must be scrupulously fair at all times and aware of how our actions could be perceived. When I see soldiers from the opposing forces on patrol, I always greet them and wish them well to show that we are neutral, here to keep the peace, not as an adversary.

The human touch

We sometimes encounter civilians in the buffer zone, often simply walking their dogs or exercising. Early one morning, I met a dog walker. I think we both knew that he should not have been there. I addressed him in Greek and took the time to explain why that was the case clearly and politely. He apologised and left. It's vital to approach individual situations at the human level and to win compliance through patient explanation, rather than force.

Professionalism

The UN mission here is very international and we are on show to the world, at least indirectly. If anything went wrong, it would reflect poorly not only on the unit, but also on the country as a whole. That's one of the reasons why getting the basics right – like maintaining a clean and orderly camp, or saluting vehicles as they enter – is so important.



Name: Cpl Scott Jones (RRF)

Age: Turns 33 this month – his third birthday on tour

Profile: Joined the Territorial Army in 2004, at 17, and has served in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is the second time on Op Tosca for the section commander

Dealing with the unexpected

During a large bush fire in our area of operations a few weeks ago we had to control the situation and bring the local fire brigade in to put it out. This involved explaining the problem and quickly negotiating with the farmers to gain access to their land. Our training had covered worst-case scenarios like public disorder or mass casualty situations and that helped prepare us to deal with an unexpected event with a level head.

Seeing the bigger picture

Tosca is an intensely political operation and misjudging a situation could escalate tensions. Tactical actions can easily have strategic effects, so getting the detail right – like understanding how both sides delineate the buffer zones or which locations are especially sensitive – is crucial. Explaining the wider context to my section also gives them a sense of purpose and keeps us energised and engaged in what we're doing.

Patience is a virtue

Being tolerant and demonstrating that you understand someone else's perspective or frustration – but nonetheless have a job to do – is an effective approach. I've also learnt how important body language can be in overcoming language barriers. These kinds of soft, interpersonal skills, as well as the responsibility of the tour, are good preparation for potentially becoming a senior NCO.

LIFE THROUGH A LENS

Former personnel reveal how the Army photographic trade shaped their future careers

THE role of a Service photographer is as unique and diverse as the British military itself.

Be it combat operations in Afghanistan, delivering aid to Haiti, jungle training in Brunei or ceremonial duties at Buckingham Palace, whenever and wherever the Army is called to action, an elite branch of highly trained cameramen and women are ready to deploy alongside front-line troops to ensure their efforts are documented for the world to see.

While these camera skills are used to portray fellow personnel in a positive light, they also prepare those behind the lens for a future life in the civilian world that extends way beyond a military context.

Here, *Soldier* speaks to four former Army photographers to learn more about their unique experiences and to find out how their time in the Service allowed them to go on to forge successful careers out of uniform...

Interviews: Georgina Coupe



› The photojournalist

"MY TIME in the military taught me a lot about resilience and why I'm the type of photographer I am today," explains artist and photographer Alison Baskerville.

"I was the first female photographer in the Army's combat camera team and that formed the basis for much of my subsequent work."

The former sergeant completed operational tours of Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Iraq during a 12-year stint as a Royal Air Force policewoman, before leaving to pursue a career in photography with the Army Reserve's specialist media unit.

"I joined what was then the Media Operations Group Volunteers because I felt like I was missing the camaraderie and being part of a uniformed community," she recalls.

"I was finishing my MA

in photojournalism at the University of Westminster and it just seemed like the right thing to do."

Baskerville deployed on Op Herrick in 2012 to capture imagery of the military's combat operations, before returning to Afghanistan as a civilian, documenting *The White*

Picture – a project focusing on female soldiers in front-line roles.

"During my tour it became really important to me to make work that reflected on important contemporary issues such as gender equality and female identity in the Forces, and to look more closely at the theme of women in conflict," she explains.

The Birmingham-based photojournalist documented areas affected by war including Gaza, Mali and Somalia and, with works commissioned by non-governmental organisations, the BBC, *The Times*, *The*





“
It’s a unique
experience
”

From above left:
Portraits from *The
White Picture* and
Women Create Change;
soldiers recover
from an engagement
with insurgents in
Afghanistan

Telegraph and *The Guardian*, has widely exhibited across the UK and Europe.

“The opportunities that I’ve had to access areas of the Army have been amazing,” she adds. “It’s a unique experience and it can be really difficult to get the same sort of access as a civilian.”

Her military experience proved essential during overseas deployments and led to her becoming a safety and security adviser for the International Women’s Media Foundation, providing training for females deploying to remote and hostile environments around the world.

“When you go out on your own and you don’t have the added safety and security of the military around you, you feel vulnerable,” she explains.

“The Army teaches you to be self-sufficient, as well as other personal admin and organisational skills that you may take for granted. It also teaches you how to look after yourself.”

Name: Alison Baskerville

Years served: 12 (RAF), 4 (Army)

Top tip: “Plan for the worst and hope for the best.”

What’s in your kit bag? “For my photojournalism assignments I used a **Canon 5D** and a selection of lenses, but I am shooting a lot of film now on a medium format **Mamiya 7**.”

Photographic inspirations:
“**Susan Meiselas**, **Lee Miller** and **Olive Edis**. The latter was Britain’s first official female war photographer in 1919 and she carried around this large glass plate camera. It’s just incredible and inspirational what she did back then.”

Commercial call

"WHEN I decided to leave the Service, it wasn't because I was disillusioned or anything," explains former Army sergeant Gary Tyson.

"But I was 35 years old, I'd met this girl and seen an opportunity to work overseas as a commercial photographer."

As an official Fuji X-photographer and videographer who produces advertising imagery for companies such as Audi, Ducati and Coca-Cola, as well as travel and financial corporations including Asia Jet and UBS, Tyson has certainly tasted success in his career outside the Armed Forces.

"Leaving was a bit of an impulsive move for me," he adds. "But my background was instrumental when it came to getting photography contracts in this part of the world."

Within a month of signing off, Tyson handed his kit in and moved to Hong Kong where he stayed for several years, before relocating first to the Philippines and then to Singapore, where he is now happily settled.

"I photographed the Queen and other members of the royal family when I was in the Army and because of my security clearances, as well as the fact that many Asians are also royalists, I was chosen for all sorts of work," he explains.

One such job was as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation photographer where he was granted unprecedented access to world leaders such as Presidents Barack Obama and Xi Jinping.

Tyson initially transferred to the photographic trade from the

Adjutant General's Corps and says: "I served as a clerk and although I didn't particularly like my trade, I really enjoyed the travel and was a keen amateur unit photographer, documenting deployments to Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Kosovo."

Following his graduation from the Defence School of Photography as top student, he was able to choose a media ops job in Cyprus that involved working as a photographer for the *Lion* newspaper.

Tyson recalls: "I had all this freedom to travel around the island and seeing my images in print every day was just an amazing feeling."

Other high-profile military jobs included overseas sporting events and a combat camera team deployment to Iraq.

"Having all these experiences and training made this an easy transition for me," he explains. "Although, I wasn't as prepared as I could have been for the financial side of setting up my own business."

Alongside global commercial contracts, the ex-soldier also runs photographic workshops in countries such as Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Mongolia and specialises in techniques that include off-camera lighting and dive photography.

"Military traits help in numerous ways, but particularly when it comes to organising photographic workshops because there are a lot of logistics and planning involved," he concludes.

"Certain people make good teachers but it doesn't mean they are good at organising – that is crucial in my line of work."



Name: Gary Tyson

Years served: 18

Top tip: "Just because you're a good teacher doesn't mean you're a good organiser and those skills are invaluable for running your own business."

What's in your kit bag? "I'm actually a Fuji X-photographer so I use the Fuji GFX medium format, but I also have the Sony A9 for my commercial sports shoots."

Photographic inspirations: "James Nachtwey, Steve McCurry and Joey L. I was lucky enough to have met James in Bosnia and, like a lot of really great photographers, he was just very humble and quiet."





Clockwise from top: Wakesurf filming and photography project for Hong Kong yacht owners; Sunset on the salt fields of Southern Cambodia; Filming for Ducati on the racetrack; At the heart of the Hong Kong Umbrella Revolution riots facing off the police; The Ducati Monster launch in Thailand.

Pictures: © Gary Tyson, Getty Images



› The multi-tasker

"I FIRST joined the military without any qualifications when I was 17-years old," recalls former BBC cameraman and university lecturer Stu McKenzie.

"But the skills and experience I left the Army with after 24 years have undoubtedly helped me get to where I am today."

An ex-warrant officer second class, McKenzie left the Army in 2014 to work as a BBC regional cameraman before a promotion led to a senior position in the Russian capital, Moscow.

"Things like being punctual, dressing smartly and turning up with a willingness to learn really helped when it came to my initial job interview," he explains. "And when you work alongside journalists who see that you have a good attitude and are organised and reliable, they will usually want to work with you again."

As well as lecturing and working as a freelance cameraman, McKenzie also runs photography business Edge of Focus, which offers workshops in remote locations such as Mongolia and Namibia.

"Another key military skill vital in my line of work is the ability to plan," the ex-soldier continues. "I've lived with reindeer herders in the Arctic and migrated with eagle hunters in Mongolia. When you're organising overseas expeditions like those you have to forward-think everything and make sure you have all aspects of the trip squared away."

No stranger to worldwide travel, McKenzie deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan as a videographer early in his military career and went on to lead a multi-national Nato media team in Kabul before taking up instructional positions at the Defence School of Photography.

"Op Telic was the first conflict that I documented – I was there with the initial British soldiers going into Iraq," McKenzie recalls. "So, it was a real career highlight that I was also there for the drawdown many years later as the leader of the combat" »



Previous page: An eagle hunter watches over his herd on a five-day migration to the Altai Mountains, Mongolia; The hunters drink tea at the end of a 150km journey

Below: Nenet reindeer herders operate in temperatures of -40C from the Arctic Tundra to the Taiga; Stu McKenzie captures one of Saddam Hussein's troops south of Basra during Operation Telic; A young boy of the Himba tribe, Namibia



Name: Stu McKenzie

Years served: 24

Top tip: "Make sure you get as much advice and training in setting up your own business before you leave the military. I had a lot of the practical skills, but not the financial understanding that was needed."

