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ARMY

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“

On this occasion we focused on the armour and the armoured infantry

”

Leading the charge – p36



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Cracking on



IN a recent message to troops (page 7), Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Patrick Sanders, commended their “determination to get the job done” amid big Service shake-ups.

It’s an attribute that seems common to all soldiers this magazine speaks with, and something that’s borne out in this month’s cover story as well.

It reveals how a bit of creative thinking – and a lot hard work – has started to win back oodles of training time for increasingly stretched armoured units (page 36).

It’s not often you see senior officers talking positively about “revolution”, but if ever there was a time to embrace overhauls – ones that also can make life pretty inconvenient in the short-term – it is now.

As Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Paul Carney, attests to in his latest column (page 15), empowering junior ranks is a big part of this effort.

And that is where we on *Soldier* hope to play our small part too.

If you have anything to share about how your unit is doing things differently – whether that be a gripe about the stuff not working (page 51) or a story about a big win – please get in touch.

Perhaps your team could front next month’s magazine. Let us know how you’re cracking on.

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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Sent to Army sites at the start of the month.

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Picture: Graeme Main

'I recognise you have felt the strain'

Chief's message to troops as Army modernisation pushes on

THE head of the Service has thanked his soldiers for their "cheerfulness in adversity" as the Army evolves to become the most lethal in Europe.

Speaking in an online message last month, Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Patrick Sanders, said that personnel had experienced a very busy year so far, not least because of Op Interflex and changes under Future Soldier – what he described as "the largest and most ambitious programme of modernisation since I began my time in uniform in the 1980s".

But he said the Service had a clear vision and plan that was already becoming a reality.

"I do recognise that you will have felt the strain as the Army adapts and renews itself for the challenges ahead," the top officer continued.

"Our success hinges on your continued hard work and commitment. I commend your efforts. Keep at it."

Reflecting on support to Op Interflex and the 20,000 fighters trained by the Armed Forces to date, he continued: "A generation of Ukrainians has left our shores with a powerful emotional bond to the United Kingdom; one that was forged during their time in training here through the dedication of their instructors."

He said this was an effort the

"whole force and whole nation" must be proud of.

On recruitment, Gen Sanders encouraged soldiers to take advantage of the recently announced £500 cash bounty (*Soldier*, August) to support new starters through the joining process.

He added: "Thank you for your commitment, sacrifice and endurance over the last few months. Thank you for your cheerfulness in adversity and determination to get the job done.

"And thank you to your families for their unwavering support. Our Army's achievements in 2023 so far belong to you and you alone." ■



“
Our success
hinges
on your
continued
hard work
”

MODERNISATION IN NUMBERS

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GLOBAL SITREP



1. USA

NORTHERN STARS

PERSONNEL from 4th Battalion, The Royal Yorkshire Regiment made their presence felt during a huge military readiness exercise in Michigan.

The UK contingent joined forces with around 7,000 personnel from the New York National Guard and US Marine Corps Reserve plus counterparts from Nato ally Latvia during Exercise Northern Strike.

Staged at the Camp Grayling range complex – 200 miles north

of Detroit – the training incorporated many aspects from the modern 3D battlefield, including American Apache attack helicopters and reconnaissance drones.

4 R Yorks are part of 19th Light Brigade whose commander, Brig Owen Lytle, said: "We are setting the standard. Going forward we will be the second echelon, and these exercises are important for building experience and skills."



2. BELIZE

SCUBA SKILLS BOOSTED

RESERVIST sappers mounted a diving exped to the second largest barrier reef in the world.

Based out of Belize's St George's Caye, the two-week Exercise Dragon Blackcat saw mixed ranks from 101 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search) and 75 Engineer Regiment working towards a variety of basic to advanced qualifications.

Capt John Andrews praised the 16 troops' enthusiasm and said: "The aim was to inspire interest in marine conservation, develop leadership at all levels, build resilience and undergo conditioning to stress by working in a unique environment."

VETS STEP BACK IN TIME

THREE Black Watch veterans made a pilgrimage to their former jungle stomping ground, 44 years after their posting to Belize.

Peter Pendlebury, Danny Donovan and Graham Angus spent two weeks visiting various locations across the country, including British Army Training Support Unit Belize – where, together with station staff, they paused to remember troops who lost their lives while serving there.

Among them was 18-year-old Pte Ian Tasker, who died during the battalion's 1979 deployment to patrol the disputed border with neighbouring Guatemala.



3. FALKLAND ISLANDS

PARAS' FINAL FLING

EXERCISE Cape Bayonet formed a memorable conclusion to a three-month stint on the British overseas territory for soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment.

Deployed as the Roulement Infantry Company, the infantrymen played a significant role during the major tri-Service manoeuvres.

Working with the Falkland Islands Defence Force plus air and naval assets, the personnel mounted a mock assault against targets taken by attackers.

Boss of B Company, Maj Iain Thompson said the opportunity to test skills in a demanding environment had been invaluable.

"Exposing our soldiers to working with other host nation forces has been of mutual benefit," he added.



Picture: British Forces South Atlantic Islands

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

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4. POLAND

AERIAL EMPHASIS

CLOSE air-support skills were the focus as Nato personnel stationed across Poland, Latvia and Estonia pooled their resources on Exercise Furious Wolf.

The combined arms package was led by 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, with a further 13 nations taking part.

The onus was on joint terminal attack controllers overcoming differences in language and procedures to direct allied air assets, including F-16s and Eurofighters.

Meanwhile, British paras pooled their knowledge with Nato colleagues during a multinational package known as "Jump Week".

Staged near Krakow, the drills gave troops from 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment the chance to learn about the techniques and equipment of allies Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland.

Between them they also completed 400 jumps from the C-295 transport plane and the W-3 Sokol helicopter.



5. KENYA

'COMFORT IN CHAOS'

TROOPS from the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment Battlegroup honed their skills over a gruelling six weeks in East Africa.

Following hot on the heels of their deployment to Sudan to help evacuate British civilians, Exercise Haraka Storm saw infantry, engineers, medics and logisticians sharpen their individual capabilities before coming together for collective drills.

For the paratroopers, the package culminated in a 16-mile overnight march to assault a mock enemy position on top of a rocky outcrop.

Reflecting on the switch between humanitarian assistance and combat training, the formation's boss, Lt Col Will Hunt said: "In both situations, what really stood out to me was every soldier's willingness to work tirelessly to do what needed to be done and to be comfortable in chaos, which is what our role demands."

Elsewhere on the exercise, a 15-strong team from the Irish Guards delivered a programme focusing on counter-insurgency and stability operations for host nation personnel from C Company, Kenya Rifles.



Picture: Cpl Aaron Stone, RLC

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Pictures: Cpl Aaron Stone, RLC

Community minded in Kenya

British Army medics broaden their skill set in remote regions

AIRBORNE medics have been testing both their healthcare and green skills in some of the most isolated regions of East Africa.

A total of 35 members of 16 Medical Regiment's 19 Squadron teamed up with the Kenyan Defence Force (KDF), the Kenyan Red Cross and Beyond Zero, a government-funded health outreach organisation, on a 700-mile journey to provide treatment in remote villages.

And they dealt with 7,668 people overall, averaging more than 600 patients per day.

"The pace was high, as were the temperatures," Maj Iain MacArthur (RAMC), OC of 19 Squadron, told *Soldier*. "The heat was a major challenge for us in terms of keeping our staff and patients comfortable.

"We put up camouflage netting over the waiting areas to keep people in the shade, and made sure lots of water was handed out to everyone."

The troops worked closely with the KDF to determine the best course of treatments that could be provided.

"It was a proper eye-opener for many of the younger soldiers," added the officer (pictured right).

"They experienced dealing with afflictions you don't normally see in UK hospitals – mothers who had



prolapsed weeks previously, children with malnutrition and others with broken bones that hadn't been set and were healing incorrectly."

The mission, named Exercise Haraka Serpent, also gave personnel an opportunity to develop their military TPPs.

"We had to drive in convoys over rough country and set up camps in the Kenyan countryside," continued Maj MacArthur.

"My junior officers also travelled ahead and surveyed the site of the next day's camp, producing a sketch map and a route plan, which they'd brief to us every evening.

"There were a lot of really good junior leader development opportunities to be exploited and it's helped prepare us for going onto very high readiness mode as 16 Air Assault Brigade's air manoeuvre medical group later this year." ■

“
It was a proper eye-opener for many of the younger soldiers
”



PRIME-TIME PADRE

AN ARMY padre has featured on the BBC's flagship religious show. Rev Amy Walters (RAHCD), 38, appeared on *Songs of Praise* last month, when she spoke about working with 13 Air Assault Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps and her role helping all personnel, regardless of belief.

LINKING UP



A REGIMENT is taking a modern approach to keeping its past and present personnel in touch.

The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers has set up an app called *Fusiliers Connect*, which facilitates in-person meet-ups across its community – so far numbered at 1,600 including Regulars, Reservists, veterans, cadets and families.

The tool features a messaging and chat function, mental health resources and event listings.

Regimental adjutant Capt Nathan Morley said the idea was to use technology to spearhead more face-to-face time with one another.

"Being a family regiment is a cornerstone of our ethos and this is one step to maintaining that," he explained. "This is increasing social interaction and making it easier to connect with peers."

"Events such as regimental days, local coffee mornings and walk-and-talks get pushed out as pop-up messages and there are sub-groups you can join depending on your interests."

For more details on the social enterprise that helped to produce the app visit militaryapp.org

Picture: WO1 Rupert Freire, RLC



IT WAS a memorable day for Welsh troops – including goat major Sgt Mark Jackson and The Royal Welsh mascot LCpl Shenkin IV – when their commander-in-chief paid his first visit to the headquarters of the Army in Wales at Brecon Barracks.

IN NUMBERS

70



Years since an armistice agreement between North and South brought the **Korean War** to an end. Some 60,000 British troops were involved in the three-year conflict, with around 1,100 UK lives lost. Veterans and dignitaries gathered at the Scottish Korean War Memorial (shown below) at Beecraigs Country Park, West Lothian, to commemorate the fallen. Also known as The Forgotten War, the fighting saw millions of civilians die. Three Scottish regiments were among those to find themselves back on the front line just five years after the Second World War had ended.



“We'll be able to do more in support of a deployed force”



Pictures: Lt Col John Greener, Capt Antony Bull, WO1 Andrew Pettiford (all RAMC); Graeme Main

Medics have a moment

Field hospital title no more as Army medicine moves forward

THE Service's high readiness medical regiment has been officially renamed to reflect a broader capability on operations.

22 Field Hospital – a unit with its roots in the First World War and which has become renowned for its huge tented hospitals providing NHS standard care – now goes by the name of 22 Multi-Role Medical Regiment.

The change is part of the Future Soldier overhaul. It will see its personnel wave goodbye to Keogh Barracks, near Aldershot, next year and relocate to Chester in the North West.

The unit has also doubled in size, with the addition of a new medical squadron from the disbanded 3 Medical Regiment back in February.

CO Lt Col John Greener (RAMC, below) told *Soldier* the changes would ensure medics could be more reactive in future, moving towards carrying out extra pre-hospital emergency work and casualty evacuations.

"This means that 22 Multi-Role Medical Regiment will be able to do far more in support of a deployed force, providing care from point of wounding, via forward surgical facilities, and all the way back to the deployed field hospital," the officer explained.

A reformation ceremony was held at Keogh Barracks last month. It was attended by various senior officers and closely followed by a families' day and attendance



of some unit members at the Nijmegen marches walking event in the Netherlands (shown top and above).

Lt Col Greener said the feeling across the unit over the summer months had been one of motivation and "let's get on with it", with few personnel dwelling on the upheaval.

34 Field Hospital and Reserve field hospitals are also included in the move to multi-role medical regiments, meaning there will be no more units with "field hospital" in their title by the end of this year. ■

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Contact Paul on Defence Connect



Picture: Graeme Main

Could you help train Ukraine?

MORE Reservists are required to help train Ukrainian forces.

Senior officers want to attract additional volunteers for the forthcoming Op Interflex 4 tour, with mobilisation starting in November. And those joining the seven-month, full-time commitment can expect to learn a great deal as they prepare Eastern European counterparts to face the Russian invasion.

Brig Chris Ledsham, Assistant Chief of Staff Reserves, Field Army, said: "We are looking for troops from across a range of cap badges and different disciplines, although NCOs with instructor skills are particularly sought."

Mobilised personnel

should expect a "unique opportunity" to develop themselves on the deployment, he added.

Read July's *Soldier* for a detailed lowdown on the experiences of Reservists on the training mission.

"Even though Interflex is based in the UK, it is still an operational tour with all the demands this entails – and it will be a challenge," the senior officer advised.

"Those mobilised could be sent to any of several locations across the country and will face a demanding pace of work."

Speak to the chain of command or search for "Interflex" on Defence Connect for more information and a list of available roles. ■

Horseback skills



THE Royal Lancers embraced their cavalry roots as they conducted tactical horse-riding training with Polish specialists while deployed on Op Cabrit. The ten-day course in Poland included 15 soldiers from both armies and was led by the host nation's 2nd Lubelska Brigade.



Ground view

Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Paul Carney, talks Service life...

I AM well into my last 12 months in this role now. The Army's busy pace of life has been accelerating one of my top priorities – to empower junior NCOs in barracks as we would on operations, and have them develop their soldiers.

After submitting this article, I'm heading off on a tour of all Op Interflex locations, where teams of junior commanders have been doing just that.

It is a nuanced task, requiring a strong dose of humility and a willingness to learn from others while working as instructors.

I'm impressed with all I have observed so far, but I want to see even more opportunities.

Key to this is ensuring that the

lessons learnt by the chain of command are embedded in how they do business in barracks, continuing to break down barriers for our NCOs to do their jobs.

It is clear we will always work with our allies in future, so I also want to see us take every opportunity to train together and learn from one another.

With that in mind, we are in the process of developing a pilot where overseas students will join the warrant officers' Army leadership and development programme.

In February we will see personnel from ten countries join. This will give everyone involved a golden opportunity to learn from each other and we'll keep an eye on how the new format plays out.



Picture: Graeme Main

Time to put fitness first

ENSURING we maintain a high standard of fitness is crucial – it is a core part of our job and we need to make sure we're ready for any eventuality.

So I was pleased to hear about an initiative on September 20 which will aim to get us all moving on

a single occasion.

It is hoped we can muster around 10,000 Regulars and Reservists, as well as MoD civilians, for collective workouts on National Fitness Day. Visit the Army Health and Wellbeing page on Defence Connect (QR code right) for more.



END OF AN ERA IN ALDERSHOT



A MUCH-RESPECTED military outfitter has admitted "wiping away a few tears" after locking the door on his Aldershot shop for the final time.

Donald Riding (pictured) quit his premises in Queen's Avenue over the summer after more than four decades of serving the Army's spiritual home.

With the lease up, and online sales growing, he decided to shift the enterprise to his sister shop in Bulford along with brother William.

But the departure from Aldershot marked the end of an era for Glover & Riding Tailors.

"Locking up for the last time was emotional," Riding admitted. "I'd been at the premises for 43 years without ever taking a day off sick and I wiped away a few tears."

A son of well-known Edinburgh tailor Charles Riding, Donald initially followed in his father's footsteps with an apprenticeship in the trade before embarking on three years of service in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

But his calling proved too strong and he signed off to work at a shop in Aldershot owned by Harry Glover.