What's in your kit bag? "A Canon 5d (mk 4) with an array of lenses

Photographic inspiration: "Don McCullin was a big military inspiration when I was serving, and I was lucky enough to have met him when he judged the Army Photographic Competition. Another is **Lewis Hine**, whose photography was instrumental in helping to bring about changes to child labour laws in America."

» camera team.

"During my time in the Army I learnt all about the practical camera skills and completed a part-time master's degree in documentary filmmaking, as well as developing my abilities as an instructor."

His role with the BBC took him all over the world and meant he could be working with a Greenpeace activist in the Antarctic one week, and former leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, the next.

"Much like in the Armed Forces, you have to remain flexible and be able to work and get on with all kinds of people," McKenzie says. "There are lots of military qualities that are lacking in some civilians, like



having that sense of urgency and the ability to analyse a situation and take control."

Edge of Focus also provides a photographic rehabilitation package in the Lake District for veteran charity Combat Stress, a cause that is close to his own heart.

"I was diagnosed with PTSD in 2009 and photography was one of the things that really helped me, so it made sense for me to develop a programme that could benefit others by teaching them about the art," he adds.

"One thing that I really miss about being in the military is the camaraderie and working with like-minded people who have that get up and go. This course is a way of providing that for ex-Service personnel."





Manchester City play Fulham in the FA Cup fourth round at the Etihad Stadium. Below right: Prime Minister Theresa May (as she was then) arrives at the Conservative Party conference
Pictures: © Ian Forsyth, Getty Images

Name: Ian Forsyth

Years served: 22

Top tip: “I don’t go to the paper shop or walk my dog without my camera. As a freelancer you have to be a news junkie and you don’t stop, there’s always something to see or sell.”

What’s in your kit bag? “I had to slowly build my kit up when I left the military and, although I have a couple of **Leicas (M9 and M3)**, my main workhorse is the **Sony A9 (mk 2)** with a selection of zoom and prime lenses.”

Photographic inspirations: “**Don McCullin, Larry Burrows, James Nachtwey and Tom Stoddart.**

Tom’s work ethic and procedure is fantastic and something that I’ve always aspired to. I am also really fortunate to have him as both a colleague and friend.”

› The agency man

“MY ENTIRE career as a photographer in the Service was a period of resettlement for me,” says Getty photographer, and ex-Army sergeant, Ian Forsyth.

“The Armed Forces teaches you to just get the job done, whatever the situation.

It doesn’t matter whether the weather is crap and you’re cold or hungry, the military mindset still ensures that critical attention to detail.”

Based in the north east of England, news and documentary photographer Forsyth is a long way from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he first honed his skills.

Despite the obvious geographic differences between documenting troops on the front line and photographing

politicians at elections, he draws parallels between that and his work in the news industry now.

“It’s really important to maintain the military ethos of integrity in the media world,” he explains. “I would never go out on purpose to make, for example, Nigel Farage look bad, but I make sure I document what I am seeing and make sure it looks right.

“Sometimes my photos have been used by certain news desks to misrepresent

things, but if you have a reputation for being straight it puts you in a strong position to counter those claims.”

During a 22-year Army career, Forsyth served as a forward observer in the Royal Artillery before transferring to the Royal Logistic Corps’ photographic trade and credits his training ”



“
You just need
to do whatever
it takes to get
ahead and get
the job done
”





Clockwise from top left: Boris Johnson attends the Conservative Party conference; A resident of Saltburn on his doorstep taking part in nationwide applause for the NHS; Extinction Rebellion protesters celebrate; Firefighters tackle a moorland blaze in North Yorkshire
Pictures: © Ian Forsyth, Getty Images

» with much of his success today, with companies such as Bloomberg, *The Financial Times* and *The Times* as clients.

“A lot of civilians struggle to turn up on time, which is pretty basic stuff, but what I took from the Army that gives me an advantage is to arrive early and stay late,” he adds.

“It’s a competitive world so you just need to do whatever it takes to get ahead and get the job done.

“As a brigade photographer I really polished my technical skills and whether I was photographing portraits, operations or sporting events it was always challenging and I learnt to adapt to different environments very quickly.

“I also worked a patch which is similar to what I do now, and it was through this that I was able to cultivate the relationships with the news desks that I still use today.”

Although career success as a photographer can be measured by credits in the national press, some of the most important work for Forsyth was ensuring there were permanent photographic

tributes to those who lost their lives at war.

“While it was great to get recognition for your efforts, for me some of the most meaningful work I did was covering the repatriations of fallen soldiers,” he remembers.

“You were providing a service to their families and friends and to the units of those who had died, as well as creating a permanent record for the Imperial War Museum.” ■



Army “skills that last a lifetime” campaign

PHOTOGRAPHY is one of the many trades that soldiers can continue into civilian life, and now the Army is launching a new campaign to raise awareness of the opportunities on offer.

The Service is well known for training its people to serve on operations around the world – and the Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated the important role they play here in the UK.

Personnel can gain qualifications and practical experience in trades such as plumbing, construction and engineering. Many also join to continue learning in professions such as medicine, teaching and law.

But polling suggests only 54 per cent of the public believe the Army invests in its Servicemen and women, and only one in five think it supports veterans.

“Skills that last a lifetime” will seek to challenge those perceptions, featuring famous faces such as Levison Wood and Captain Sir Tom Moore, as well as veterans working in a range of new careers. These include former chef and AGC HR specialist Ana Lavekau, who now champions Pacific art, design and culture and took part in London Fashion Week.

“Looking back, I would strongly recommend that you should remember that your chosen career path is just the start to more opportunities that lie ahead,” she said.

View Ana’s video and more stories relating to the campaign at www.army.mod.uk/armyskills

BACK WITH A BLAST

Riflemen hit the ranges as training tempo ramps up »



ACCOMPANIED by heavy winds and lashing rain comes the unmistakable sound of heavy artillery that echoes across the remote clifftop training area of Castlemartin Ranges.

Under normal circumstances it is a familiar backdrop for those working and living around the Pembrokeshire setting, who are used to hearing gunfire and explosions late into the night as the military practises its warfighting skills.

But since the declaration of a global pandemic, the ordinarily busy proving ground has lain silent, the situation far removed from what could ever be described as normal – until now.

For these are the sounds of the Army's return to training and, with a deployment to Estonia looming, it has come at a crucial time for 5th Battalion, The Rifles, who were keen to test their operational effectiveness in the Welsh wilderness.

The first armoured infantry unit to tour the country in 2017, they are due to relieve 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers on Op Cabrit later this year and are now rapidly picking up the pace ahead of departure.

While the restrictions surrounding the coronavirus outbreak marked a distinct change in the way the Service does business, commanding officer Lt Col Jim Hadfield feels his troops adapted well to the situation.

"Actually, some really positive things have come out of lockdown," he told *Soldier*.

"By virtue of necessity, the recent situation has shone a light onto our processes and habits that we thought were important, but their absence has made them less so.

"It's been a useful catalyst for bringing us into a 21st century way of working.

"We've been learning how we can communicate differently by using Zoom, Teams and Strava and have even been creating podcasts in order to reach our troops and their families.

"There's been a natural sense of anxiety by some about returning to work and the podcasts have been a useful way to reassure people that we have followed clinical advice to make sure training is safe.

"It's also important that we remain flexible and supportive for the three personnel who are unable to be here because their family members are in a vulnerable or shielding category."

To the untrained eye, watching the riflemen as they fight their way down the four-kilometre range, detonating grenades and using smoke to clear multiple enemy positions during a prolonged three-hour company attack, it doesn't seem like much has changed.

Soldiers still form up closely in sections, they still crouch next to each other to plan their next move and ammunition still needs to change hands. But as soon as the enemy is defeated, and the company retreat back, it becomes apparent that things aren't quite the same as they once were.

“By virtue of necessity, the recent situation has shone a light onto our processes and habits”



IN NUMBERS

365

soldiers across the
battlegroup
took part

546

120mm (tank)
rounds fired

six

integrated
platoon attacks
(day and night)

27

integrated
section attacks
(day and night)

27

new Warrior
gunners qualified

TWO

company
day attacks

6

LFX8s (annual
Platoon assessment)

150

grenades fired

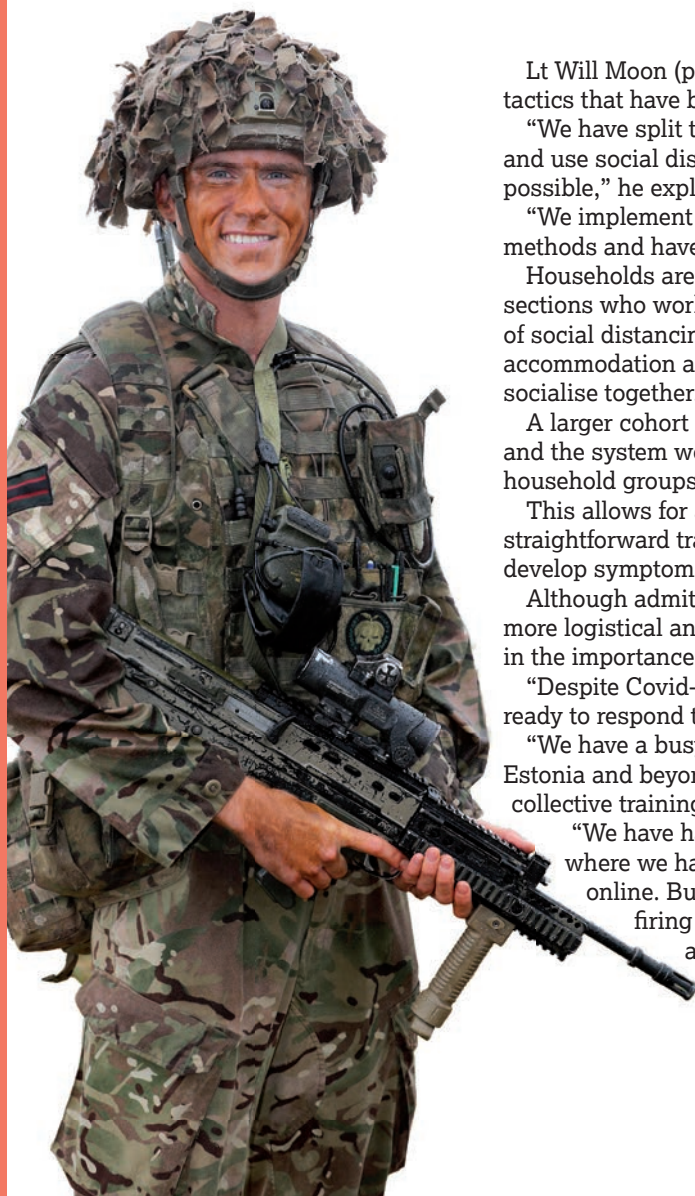
**The Challenger
squadron fired;**

546

120mm rounds

28,000

7.62mm rounds



Lt Will Moon (pictured left), 2iC of A Company, described the tactics that have been introduced to mitigate risk.