Riding, who is now 67, went on to buy the business when its long-standing owner retired in the 1990s, renaming the venture with the two family names and taking on his second outlet in Wiltshire.

COMBAT CONNECTIVITY

A NEW digital comms system linking troops and battlespace platforms will be installed under a deal between the MoD and BAE systems.

The £89 million, five-year agreement will see the firm lead a consortium to deliver a secure wide area network called Trinity, which will plug commanders into a range of assets, including vehicles, aircraft and drones.

ALL EARS



Picture: Graeme Main

“Locking up for the last time was emotional”

Call on Reservists to speak up about timewasting processes

NDIVIDUALS are being asked to do their bit in the quest to strip away Regular-centric policies from the Army Reserve – ones that are leaving some feeling undervalued.

As reported in July's *Soldier*, Service chiefs have called a halt on training part-time personnel in the same way as Regulars. Instead, they want to create more flexibility so that time can be optimised for more meaningful role-related tasks.

An Army briefing note asked for Reservists to play their part in this effort with their own suggestions for change to admin and policies.

"The approach to identifying

unnecessary or excessive practices must be both top-down and bottom-up," it explained.

Units and individuals are being asked to submit their suggestions via the Defence Ideas portal, which can be accessed on any device via Modnet or Defence Connect.

Volunteers will need to create an account before searching for the term "Reserve equivalence".

For more guidance read **ABN 028/2023**. ■

Something to say? Tell *Talkback* what's on your mind via WhatsApp on **07973 614782** or turn to page 51.

What Reservists are **really** thinking...

24%

were **unhappy** with **support for their family** when last mobilised

56%

are **satisfied** with opportunities for **adventurous training**

91%
enjoy serving



Picture: Peter Davies

MORE than 90 per cent of Reservists feel proud to serve the Army despite pay satisfaction being at the lowest level recorded. That was the finding of the latest **Reserves continuous attitude survey**, with around 2,700 spare-time soldiers participating in the poll. Read Army briefing note **030/2023** for a more detailed breakdown.



Picture Graeme Main

Salute for Signals cyber swot

A GIFTED NCO from the Royal Signals has spoken of his shock after his cyber work was recognised with a national accolade.

Cpl Pa Malik Adams (above) was saluted by the Worshipful Company of Engineers for innovation and assisting colleagues. His achievements include the setting up of a cyber development suite at Stafford-based 16th Signal Regiment to help troops learn about digital threats and opportunities.

Sourcing a raft of kit, he created a virtual space that has been giving troops the opportunity to safely experiment with different cyber situations. And a club he set up in tandem now has 40 members, meeting every week to develop their skills.

Elsewhere, he has led personnel on digital exercises as well as mentoring specialist officers in the Met Police Counter Terrorism Command.

Cpl Adams admitted being shocked at scooping the prestigious Soldier Engineer of the Year Award, but was delighted at the recognition.

"All this is humbling to be honest – I really didn't expect it at all," he said.

"It is also great to see our corps singled out – the Royal Signals are part of wider Army engineering and this is something we must champion."

Cpl Adams – who initially joined up as a gunner in 2008 and completed an Afghanistan tour before making the cap badge switch – added that he was pleased Army top brass had financially supported his studies – particularly his master's degree in cyber security.

The 36-year-old, who has also received two other Royal Signals awards, continued: "The cyber club seems to be flourishing – it is satisfying to see the small contribution I have made proving ever popular."

Lt Col Robin Foster – commanding officer of 16th Signal Regiment – added that he was delighted Cpl Adams had been saluted.

He told *Soldier*: "It is an extraordinary achievement for him to receive this award, which is usually made to more senior NCOs and warrant officers.

"We are really proud of his work, which was judged against the entire British Army." ■

“The award is usually made to more senior NCOs”

SEPTEMBER DIARY DATES

20

Army Multicultural Network Conference. Read ABN 033/023 for details.

28

Army LGBT+ Network Conference. Read ABN 034/023 for details.

Both events are being held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

NEW LEARNING PLATFORM

KNOWLEDGE-HUNGRY troops have been directed to a new online learning tool which has all the intel needed to ramp up their professional development.

MyLearning area, available via Defence Connect, includes details on career courses, resettlement and policies. Soldiers can also tune into live seminars, while finding out where they can talk through development needs in person. It replaces the Learning and Development Portal (Army).

ACTION NOW NEEDED

MILITARY charity Fighting with Pride has called for an immediate hardship fund to support those with urgent needs following the government's apology for the way LGBT+ veterans were historically treated.

Up to 5,000 former personnel are estimated to have been impacted – both mentally and physically – by the so-called "gay ban", which ended in 2000.

The apology came at the same time as a judge-led review into the policy was published. Among its recommendations were substantial financial reparations to those affected.

The charity's Craig Jones said: "We must ensure the government moves quickly, so words translate into action."

"We're on WhatsApp"



Put your gripes to the Army's top brass on **07973 614782**

Kinross branch.

Now the ex-captain's efforts have seen him

presented with a Global Sir James Gildea Award – the highest accolade given by the charity – for a tireless 12 months of fundraising and more than a decade of assisting the military community.

Funds raised: **£16,000**

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING

MARATHON MAGIC



A FORMER Black Watch officer and serial charity volunteer has topped off a busy year by receiving a top award from military good cause SSAFA.

Brian Baxter (fourth from right) led eight Reservists from 7th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland on the Washington Marine Corps Marathon to complete a total of £16,000 raised for its Perth and

THE BIG PICTURE

Nijmegen, Netherlands

Walking the walk

HUNDREDS of British soldiers descended on the oldest city in the Netherlands for this year's international Four Days Marches event. It saw 45,000 participants trek routes of varying lengths over four days in the east of the country. All regions of the UK were represented in the Army's contingent, which included troops from a range of cap badges.

Pictures: Eira Booth





McCloud Remedy.

Arm yourself with the information you need.

Join us. Job done.

From 1st October 2023, the AFPS15 Remedy (McCloud) is being implemented. From that date, it's decision-time for many.

Armed Forces personnel who were in service both on or before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 (with any break in service of less than 5 years), will have the option to choose their legacy scheme benefits or equivalent AFPS15 benefits, for the remedy period (1st April 2015 – 31st March 2022).

Eligible members will all receive a Remediable Service Statement detailing their remedy choices, no later than 1st April 2025. Existing pensioner members and those retiring from the Armed Forces after 1st October 2023 with immediate benefits will be asked to make their election. Those with deferred pensions will be asked to make their decision before their benefits become payable.

Be sure to arm yourself with all the information you need to make the best choice for yourself and your family by joining the Forces Pension Society. You will have access to our expert team of Forces Pensions Consultants who will provide the guidance you want. Job done.



GUIDANCE WHEN
YOU NEED IT MOST

Independent, not-for-profit

Independence is vital to our work, calling governments to account whenever we spot unfairness or injustice in the system. We also give you a voice where it counts, on the representative bodies for Armed Forces and Public Sector Pensions.

We are funded by our Members' subscriptions. Any surplus helps fund our outreach programmes of Roadshows, Webinars and our attendance at CTP Employment Fairs.

Visit: [forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/](https://www.forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/)

Annual membership for you and your spouse/ partner is just £43. You will have exclusive access to our Forces Pensions Consultants, our informative Members' Webinars, and you'll receive our bi-annual e-newsletters and magazine, Pennant.

You'll also have access to our wide range of membership benefits from discounts on new cars and white goods, to insurances, (including our latest range of travel policies) plus a great deal more.



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NEED TO



All the right moves

How to bench press
the correct way

► IT'S one of the more straightforward exercises, but getting it wrong puts you at risk of acute (sudden) or overuse injuries.

The good news is that there are strategies to help you bench press without pain, while at the same time ensuring you maximise strength gains.

"To put it simply, safe movement is effective movement," says Jefferson Huggins, chief athletic officer at physical training app developers Form-AI (pictured).

"There is no example of an exercise that, when performed in a less safe way, produces more force.

"Additionally, the bench press is one of several movements that fall into the category of upper body pushing horizontally with two arms – so the correct technique largely applies across the board, whether you are using a barbell, two dumbbells or even doing a push-up."

According to Huggins, this is what to look out for during your next workout...



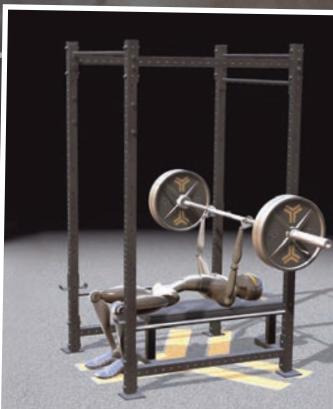
Optimising shoulder mechanics

The shoulder primarily does two things during a bench press:

- **Depression** – or packing down away from the ears
- **Retraction** – the rolling backwards of the shoulders

The following tips will help you maximise these two movements in a way which increases both performance and safety

Pictures: Shutterstock, Form-AI



How-tos

- 1** The focus of any bench press variation is the eccentric (or downward) half of the exercise as this sets you up to produce optimal force from the bottom position
- 2** **Maintain a tight grip** on your equipment throughout, to add stability to the shoulder
- 3** From the starting position, **pull both shoulders down away from your ears** – imagine you have a nail on the top of your shoulder you are trying to keep away from your ear. You should feel this motion in your lats, which are the large muscles in your back immediately below each shoulder blade
- 4** To initiate the movement, **pull the shoulder backwards towards the floor** and **allow the elbows to naturally follow the shoulders** to begin the eccentric portion of the exercise
- 5** **Keep your hands directly above your elbows** at all times
- 6** Once your shoulders are no longer able to move backwards towards the floor, **drive the weight away from your body while keeping your shoulders packed and away from the ears**
- 7** **Avoid excessive arching of the spine** throughout

Common errors

- 1** **Internal rotation, or forward roll of the shoulder**, most commonly seen at the bottom of a rep
- 2** **Excessive arching of the spine** – to avoid this drive your ribcage down throughout each rep
- 3** **Allowing the hands to leave a position** directly above the elbows



The Form-AI Movement Library app is a 3D guide to more than 1,300 strength and conditioning exercises, available for free on Android and IOS

‘Environmental collapse in Ukraine is a possibility’

Veteran’s mission to protect ecosystems affected by war

► **AFTER leaving the Army in 2018, Jody Bragger (ex-Coldm Gds) completed a postgraduate degree in biodiversity. Along with fellow former officer Angus Aitken (ex-RGR) he set up Tellus Conservation, which works with investors to fund environmental projects around the world.**

Here, Bragger describes how, when war threatened Ukraine’s national parks, the pair knew they had to act...

GUkraine is essentially bankrupt because the economy has collapsed by 40 per cent, with expenditure on defence obviously skyrocketing and all discretionary spending cut.

We wanted to support the country in any way we could, so we pulled together a crisis planning package to fund the operational, infrastructure and ecological work needed across the national park network.

It's really important because 6.2 million people in Ukraine work in agriculture and it's one of the breadbaskets of the world.

Its food systems feed up to 400

million people, providing 40 per cent of the UN World Food Programme grain, predominantly for the Sahel and Horn of Africa.

Environmental collapse in Ukraine is a possibility, given huge issues with the water table, fires, degradation and lack of land management.

There is also evidence the Russian military have conducted something called ecocide – purposely destroying forests or natural areas.

Contamination is a concern as well. War uses lots of chemicals – explosives leave large amounts of toxic traces in the ground.

So supporting ecosystems is a critical aspect of the country's post-war recovery. We see it as a strategic humanitarian investment in people's lives and food security.

Our company has been working for about two years now, so it's still early days, but I love what I do.

We have projects in sub-Saharan Africa and some of the Caribbean.

We exist to allow

the private sector to invest money and actually make a difference. And we take pride in breaking down those complex governance and geographical issues that limit funding for these kinds of projects.

I think one of the main frustrations of the environmental crisis is that it's a slow-moving disaster, and within it you have multiple other crises – the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, the water crisis and so on.

People feel like, 'how can you put something in reverse that's way bigger than you are?'

We try and channel that frustration into action to have an impact on the ground.

That's something I'm incredibly proud of and definitely gives me purpose every day. ■



Want to know more?

Take a look at tellusconservation.com or look **Jody Bragger** up on LinkedIn

Early departure payment

The “Savvy Squaddie” explains this cash benefit for Service leavers

► **UNDERSTANDING** your post-Army income is crucial – and one element that can make a big difference is the early departure payment (EDP).

The benefit is for longer serving personnel on Armed Forces pension schemes (AFPS) 05 and 15, who unlike their counterparts on the earlier AFPS75 system will not receive an immediate pension upon leaving – which most will do before reaching normal pension age.

It consists of a tax-free lump sum and monthly (taxable) income, but according to Cpl Cam Eden (RLC) – the brains behind the Savvy Squaddie

financial education YouTube channel – the payment is poorly understood.

“People say the later schemes aren’t as good because you don’t get your pension until you fully retire, however they don’t realise that if they meet the criteria they are entitled to this money,” he says.

“It’s not enough to live off, but it bridges the gap and takes the pressure off, as well as giving you more flexibility when you’re looking for civvy jobs.”

Cpl Eden’s message to troops is get clued up on the EDP before making decisions affecting the length of your career. These are his key pointers...

EDP on AFPS05

- Eligible to those who have served a minimum of 18 years AND are 40 years or older upon leaving
- The tax-free lump sum is three times the annual deferred pension, and the taxable monthly income is at least 50 per cent of the annual deferred pension, divided into 12 equal amounts
- The monthly income increases by 1.667 per cent for each year served beyond the 18/40 EDP point and reaches 75 per cent of the annual deferred pension at age 55
- Continues until you claim your state pension



EDP on AFPS15

- Requires a minimum of 20 years of service AND the recipient must be aged 40 or older upon departure
- The tax-free lump sum is 2.25 times the annual deferred pension, and the taxable income payments are up to 34 per cent of the annual deferred pension, divided into 12 equal amounts
- The monthly payments increase by 0.85 per cent for each year served after the 20/40 EDP point, and at age 55, adjust based on the consumer price index
- Stops when you reach state pension age, which is currently 66 but is set to rise

And another thing...

- Even though the EDP is based on your pension, it does not affect the pension itself
- It will be paid to you automatically as a result of the paperwork you fill out during the leaving process
- Troops on AFPS75 but with some time on the later schemes may also be entitled to a small amount



Use the QR code to follow the Savvy Squaddie on YouTube

Good day at the office

Is this posting the Army's best kept secret for job satisfaction?

► OUTSIDE of operations, the opportunity to save lives is rare. But Royal Engineer WO2 Alan Chapman's work in the Export Support Team (EST) may have done just that.

Under the outfit's remit to boost UK trade overseas, the 37-year-old advises the British defence and security industry in his field of expertise – explosive ordnance disposal.

During his two-year tenure, he has seen his projects not only help the economy, but make a difference on the ground in Ukraine and beyond – as he told *Soldier...*

Finding solutions

"Problem solving is a big part of what we do, like when we came up with an idea for a non-explosive wire cutter for bomb disposal. Some countries can't store, transport or secure explosives properly, so we found off-the-shelf technology of the kind used in airbags and ejector seats to develop a way of using kinetic energy to disarm a device instead, rather than a human having to approach it."