"We have split the troops into household and cohort groups and use social distancing methods as much as practicably possible," he explained.

"We implement the obvious hand washing and hygiene methods and have our own track and trace system in place."

Households are formed by vehicle crews or infantry sections who work in such close proximity that maintenance of social distancing is virtually impossible. Members share accommodation and meals and are only permitted to work and socialise together.

A larger cohort group ranges between troop and platoon level and the system works by restricting the movement of smaller household groups.

This allows for a swift isolation response and a straightforward track and trace system should any member develop symptoms.

Although admitting that these new ways of working create more logistical and admin challenges, the officer firmly believes in the importance of resuming physical training.

"Despite Covid-19, we have a responsibility to the world to be ready to respond to demands put upon us," Lt Moon added.

"We have a busy year coming up with our deployment to Estonia and beyond that to Canada, so it's important to get this collective training together.

"We have had dispersed working for a number of weeks where we have been focused on conceptual training online. But these ranges allow us to get back to live firing with rifles and vehicles, progress with our annual crew tests and assessments and

»



“ Since we’ve been back you need to think about things like social distancing more, but we’re in the swing of it now and have adjusted ”



be as prepared as we possibly can be in order to relieve our counterparts in the Baltic.”

Despite some of the obvious benefits that virtual training offers, there is no real replacement for the hands-on approach required by tank and armoured fighting vehicle crews.

The Bulldog, Challenger 2, Spartan and Warrior form part of the spectacular array of lethal force and Castlemartin has given them all a much-needed opportunity to get moving again.

“They don’t like to be static, they need to be used,” said electronic technician Cpl Sam Houghton (REME).

“We’ve taken over these vehicles and they’ve needed quite a lot of work, but we tend to find the more we use them the better they run.”

And what of the new working conditions that he and his colleagues are experiencing?

“Since we’ve been back you need to think about things like social distancing more, but we’re in the swing of it now and have adjusted well, so it’s just become a normal rhythm,” the NCO added.

Following the three-week package – which enabled around 400 members of the 5 Rifles Battlegroup to conduct day and night-time, mounted and dismounted, live fire training, and saw the completion of annual crew tests across all platforms – the formation will move onto the final training exercise phase held on Salisbury Plain before heading to Estonia.

And, as a result of the new pathway put in place after the recent restrictions on military training, they will follow on from Op Cabrit with a further planned deployment to Canada in order to complete their cycle.

Lockdown may have temporarily halted progress, but the pace of Army life has quickly resumed for 5 Rifles. ■

HARD to FORGET

National serviceman
recalls his actions in
a conflict that failed to
resonate with the public

By the river: A forward post of
1st Battalion, The Royal Sussex
Regiment in Korea overlooking
the valley of the Imjin River.



“

IT WAS so far away that it didn't register with a lot of people, but it was very important," veteran Neville Williams tells *Soldier* as he reflects on his involvement in the "Forgotten War".

In January 1951, the 21-year-old apprentice engineer was called up for national service – but instead of embarking on a routine of seemingly endless drill and boot polishing on camp he found himself on the front line of a conflict that claimed some three million lives, yet received very little in the way of public attention.

Late last month marked the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War and July 27 is the date, in 1953, when the fighting ceased.

The three-year struggle was ignited when the communist Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) launched an all-out offensive on its southern neighbour.

Backed by China and the Soviet Union, the invading force was met by opposition from the United Nations Security Council, who called on its members for support. The United States quickly sent troops to the region, where they were later joined by British personnel.

Having seen the enemy initially make rapid strides, the coalition counter-attacked and by October its ranks had advanced into North Korea, taking the capital Pyongyang.

A series of offensives and counter-offensives followed until the conflict reached a stalemate after the Battle of the Imjin River – the bloodiest engagement fought by the Army since the Second World War and one of the most decisive defensive actions the Service has ever undertaken.

Two years of static fighting followed, often in conditions of extreme cold and heat, and British soldiers – the majority of whom were national servicemen – were deployed on a rotational basis, defending hill positions and carrying out patrols.

And it was this backdrop that Williams, a lance corporal in The Welch Regiment, found himself amongst when he disembarked at the port of Busan in November 1951.

"On arrival we realised it was a very primitive country, with children begging on the streets asking if they could clean our shoes for a few pennies," the 90-year-old recalled.

"But the people were very nice, and we later had Koreans working for us as porters. They knew the country and that proved to be a great help.

"The winter was heavy going and it would get down to -45 degrees Celsius. If you stood still for a few minutes, you'd hear the cracking sound of your feet freezing to the ground.

"When you went to the toilet you had to put a blanket around you – if you didn't, you'd stick to the seat. ”



» And if you were on guard with the Bren gun you had to cock it every four or five minutes to stop it seizing up.

"All we could do was help each other out, get our heads down and make the best of it. No matter how difficult things got we had to get stuck in.

"The officers were the same, we all knew it was a hardship and pulled together – we managed to build a very good spirit that way."

But the passing of the winter months brought little in the way of respite as sub-zero temperatures were replaced by the deluges of the monsoon season.

"We were not brought up in monsoons," Williams joked. "It would rain for two or three weeks and out of the 20 bunkers we had we ended up sharing ten.

"The water would just pour through the walls and every vehicle that came down the road would get stuck. It was terrible to live in conditions like that."

This new environment proved to be nothing like the comfort of Williams' native Cheshire. But it didn't come as a total surprise to the conscript, who had an early inclination that his time in uniform would be anything but dull.

After initially joining The Royal Welch Fusiliers he transferred to The Welch Regiment and a period of intensive battle training in Norfolk soon followed.

"We knew something was going on," he continued. "We thought we might be going to Malaya, but it wasn't until September that Korea was confirmed.

"We did serious training on every weapon you could think of. We did patrols at night, had live bullets fired overhead and practised jumping onto moving vehicles.

"It really kept you on your toes. Looking back, if I had been stuck in barracks for the two years of my national service it would have been very boring.

"The training was excellent. The only thing you cannot train people for is real warfare, with real bullets and shells.

"That's when you realise your life hangs on a thread. Sometimes, with all the shelling we faced, you'd wish it would just stop. But the training held us in good stead."

Williams made a seamless transition to life on the front line, where he initially served as a regimental signaller before later acting as an assault pioneer and then a mortarman.

His first job offered the young Serviceman an insight into the bigger picture, but his other roles drew him closer to the action, with the mortars proving "red hot" at times.

"For us, it was about fixed positions," the veteran, who went on to become a chief safety

officer at British Leyland and British Aerospace, explained.

"But if a line got broken, we were the ones who would have to go out and fix it. And when the shells started falling that was not a nice place to be.

"On the whole, it was mostly artillery exchanges. They would know when we were having dinner, so they'd drop shells then.

"I had a couple of close shaves with my mates. One shell landed about three feet from us and we all dived in a slit trench – the lad at the bottom was grumbling a bit after that.

"Another time, when we were in semi-reserve, I remember standing on a hill thinking the Chinese were a mile or so up the valley and suddenly bullets started whistling past us.

"And on one occasion we set a tripwire off. We didn't know if it was a mine or flare, luckily for us it was the latter.

"The only time I really saw the enemy was when some Chinese or North Koreans approached our standing patrol, wanting to pass through.

"I was the only NCO on site, so I got six lads together, along with some grenades and rounds, and went down to arrest them.

"Our machine gunner had his weapon pointed at them the entire time and their officer was getting very agitated. I told our lads to pick a Korean each and when I give the word, disarm them.

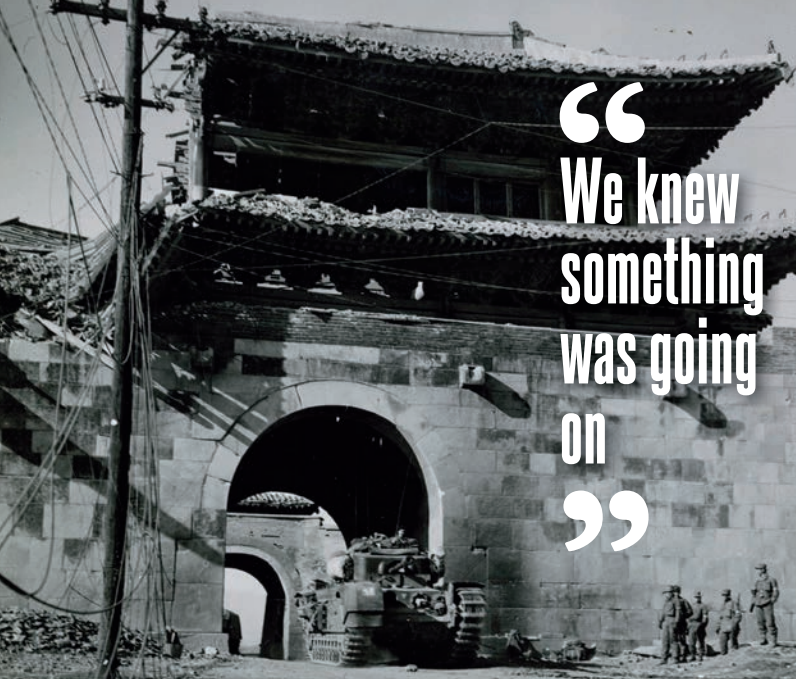
"We took their weapons and told them to put their hands on their heads. They were then taken back to the battalion headquarters and we returned to our positions.

"Many years later I heard from an intelligence officer who said they were able to get a lot of information from them and that, in hindsight, we might have got a Mention in Dispatches."

The Battle of the Imjin River

● IN April 1951, the Chinese counter-attacked in a bid to break through to the South Korean capital. They were held up by UN forces near Gapyeong and on the Imjin River. Here, the line was primarily defended by the British Army's 29th Brigade. The enemy were numerically superior, but the troops held their position for three days, before being forced to retreat. The 1st Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment's last stand at Hill 235 helped break the Chinese advance but resulted in heavy casualties. Only the remains of D Company, under the command of Maj Mike Harvey, escaped to reach UN lines. The rest of the battalion, including its commander Lt Col James Carne, was captured. The unit was later awarded the United States Presidential Unit Citation for its gallantry.





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We knew
something
was going
on
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Pictures clockwise: A Churchill tank during the UN push northwards moving through the gates of the walled city of Suwon; Soldiers from The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders help a wounded soldier along the road to Anju during an allied advance; A patrol from 1st Battalion, Durham Light Infantry receive a briefing before leaving on a night reconnaissance of Chinese positions



Korean War in focus

Around **60,000** British personnel served in Korea
– many of whom were national servicemen

More than **1,100** were killed and a further
2,600 wounded

The US suffered almost **37,000** fatalities, South
and North Korea each had at least **half-a-**
million killed or wounded, China saw more than
110,000 killed

Estimates suggest that at least **two million**
civilians from both countries died

On **July 27, 1953** an **armistice** was
finally signed but the country remained divided.
Skirmishes still occur along the border, which is the
most heavily militarised frontier in the world



But military life, and the pressures of war, had a big impact on those he served alongside.

Williams recalled a colleague sleeping with grenades in his bed as he was that nervous and said others, when on reserve, would find their hands shaking uncontrollably.

“With all the shelling you didn’t realise your body was going into such a state of tension,” he explained. “In reserve, there were guys who would not get out of their beds.

“You wouldn’t go through something like that in civilian life as you are never pushed to such limits. If you can put up with that, you can put up with anything.”

Despite this, Williams, whose father also served in The Royal Welch Fusiliers during the First World War, looks back at his national service as a positive experience.

“I thought it was a good thing and the discipline was great,” he added. “It was also educational; I was a tradesman mixing with someone who worked in a shoe shop, and another who was on the stage.

“You were with all these different people and you found your level. Some thought they were better than average but soon realised that was not the case, while those who were a little more reserved could really last the pace.

“But when I finished, I knew what a nasty business war was. I didn’t really blame the Chinese; they were like me and had been conscripted into something they did not know much about.

“It was terrible, and it made me realise that people need to work as hard for peace as they do in war.”

And while he has been able to reflect on the impact the process had on him personally, Williams also spoke with pride on how his efforts played a small part in a much bigger picture.

“Stalin had ideas of global domination and thought communism would rule the world,” he concluded. “If they had got to the southern tip of Korea it would have been on to New Zealand, Australia and the Far East.

“It would have been difficult to stop them, so it was an absolutely essential war.” ■



Neville Williams describes his experiences as a national serviceman during the Korean War in his book, *A Conscript in Korea*, which is available from Pen and Sword, priced £12.99



Report: Cliff Caswell Main picture: Graeme Main

FORMING UP

Army aviation's newest outfit tastes immediate action

WHEN the groundwork was being laid for the Army's 1st Aviation Brigade, its troops could never have predicted they would be on ops from the very first day.

The formation had been on the drawing board for some time with the key intention of shaping helicopter assets for future high-intensity deployments.

But as final preparations were made to bring the outfit online, it was an emerging threat on home soil that had become the focus. With aircraft needed to assist in the Covid-19 pandemic, personnel were rapidly on the front line against the virus.

"We had to work very fast to put the key elements in place, but everybody pulled together to meet the challenge and ensure we were ready," Maj Luke Hoare (AAC), chief of staff at the brigade's headquarters, told *Soldier*.

"Our Wildcats were required for the tri-Service Covid Aviation Task Force – we were able to quickly put together the request and had several platforms ready to fly out of RNAS Yeovilton in the south, and RAF Leeming in the north.

"We had to work smarter – looking at what we could afford not to do while taking heed of health guidance.

"All the while we were operating against a virus threatening our troops as much as anyone else."

The Army Air Corps crews certainly made a huge contribution alongside colleagues from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

As they received their new brigade badges, the soldiers flew some 70 per cent of taskings in the first month of Op Rescript – largely ferrying key individuals tackling the epidemic.

But while its first taste of action was in peacetime, the

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This latest move
represents a
cultural shift for
the Army
”

formation is also now ready to ensure Service helicopter crews can pack an equally serious punch on the battlefield.

Uniting assets previously split between the attack helicopter and aviation reconnaissance forces – respectively operating Apaches and Wildcats – the new outfit also pulls in the Gazelles of 5 Regiment, Army Air Corps.

And specialists from 7 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers play a critical role, providing the backbone of essential maintenance to keep the kit flying.

Commander Brig Paul Tedman is confident his line-up will provide a potent range of options throughout a broad spectrum of operations.

He pointed out that the brigade had been built on so-called attack reconnaissance teams of Wildcats and Apaches.

With the former focusing on marking targets and controlling engagements, its stablemate could use its entire payload to carry weapons.

Held at high readiness, the teams may also be brought together to form a larger combat aviation force.

"This massing represents a cultural shift for the Army, which has evolved from using helicopters solely as a close support capability to being able to use them to hunt in packs at long ranges," Brig Tedman said.

The ability to attack opposition forces miles away is certainly one of the most potent capabilities of the brigade. But the senior officer also stressed that the formation's flexibility was unique. Crews could be tasked with long-range strikes in the morning to backing tanks in the afternoon and an air assault in the evening. Commanders could even call on all three at once.

"The brigade has enormous utility, ranging from supporting operations in the UK to deploying attack recce teams or task ”

AT A GLANCE



1st Aviation Brigade

Motto: Fly, Fight, Lead

Wildcats, 1 Regt AAC
Based in Yeovilton

Apaches, 3 and 4 Regt AAC
Based in Wattisham

Gazelles, 5 Regt AAC
Based in Aldergrove, Northern Ireland

Also **Reservists** of **6 Regt AAC**
and specialists from **7 Bn REME**

» forces over long distances to support small exercises and operations and fighting at scale," said Brig Tedman.

Lt Col Nick English, commanding officer of 3 Regiment, AAC, which is equipped with Apaches, said the new formation would give the attack helicopter even greater potency.

"In many respects this is about Army aviation coming of age," he added.

"A further uplift will be provided by the arrival of the new E-model of our aircraft towards the end of this year.

"Our crews have been in the process of booking on courses and will start training in the autumn.

"The latest Apache represents a quantum leap in capability over the current generation – there are sophisticated new avionics among other modifications and we will also be taking delivery of it at the same time as the first US Army units."

Along with the new Apache, the full potential of the Wildcat



Pictures: Graeme Main, Steve Dock, Andre Bour

IN NUMBERS

70

Percentage of Covid-related aviation taskings undertaken by the AAC in April

TWO

Bases – Leeming and Yeovilton – used by Army crews on Op Rescript



6

Wildcats made available during pandemic



CV: Lt Col Nick English

Current role: CO, 3 Regt AAC; pilot, Apache

Years of service: 2000-present

Operational experience: Includes four tours of Afghanistan

CV: Lt Col Charlie Scott

Current role: CO, 1 Regt AAC; pilot, qualified on Lynx and Gazelle

Years of service: 1995-present

Operational experience: Includes Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan



Picture: Roo Lonsdale

is also still being unlocked.

Having proven its versatility at the height of the military involvement in the Covid-19 crisis, crews are now returning to their mainstream reconnaissance role.

With the aircraft also used by Navy colleagues, personnel from 1 Regiment, AAC, are soon taking delivery of a platform that is fitted with the sophisticated Seaspray radar.

While designed to scour the waves, it is hoped the technology could also prove a battle winner on land. The aircraft already has sophisticated sensors and powerful communications.

The crews' recce skills will again be tested when four of the helicopters deploy on Op Cabrit later this year, where commanders will look to build on a strong reputation forged on several previous tours in the region.

"We make no bones about the fact that we want to be the Army's reconnaissance regiment," commanding officer Lt Col Charlie Scott said with a smile.

"But Wildcat's versatility is impressive – we've seen that by its performance during Op Rescript and the full range of tasks we routinely fulfil including command support, heli-sniping, fast roping, artillery fire direction and forward air controlling," he added.

The new brigade certainly provides an environment for personnel, as well as kit, to flourish while bringing a greater scope for creativity for those at the helm. An impressive concept from the earliest days, it holds a lot of future potential.

"Honestly, I think this outfit has been pretty much the dream for Army aviation ever since I joined the Service 25 years ago," Lt Col Scott concluded. "We already had the best people and equipment – now our brigade is a reality too." ■

**DON'T
SIT AND
WAIT FOR
RACISM
TO PUNCH
YOU IN
THE FACE**

Interviews: Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main, Freepix

Recent protests about racial inequality have changed the world, but what impact have they had on the British Army? We spoke to three of the Service's leading anti-racism advocates to find out...



Col Karl Harris
Chair of the Army's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Network since its inception in 2015



Lt Gen Tyrone Urch
Commander Home Command and Army race champion



Sgt Christine Hawkins (RAMC)
Passionate member of the Army's BAME Network and a diversity and inclusion adviser

Q. IN LIGHT of recent events, what sort of conversations should commanders or junior leaders be having with their people on the subject of racism and how do they create a safe space for that discussion?

Lt Gen Urch: It's really important that they create conditions where people can speak out without any form of retribution. As we know, the British Army mirrors many aspects of society; we recruit from all walks of life and we're not immune to racism by individuals. The key thing to reinforce is that we, as an organisation, will not tolerate it and it will be investigated if it is brought to the chain of command's attention.

Col Harris: It's a topic that won't go away and it's naive to suggest it will. As an organisation we haven't, in my view, gone far enough or fast enough in dealing with racism. But, since the killing of George Floyd, I feel we're now experiencing something of a cultural and social renaissance – most decent people, as far as I can see, are simply fed up with racism occurring over again and are saying "enough is enough". The time has always been right

to speak about it, but now more than ever.

Sgt Hawkins: We all know that racial discrimination hasn't disappeared. As the assistant equality, diversity and inclusion adviser in my unit I can point soldiers to the places where they can get more help. I always look for junior personnel who might need someone to speak to and tell them they are free to come to me because I know what they might be going through. I experienced some racism and discrimination when I first joined the Army back in 2007, mainly due to the way people perceived my accent – I'm from Belize – and my age, as I joined at the relatively mature age of 27. A lot has changed since then though.