Having an impact

"I was involved in an urgent operational requirement to supply bomb disposal kit to Ukraine. The UK defence industry rallied together to get the equipment over the border within about three months. It's great when you see the products you've helped to export saving lives."

High-profile taskings

"You travel all over the UK and abroad, briefing everyone from senior officers to foreign delegates. I've been to Nigeria, Poland, France, Estonia and Japan – recently I attended DSEI in Tokyo, where I presented to Defence Minister Ben Wallace. It was one of the better gigs I've had in the Army both professionally and personally."

Outside exposure

"Our team is part of the Department of Business and Trade's UK Defence and Security Exports branch. You liaise with multiple organisations across industry and the government. It's great for understanding how the civilian sector works, as well as getting an insight into potential post-Army careers. Overall, it's a really good role – I'd say it's the best kept secret in the military."



UK Defence Security Exporter
Department for International Trade

In numbers

19

staff in the Larkhill-based EST, whose role is to advise the UK defence industry on a range of land-based capabilities

Want to know more?

Scan the barcode to visit the website



Got your back

Ex-soldier designs one-stop-shop mental health app

► NAVIGATING the complex network of military charities can be a daunting task when you're in a bad place – as Savannah Thomson (ex-AGC (SPS)) knows first hand.

In 2021 the former private was medically discharged following a long-term back injury, coupled with PTSD from the traumatic birth of her son.

Here, she reveals how she drew on the experience to develop a new mental health support app – *urbackup* – and how she hopes it will help others...

What's the thinking behind the app?

I kept hearing the same things about people struggling and not knowing where to go, or being turned away, so I thought 'wouldn't it be good to have something where all the charities on there will respond to you'. You only have to press one button and help will be on its way.

How does it work?

It's as simple as possible so everyone can use it. The veteran or serving person creates an account, chooses a charity and adds up to three contacts – and then there is a traffic light system. So when they press amber or red, it will send a notification to the charity and their contacts, who could be family or someone like a welfare officer, to let them know they are in need of support.

What caused your own mental health to suffer?

Soldiers have a difficult time for various reasons – it's not always from going away on ops. I had degeneration in my spine and nerve damage from an injury, and then when I gave birth to

my son, who is now four, the two of us nearly died. I lost a lot of blood and had sepsis, while he had to be resuscitated. It all added up to waves of depression.

How did you get the app off the ground?

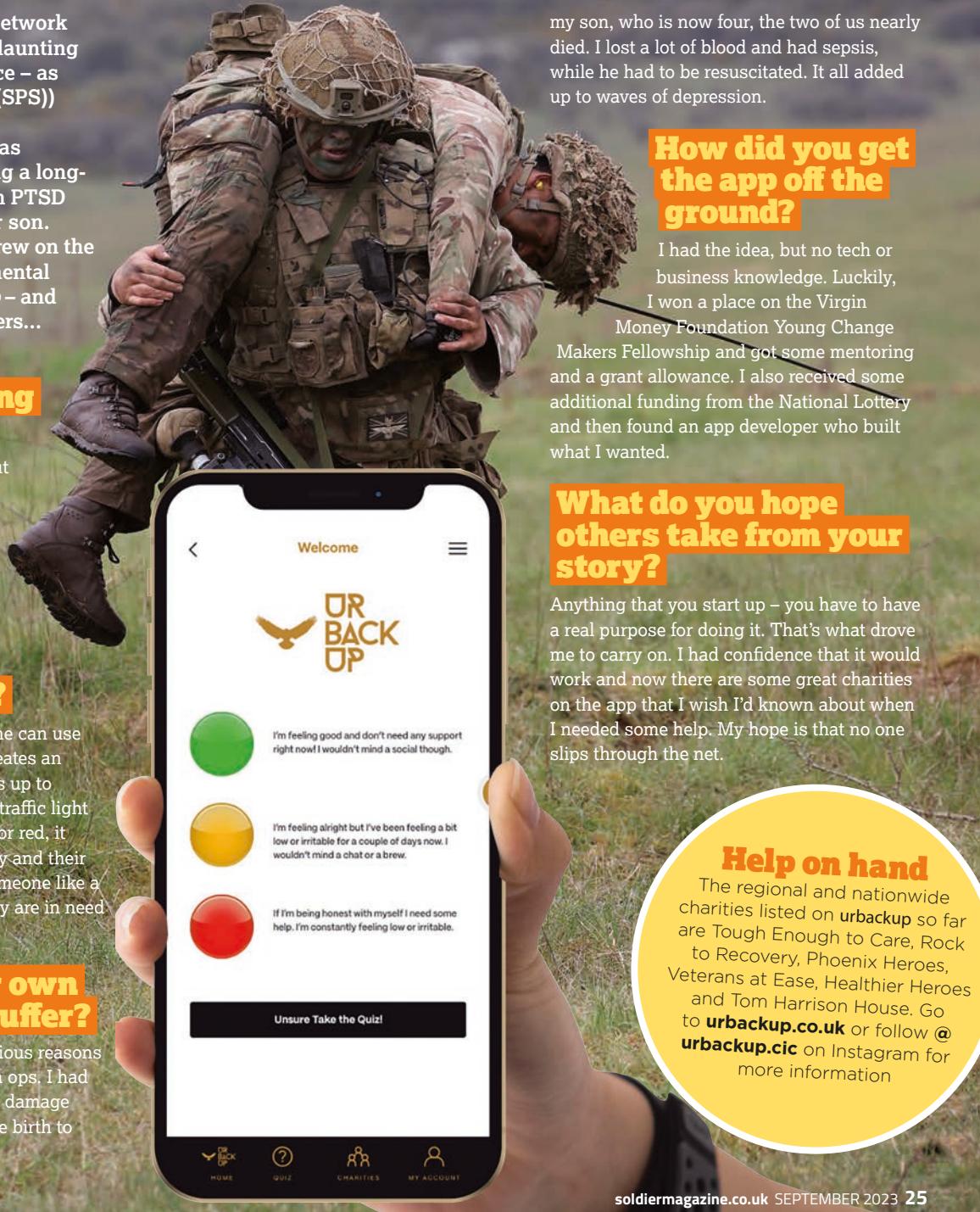
I had the idea, but no tech or business knowledge. Luckily, I won a place on the Virgin Money Foundation Young Change Makers Fellowship and got some mentoring and a grant allowance. I also received some additional funding from the National Lottery and then found an app developer who built what I wanted.

What do you hope others take from your story?

Anything that you start up – you have to have a real purpose for doing it. That's what drove me to carry on. I had confidence that it would work and now there are some great charities on the app that I wish I'd known about when I needed some help. My hope is that no one slips through the net.

Help on hand

The regional and nationwide charities listed on *urbackup* so far are Tough Enough to Care, Rock to Recovery, Phoenix Heroes, Veterans at Ease, Healthier Heroes and Tom Harrison House. Go to urbackup.co.uk or follow @urbackup.cic on Instagram for more information





Leaving the Armed Forces? Want to join a family-friendly organisation where you can continue to support military colleagues?

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Not sure where to start? Perfect your CV!

Scan the QR code for our CV writing tips.



No pillow? No problem

Sleep expert shares neck support hack for on-the-go

► WHETHER you're jetting off on a long-haul trip (yay) or stuck in a convoy en route to an exercise (bad times) – at some point you're likely to be desperate for some shut-eye.

As your head lolls from side to side, you kick yourself for forgetting your travel pillow.

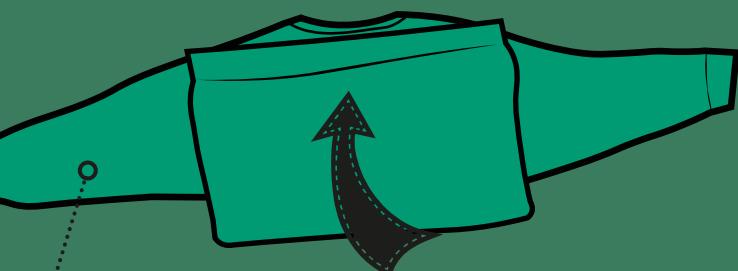
Not to worry, says James Leinhardt, founder of mattress brand Levitex.

With just a sweatshirt and an elastic band, you can fashion your own version – and according to the sleep expert, it actually provides better support for the 20 muscles and seven tiny vertebrae in your neck than the overly-rigid options available in airports and service stations.

Follow his five-step solution for cushioned comfort in any mode of transport...

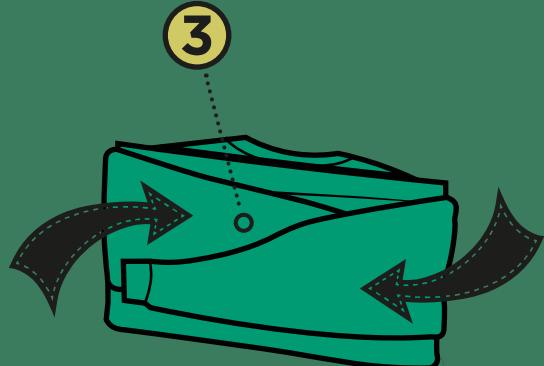
1

LAY YOUR JUMPER OUT FLAT



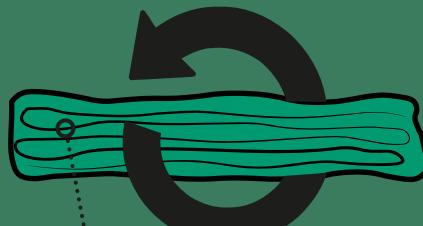
2

FOLD IN HALF FROM BOTTOM



3

FOLD BOTH ARMS IN



4

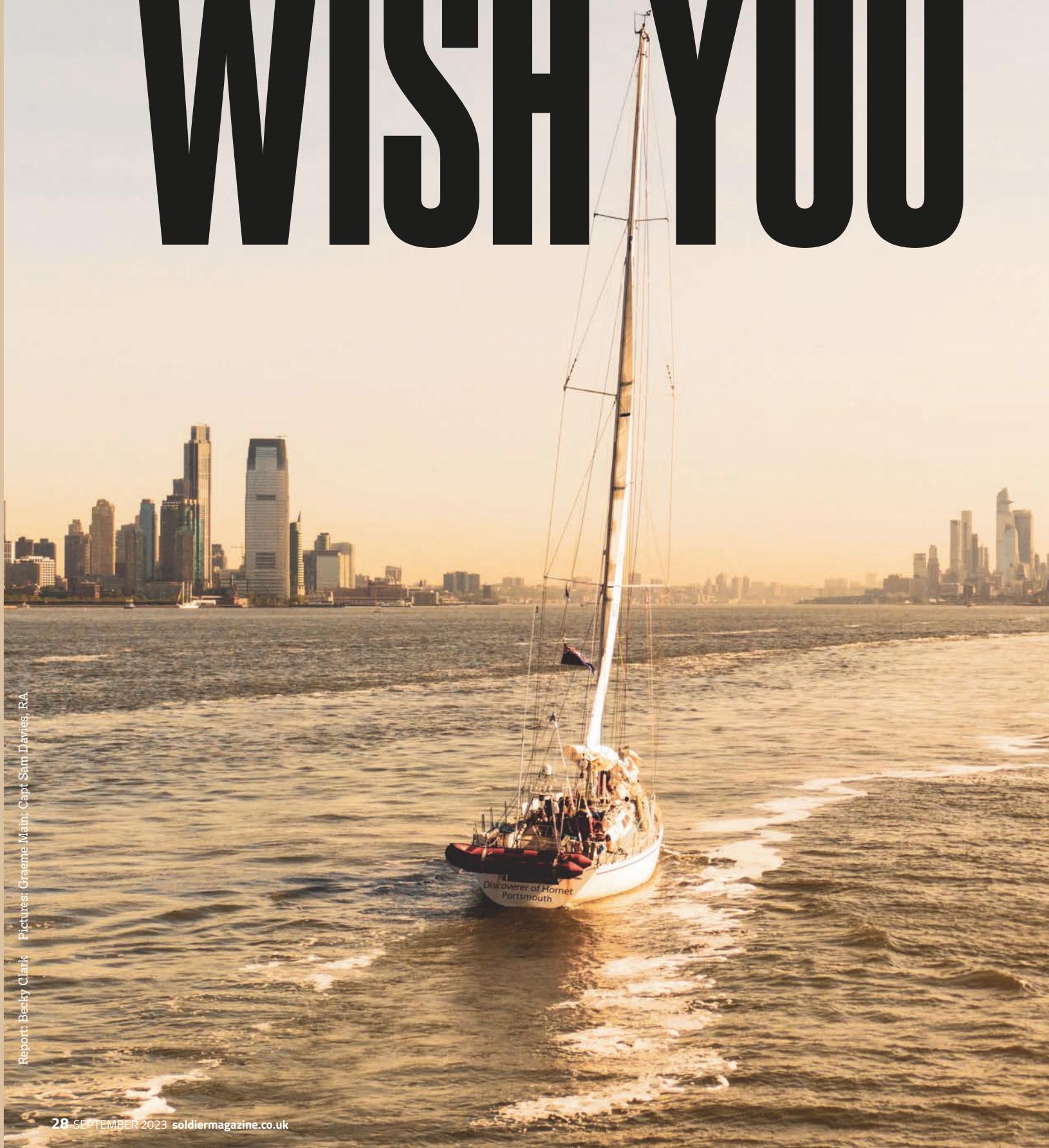
ROLL INTO SAUSAGE SHAPE

**FASTEN ROUND
NECK WITH AN
ELASTIC BAND...
AND SNOOZE**

5



WISH YOU



WERE HERE

Troops mark five decades of Army AT with bucket-list expeds



IT'S 50 years since the first personnel deployed under the joint Services adventurous training scheme.

Introduced to bring more structure to outward-bound activities, the programme is still going strong five decades on.

Some 1,200 expeditions are scheduled to run in 2023 alone, while the number of trips to have taken place since 1973 is thought to be around 30,000 – benefitting upwards of a quarter of a million troops.

And although the modern Army looks very different to its Cold War incarnation, the purpose of the initiative – to foster resilience and leadership skills through exposure to controlled risk – remains the same.

As Commander Adventurous Training Group (Army), Col Neil Wilson points out, equipment and technology move on

rapidly, but the principles of individual development do not.

"Human beings haven't really changed, arguably in centuries," he adds.

"Everyone will tell you Generation X, Y or Z is different to the one before them, but ultimately everyone has that requirement to be challenged, gain in confidence and become more robust than they were.

"It applies to all of us, no matter how old we are – we still get anxious about things and being able to overcome those concerns through the medium of AT is one of the reasons it's still so valuable.

"The Army's demand for such experiences is still as insatiable as ever."

In another sign of the scheme's longevity, the activities available today are virtually unchanged. Nine pursuits were ▶



» originally offered: sailing, diving, parachuting, gliding, canoeing and kayaking, mountaineering (including climbing), skiing and caving – with paragliding replacing hang gliding along the way, and mountain biking later added to bring the total up to ten.

All training is designed to be progressive, so that beginners can eventually become instructors and give back to their chosen sport.

Having sampled most activities during his 38 years in uniform, Col Wilson (pictured right) urges others to take full advantage of upcoming expeditions, which are often available at minimal cost to participants.

“While AT is mandated – everyone has to do it – the activity you choose is voluntary,” he continues.