Q. HAS the Army changed that much in the last decade or so?

Sgt Hawkins: I think the training the Service provides through MATTs has helped change attitudes and soldiers are now far more conscious of the environment they are operating in. It is drummed into individuals that racism is not acceptable. We will always have bad apples trying to test the system but it's the »



» responsibility of everyone not to walk past and allow it to happen.

Lt Gen Urch: Education and training is crucial. MATTs are mandatory, but it really shouldn't be just a dry lecture in a classroom. I challenge every commanding officer and regimental sergeant major out there to create an inspirational dialogue with case studies and real-life examples to really make it stick.

Q. COURSES don't necessarily change the culture at ground level, though, do they? The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey of 2019 revealed that only a tiny fraction of soldiers who reported being bullied or harassed at work actually made a formal complaint – half of them said they believed doing so would harm their careers. How do you feel about that?

Col Harris: I think some context is useful. When I joined Welbeck Sixth Form College, I was invited to do a rap as my introduction to everyone. I'm not a gifted or even average rapper. And when I turned up at Sandhurst with my parents before starting my commissioning course – and after having already completed ten weeks on Rowallan Company, an extremely demanding preparatory phase – we were invited to sit in a room to the left where the foreign cadets were congregating. Why the directing staff felt the need to separate overseas and British cohorts still bemuses

me. Those in positions of authority ought to have known better. Nowadays, I've occasionally heard officers referring to 'floppies' and I call them out. There are plenty of other instances I could offer from the last 29 years. But in my personal experience incidences of casual racism are far less common than they were, although I don't see others' and it's evident that racism remains unacceptably prevalent.

I also think it would be wrong to beat the system up specifically because of data in a survey; we all have a part to play. I think we should celebrate the fact we have an AFCAS process at all. Change can't be made if we're blind. I ask everybody what they're doing to enrich our understanding. What are they doing when the AFCAS form comes in and are tempted to just bin it? The institution is trying to encourage us to speak up. We have come an awful long way and we have a considerable distance to go. I've found the information to be an important way of understanding and for the Network to be able to try and hold senior leaders to account.

Q. LT GEN Urch, you mentioned initiatives like the Unacceptable Behaviours Branch in an open letter recently. What difference are they making?

Lt Gen Urch: They provide a really good intervention service for when the chain of command can't deal with



the problem themselves. When I was in Basra there was a serious allegation of racism in my rear operations group. The Army mediation team had to get involved and it was very drawn out, but this is exactly where the Unacceptable Behaviours Branch would have made a real difference. The confidential helpline is a great tool and our BAME Network is providing a platform for people to speak out – and through me they have direct access to the head of the Army.

Q. WHAT else can be done to make a difference?

Sgt Hawkins: I organised two cultural days for my unit to enhance cohesion. I discovered we had 18 nationalities among us. It worked really well and as a senior NCO I believe all units should be doing this. Every single year in March we celebrate Commonwealth Day, for example, so why not put

the idea forward then? At our days different personnel spoke a little about where they come from, their culture, their food and dress of their home nation – and why they wanted to join the British Armed Forces. We had external speakers too, including former high jumper Dalton Grant and boxer Anthony Ogogo who talked about their backgrounds and experiences. They were very inspirational.

Col Harris: These events celebrate people in the same way we have them for specific dates in regiments' and battalions' histories, to mark battles and heroism. When I was serving in 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery we had a cultural day with 23 nations represented and it added to team cohesion. It was a fantastic party that helped us to get to know each other and dismantled some artificial barriers.



I CAN'T
BREATHE



“
This is a
matter for
all of us
”

Lt Gen Urch: Bridging cultural differences is something that's crucial. My reverse mentor, a corporal, told me only yesterday about a young soldier from a Commonwealth country receiving a grilling from an instructor. It escalated because he looked down at the ground the whole time – the done thing when being reprimanded in his own country. The instructor took this as a sign of disrespect and a Service complaint ensued, but it was simply a misunderstanding of each other's culture. We've brought in external companies such as The Garnett Foundation to help further in this area and educate our troops about foreign cultures and customs.

Q. DO YOU think it would be helpful if the top of the Service was more diverse? It's hard to imagine an ethnic minority person feeling the Army is for them by looking at its leadership...

Lt Gen Urch: I think there is a lot to unpack in that question. While the Army board is full of middle-aged white guys, they are not all toffs who went to public school – they have diverse backgrounds. It will not be long before it is even more diverse. If you compare the Army board to that of a typical FTSE 200 British company they are pretty similar, so we shouldn't beat ourselves up that we are uniquely bad, because we're not. However, we should be doing a lot better. We do bring in non-executive directors – females and

members of the BAME community – and we have plenty of brigadiers and colonels from diverse backgrounds. We also really want more BAME sergeant majors and junior officers. The trick is to grow the junior officers from Sandhurst. Overall, BAME inflow is increasing and at the end of the last recruitment year it was up to about 17 per cent, with about seven per cent from the UK and around ten from the Commonwealth. It will take a bit of time for those people to rise through the system but we will ensure they have every opportunity to do so. We must become more diverse, that's something the Army Board is very aware of and they recognise the need to address this with greater energy and urgency at all levels in the chain of command.

Q. DID you all see the BBC programme *Racism in the Ranks* and if so what did you think, especially when former soldier David Nkomo was told by officers handling his departure from the Service not to mention racism as his reason for leaving the Army?

Lt Gen Urch: It made me feel uncomfortable in places, but overall I have to say I think it was pretty balanced. As I said previously, we do suffer instances of bullying, harassment and racism but the British Army will not tolerate this where it is encountered and I would strongly encourage people to complain. We'd like to resolve complaints informally if possible ”

» and go through mediation before a full-blown Service complaint is generated, but it's important people feel confident enough to step forward.

Q. IN THE programme Nkomo mentioned how banter had crossed a line – how much of a problem is this?

Lt Gen Urch: There can be a really fine line between fun and discriminatory remarks. When I was a brigade commander I had a really messy complaint to deal with as the offender just couldn't work out why what he'd said was wrong. I had to explain to him that it's not about what he thinks, it's about what the person he was talking to feels about the comment. That case went to a full blown Service complaint and he was disciplined for his comments. We will discharge people from the Army for such behaviour or send them for court martial if they are breaking the law.

Sgt Hawkins: I think junior officers and senior NCOs need to speak up

for personnel suffering racially motivated incidents or slurs, and not turn a blind eye. I've seen an incident first-hand where a junior officer did step in after a young soldier was racially abused for his accent and the trouble was swiftly stopped in its tracks.

Q. WHAT happens when the officer doesn't step in or maybe is behind the abuse? Where does the soldier turn to?

Sgt Hawkins: Speak to someone, there is enough signposting out there. We have the BAME Network and every single unit is encouraged to post signs to helplines or support networks. There is no reason not to

feel confident enough to speak with someone anymore. Within my unit we actively encourage people to do exactly that.

Q. WHY don't the AFCAS figures back that up? There are a lot of soldiers being bullied or harassed who aren't making complaints.

Col Harris: While the heart of your question is valid, the essential fact remains that we do want people to speak out. We know we need to continue to work hard to give them the confidence to do so, because not enough are coming forward. The confidential helpline, for example, is something I'd strongly encourage personnel to use.

Sgt Hawkins: I think it's incredibly hard to totally remove the worry about what people will think of you if you complain, but alleviating those concerns is the thing we need to work on.

Q. SO WHERE does the Army go next?

Lt Gen Urch: It's a challenge for everyone but nobody

I know, from sub-unit command level upwards, would brush incidences of racial discrimination under the carpet. I can assure everyone in the British Army that if we know about racist incidents we will get after them.

Col Harris: I want people to recognise and be encouraged by the effect recent events have had on the ethnic majority too. I've received emails and WhatsApp messages from those who are not identified as BAME but want to deal with the scourge of racism once and for all. This is a matter for all of us and we need to see the whole Army going after racism, not just the diversity and inclusion advisers or chain of command. Turning the dial to where ambivalence towards racism is not acceptable is key. Service personnel can't sit and wait for racism to punch them in the face, they need to engage and to pick up their weapons – which are their values and standards, their decency, and the rank they are privileged enough to hold – and then do something about it. ■





Learning credits are 'pitiful'

DON'T think the standard learning credit (SLC) scheme offers enough value to purchase any useful courses. Just £175 per year is embarrassing.

It's such a pitiful sum that if I want to do the European Computer Driving Licence I need to wait another 12 months before I can take my next one, which is not acceptable.

Enhanced learning credits (ELC) provide more funding, but there are lots of restrictions and not much information on what you can do and where.

Not all providers have courses that can be funded by ELC and the scheme is really meant for higher level learning.

I believe more than 70 per cent in the Army haven't even got GCSEs in three main subjects, so how can any of them apply for a higher level course? – **Name and address supplied**

Lt Col Stuart Allen, Learning and Development Policy, Personnel Directorate, replies: While it is true that the SLC amount has not kept pace with inflation, recent changes have significantly increased the flexibility around their use.

This means access to a greater variety of online courses and language learning. SLCs can also be used for multiple small-scale courses in a single year.

Furthermore, the last decade has seen a significant increase in the educational support to personnel.

This includes the largest apprenticeship programme in the

UK, free access to English and maths qualifications, access to funded leadership and management qualifications through the Service's accreditation offer, and an expanding higher education offer through degree apprenticeships, academic external placements and the Army higher education pathway.

Nearly 6,000 personnel used the ELC scheme last year, receiving an average of £1,700 each.

Combined with SLC numbers, almost 12,000 claims for personal development funding were made.

In terms of choice, I would encourage you to visit the Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Services website.

This allows you to search hundreds of options including almost all major universities and an array of colleges and vocational training providers.

There are literally thousands of academic, vocational and professional courses to choose from, ranging from level three to level seven, featuring awards, certificates, diplomas, foundation degrees, honours degrees and masters.

If you are currently operating at GCSE level two then seek advice from your Army education centre on what level three opportunities are available to you.

These do not need to be academic and could be focused on boosting your practical or digital skills.

I'll have to wait another year

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

✉ mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk
 🐦 [@soldiermagazine](https://twitter.com/soldiermagazine)



CAREERS

Army Communications, the specialist unit based at Army Headquarters at Andover, is recruiting two Reserve SO1s and three Reserve SO2s. The new incumbents will be Reservists or recent ex-Regular officers with specialisms in media, comms, marketing, PR or journalism. The roles encompass an exciting, broad portfolio opportunity, with potential to support or lead projects across any of the Army Comms branches, eg campaigns, news, media ops, internal comms, digital comms and events. Look out for the job specs on the **MS web** early this month.

Linx Security Training is offering a 20 per cent reduction on 28 courses for serving and former personnel through the MoD-approved Defence Discount Service. The courses on offer range from technical skills to management with industry-approved qualifications. Visit www.linxtraining.co.uk



COMPETITIONS

1917 DVD and gift box: Mr Paul Sutton, Crawley, West Sussex; name withheld, 30th Signal Regiment, Nuneaton.



SEARCHLINE

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

Jacqui Ritchie, general manager at St John's Wood Care Centre, 48 Boundary Road, London is trying to find more information about the building's former life as an Army barracks. The centre celebrates its 20th anniversary in October and is keen to invite veterans to the celebration. Anyone with memories to share should email stjohnswoodmanager@bondcare.co.uk

Retired Royal Air Force Serviceman Andrew Clark is a collector of British Military Tokens used in Iraq and Afghanistan and is seeking examples of pre-2007 issues to boost his collection. If you have any items of interest email amcpapermoneyman@aol.com

The Air Training Corps, now part of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets, will celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2021. To help mark the occasion, they would like to identify those who were cadets when the formation launched in 1941 and interview them to capture memories of those early days. Email al.munns@btinternet.com

The Women's Royal Army Corps Association has launched a campaign to find the oldest British female Second World War veteran. To nominate someone you think may meet the criteria visit www.wrassoc.org or use #FindOurOATS on social media.



DIRECTORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Army Libraries:
01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

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

Care After Combat:
www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:
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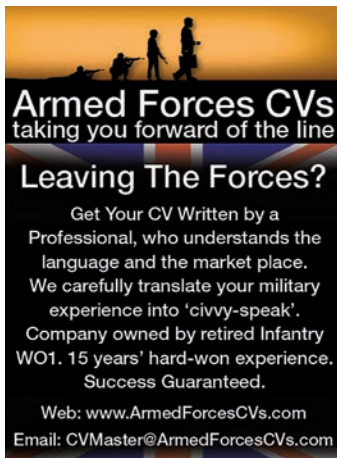


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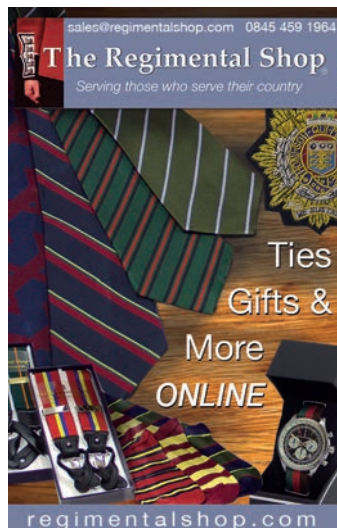


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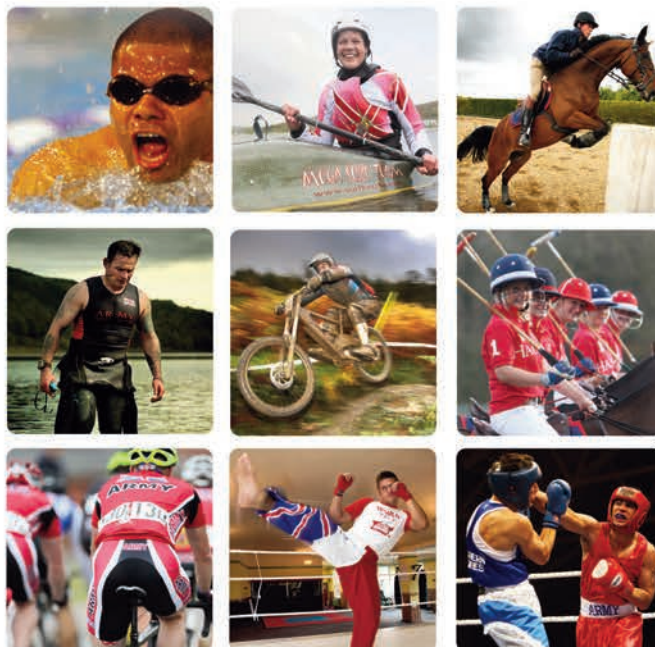
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REVIEWS

MUSIC

MTV Unplugged

Former Oasis frontman spectacularly delivers in tranquil surroundings

› WHEN Noel Gallagher, albeit jokingly, described the city of Hull as a “s*****e” while on stage in the US, the obvious venue for sibling rival Liam’s *MTV Unplugged* performance swiftly emerged.

Recorded late last year, the gig featured a string of tracks from the singer’s impressive solo career to date that were weaved with classics from a triumphant Oasis back catalogue and, such was its success, an album version of the show has now emerged.

The venture represented unfinished business for Gallagher, who missed his former band’s own *Unplugged* set way back in 1996 with a “sore throat”.

Fortunately, there were no such vocal issues this time round. Some may question whether his famed raw, gravelly style suits the stripped-back approach of this format, but such inklings are swiftly dispelled on triumphant opener *Wall of Glass*.

In fact, by the record’s conclusion, it is hard to think that these seemingly polar opposites are anything but a perfect match.

This is achieved through a skilful reworking of the songs as the trademark dialled-up, rock ‘n’ roll sound is replaced by the strings of the 24-piece Urban Soul Orchestra, while the gospel-like support offered by a trio of backing singers adds a further calming influence to matters.



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BOOKS

With two number one albums already to his name, this offering looks set to complete an impressive hat-trick for a performer who was initially reluctant to refer to himself as a solo artist.

Here, his material more than holds its own among the **Oasis** anthems that defined a generation, with his personal favourite *Once* proving to be the undoubted highlight.

Gallagher also provides an emotional moment on *Now That I've Found You*, a track written for and dedicated to his daughter Molly.

But, for many, the real excitement will stem from the proud Mancunian's forays into the past.

The pleasing aspect to this comes from the fact he has resisted the urge to go with the obvious. There's no *Wonderwall* or *Live Forever* – an acoustic version of which proved particularly poignant in the wake of the Manchester Arena bombing.

Instead, we're treated to the likes of *Sad Song*, in which he gives his first ever live performance of a B-side that was once the mainstay of brother Noel's repertoire, and *Stand By Me*, an often overlooked classic from the band's unfairly maligned third album.

However, Gallagher returns to type at the end as *Champagne Supernova* – so often the closing number on an **Oasis** set list – is delivered with a simple combination of piano and strings to form a fitting finale.

Hull may not have been the envy of one Gallagher, but it proves the perfect backdrop for the other as he continues to excel on his own. ■



VERDICT:

Stripped back, but not lacking punch
★★★★★

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, *SOLDIER*



PICK OF THE MONTH:

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE

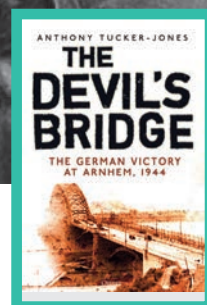
Historian presents a fresh take on Market Garden

► RIVERS of ink have been expended on the Allied defeat at Arnhem, however, rarely has the story of the German victory been told.

Thirty years since the last major work on the topic, a new analysis of Operation Market Garden, by author and historian Anthony Tucker-Jones, is offering up a less familiar version of events.

The Devil's Bridge reveals how the beleaguered and startled Nazi forces managed to fend off the largest airborne invasion in history, thwart the Allies in crossing the Rhine and dash hopes of a swift end to the war.

The action begins as Field Marshal Walther Model, commander of Army Group B, sits down to lunch with his staff at their headquarters in Oosterbeek on Sunday, September 17, 1944 – only to find legions of British paratroopers descending



● *The Devil's Bridge*, by Anthony Tucker-Jones is published by Osprey and priced £20

from the skies overhead.

"It's what he and others did next that interested me," Tucker-Jones told *Soldier*.

"By that stage the German Army was in a terrible state of disarray following its heavy defeat in Normandy.

"Over the years people have pored over the mistakes the Allies made and argued that Market Garden failed because it was poorly planned – which is true – but that belittles the German combat effort.

"I wanted to explain what it was they did to win, rather than what the Allies did to lose."

Describing how the Germans quickly punished the British and American top



Picture: Mick Kavanagh

BOOKS

brass for having underestimated them, the former defence intelligence officer continued: "If there was one thing they were good at it was getting themselves out of a jam and Montgomery should have known that, having fought them in Africa and Normandy.

"They also had this ethos that it didn't matter what your trade was, first and foremost you were an infantryman – they could cobble together makeshift battlegroups very quickly and put them into combat.

"So, at Arnhem they rounded up all sorts of weird and wonderful units to oppose the airborne landings and subsequent advance on the ground.

"In addition, they managed to isolate the British troops that had captured the bridge from the rest of their division at Oosterbeek.

"Another thing they did particularly well was to slow down XXX Corps' progress on highway 69 – the main route through the Dutch towns up to the bridges – by counter-attacking from both sides."

Throughout the book, vignettes bring the key protagonists in the German defence to life – from senior personalities like Model, his chief of staff, Lt Gen Hans Krebs, and commander of the 2nd SS Panzer Corps, Lt Gen Willi Bittrich, to those lower down the chain of command but no less fanatical in their determination to repel the invaders.

Tucker-Jones also sheds light on how – contrary to popular belief – the Nazis had been able to build a surprisingly detailed intelligence picture prior to the attack.

"Looking at it dispassionately, in terms of pure soldiering, you can't fault their performance," he added.

"It sounds politically incorrect to say it, but they almost deserved to win because they did their utmost to stop the Allies."

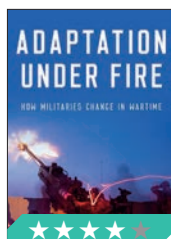
Following Market Garden, the fighting shifted south to the Ardennes, where that winter the Germans launched what proved to be their last major counter-offensive – the so-called Battle of the Bulge.

Arnhem would not be liberated until the last days of the war and its citizens continued to suffer at the hands of the Nazi occupiers.