“But don’t sit and wait for it to come to you – be proactive. The most junior soldier can put themselves on a course as long as they’ve cleared it with their chain of command.

“I would say look at the ten categories and then pick the one you really don’t want to do – that’s exactly the one you should try out because it’s going to push you out of your comfort zone most and really develop you as a person.”

With trips often heavily oversubscribed, the phrase “book early to avoid disappointment” very much applies. These troops did, and recently found themselves deploying around the world on some once-in-a-lifetime experiences...



“The Manhattan skyline was the first land we’d seen in days”



EXERCISE CARIBBEAN EXPRESS

SNAPSHOT: A 15-leg circumnavigation of the northern Atlantic taking in the Bay of Biscay, Spain, Portugal, the Canary Islands, Cape Verde, several Caribbean islands, Florida, New York and Halifax in Canada. A total of 225 personnel from across the MoD took part over the course of eight months, taking turns to crew the 72ft vessel from Portsmouth’s Joint Services Adventurous Sailing Training Centre. Among those aboard on the Florida-New York route was novice sailor **Cpl Stephan Antoine (RE)**...

“This was my first time sailing as part of a crew – I liked the teamwork and camaraderie, as well as the challenge. I get seasick but after the first two days it all stopped and I managed to do my bit.”

“Sailing at night using the stars to navigate was a highlight. We also got some heavy weather and each of us got an opportunity to take the helm and feel the experience of steering the yacht at a 45-degree angle.”

“The Manhattan skyline was the first land we’d seen in a few days. Being anchored by the Statue of Liberty and seeing the city all around you was amazing.”

“Adventurous training is a big thing for me – I’ve done scuba diving, parachuting, mountain biking, skiing, ice climbing and winter mountaineering.”

“I like to try everything at least once to know what my passions are.”

“There’s something that will grasp the interest for everyone.”

EXERCISE TIGER REIKA, ICELAND

SNAPSHOT: As part of a one-week summer mountaineering package, a mixed cap badge team from across the Royal School of Military Engineering completed the 58km Laugavegur Trail in southern Iceland. **Capt Jack Avery (RE)** explains how the dramatic volcanic terrain and poor weather threw up a number of challenges...

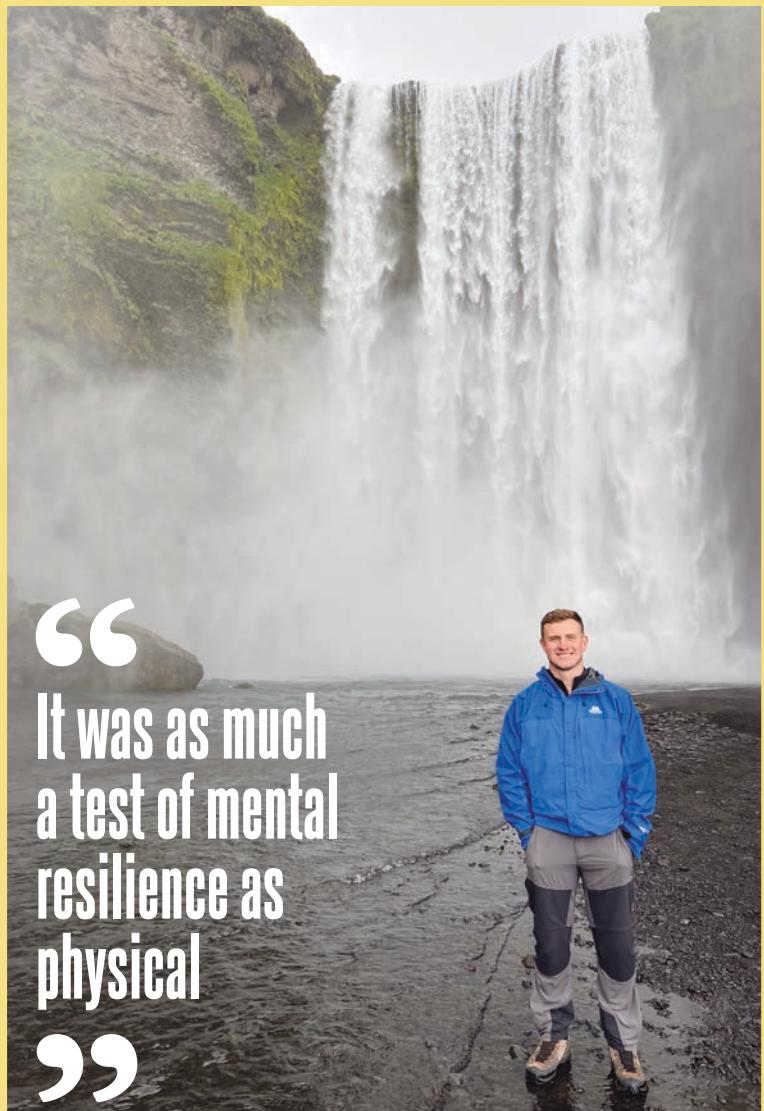
"The scenery in Iceland is breathtaking. It looks like Tolkien's Middle Earth or how you'd expect the world was hundreds of years ago, with very little human interference.

But the weather can be miserable, so it's a real test of planning. The terrain goes from sea level up to altitude with snow and ice, and temperatures ranged from zero degrees Celsius to the mid-teens.

People learnt that walking in tough conditions was as much a test of mental resilience as it was physical. Setting up camp and doing your admin in the rain is hard work.

At times we had to strip down and wade across glacial rivers, and in the evenings we sat around talking to each other, with no phones because there was no signal.

This was a really important aspect and something people don't do enough of anymore."



“
It was as much
a test of mental
resilience as
physical
”





EXERCISE NORTHERN AMAZONAS FORTUNE, BRAZIL

SNAPSHOT: 15 Reservists who were drawn mainly from 4th Battalion, The Royal Yorkshire Regiment spent two weeks kayaking and canoeing some 230km along the River Urubu – one of the major tributaries of the mighty Amazon. The personnel paddled some 40km per day, sleeping in tents and huts in the rainforest along the way, and bonding as a team – as **Pte Sam Jansen (R Yorks)** describes...

“Being relatively new to the regiment, the chance to get to know everyone on a personal level was one of my favourite parts of the whole expedition.

Each person is an individual and while we are from different backgrounds, we all share the same motivation.

If things went wrong, we would all pull together as a team, selflessly and effectively which is what I believe adventurous training is all about.

As the days went on, I learnt how to self-administrate and managing my kit became easier.

Overall, this trip has changed my life for the better and will truly impact my career in the Army in a positive way – I feel honoured I took part in it.”



“

This trip has
changed
my life for
the better

”



EXERCISE NORTHERN AHAWANEE WARRIOR, CALIFORNIA

SNAPSHOT: Members of Aberdeen and Tayforth Officers' Training Regiment, with various levels of climbing experience, travelled to South Lake Tahoe and Yosemite National Park. The two-week exped saw OCdt Alasdair Tod scale Yosemite's Washington Column – a 1,800-foot high rock formation – making him, according to organisers, the first British officer cadet to successfully climb a "big wall"...

"I had done a multi-pitch climb last year so had some exposure to what was expected of me, but it was definitely physically exerting and a learning experience.

Sometimes you look down and go 'wow, the ground is a long way away', or you're sitting in your harness and you're very aware there's nothing underneath you, which is daunting, but also cool.

Washington Column is considered beginner friendly. There's an outcrop called Dinner Time Ledge, where we stayed for two nights and which is quite large and comfortable.

It's one of my biggest accomplishments to date. It's not something a lot of climbers have done, especially in Britain because we don't have anything that big.

From the top you get a fantastic view of Half Dome, which along with El Capitan is one of the famous walls in Yosemite – so that got my mind working.

I'm now booked onto my rock-climbing supervisor's course and the goal is to lead expeds myself one day, and maybe do something similar for another officer cadet."

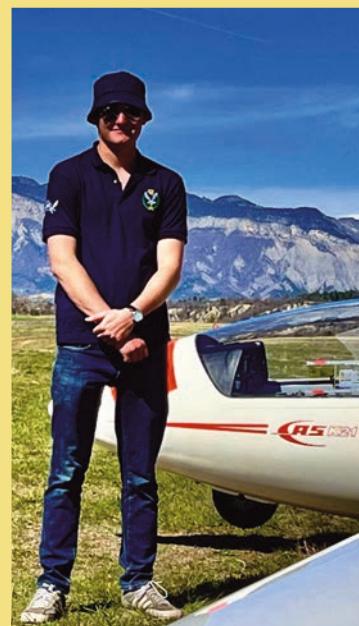
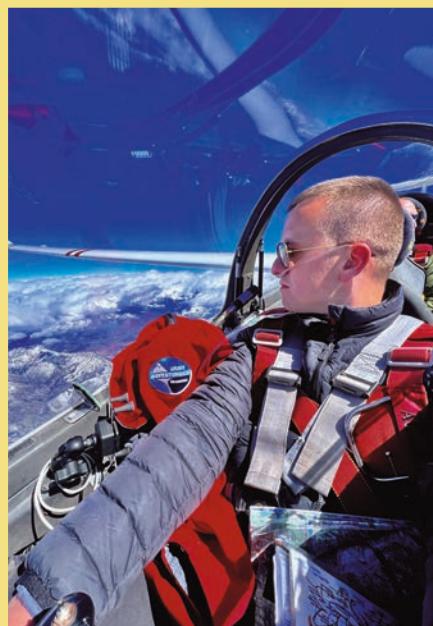
“
It's daunting,
but also cool
”



“

You can't help but be astounded by the beauty of it all

”



EXERCISE ALPINE QUEST, FRENCH ALPS

SNAPSHOT: Over three weeks, 19 novice and advanced glider pilots from the Army and Royal Navy developed their skills in a challenging new environment. For Army Air Corps communications specialist **Air Tpr George Ward**, the Alpine exped allowed him to gain more time in the sky ahead of applying to become a pilot...

“I've been involved in flying since I was 12 and when I saw the opportunities around Army gliding I jumped at it.

To go from the UK, which is pretty flat, to the Alps is a very different experience – one moment you're literally feet from the rocks trying to catch an updraft and minutes later you can be at

an altitude of 20,000ft.

It's easier to stay up in the mountains because there's more wind, but it requires a much greater level of accuracy due to the proximity of the terrain and the fact your options to land are pretty minimal.

I also had the chance to go solo, which can be incredibly nerve wracking. Your workload is high, you're managing the aircraft and making sure you stay safe, but at the same time you can't help but be astounded by the beauty of it all.

It's probably the most stunning place I've ever been.

There are lots of people who don't take these amazing opportunities – but AT puts you under pressure in a controlled environment and is great for building your confidence and decision-making ability.”



“
The best stuff
I've done
through the
Army is AT
”



EXERCISE DRAGON DIVE, MALTA

SNAPSHOT: A group from various cap badges spent two weeks diving to wreck sites, sunken statues and underwater caves around Malta. Among them was **LCpl Tanya Scheepmaker (AGC (RMP))**, who gained her sports diver qualification during the trip...

“I only started diving last December, in a flooded quarry near Birmingham where the maximum depth was 15m. However, in Malta we dived up to 40m so the jump was huge.

But the ocean is so blue and warm – it's beautiful. The first time diving deep is a bit intimidating because it gets very dark and cold.

We also did a few wrecks, including the MV Karwheha, which is well known and has an intact staircase. It's hard because you need to maintain buoyancy and not touch the wrecks. That becomes easier the more practice you get.

The best stuff I've done through the Army is AT and I've definitely got the sub-aqua bug. Every dive is different and there are so many locations in the world where you can do it.

I now want to build up my logbook and work towards my dive leader qualification so I can plan expeds in future – that would be brilliant.” ■

Turn to page 56 to learn more about AT opportunities



LEADING THE



TALK to personnel in any section of the British Army at the moment and there is one piece of feedback you'll hear over and over again; everyone is being asked to do more with less. The warfighting divisions are no exception, with a high tempo of activity fuelled by operations Mobilise, Cabrit and Interflex as well as preparations for Nato's new force model that will provide an expanded pool of high-readiness forces by mid-2024. Compounding the pressure is the gifting of vehicles and ammunition to Ukraine, not to mention being part of a smaller Army that – like many militaries around the Western world – is struggling to recruit.

Significant efficiencies have to be found and, much to the relief of those holding the purse strings, a recent exercise called Iron Cyclone has been a major step in the right direction.

Staged on Salisbury Plain, it saw nine sub-units



CHARGE

Armoured troops spearhead battlegroup training revolution

practise low-level skills before building up to operate as squadrons, then companies and finally as combined-arms teams within a battlegroup.

Against that backdrop, The King's Royal Hussars in Challenger 2s and 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment in Warriors, were busy pioneering a new formula created by the Land Warfare Centre to streamline training by integrating initial and subsequent trade courses into the same package.

Significant change

"Iron Cyclone represents the most significant change to how we conduct armoured vehicle tactical training in a generation," says Maj Lewis Ballard-Whyte (Scots DG), officer commanding the Armoured Wing at the Combined Arms Manoeuvre School (Cams).

"Rather than stage two big exercises – one that qualifies young officers as troop or platoon commanders and experienced NCOs as vehicle commanders, followed

by another that takes sub-units and battlegroups through the training levels of the battlecraft syllabus – we achieved all those outcomes with one event.

"On this occasion we focused on the armour and the armoured infantry because we needed to prove the concept would work.

"On future Iron Cyclones we will be opening it up to the battlegroup as a whole and, therefore, all the sub-units involved will be able to qualify their initial and subsequent trade training students using the exercise."

The efficiencies that have been identified from the new-look format are significant and sure to raise a few eyebrows among senior leaders.

"Our figures prove this will ease the burden on 3 Div by seriously reducing the support to experimentation and training" ▶





» demand,” explains Maj Ballard-Whyte.

“In Iron Cyclone’s case this was cut by around 80 per cent. The previous two-exercise route would have swallowed about 5,000 workforce days but Iron Cyclone achieved the same results using just 800. In the current climate that’s huge.”

Training focus

According to one of the architects of the new template, Maj Simon Kershaw (SG), chief instructor at Cams, combining the training in this fashion will also speed up the process of making troops deployable.

“3 (UK) Div’s battlegroups have not been fully completing the battlecraft syllabus training they need to be ready for operations due to the multitude of other taskings and high tempo of commitments” he says.

“The external pressures on the units were such that we had to bring in a system which ringfenced a suitable period when they could focus purely on training.

“Under this format each battlegroup gets eight uninterrupted weeks to do all that they need to reach training level echo or foxtrot – the latter being the final stage that needs to be achieved before deploying.”

The revised format also guarantees top quality instruction, despite the fact that inserting career courses into a combined arms exercise has the potential to disrupt the flow of the package.

“Inevitably, some serials will have to be repeated,” says Maj Ballard-Whyte. “But the training benefit is significant because even when troops are assisting or observing, rather than doing, they are still doing the reps – they are still learning.

“We can be sure the training will be of the highest quality because we now have teams from Cams present during the exercise who instruct, mentor and assess, providing feedback wherever it’s required.

“That wasn’t the case before. When a sub-unit or a battlegroup went out to do battlecraft syllabus training it was usually self-taught, self-governed and self-assessed without support from any external agency. It was validated by the company commander or squadron leader or the commanding officer, depending on how advanced the training level was.

Quality assured

“That was a potential weakness of the old system. You might have had a squadron hierarchy whose knowledge was a little weak in a specific area because, for example, they’d recently been heavily committed to other tasks.

“Now we have the Cams instructors around who can assist during all of those stages, so the quality of the session is assured.”

The fresh approach seems to have struck a chord with those participating in Iron Cyclone. Challenger 2



“
The external pressures on the units were such that we had to bring in a system which ringfenced a suitable period when they could focus on training
”

crew commander Cpl Robert Ashfield (KRH) comments: “It was a really useful and effective package from my perspective because we had new personnel in our teams and were able to progress them more quickly, teaching troop manoeuvre and squadron tactics as we went, before moving on to battlegroup procedures.

“Meanwhile, existing commanders were given refreshers in conventional strategy through the battlecraft syllabus, having used forest fighting skills extensively in Estonia over the last few months, where most of our movement was on single tracks through dense forests.”

Reconnaissance Troop leader Lt Susannah Watts (KRH) adds: “We had to provide set tasks while training as a battlegroup with some sub-units we’ve not trained with in recent years so it was a question of integrating all of that.

“For example, we combined what used to be the armoured crew commanders’ course final element – Exercise Combat Spirit – with the battlecraft syllabus for training personnel at battlegroup level.

“Everyone really bought into that and, as a result, the end product was really commendable and all our objectives were achieved.”

With the Army’s personnel and resources stretched in all directions, finding more efficient ways to develop competencies and TTPs to a high level has become

paramount. And thanks to the successful roll-out of Iron Cyclone, personnel right across the Field Army can expect to become familiar with this overhauled training format before too long.

Revolutionary

The Infantry Battle School in Brecon has just staged the first Exercise Combined Warrior, which is the dismounted equivalent of Iron Cyclone. A second such package is scheduled for November.

The next two Iron Cyclones are also in the pipeline – one due at the end of this year and one in the spring of 2024, both of which are due to take place in Germany to coincide with other major exercises in the country.

“The new formula might seem revolutionary but it’s a necessary move,” comments Maj Ballard-Whyte.

“The Army is incredibly busy so if we can reduce support to experimentation and training by a large margin it frees up personnel and resources to conduct other tasks.

“With the Service now down to less than 80,000 troops such gains are becoming increasingly important.” ■



“As a people focused organisation, our people are vital to our success”

We run a number of initiatives to support our colleagues and offer new opportunities for Service Leavers too.

Apprenticeships

Our team members are the greatest asset we have in our business. We want to grow and retain the best possible Side by Side team that we can by maximising the skills of our existing colleagues. One of the ways we can do this is by offering a range of apprenticeships. A number of our team members are already involved in apprenticeship schemes covering areas such as Business Improvement Techniques, Business and administration, Hospitality management, Support cleaning services and supervisory skills.

Mentoring programme

We have a network of nine Aramark Armed Forces Employee Community volunteer mentors who are employees as well as veterans and spouses. They've received exclusive mentor training to; support Aramark's new work experience programme for service leavers and the wider Aramark armed community where possible. Aramark have created an 8-12-week work experience programme to benefit service leavers in their resettlement period.



Work Experience

Aramark have created a work experience placement programme to offer Armed Forces service leavers the opportunity to undertake 8 -12 weeks of work placement within Aramark UK. This is known as a Civilian Work Attachment (CWA) to a service leaver.

The aims of the programme are:

- To provide the service leaver with sector specific (catering and facilities services) work experience, offering insight into our roles and our industry.
- To help the service leaver to identify if their skills and experience are suited to the chosen position
- To support the service leaver to develop an understanding of the civilian work environment
- To support the service leaver to understand the culture of our organisation and whether they will be a good fit.

For more information head over to our website



www.sidebysidesfm.co.uk

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We Move Together As One

HORSING AROUND



Stunt riders stage crash course for mounted troops

IT MAY not have the fearsome reputation of P Company or commando training, but the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment's equitation course is no trot in the park.

In fact, the 23-week package, which takes new recruits from complete beginners to ceremonial-standard riders, has one of the highest attrition rates of any Army course.

Inevitably, hitting the deck – often from height and at speed – is an occupational hazard for these personnel.

While most will walk away with nothing more than bruises, an unlucky few will be hurt badly enough to put their training on hold – broken arms and collarbones are not uncommon. ■

Earlier this year, in an effort to reduce the risk of injury and boost troops' confidence in the saddle, instructors at Combermere Barracks in Windsor brought in professional stunt riders to lead sessions on how to fall safely.

And following a successful pilot, the one-day class – which is run by the Centre of Horseback Combat – has become a regular fixture in the early weeks of the riding course.

Training wing boss, the aptly-named Capt Mark Quickfall (RHG/D, pictured right), said the ultimate aim was to maximise the number of personnel who pass out from the package to maintain inflow into the regiment.

"If a soldier is injured for a few months they may not complete the training at all, or may form some sort of fear of horses," explained the officer.

"That confidence building element is an important part."

In the same way jockeys learn techniques to fall as safely as possible, the hope is that recruits will develop the muscle memory to enable them to react correctly if the worst happens.

Capt Quickfall continued: "Just like if you have a weapon stoppage, you take a knee and look at the cocking handle, we want them not to put a hand out if they fall so that they minimise the chance of damage.

"Obviously, the best thing is to remain on the horse if you can, so the session covers theory around that too, but sometimes falling can't be helped.

"Our goal is that they develop the right habits, which they continue when they get to the regiment and hopefully go on to have a long career with us."

From rearing to emergency dismount drills, three students told *Soldier* what they had taken away from the session...

“

I enjoyed rearing on purpose. It helps build your confidence

”



“KEEP YOUR COMPOSURE”

I was doing phase two training to join the Infantry, but I got injured and I thought there were more opportunities for me here, so I transferred across. I'd never been around horses so I was a bit sceptical, but now I've bonded with them it's fun. I've had four falls. The second time I landed in a funny place on my back and it hurt for a few days, but I pushed through and it was fine. The best thing is to jump straight back on before you have time to think about it. This course prepares you for if the horse does something unexpected, like rearing or bucking or you fall off for whatever reason.

It teaches you to keep your composure, deal with it properly and not freak out or get injured. It was fun – I enjoyed rearing on purpose. It helps build your confidence. Hopefully by the time we learn to ride in the ceremonial kit I won't be worrying, I'll be thinking about looking proud and representing the regiment.

Tpr Lois Norton, LG



“
The premise
is if you do
it enough
it becomes
second nature
”



“TUCK AND ROLL”

We are taught to do what's correct when things are going right, so learning what to do when things go wrong was a confidence booster. You have to point your toes and straighten your legs, cross your arms and put your hands on opposite shoulders to try and stop the instinct to put your arm out. That's why you usually end up breaking your hands, wrists or arms. Ideally, you'd land on the side of your body. It's a tuck and roll action, should we have enough time to think about it. It will depend on how much warning you get, but the premise is if you do it enough it becomes second nature. Today was a good introduction.

Lt Charlie Carr-Smith, LG

»



Teake, a stunt horse from the Hemel Hempstead-based Centre for Horseback Combat, rears on command for a student rider. The striking Friesian gelding is set to appear in a forthcoming Harry Styles video and has also starred in Dior advertising campaigns.

“TRY AND RELAX”

I'd never touched a horse before I joined the Army and at first I was nervous, but I've really grown to like them now – although they will definitely take advantage if you're inexperienced.

I've fallen off six times so far. It didn't really knock my confidence, though. I'm learning so it's to be expected. The session was fun – now at least when I fall I know the correct position to get myself in before hitting the ground. You have to try and relax and breathe, as well as taking your feet out of your stirrups so you don't get a foot trapped and dragged along the floor. The million-dollar question is whether I can react quick enough when it happens. I hope I can but often you don't have much control over it.

Tpr Oliver Judge, RHG/D



“
The session
was fun – now
at least when
I fall I know the
correct position
”



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FORCE MULTIPLIERS

Royal Military Police Reserves mount recruitment push with expanded footprint in the south





PPLICATIONS to join the Regulars and Reserves are now below the numbers required to keep the Army at full strength, meaning the Service is in obvious need of a boost when it comes to recruiting.

The Royal Military Police are among those looking to help the cause, and an overhaul of how its Reserve element is deployed across the south of England has already resulted in a ten per cent increase in personnel joining the ranks of 253 (London) Provost Company.

Under the previous structure, opportunities were limited to Brixton. But three months ago, the company, which is part of 3 Regiment, RMP, decided to spread its wings by pushing sections out to Colchester, Bulford and Aldershot – a move that has eased the geographical battle for those wanting a career in this field, while also opening up opportunities that were previously limited.

"We are the only RMP Reserve company in the south of the country," Maj Jon Roberts (AGC (RMP)), officer commanding 253 (London) Pro Coy and the driving force behind the changes, told *Soldier*.

"There are those who might want to join but cannot travel from outside of London for training.

“There is the ultra-low emission zone, low traffic”



IN FOCUS

■ 253 (London) Provost Company will maintain a home platoon in the capital, with another having sections split across Aldershot, Colchester and Bulford and collocated at Regular RMP police stations

■ Equal opportunities for all – a civilian policing background is not required. The process is open to those from all walks of life



■ The unit is actively recruiting ex-Regulars from private to corporal and will consider sergeants. Direct transfer from the RMP Regulars is also possible within 12 months

FOR MORE DETAILS FOLLOW

X @253RMP_Reserves on X (Twitter) or
Instagram @253_rmp_reserves

» neighbourhoods and other congestion and traffic problems, so we are somewhat restricted by our location.

“Some soldiers have been travelling for three hours just to train for two.

“So we have increased our footprint by creating Reserve sections at three Regular police stations. We have the real estate to grow outside of London and reduce those travel times. We can conduct our own training at these locations which means there is no need for some individuals to come into the capital four times a month.”

The expansion also presents a new realm of possibilities, with personnel more able to operate alongside both their Regular and civilian counterparts.

With the sections collocated at established RMP police stations, Reservists have the chance to perform day-to-day military policing duties while also working with officers from the City of London, Essex, Hampshire and Wiltshire constabularies.

The ability to mobilise is another positive, with Ops Tosca, Cabrit and Ilkane (Border Force support) among the deployments on the cards, while Army Reserve P Company and parachute training is an option for those based

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FOR MORE DETAILS FOLLOW

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with 156 Pro Coy in Colchester.

“There are lots of opportunities and if you join us you can deploy and police overseas where no one else can,” Maj Roberts, who is a detective inspector in the Metropolitan Police in his civvy career, added.

“But if you just prefer policing duties, you can do that in addition to routine training and instead of working overtime in your day job, you can come and serve with us in your spare time – much like a paid special constabulary.

“We are actively recruiting and will take ex-Regular personnel and those rejoining the Reserves within six years of leaving will not have to retrain.

“A Regular can leave the Royal Military Police on a Friday and be back policing at the same station as a Reserve on the Monday, while working towards a civilian career and supplementing their income.

“We are looking for lance corporals to corporals and will also take those transferring from other cap badges, whether they are Regulars or Reservists.”

With the wind of change blowing briskly through the formation, *Soldier* spoke to two of those who have already benefited from this fresh outlook...

HAPPY TO HELP

PART of the 253 (London) Pro Coy recruiting team, LCpl Chelsie Brandrick has seen the benefits of the restructuring move from two perspectives.

In terms of the bigger picture, the 24-year-old said there has been a spike in interest from those considering a career in the RMP Reserve, describing the reduction in commuting time as a major factor.

And, from a personal perspective, she is making the most of the new opportunities presented.

“I’m based in London but have been doing policing in Aldershot and it is great to be working alongside the Regulars,” she continued.

“There are so many benefits. For example, we



do not have an armoury at our unit, but now have easy access to weapons for training or a handling test.

"We have a lot of support from Regular companies, who have the equipment and that lived experience to learn from.

"The facilities are better and there are a lot more vehicles in the fleet to get familiar with, while things like manning the station and having shift patterns give a better idea of how military policing works.

"In the capital, the only real policing opportunities come at big events like the Coronation, The Lord Mayor's Show or Army-Navy game. Being paired with the Regulars allows us to do more policing duties, proactive operations and get out in local areas with

people who do this job day in, day out."

LCpl Brandrick transferred to the RMP from the London Guards to pursue further opportunities in the Army Reserve and is currently supporting the UK Border Force on Op Ilkane.

She is due to deploy to Kenya soon and was part of the 253 (London) Pro Coy team that helped police the recent Nijmegen marches in Holland.

"I think there will be an increase in the deployments that are available as our Regular counterparts understand what we can offer," she continued.

"The more opportunities we have to get on courses and develop, the more we can take part and help."



COMMUTING CUT IS KEY

THE reduction in commuting time has been gladly welcomed by LCpl Adam Hynes, who has taken advantage of the change in approach by conducting policing duties in Colchester.

A property manager by day, the 23-year-old was travelling into London from outside the M25 for the unit's drill nights. But with the Essex garrison being closer to home the option of working out of a new venue has been warmly welcomed.

"I have put in quite a few shifts already and was part of the policing task for Op Golden Orb," he said. "I wanted to get involved more and it has been very positive so far.

"There has been a lot of activity over the past year as part of a push to integrate more with the Regulars, with opportunities to deploy on the same exercises.

"We have a contingent in Cyprus on Op Tosca and others have just come back from the Nijmegen marches, where they were the sole representatives from the RMP. That is usually done by Regulars.

"I feel we are serving our purpose – this is what we are supposed to be doing and we now have more opportunities than ever.

"We are doing proactive patrols and have a presence in the garrisons, assisting police operations and doing lots of community policing.

"In Colchester we have a partnership with Essex Police and are working to ensure people are safe on nights out. With a big Army footprint, that is important.

"Previously, we would not get that opportunity unless we were mobilised or FTRS."

LCpl Hynes also said the flexibility of the new structure adds to the appeal.

"You can put a word into the chain of command, who contact the RSMs to say you are available," he explained. "You can then be on a shift that fits around your schedule.

"You get paid for a full day, and it also counts as a bounty day. It means that if you cannot attend on a Wednesday, you can put in for something that works around your other commitments – it is a great idea.

"I have spoken to people who have served with the company for 30 years and they have said this is a first.

"There has also been a big emphasis on courses. Close protection is one of the most sought-after ones and that has been pushed across the unit, while training for P Coy is another option.

"I'm not sure there are many other Reserve units doing the same thing."

"The training has improved tenfold over the past 12 months or so and the increase in numbers seems to be quite steep.

"Everything we post on our social media channels says we are actively recruiting; we are reaching out into new areas across the east and south-east and hopefully that footprint will continue to grow." ■



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'Meal rate is way out of date'

GIVEN the current surge in food prices, I want to know why personnel are limited to a maximum claim of £25 per day when serving outside their home unit.

It's challenging to find anywhere that can provide three meals within this price limit. Isn't it time to thoroughly review and re-evaluate the policy to ensure our serving soldiers' nutritional needs are adequately met? — **Name and address supplied**

Lt Col Iain Wallace, Army Remuneration Policy Branch, Army Headquarters, replies: Day subsistence (DS) was reduced to £25 as a Strategic Defence and Security Review 2010 cost-saving measure and

has been frozen at this rate ever since.