The story of the ill-fated but courageous Allied defeat will continue to fascinate military history buffs, but anyone wanting to understand this chapter in the war from the "other side of the hill" will find *The Devil's Bridge* equally as compelling. ■

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*

BOOK RELEASES

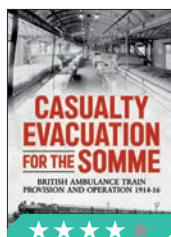


Adaptation Under Fire

by David Barno and Nora Bensahel

THIS is a valuable guide on the need to adapt in war. It's written about the US Army – though applies perfectly well to us – stressing the difficulty in predicting future warfare, especially for expeditionary forces. It explains how important doctrine is, so we know how to operate, coupled with the need to understand the operational environment and then adapt to it faster than our enemies. This is a good book that makes some intelligent insights into recent conflicts, notably the American performance in Iraq and Afghanistan, and how we might adapt to win future ones.

Maj Giles Cooper, RLC



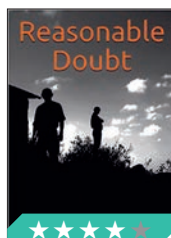
Casualty Evacuation for the Somme

by Jeremy Higgins

WRITTEN by a lifetime railwayman and Reservist, this is a well-informed and meticulously researched account of the British Army's use of ambulance trains. The level of data

and technical detail on what was previously considered an under-researched subject is unlikely to be surpassed. Casualty evacuation on the Western Front took place on an unprecedented scale and there are many lessons to be learnt from the Somme campaign. This book is absolutely packed with those lessons – certainly worth a read if your interests are medical or logistical in nature.

Mike Peters, ex-AAC



Reasonable Doubt

by Craig Lawrence

A GOOD old-fashioned thriller, this title is fast-paced and action-packed from the start. It involves a former Gurkha officer, Harry Parker, tracking down a terrorist called Malik who has been arranging

attacks in the UK and France as part of an attempt to stage a coup in Nigeria. Our hero trails his quarry to Malta, then Afghanistan – picking up a beautiful investigative journalist and some former Army colleagues along the way. All in all, this is a good, easy-to-read book which is well worth getting hold of.

Andy Kay, ex-RS

MOVIES

PICK OF THE MONTH:

DARK WATERS

A terrifying tale of corporate cover-up

► FROM the opening scene of this gripping drama, it's clear that a decades-long case of industrial contamination is set to be laid bare.

But this knowledge does not detract from the continual frustrations experienced by corporate defence lawyer Robert Bilott (**Mark Ruffalo**) in his David-versus-Goliath struggles against US behemoth, DuPont.

Based on a 2016 *New York Times* article – "*The Lawyer who became DuPont's worst nightmare*" – the film reveals how Bilott refused to walk on by despite the personal and professional cost.

Linked by family to an obscure West Virginian town, he is approached by a local farmer convinced that the unexplained deaths of hundreds of his livestock are connected to the nearby factory.

Once the surface is scratched, the conglomerate's defensive tactics manifest themselves viciously.

Requests for disclosure result in Bilott being provided with decades of corporate files in hard copy, but as with all enormous tasks, he proves that persistence and tenacity are key and gradually pieces together the story.

Unregulated chemicals, originally intended for military use, had been found to have innovative civilian applications, but the disastrous impacts on the local water courses, livestock and, ultimately, humans were ignored.

Naturally, DuPont – whose slogan was, ironically, "Better living through chemistry" – is



big enough to bury this bad news, so cancers, birth defects and countless other diseases ensue.

As the firm is confronted with its misdeeds and unemployment threatens the community, Bilott comes up against local hostility, his home life falters and his health is compromised.

However, around 70,000 of the town's inhabitants agree to blood tests, kick-starting the largest study of its kind in human history.

Vindication – or so it seems. But in a classic assumption that the small guy always loses, DuPont defends its reputation – and market value – with callous disregard for the law and residents.

Throughout the legal battle, employees and local citizens continue to die or suffer debilitating illness.

The film is a stark portrayal of the helplessness of the downtrodden in the face of the corporate machine, told with menacing atmospherics and enough tension to give you paper cuts.

Ruffalo, who also co-produced the project, is ably supported by a high-calibre cast, including **Anne Hathaway** (*Interstellar*, *Les Misérables*), **Tim Robbins** (*War of the Worlds*, *The Shawshank*

Redemption) and **Bill Pullman** (*Independence Day*, *The Sinner*).

Their combined efforts make for compelling viewing, all the more so because the story is true.

We learn that during the 12-year scope of the movie, the “forever chemicals” that leached into the town and others like it across the globe are found in 99 per cent of animals, including humans – a sobering and depressing thought that stays with you long after the credits have rolled. ■

VERDICT:

A hideously true story to keep you up at night

★★★★★

REVIEW: MAJ NEIL JOHNSON, AAC

DVD/DIGITAL



The Personal History of David Copperfield

Out now

DIRECTED by Armando Iannucci, this is a modern reinvention of

the classic Charles Dickens novel starring **Dev Patel** in the titular role. While on a journey through the memories of his life and experiences he is joined by a truly remarkable cast, including **Ben Whishaw** as Uriah Heep, **Peter Capaldi** as Wilkins Micawber and **Hugh Laurie** as Mr Dick. If you're a fan of *The Thick Of It*, *Avenue 5*, *The Death Of Stalin* or any of Iannucci's other works you will enjoy this. It is two hours of genuine laugh-out-loud comedy, with so much happening on screen you could undoubtedly watch it several times and not stop chuckling. This is a must-watch movie – definitely one for a lockdown date night.

Sgt Adam Jackson, Para



Death of a Vlogger

Out on July 6

IMAGINE *The Blair Witch Project* for millennials and you've hit the nail on the head with

this film. It follows Graham, whose online channel isn't getting the hits he wants until a freak paranormal experience is captured on film. Before you know it he has hired an internet ghost hunter to solve all his problems. Delivered in a documentary style with interviews with Graham's nearest and dearest, you are quickly lured into the spooky trap. With genuinely jump-out-of-your-seat scary moments, albeit with some quite comedic undertones, this is certainly a movie you want to keep in your back pocket for quiet nights at home. Well worth a watch if you're a fan of the genre.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

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GAMES



PICK OF THE MONTH:

FURY UNLEASHED

Comic book caper provides retro escape

▶ **LIGHTNING** fast reactions are a prerequisite to survive the relentless pace of this stylish action-platformer – which is certainly not an experience for the faint hearted.

Sharing DNA with retro classics such as *Metal Slug* and *Contra*, *Fury Unleashed* (out now on PC) requires players to rapidly move, accurately shoot and relentlessly upgrade to stay ahead of game. Put simply, those unable to meet these requirements will be punished in short order.

A living comic book, in which you must progressively slog your way through level after level, forms the backdrop to all of this mayhem. The action is presented against graphic novel-like panels, which are distinctly styled and coloured.

It might look impressive, but the ride is rough and even seasoned arcade gamers can expect to have their skills tested by an array of enemies armed to the teeth.

Mastering the controls is a must to stay safe. After starting off with movement and attack tutorials, *Fury Unleashed* quickly lives up to its name. Players are faced with increasingly difficult scenarios in an immediate shakedown of everything they have learned.

Enemies appear from all directions with an assortment of bladed weapons, firearms and explosives – usually all at once – and this is where the upgrades come in handy.

These ultimately provide the more powerful attacks and weapons that are key to survival. But bonuses also require a steady stream of vanquished foes to maintain the likes of a shield or weapon boost.

However, brute force is the most critical asset – stand off to the side on a ledge for too long while planning an assault will quickly, and decisively, end in tears.

While not as expansive as some other titles, *Fury Unleashed* is a superb number that demands a sharp and constantly aggressive approach. Live up to these demands and the rewards mount up.

But it does require total focus, as well as sustained concentration, which clearly won't suit everyone – particularly those who are out for a more sedentary gaming experience. ■

VERDICT:

Rough around the edges but plenty to enjoy

★★★★

REVIEW: DAVID MCDUGALL, CIVVY

GAMES RELEASES



Pro Cycling Manager For PC

ANYONE who fancies taking charge of a cycling team and leading it to be the best in the world will find plenty to keep them entertained in this rich

and complex title. Covering every aspect of being the boss, the game has single as well as multiplayer modes and will reward persevering players as they climb the global rankings. While the interface is daunting for newcomers, it is rapidly mastered, care of some detailed tutorials. All in all, this is pretty much the perfect offering for enthusiasts of the sport.

Cpl Cameron Whatmore, RLC



Tour de France 2020 for Xbox One and PS4

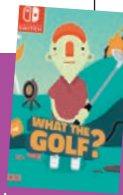
WHILE I am not usually a fan of cycling games, *Tour de France 2020* caught my attention during lockdown because I could virtually join others and take in

some scenery. Visually, this version of the famous race does a commendable job, although it's not perfect as most of the riders look like identical twins. With the title aimed at fans, there is also some specialist bike terminology to navigate. But a tutorial helps you take to the road amid attired enthusiasts while picking a team to start racing. Definitely worth a look.

David McDougall, civvy

WIN >>

What the Golf? for Switch



● IT MIGHT be billed as a game for people who can't stand the thought of an 18-hole round – but this bizarre 3D puzzle offering is one of the most addictive titles *Soldier* has recently played. Using aids such as cats, dogs, vehicles and people scattered around courses, players face the simple aim of driving an object towards the flag. It is occasionally a golf ball – but it can equally be a car, stick of dynamite or household item. Variable gravity and other forces add to the mayhem in a game that, while underpinned by a bizarre sense of humour, is actually immensely playable. While it's the best £20 you could spend at the Nintendo store, we have a copy to give away. To stand a chance of winning tell us in which country golf originated. Send your answer to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by July 31. Usual rules apply.

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SOLDIER SPORT

LOOKING AHEAD >>

ELITE athlete Capt Katrina Matthews (RAMC) has maintained a positive focus during lockdown, posting regular 30-hour training weeks from home. Read about her preparations for a potential autumn return, as well as her long-term goals in the sport of triathlon, on pages 70-71...





MATTHEWS MAKES THE MOST OF HOME TRAINING

TRIATHLON star Capt Katrina Matthews (RAMC) believes her ability to maintain a “flexible outlook” has helped her deal with the lack of elite-level competition during the coronavirus crisis.

The endurance athlete was due to fly out to Spain for her first race of the season on the day the UK’s airports closed as the Covid-19 outbreak worsened and, instead, has been training at home in a bid to stay in peak condition for when the international schedule resumes.

Matthews enjoyed a stunning debut campaign in the sport’s upper echelons – the highlight of which saw her crowned European half ironman champion – and was hoping to build on her progress in 2020.