This is a conscious decision by the MoD based on affordability. There is no specific monetary limit imposed on DS rates by HMRC subject to certain conditions being met and there is policy freedom to exceed £25 per day based on criteria.

The maximum DS rate for personnel is currently aligned with the civilian rate. Raising ours in isolation may create presentational issues.

Food inflation does pose a challenge to the current rate but the Armed Forces remuneration and single Service pay teams are exploring options – although affordability constraints may prevent any uplift.

“Isn't it time to review the policy?”

'IT'S TIME TO JUMP ON THESE RIDICULOUS PARCEL RULES'

● I WORK in engagement, helping the recruiting effort, partly by showcasing how amazing our Army lives are.

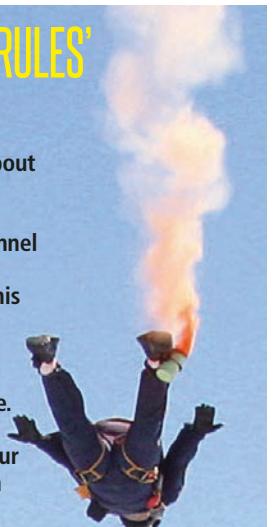
But that has been tarnished by policy changes which affect mail delivered to our residence at work address (the camp or mess) and our work location, which is at a different camp.

The rules mean we cannot always get goods purchased online, including kit for repairing our professional equipment, delivered easily. If they are not handled by Royal Mail, ParcelForce or UPS they get turned away. It's a ludicrous rule and one that undermines our welfare and work. — **Capt Oliver Soord-Gurney (PWRR), The Tigers Army Parachute Display Team**

Brig Alexander Smith, Chief of Staff in HQ Regional Command, replies: I am very sorry to hear about your frustrations and you raise an important issue.

It is absolutely right that personnel should enjoy the convenience of online shopping. We will ensure this is tackled through the ongoing review into the services provided by our garrisons and stations to ensure proper provision is in place.

In the meantime, I would encourage you to engage with your head of establishment or garrison headquarters to ensure they understand the issue, and to find out what steps they are taking.



IT'S TIME TO JUMP ON THESE RIDICULOUS PARCEL RULES

YOUR letters provide valuable insight but please be brief. Emails must include your name and location (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 in, you should first try to get an answer via your chain of command.

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BULLET POINTS

Bite-sized data to keep you in the know



COMPETITIONS

JULY 2023

HOAY winner (Nanogen hair items): Carl Bray, Catterick Garrison.

RULES: Winners chosen at random from all valid entries. Except where stated otherwise, competitions are open to readers aged 16 or over only. We have no responsibility for incorrect, incomplete, lost or delayed entries. Any winner will be bound by the terms and conditions attached to a prize. Where we are unable to contact a winner within one month, or any prize cannot be taken up or is declined or returned undelivered, a substitute winner may be drawn. At that point, the original winner shall cease to be eligible. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. *Soldier* is compliant with the Data Protection Act. We will not pass on your details to any third party without your prior consent. Automated entries, bulk entries or third-party entries will be disqualified. Competitions are not open to *Soldier* employees, competition sponsors or anyone else connected with the competition, or the immediate families or agents of the foregoing. We have the right to verify the eligibility and identity of any entrant. Prize winners acknowledge and agree that neither *Soldier* or any competition sponsor(s) or any of their employees, agents or subcontractors shall have any liability whatsoever in connection with the winner's use and/or possession of the prize.

SEARCHLINE

Calling all Staffords! Did you serve, or know anyone who served, in the 1944 Normandy campaign with the North or South Staffords, 59th (Staffordshire) Division? August 2024 will mark the 80th anniversary of their finest hour, the first successful crossing of the River Orne, which will be commemorated at a parade and memorial in France. Contact Peter Collins on 01543 434394 or curator@staffordshireregimentmuseum.com for more details.



WELFARE

If you have a problem, your **chain of command** and **unit welfare teams** are always a good starting point. They may also be able to help you find local support groups not listed below. **Padres** can provide individuals with

pastoral care and moral guidance, whatever their faith. Here are some other national organisations that can offer help:

Army HIVE

These centres provide information for the whole military community on a wide variety of topics affecting their everyday life, including relocation, accommodation, health and well-being, finance, non-UK nationals, education, employment, deployment, resettlement, military discounts and local area information.

army.mod.uk/hives

Forcesline

A free and confidential telephone helpline and email service for Regulars, Reserves, ex-Forces and their families.

0800 731 4880

ssafa.org.uk/get-help/forcesline

Army Welfare Service

Contact directly via rc-aws-iat-0mailbox@mod.gov.uk or 01904 882051/2053

ALCOHOL AND SMOKING

If you are concerned about someone else's health or your own you can get confidential, free advice from your medical officer during routine hours, or your unit duty officer.

Drinkline

A free, confidential helpline 0300 123 1110

NHS support

nhs.uk/livewell

BULLYING/HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION

Army Mediation Service

0306 770 7691 or mil 96770 7691
army-mediation-0mailbox@mod.gov.uk

Army Speak Out Helpline

0306 770 4656 or mil 96770 4656
army-speakout@mod.gov.uk

Defence BHD Helpline

Confidential, freephone and outside the chain of command 0800 014 2381

CHILDCARE/CARING/FAMILIES

Army Families Federation

The independent voice of Army families, offering confidential advice and support 01264 554004

aff.org.uk

Flexible working has been

introduced by the Army to help personnel tailor their work-life balance. This includes arrangements such as remote working, variable finish times and restricted separation. Read more in the *Flexible Working and You* guide on Modnet. Regulars can find out how this impacts pay and benefits at discovermybenefits.mod.gov.uk

DEBT AND MONEY PROBLEMS

These can be a considerable burden, made worse by dealing with them alone. The following organisations can provide support.

Forces Pension Society

A not-for-profit, independent military pension watchdog and enquiry service 020 7820 9988

forespensionsociety.org

Joining Forces Credit Union

Saving and affordable loans for the Armed Forces community from not-for-profit financial cooperatives joiningforcescu.co.uk

Money Helper

Government-backed money and pensions guidance with a wealth of in-depth guides, tools and calculators moneyhelper.org.uk

National Debtline

A charity that can talk through your options and help you take back control 0808 808 4000

nationaldebtline.org

StepChange Debt Charity

The UK's leading debt charity offering free, confidential advice 0800 138 1111

stepchange.org.uk

GAMBLING

National Gambling Helpline

Free information, support and counselling for problem gamblers in the UK 0808 8020 133

GRIEF

Cruse Bereavement Support

0808 808 1677

SSAFA support groups

A network of people who have been through a similar tragedy, giving you the opportunity to talk though your emotions with an understanding compassionate group

supportgroups@ssafa.org.uk

HOUSING

Joint Service Housing

Advice Office

The MoD's tri-Service focal point to provide Armed Forces personnel and their dependants with civilian housing information 07814 612120

rc-pers-jshao-0mailbox@mod.gov.uk

Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services 01748 833797

spaces.org.uk

Veterans Gateway

A first point of contact for veterans seeking support veteransgateway.org.uk

INJURY/SICKNESS

Personnel Recovery Centres

can be found across the UK. To find out more about your local service, speak to your unit welfare team, search for Army Recovery Capability on Defence Connect or email rc-pers-arc-0mailbox@mod.gov.uk

LOLONELINESS

Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs

A network of clubs to enjoy breakfast and banter, while combating social isolation afvbc.net

Samaritans

Someone to talk to, night or day, for free and without judgement 116 123

samaritans.org

The Royal British Legion

Contact the friendly team for information about local groups and support services 0808 802 8080

britishlegion.org.uk

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

There's always someone to talk to. Speak to your friends or family, boss or padre, unit welfare staff (details above), medical officer or GP. Charities and organisations that can also provide support include:

Combat Stress 24/7 Helpline

0800 138 1619

Headspace

All British Army personnel and civil servants can access this mindfulness app for free with an @armymail.mod.uk email address

work.headspace.com/britisharmy/member-enroll

Mind – The Mental Health Charity
0300 123 3393
mind.org

NHS
General mental health support
nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

Op Courage
A specialist NHS service for Armed Forces leavers, Reservists, veterans and their families. Search for "Op Courage" on nhs.uk to find your local team.

Samaritans
116 123
samaritans.org

The Ripple Pond
A self-help support network for relatives of physically or psychologically injured troops and veterans
0333 900 1028
theripplepond.org

Togetherall
A safe, online community where people support each other anonymously
togetherall.com

RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN/ABUSE
Aurora New Dawn

Safety for survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking
02394 216 816 aurorand.org.uk

ManKind
Support for male domestic abuse victims
01823 334244
mankind.org.uk

Relate
Relationship support relate.org.uk



REUNIONS

Royal Hampshire Territorials and Hampshire Companies, The Wessex Regiment 76th post-war reunion lunch will be held on Saturday, September 23 at the Winchester Royal Hotel in Hampshire. For more information – or to attend the event – contact Jim Cooper on 0239 2816 165 or email rhwstx@ yahoo.com

HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

No. 976



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TEN details have been changed in this picture of the head of the Army in Wales, Brig Nick Thomas, welcoming King Charles III to Brecon Barracks on his first official visit to Cymru since the Coronation.

Circle all the differences on the left image and send the panel to HOAY 976, *Soldier*, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU along with your contact details – including email address – by September 29.

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The winners' names will appear in the November issue and all the usual competition rules apply (see opposite page). Good luck!





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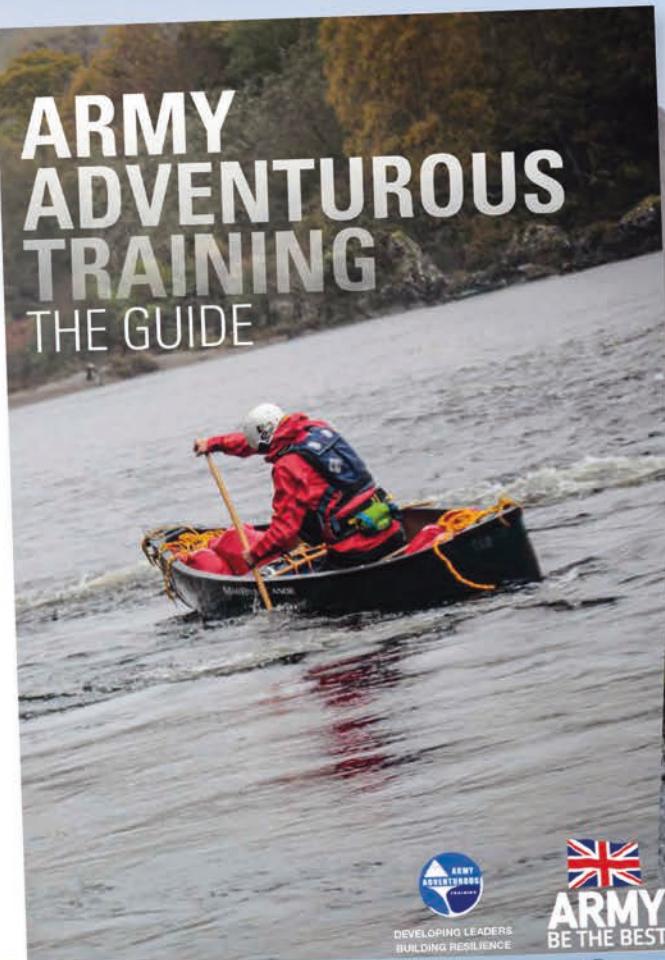
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REVIEWS

PICK OF THE MONTH

Classified: France '44

Out soon for PC

Second World War special ops outing looks promising...

► TURN-BASED strategy titles have proved popular since the dawn of home computing – when armchair commanders had to use their imagination to supplement the primitive graphics replicating the battlefield.

Even with the tech limitations of the 1980s, there was always a rich choice of theatres – from Gallipoli to Cold War Europe. But it was arguably Julian Gollop's 1986 sci-fi hit *RebelStar* on the ZX Spectrum and his later PC-based *XCom* series that cemented the template for the genre.

Creating an easy-to-learn fire and manoeuvre system for units on the battlefield, his gameplay dynamic has formed the basis of many titles since. Using these basic underpinnings, digital wargaming has evolved to reflect more complex environments, often impressively represented in 3D glory.

Classified: France '44 – a Second World War foray into the sector by publisher Team 17 – is the latest to take the genre forward.

Charging players with fuelling an insurgency as they spearhead a sabotage mission against Nazi forces ahead of Operation Overlord, commanders



GAMES



face a potent German military across settings such as factories and V-weapon sites.

Amid tight timeframes, players must deploy an Allied special forces group to cause maximum disruption. But this mission also requires the assistance of the French underground and managing their disparate agendas en route.

Players are helped with a strategic map of the occupied country – where they must decide where to invest resources and which resistance experts are suited to their cause. Skirmishes then take place using the now familiar turn-based interface.

Soldier was given hands-on time with a late-build demo of *Classified* and was suitably impressed despite our code still having some unresolved technical issues.

The game certainly offers a decent level of depth and plenty of satisfaction can be derived from assembling and arming a team of specialists.

It also has a few features that set it aside from its contemporaries. A morale system – which reflects how much stress a character is under – is a case in point.

Foes lose turns if they are suppressed effectively, while showering them with rounds accurately can force them to take flight from the battle altogether.

Victory conditions in the game are well thought out too. Commanders have 60 days in which to deal a decisive blow to the Nazi's defences around France. The

chances of the D-Day invasion succeeding are bolstered by each mission prosecuted well while failure means the invasion is more likely to be decisively repelled. Maintaining flexibility while finding a way to win is a challenge in itself.

All in all, *Classified* looks as if it will be impressive if the game's potential ultimately carries across to its finished form.

With tactical action aplenty as well as a reasonable nod to history, fans of the Second World War setting – matched to an *XCom*-style of gameplay – should be pleased. ■



Reviewer profile

Rank and name: Maj Tim Harcourt

Age: 40

Cap badge: Rifles

Current role: Chairman, Army Esports

Years of service: Regular 2012-2020; Reserve 2020-present

Operational experience: Herrick, Cabrit

VERDICT:

A promising start – we wait to see the finished product



MUSIC RELEASE



The Ballad of Darren

Blur

IF anything, *The Ballad of Darren* shows how far Damon Albarn's Britpop outfit has matured over the years – from noisy cynicism to a quieter reflection in later life. The tone of this album is a largely gentle affair of relaxed guitar riffs, strings and keyboards with *Russian Strings* and *Goodbye Albert* among the standout tracks. The inclusion of an emotional bonus song makes the purchase of the deluxe version of this album well worthwhile.

Cliff Caswell, *Soldier*

BOOK RELEASE



Goldie

By John Mayhead

THERE was an era when pushing the envelope of performance cars fired the public imagination – along with the drivers putting their lives on the line to break speed records. But while the likes of Malcolm Campbell and John Cobb remain etched on the consciousness, others are lost in the pages of history. Lt Col Alfred "Goldie" Gardner – who was awarded the Military Cross while serving with the Royal Artillery in the First World War – is one such case in point. Former Coldstream Guards major and motoring writer John Mayhead redresses the balance in his first book, published by the National Motor Museum. Charting Goldie's life, from overcoming injuries he suffered in conflict to becoming a racing pioneer, the author's lucid style makes this a decent read for enthusiasts and military historians.

Cliff Caswell, *Soldier*

MORE TOP PICKS

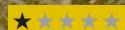


Movies

Johnny Z

Out now on digital

► FANS of martial arts-based zombie apocalypse actioners – and presumably they do exist – are in for a treat with this low budget gore-fest. Although they will also need a high tolerance for clunky dialogue, hammy acting and massive plot holes. The undead have taken over the earth and Johnny Z, whose blood holds the cure to the virus, is on the run from a sinister medical facility, helped by Kung fu grandmaster Jonray. Writer-director Jonathan Straiton (it's Johns all round for some strange reason) seems to have form in the genre judging by his previous effort – a horror-comedy about an STD-induced zombie epidemic. This bizarre offering is equally niche and – worryingly – its closing scene hints at a sequel. Please spare us. ■



Review: Becky Clark, *Soldier*

Atomic Hobo

► EXAMINING the Cold War era and how weapons of mass destruction shaped our world, journalist Julie McDowell provides a mix of on-the-spot reporting from disused bunkers and a dive into the archives. Her commentary – accompanied by audio artefacts including public information films – make for fascinating, if darkly comic, listening. McDowell's recently published book *Attack Warning Red* was also serialised on Radio 4 over the summer. Highly recommended, it provides a distillation of her thoughts in this podcast. All instalments of the audiobook are now available on the BBC Sounds archive. ■

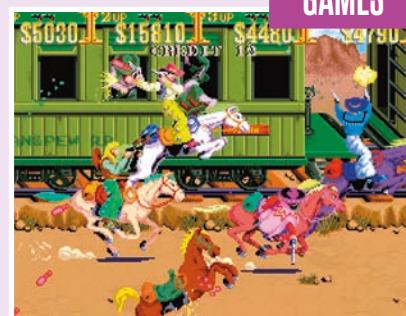


Review: Keith Merritt, civvy

PODCASTS



GAMES



One to try

► A REMASTERING of the coin-op titles of yesteryear, the all-formats Arcade Archives series is a worthy consideration for troops on exercise where downtime comes in short bursts. The games are easy to pick up, decent value at £6 or so each, and there are additions to the vault each month. Check out 1990s wild west shooter *Sunsetriders* (pictured) and beat 'em up *Vendetta* for starters. ■

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SOLDIER SPORT



BACK ON TRACK

THE Army motorcycle road race team posted some impressive results at Brands Hatch after a frustrating season to date. Injuries and deployments have taken their toll this year but the set-up is flourishing with a dedicated cohort of riders and pit crew. Read more on pages 62-63...



GET ON THE GRID: FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE ARMY MOTORCYCLE ROAD RACE TEAM FACEBOOK PAGE OR FOLLOW @ARMYMRRT ON X AND INSTAGRAM



LATTER SEASON SURGE

ARMY RIDERS EYE STRONG FINISH AFTER CHALLENGING CAMPAIGN TO DATE

THE Army motorcycle road race team is pushing for a strong end to the season after a series of disruptions hampered their track ambitions in the early part of 2023.

Injuries to key personnel and the unavailability of others meant the set-up has been unable to field its strongest riders on a consistent basis, allowing their Royal Air Force rivals to surge ahead in the Inter-Services standings.

However, there were encouraging signs in the team's latest outing at Brands Hatch, where WO2 Gav Watts (R Anglian) made the most of his position at the front of the grid to take the Forces chequered flag ahead of teammate Cpl Calvin Heaver (REME).

The latter is the defending Inter-Services individual champion, but a Falklands deployment has frustratingly limited his participation to just two events this year.

"I did round one at Snetterton and had two crashes, but still managed to win three of my five races," he told *SoldierSport* on the test day ahead of his Brands Hatch podium placing.

"I then deployed for three months and am now back on R&R. I'm also hoping to make the last round of the season.

"It is so addictive, and you have got to be on it all the time. In the build-up to a race there is so much anxiety and stress and you question why you are doing it. But once you are on the bike it is a fantastic feeling.

"It is a big step up; people think they are fast but when they actually come racing it can be a shock."

The Inter-Services is contested in the sprint

discipline and is staged by No Limits Racing as part of a series that features rounds at the top tracks in the country.

Additionally, Army riders compete in a variety of civilian championships, while also testing themselves in the endurance category, although there is no military prize on offer in this event.

Heaver, together with Watts and veteran Scott Halliday, excelled in this field in 2022 when they topped the standings in the Clubman 1,000 category. They added another win to their haul at Brands Hatch.

However, such success did not happen overnight for Heaver. He joined the team in 2017 and spent his first two years working with the pit crew before embarking on his debut rookie season.

"That is the natural path," he explained. "It gives you the chance to see how the paddock works and understand racing, and everything that goes into it.

"It's not just a case of bringing your bike and getting out on track. When I first joined the pit crew, I thought it was incredible. I sold my road bike, bought a track bike, did a couple of track days and then started racing."

While the Army supports the team the discipline still incurs significant personal investment – Heaver estimates he spent around £20,000 on the sport he loves last season alone.

Teammate Cpl Tyler Viveiros (RE) said the Service's backing is vital and admitted his participation would be doubtful had he not received such assistance.

"It is everything from being released by the chain of



**"YOU
HAVE
GOT TO
BE ON IT
ALL THE
TIME"**

command to funding for things like safety equipment and tyres," the soldier, who finished third in the No Limits Standard Twins Championship race at Brands Hatch, explained.

"It is such an expensive sport and riding at the front and competing in the various rounds would be almost impossible without the Army's support."

Viveiros suffered a broken back at Snetterton in March and was sidelined for four-and-a-half months before returning at Anglesey, where he managed to claim two victories.

"I was not expecting to win straight away," he said. "I had the mentality of wanting to get back on the bike and my recovery was quicker than it should have been."

"Having races to look forward to was the dangling carrot. If you get on the bike thinking you are not going to get injured at some point you are naive. We are all aware of the risks."

"I still have a few niggles, but I feel confident on the bike. I have missed so many races that a championship win is almost impossible and it's now about enjoying the rest of the season."

Viveiros progressed to the team after attending the annual British Army Track Day and 55 riders took to the grid for its latest staging in the aftermath of the Brands Hatch action.

Featuring expert tuition, it welcomes talent of all experience levels and offers an insight into the Service team and how it operates.

"Some have never done track days before and it is a good opportunity to come and see a different part of what the Army has to offer," said organiser Sgt Mick Partridge (R Signals). ■



GET ON COURT: ARMY TENNIS IS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR PLAYERS OF ALL ABILITIES. FOR MORE DETAILS EMAIL IHAIGS@BRITISHARMYSPORT.COM



COURT APPEAL REMAINS HIGH AS TITLES SECURED

T WAS a familiar story on the courts of Wimbledon as the Army built on their impressive form of recent seasons to claim another double at the Inter-Services Tennis Championships.

However, it proved to be a sterner test for the men compared to the previous two years – when they won a combined 23 ties out of 24 – and they were indebted to the fine form of Reservist Pte Marco Wright (4 Para, main picture), who ended the competition with a 100 per cent record in the singles and doubles.

The number two seed – who once played on the ITF Futures circuit – started his campaign in style as he outclassed Royal Navy rival CSgt Chris Jones (RM) 6-1, 6-1, although he praised his opponent's efforts afterwards.

“The score does not reflect how close some of the games were,” he told *SoldierSport*.

“I am thrilled with the result. This is the third time I have

played here and I'm happy to continue winning matches.

“As a team we have not lost in that time, and I want to keep that run going.

“We have a lot of matches on hard courts and train on the grass for only a week each year. This season it was just a day-and-a-half due to the rain, but it is always a pleasure to come to Wimbledon and play on such a special surface.”

Wright then downed Royal Air Force number two AS1 Mike Greedy in straight sets to finish the opening day on a high.

Top seed Maj Ben Rogers (RA) also started in style as he recorded a routine 6-1, 6-1 victory over the Navy's Lt Doug Trimmer before succumbing to the RAF's Flt Lt James Marchant, who was crowned men's Inter-Services individual champion.

And there was disappointment for the returning Maj Scott Sears (RGR), who lost both contests as

number three seed.

Trailing the RAF after the singles draw, the men hit form in the doubles to finish with eight rubbers – one clear of the airmen, with the Navy securing three. Again, Wright won both of his matches to cap an impressive individual display.

Success proved more of a formality for the women, who won five of their six singles matches to lay the foundations for another title.

Number two seed Maj Fiona Welborn (RADC, pictured left) produced the most eye-catching performance of the day, coming back from a set down to defeat the Senior Service's Capt Katharine Armstrong in an epic encounter that lasted more than two hours.

“It was a really tough match,” the Reservist said afterwards. “She is always a difficult opponent and if you do not bring your A game you have to work



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A SWEET
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for every point.

"In a team competition such as this every game and set counts, so even if you think you're not going to win you have to keep pushing forward.

"Going into the second set I knew I had to fight. She started to make a few more mistakes and I began to play my tennis."

She then downed Flt Lt Andrea Jackson in her second match.

As a veteran of the team Welborn is no stranger to the courts of SW19 but admitted the venue still holds the same appeal as it did in her very first tie.

"When you walk through those gates you feel like a child in a sweet shop," she added. "You look at the grass and think 'I cannot believe I am here'. That will never grow old and the fact you can say 'I played at Wimbledon' is amazing."

Top seed Cpl Chloe Pike (Int Corps, pictured below) cruised to a 6-0, 6-0 triumph over the Navy's LNN Sunny Parker in her opening tie, before losing to eventual individual champion AS1 Eve Brady of the RAF.

Number three Pte Georgie Mullin (RAMC) was victorious in both her matches and the Army claimed five further wins in the doubles – including two for Welborn – to finish on ten rubbers, with the RAF on six and Navy two. ■



TENNIS IN NUMBERS

WINS FROM
FOUR
MATCHES
FOR PTE
MARCO
WRIGHT
AND MAJ
FIONA
WELBORN

4

SUCCESSION
TOURNAMENT
DOUBLES FOR
THE ARMY
MEN'S AND
WOMEN'S
TEAMS

3

RUBBERS
WON BY
THE MEN'S
MASTERS
SQUAD AS
THE ARMY
CLAIMED
ANOTHER
SERVICES
CROWN, BUT
THE WOMEN
LOST OUT
TO THE RAF

5

INDIVIDUAL
TITLES WON
BY THE
ROYAL AIR
FORCE

2



MULLIN HOLDS HER NERVE

WOMEN'S third seed Pte Georgie Mullin (RAMC) enjoyed a singles debut to remember as back-to-back wins contributed to a convincing team triumph.

The Reservist had previously graced the Wimbledon courts in the doubles competition and admitted the step up proved daunting at first.

"I was so nervous going in," Mullin (pictured) told *SoldierSport* after she opened her account with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Flt Lt Rachael Kidner of the Royal Air Force.

"It is such a big occasion, and it was so helpful having a coach on court with me to offer some calming words.

"I tried to stay focused and not get carried away. I managed to move her from side to side quite well and she settled into the match in the second set. But I kept pushing her to make a mistake, rather than going for the winner, and it worked well.

"It was an honour to be selected and I started to enjoy it more the longer the match went on."

She completed a successful day by defeating the Royal Navy's Cdr Kate Scott.

While Mullin sampled Wimbledon singles action for the first time it proved to be the final outing for top seed Cpl Chloe Pike (Int Corps) as a Regular soldier.

She is due to leave the Army shortly but plans to continue her military career as a Reservist and admitted the lure of the iconic venue influenced her decision.

"It played a really big part," Pike added.

"Having the opportunity to come back here was a huge incentive for me."

"You never get over the fact you are playing on these courts. They almost look like they're too good to be true and you rarely get a bad bounce – this place is amazing." ■



SPORT SHORTS



Bouldering brilliance

THE Infantry Bouldering Championships proved to be a firm success with climbers from across the formation travelling to the Last Sun Dance gym in Leeds to compete.

The event was won by LCpl Connor Higginson (Para), with Rfn Ryan Chamberlain second and LCpl Adam Myers (both Rifles) third.

It proved to be the ideal warm-up for the Armed Forces Bouldering League, which gets under way in Swindon on September 13, and is due to be staged again next year.



Picture: Grace Sercombe

Golden return in Scotland

THE Army women's tug of war team showed their strength in a successful outing at the British and Irish Championships in Scotland.

Representing England in the senior ladies 560kg weight category, they won gold on the opening day – a feat that was repeated as they pulled on their Service colours in the club open competition 24 hours later. They also took silver in the 520kg ranks.

The team was in action at the World Championships as this issue went to press. Read a full report from the competition in the October edition.

PROMISE SHOWN AT ICE DEBUT

PLANS to form an Army women's ice hockey team took a positive step forward with a successful showing at its inaugural learn to play event.

Split between rinks in Cambridge, Romford and Chelmsford, the sessions welcomed 30 players to the venues and there were encouraging signs for those in charge.

"We had a huge mix, from an ex-GB player to complete novices," Lt Col Laura Ellis (REME), chair of the Army Ice Hockey Association, told *SoldierSport*.

"Around a third had played before, including some who have served at Batus, while others had previous skating experience. For the total newcomers it was a chance to see if they enjoyed it and we managed to loan some learn to play kit so cost wasn't an issue."

"Overall, it was an opportunity to get everyone together and show there is an interest to develop this in the Army."

British international Sig Jess Sprules (R Signals, pictured) has been flying the flag for the women's game and the set-up has welcomed 68 personnel to its ranks since its official launch in April.

"It is absolutely amazing and I'm quite shocked by how much interest there has been," Ellis added.

"People always come out of the woodwork. We had one soldier who had never played before but did figure skating when she was younger – she took to it like a duck to water."

"We are now waiting on feedback from the players on the best way to move forward but the aspiration is to have a training session at least every other month before taking on the Royal Air Force at the next Inter-Services." ■



**"SHE
TOOK TO
IT LIKE A
DUCK TO
WATER"**



ARMY American football players will step on to the big stage this month as they compete in their inaugural Inter-Services match against the Royal Navy in Abingdon. Staged at Tilsley Park, the game starts at 1900 on September 22. They then face the Royal Air Force on November 3.

MONTH IN SPORT

September's key dates...



WHAT: Inter-Corps Twenty20 Cricket
WHEN: September 5 to 8
WHERE: Larkhill, Tidworth and Aldershot
NEED TO KNOW: Having

moved from its traditional early season berth, this short-format festival brings the campaign to a close. Can the Royal Logistic Corps defend their title?



WHAT: Inter-Services Cross Country Mountain Bike Championships
WHEN: September 6
WHERE: Woody's Bike Park, Cornwall
NEED TO KNOW: Male, female and team trophies will be up for grabs as the military's top riders test themselves on a course featuring a mix of single track, switch back climbs and technical features



the Royal Navy, with the women starting as firm favourites for the silverware. The men will be looking to improve on a disappointing showing last time out

WHAT: Inter-Services Rugby League
WHEN: September 15
WHERE: Portsmouth
NEED TO KNOW: The

Army begin their campaign against



Pictures: Craig Hawkhead/York RLFC

ROBERTS RETURNS FOR TROPHY PUSH



"I CAN COMMIT ENOUGH TIME TO COME BACK"

FORMER England international SSgt Carrie Roberts (REME) made an instant impact on her return to the Women's Super League with York Valkyrie.