“I was planning for a long season with a key race in June at the Ironman Ireland, and then peaking for September/October,” the athlete told *SoldierSport*.

“With endurance sports like triathlon you are always thinking about the long term because it takes time for your body to adapt to the aerobic training.

“Something like six to eight months would be normal, and even then you’re looking ahead to what the plan is for the next one or two years.

“So, luckily, I have these long-term goals still in my head but having no performance outlet with racing on hold definitely adds a layer of challenge to the short-term motivation.”

Matthews – who was shortlisted in the rising star category at last year’s Army Sports Awards – was able to post 20- to 30-hour training weeks in the early months of the lockdown and found herself working equally hard on the mental side of the sport, viewing each session as a building block towards the bigger picture.

“I absolutely love the majority



**“I DON’T
WANT
TO
THINK I
SHOULD
HAVE
DONE
MORE”**

of the training and I have had the opportunity, with time, to really develop myself as an endurance athlete,” she added.

“Holding those training weeks has led to a massive improvement in terms of my physical resilience.

“I think this is down to actually having more control over my structure without worrying about the impact of travel and other commitments.”

A turbo trainer in the garage ensured the officer was able to clock up the necessary miles on the bike, while her gym programme was tailored to exercises that could be achieved at home.

The lack of swimming pool access initially proved frustrating, but some inventive modifications involving hand paddles, shoelaces and resistance bands allowed her to work on her stroke technique outside the water.

And with considerable training

hours in the bank she is targeting a return to action in the autumn.

"Optimistically, I would hope there will be some long-distance triathlons I can race in as my focus is now firmly on the World Championship in 2021," Matthews, part of the victorious Army women's team at this season's Inter-Services Cross Country Championships (pictured left), explained.

"If there isn't an opportunity in triathlon, I will look at the British 100-mile time-trial cycling championships, where I will hope to podium.

"I am confident that when racing returns, I will be on the start line happy that I committed myself admirably over this difficult period.

"I want to be proud of this commitment and not look back and think maybe I should have done more.

"Perhaps racing will not be until 2021 – if so, I think having a flexible outlook and being adaptable to the ongoing health situation is vital.

"It has been frustrating, but I have not let that feeling settle.

"It is about maintaining the positivity and understanding that everyone is going through the same thing.

"In fact, I've been quite fortunate with the support I have received from the Army – they have let me crack on and develop into the best athlete I can be." ■



MATTHEWS IN NUMBERS

THE PLACE
ACHIEVED
IN LAST
YEAR'S HALF
IRONMAN
WORLD
CHAMPS

16

PODIUM
FINISHES
FROM HER
FIRST THREE
RACES AT
ELITE LEVEL

3

WINNING
MARGIN, IN
MINUTES,
AS SHE
TOPPED THE
STANDINGS
AT THE
EUROPEAN
HALF
IRONMAN

6

YEARS
COMPETING
IN
TRIATHLON
- DURING
WHICH SHE
HAS MOVED
FROM
LOCAL
QUALIFIERS
TO THE
WORLD
STAGE

5



VIRTUAL SERIES GOES VIRAL

THE Army Athletics Association has celebrated a successful venture into the online world with the Inter-Corps and Inter-Services virtual five-kilometre race series.

Personnel had a month to clock their best times via the Open Track platform, where organisers were able to determine the winners in a variety of individual and team categories from a field of more than 1,000 entries.

A time of 17min 52sec saw Capt Faith Taylor (RAMC) claim the senior women's title – finishing nine seconds clear of Capt Becky Hannah (AAC) in second place.

In the men's ranks, LCpl Dean Williamson (REME) was the athlete to beat as he clocked a time of 15min 3sec to top the standings ahead of SSgt Rob Davies (RAPTC).

Taylor's efforts helped the Army Medical Services to the women's team prize, a pattern that was repeated in the men's

equivalent, where Henderson led the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers to glory.

Elsewhere, there were wins for Air Tpr Joe Dolman (AAC) and Pte Rhiannon Kirk (AMS) in the men's and women's under-23 competitions.

Taylor and Hannah also steered the Army women to victory in the Forces showdown, where the men completed a Reds one-two.

Maj (retd) John Killoran, secretary of the Army Athletics Association, told *SoldierSport* he was hoping for in excess of 500 entries, so to see that figure doubled has been a testament to its success.

"We are very happy," he added. "The plan now is to keep this going and run something similar each year."

A two-kilometre inter-unit series was staged in June and was reaching its conclusion as this issue went to press. Contests over 600 and 400 metres are planned for the coming months. ■



ENGLAND COME CALLING FOR REDS DUO

ARMY duo Gnr Abby Eatock (RA) and Sgt Carrie Roberts (REME) have been named in the 29-strong England women's rugby league performance squad for 2020.

Head coach Craig Richards made the announcement to help the group "maintain some normality" during the coronavirus lockdown and Eatock is among seven uncapped players included in the party.

For Roberts (pictured above), the selection marks a return to the set-up for the first time in five years.

With the women's Super League campaign curtailed the players have yet to see competitive action in 2020, meaning they have been working on individual training programmes, as well as online sessions and webinars.

"All you want to do is play for your country, so this is a dream really," Eatock said. "All the hard work is paying off and

to be selected alongside Carrie makes it even better."

Eatock's inclusion comes on the back of some blistering form in 2019 that culminated with her scoring the opening try in Leeds Rhinos' 20-12 win over Castleford Tigers in the Super League Grand Final.

The full-back (pictured right) also crossed for a hat-trick as the Army demolished the York City Knights in the Challenge Shield final, and she was a key member of the victorious Inter-Services team.

Work commitments meant Roberts has been unable to push for a place since her last call-up in 2015, but with circumstances falling in her favour last season she was able to excel on the pitch.

"I wasn't expecting to get back in, although I have worked hard," she explained. "I really did focus and was ecstatic to get the call."

Both players are now looking to make their mark ahead of next year's World Cup. ■



**"THE
HARD
WORK
IS
PAYING
OFF"**

SPORT SHORTS



Boxers get back to work

BOXER Gnr Karriss Artingstall (RA) tested herself in the gym for the first time in three months as the Team GB set-up launched a phased return to training for its Olympic hopefuls.

The camp, conducted under social distancing guidelines, saw 12 athletes take part in a programme that comprised morning runs, strength and conditioning and non-contact sessions featuring bag work and shadow boxing.

"Being able to return to the gym is a big step forward," said performance director Rob McCracken. "It is great for the boxers and coaches to work together and not through a screen."



Cairney makes his move

ARMY goalkeeper LCpl Luke Cairney (RE) has become the highest-level serving footballer by signing with National League South outfit Hungerford Town.

The 28-year-old, the Reds' undisputed number one in recent seasons, has made a step up the non-league ladder after two years at Poole Town and is looking forward to challenging himself at a new club.

"The manager wants to go and get results and that really attracted me," the soldier explained.



COURT STARS RETAIN FITNESS FOCUS

THE Army netball squad has become the latest sporting set-up to turn to the online world as part of efforts to keep players fit and healthy ahead of a return to action.

Team physio Capt Becky Church (RAMC) launched the initiative as this issue went to press, when members were tested in a high-intensity fitness and stretching session, and the programme will continue on a biweekly basis until the new season hopefully gets under way in the autumn.

"This is all about making sure their bodies are conditioned as best as they can be," she told *SoldierSport*. "They are a fit group of girls, but this will ensure they hit the ground running when they get back on court."

"We are hoping that might be in October. It will not be full training, but we'd like to get together, while following social distancing guidelines, and work on some ball skills."

"Up until then, it will be fitness every other week."

The squad secured a hat-trick of Inter-Services titles – winning the senior, development and masters crowns – just weeks before lockdown measures were announced and Church said the players had little time to celebrate as they were quickly re-rolled.

"The tournament was played as the coronavirus really started to hit the news," she said. "We didn't know what to expect."

"The girls absolutely smashed it, which was a great achievement as we had players away on deployments, while others were out injured, in the build-up – it was all a bit disjointed."

"But from there they went straight into the Covid response. We had people working in the logistics supply chain and had nurses and doctors who were thrown back to work."

"We still have elements involved now, with personnel at the Frimley Park and Birmingham hospitals, while physios have been helping patients with their coronavirus recovery at Stanford Hall." ■



**"THEY
ARE
A FIT
GROUP
OF
GIRLS"**



PLANS TAKE SHAPE

THE Army Sport Control Board has made an estimate of the activities that could potentially resume first as the coronavirus restrictions continue to ease.

As this issue went to press the organisation was due to pass its recommendations to Army Headquarters, where an endorsement or rejection of the plans will be made.

Sporting events at all levels were initially suspended until June 30 at the earliest and, while a return to action is not imminent, it is hoped a decision on the proposals will be made in the coming weeks.

"While we take advice from national governing bodies and adhere to current direction on social distancing, it has always been an Army decision on when Service sport will resume," said the board's Chief of Staff, Lt Col (retd) Paul Leighton.

"It will be based on what the Army's capacity and appetite is to authorise the recommencement of representative sport."

Overseas sports visits remain suspended until September 30 at the earliest and a decision on whether this date will be further extended is also expected in the coming weeks.





My mum's a nurse so it has been quite hard with worrying about her. I've been stuck on camp in isolation with just a few others so it's just really good to be back with people and to be training again.

Rfn Robert Sutton, Rifles



I'm loving being able to see my mates again and gain more experience, ready for our future deployments.

Tpr Cameron Matthews, QRH



It's good to see all the guys again. Training is not quite normal, but we are all getting to grips with it, and if we look after ourselves with the social distancing and other restrictions we can carry on.

LCpl Dylan Emblen, Rifles



I've enjoyed being back at work. When it comes to sitting around for long periods of time you can get restless, but it was nice to have the experience of living with my girlfriend during lockdown.

Cpl Sam Houghton, REME



Coming back to work has been great – it gives you a decent structure and sense of purpose. We have a long deployment in Estonia at the end of the year so the return to training has been very important for us.

LCpl Tom Lear, QRH



I've been at home with the family, which was good for a short time, but I've missed the ranges and socialising.

Rfn Tobi Esan, Rifles

Return of The Rifles

We asked troops from the 5 Rifles Battlegroup what has been the best thing about returning to life on exercise

It's been so boring in quarantine, knowing that you could be out doing better things. It's a relief to be back in work and I'm happy to be doing stuff again.

Rfn Harry Austin, Rifles



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