The 33-year-old signed for the outfit at the back end of the campaign and scored a try on her full debut, while also kicking three goals, as they ran out 58-10 winners over Warrington Wolves.

She was then named player of the match as York beat Wigan Warriors 36-4 to retain the League Leaders' Shield with a game to spare, qualifying for the tournament's semi-finals. The Super League Grand Final will be played on the weekend of October 7-8.

Roberts enjoyed a successful spell at St Helens, winning the treble in 2021 and the Challenge Cup last season. She also played at the World Cup, scoring in the 54-4 win over Canada.

The soldier left the Saints at the end of the season to focus on her Army career but felt the time was right to return to rugby league.

"I'm back in work full-time and have now settled into the job," she explained. "I felt like I had the opportunity to commit enough time to come back. Hopefully I can help the team bring home some silverware."

Roberts joins a growing number of Army players starring in the Super League, with Bdr Beth Dainton (RA), Cpl Kaiya Glynn, Pte Tara Moxon (both RAMC) and Pte Jenna Greening (RLC) all on the books of Leeds Rhinos.

Dainton and Greening both started, while Moxon was among the interchanges for Leeds as they faced defending champions St Helens in last month's Challenge Cup final.

It was the first women's showpiece to be staged at Wembley Stadium but, unfortunately, the Service trio found themselves on the wrong side of a 22-8 scoreline.

And there was further disappointment in the women's Super League South competition, where the Army saw their campaign end at the semi-final stage with a 22-12 loss to London Broncos. ■



TEN-MINUTE TRY SPREE GUIDES INFANTRY TO GLORY

A FOUR-try burst midway through the second half saw the Infantry overcome an eight-point deficit to surge to victory in rugby league's Lawson Cup final.

Trailing 12-8 to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers at the interval, their hopes hung in the balance as they conceded the first try of the second period when Cfn Pita Moku sprinted home for his second score of the afternoon.

However, a defensive slip gifted the Infantry a foothold and Rfn Iliuta Naulumata (Rifles) punished the mistake by ghosting in under the posts, leaving Cpl Jamie Irving (Lancs) a simple kick for the extras.

Replacement Pte James Uluikavoro (R Yorks) crossed moments later for another converted score and when Kgn Pita Tamani (Lancs) held off two tacklers to round off a slick passing move in the corner, the Infantry were 24-16 ahead.

Naulumata then delivered

the knockout blow as a scintillating break from LCpl Niumia Corivuka (R Yorks) created the platform for the wing to cross out wide, with Irving again slotting the conversion.

REME skipper Cpl Peter Holmes sparked hopes of a comeback as he battled his way over late on, but as the clock ticked down further chances failed to follow as the contest ended 30-22.

The clinical rugby was in contrast to an attritional first half, in which the error count was high as the teams battled heavy downpours, as well as each other. LCpl Isikeli Bainivalumailepanoni opened the scoring for the REME, with Sgt Dom Carroll adding the conversion, before Naulumata scrambled to the line for the Infantry five minutes later.

Tamani and Moku traded tries, with Carroll slotting another conversion and then a penalty to leave the REME dreaming of victory at half-time.

LAWSON CUP FINAL

INF

30

REME

22



"It was difficult for both teams and the conditions were ruthless," Sjt Liam Pickles (Rifles), part of the Infantry coaching team, told *SoldierSport* afterwards.

"We both weathered that quite well but as soon as the sun started to shine, we seemed to have a bit more fight than them.

"When we fell behind, I wasn't too worried as we still had time on our hands, as well as the players who could make a difference. We also made our interchanges early to stop people blowing up.

"We lost to the REME by the same scoreline in the opening round and our mantra for this week was 'it's not how you start, but how you finish'.

"Our captain, LCpl Kajii Sugavaua (Rifles), has been an inspiration to the team all year. Operationally we have been stretched, which has been a challenge, but we have a good core of players that have carried us through." ■

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ARMY WHITE FLEET CHANGES

*Book your car
as early as possible*

The Army is spending significant amounts of money on avoidable vehicle rentals while failing to fully utilise its lease vehicles. A transformation programme is under way targeting poor utilisation. To be successful we require a change in personnel behaviours. Do you know...

FLEET AVAILABILITY

- You may have to collect an Army lease car from a nearby unit for your booking
- Lease vehicles will always be used before a vehicle is hired
- The White fleet optimisation programme has been designed to benefit the end user experience
- Operational needs of the Army will always be supported

ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY

- If rentals are required, MT departments should investigate off contract rentals in order to achieve the best price

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT

- Book your car as early as possible to enable better planning by the MT teams
- Return your vehicle on time
- Return it with a full tank of fuel
- And make sure you return your vehicle to a nominated individual



The Army has launched a new management system to provide a better user experience and ensure we increase use of our lease fleet. Further information can be found in the new ACSO 4423 using the following QR code.





TITLE TARGET: ARMY CYCLISTS WILL LOOK TO RETAIN THEIR INTER-SERVICES ROAD RACE CROWNS ON SEPTEMBER 27

» CYCLING



STARTING IN STYLE

FORWARD Cpl Ifereimi Boladau (R Signals) was among the try scorers as the UK Armed Forces recorded a comfortable win in their opening match at the International Defence Rugby Competition.

The military outfit crossed seven times on their way to a 43-14 success against Tonga, with Gnr Sai Laudola (RA) and LCpl Mana Cakau (RE) also touching down, while Bdr Owain Davies (RA) kicked three conversions.

Seven Army players were named in the starting line-up, with a further five soldiers included among the replacements.

UKAF were in action against Georgia and Spain in their remaining pool fixtures as this issue went to press.

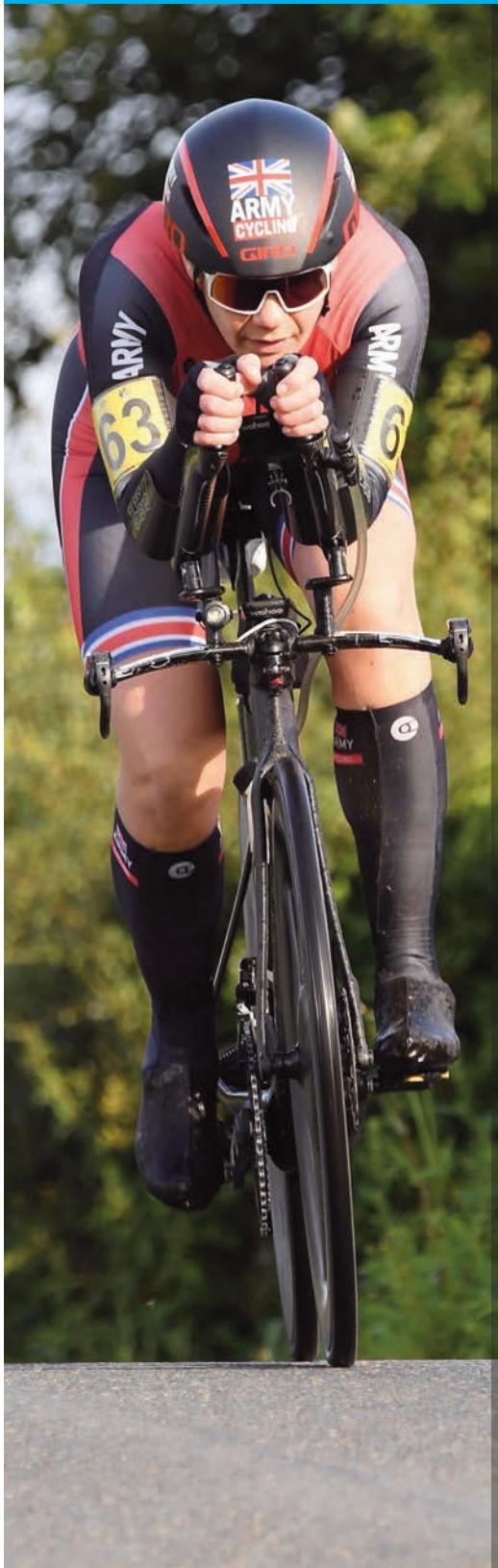
Knockout rounds then follow ahead of the final, which will be played on Saturday, September 9.

“We’re on WhatsApp”



Put your gripes to the Army's top brass on **07973 614782**

MURRAY'S RIDE OF RESILIENCE



TORRENTIAL downpours and a bout of food poisoning failed to deter Lt Col Christina Murray's (Int Corps) bid for glory in cycling's National 24-hour Time Trial.

An entire month's rainfall fell in the space of just 13 hours in rural Shropshire but the punishing conditions failed to deter the officer as she covered a total of 465 miles to be crowned women's champion for a third time.

The feat was made more impressive by the fact she battled sickness through the night – a condition that was later diagnosed as food poisoning and required a ten-day recovery.

“On the previous occasions I won I set new national records in the process but that was never going to happen this time,” Murray told *SoldierSport*.

“Going in the forecast looked really bad. I started at 1400 and then it rained from 1500 to 0400. It was incessant, and some of the back roads were completely flooded; it was horrendous.

“There were some concerns around safety, but from a rider's perspective you just deal with it. If you get 12 hours in and the race is cancelled everything you have done is in vain.

“You adjust to the weather. Normally you make the best progress by going as fast as you can, but what happens when you hit a flooded pothole you can't see?

“You are better off slowing down, riding to the conditions and avoiding the incidents that could cost time in the long run. The worst scenario is not being able to finish due to your own stupidity.”

With the elements under relative control, Murray then faced another challenge seven hours in.

“I started to feel ill at around 2100 and then had ten hours of stomach misery – I just felt awful,” she continued. “Vomiting, while pedalling was a new skill I learnt.

“But it was an interesting problem in terms of resilience and having to change plan. I wasn't able to eat much as I was so ill, but I had to keep going.

“I had aspirations of beating my record but with the rain, and then the illness, I knew it could not be reached.”

Murray fell 25 miles short of her previous best but still managed to finish sixth in the overall field – beaten only by five male cyclists. And despite the various setbacks she was on the move for all but ten minutes of the 24-hour timeframe. ■



BOYNTON'S DEBRIEF

DEFEAT to the Royal Air Force marked the Army's first 50-over loss of the 2023 campaign and skipper Sgt Jay Bonyton (REME, pictured above) told *SoldierSport* his players should be proud of their efforts despite the setback.

"I'm so proud of the lads," he added. "I've not seen a season where we have been undefeated leading into the Inter-Services.

"We've beaten Warwickshire's academy team and a Hampshire second XI and have brought in a number of new faces. We had four new caps against the RAF.

"Having our game against the Royal Navy washed out did not help and we didn't do enough with the bat. Given the strength of our bowling, we would have been in the game with a score of 200.

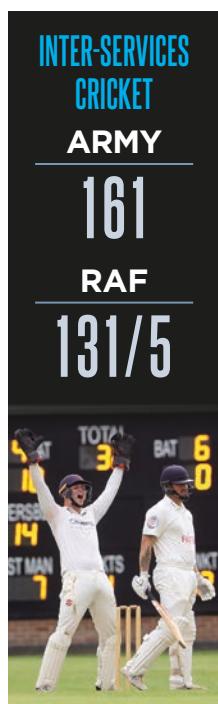
"Ross Dearden batted fantastically, and by getting to 160 we had a chance.

"We reduced them to 30-4 and at that point dismissing their captain, Tom Shorthouse, early would have made a real difference.

"This result just shows how close the RAF and Army are. The Twenty20 was very tight and it is good for Services cricket, although you always want to be on the winning side."



DEARDEN'S DEFIANCE NOT ENOUGH



THE Army's cricketers missed out on another Inter-Services double as a below-par batting performance saw them slip to a five-wicket defeat to the Royal Air Force in the final of the 50-over format.

Having lost the toss and being asked to bat, the soldiers made a brisk start with opener Cpl Varun Bali (AGC (SPS)) – playing his last game in Service colours – hitting a rapid-fire 25

Colours - hitting a rapid-fire 25.

However, his departure at the hands of Sgt Keiran Pearce sparked a flurry of wickets as they slipped from 30-0 to 56-5.

Skipper Sgt Jay Boynton (REME) set about repairing the damage alongside WO2 Ross Dearden (RE, pictured above), with the latter playing the more aggressive role in a stand of 49.

But with the platform set Boynton was bowled by spinner Sgt Ash Watson, leaving Dearden to play a lone hand.

With wickets falling around him, the all-rounder hit eight fours and a six in a fine knock of 75 that was ended when he was caught at fine leg off the

bowling of Sgt Sean McCabe. His dismissal brought the innings to a close on 161.

With a low total to defend, the soldiers were desperate for early wickets and they got exactly that as Cpl Ross Diver was caught at slip by Dearden in Boynton's first over.

Seamer Bdr Nick Schofield (RA) then trapped dangerman Flt Lt Adam Fisher leg before for a duck and when Boynton claimed the scalp of Cpl Adam Sutcliffe – courtesy of a stunning slip catch by Dearden – the RAF were rocking at 19-3.

Sgt Denson Narayan (RLC) added to the Army's joy as he dismissed AS1 Ellis Richards for seven before Cpl Tom Shorthouse and AS1 Sam Beales dug in to stop the rot.

Beale dug in to stop the 1st. Having played conservatively they hit the accelerator with the rain clouds looming and when the heavens opened, they were narrowly ahead.

Play resumed after an hour-and-a-half and the airmen reached their revised target of 130 with nine balls to spare.

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ABF The Soldiers' Charity is a registered charity in England and Wales (1146420) and Scotland (SC039189) and registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (07974609).



I'm mainly asked about the travel – the places I've been, that kind of thing. Army life is good although it has its ups and downs like any other job.

Gdsm Ben Davies, Coldm Gds



They ask me what it's like being a Reservist – I tell them I appreciate civvy life more after coming back from 22-hour days on exercise to a warm, comfortable bed!

Rfn Ben Steed, Rifles



They are generally curious about what soldiers do on a day-to-day basis. They tend to think of our battalion being responsible for ceremonial duties – and don't know as much about our core green business.

Gdsm Luke Bungay, Coldm Gds

Pictures: Maj Nicholas Hedges, Rifles and Lsgt Carl McClelland, Gren Gds

Interviews: Cliff Caswell



I've only been in the Reserve for eight months. I'm usually asked about the time commitment and how you fit military life around civvy jobs.

Rfn Simeon Bradstock, Rifles



Friends often quiz me about career stuff – such as whether I have done any promotion courses. They knew I was joining and want to know how I'm getting on.

Cpl Daniel Pugh, Coldm Gds



Those I know tend to ask what training is like in the Army Reserve, among other things. I think lots of people would enjoy military life if they gave it a chance.

Rfn Tristan Rolfe, Rifles

I'm in the situation where most of my immediate family served in the military – my uncle deployed in Iraq with The Rifles and even my nan was in the Royal Air Force – so they're familiar with the life when we chat about it at home. Civvy mates want to know where I've been and what I'm doing, though.

Gdsm Josh Hall, Coldm Gds



Inside track

Soldiers reveal the most common things their civvy friends ask them about Army life

Civvies tend to ask questions such as whether I've ever been shot at or had to shoot at anyone. Having served on an Op Herrick tour, they are curious about Afghanistan as well as other places I've travelled to.

LCpl Anthony Woodward, Coldm Gds





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