

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

MESSING MEN OF THE SOMME



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personal stories
behind the bloodbath

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Faces behind the figures

STATISTICS can be difficult to escape in the British Army.

Whether it is sport results (pages 75-88), the Freedom of Information figures splashed across the headlines or details given out in routine orders, life in uniform is under constant measurement.

But in an age where any fact imaginable can be sought online at the click of a button, it is easy for the relevance of such data to be drowned out by the volume.

Who cares that two thirds of troops told a survey they are satisfied with their kit and leave allocation (pages 28-30)? If you are one of the ones who feel differently the number itself is of little consequence.

This month *Soldier* marks the 100th anniversary of one of the most disastrous conflicts in British history. The Battle of the Somme saw 19,240 fatalities in its first few hours – more than 40 times Afghanistan's total death toll in a single day.

The scale of this loss is hard to fathom.

And by the time this issue hits the shelves the official commemorations will be over.

But let's hope the digital age never drowns out the stories behind these figures.

Turn to pages 37-47 and 90 to learn more about the human cost of some of the most horrific statistics you will ever encounter. ■



Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

Where to find *Soldier* magazine...

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Online

DIGITAL versions of current and past editions are available on the Army website at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk. Just click on "read it now".

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Picture: Graeme Main/Wadie Macment

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"This time round we are much more in the spotlight"

Stanning sets sights on Rio

p76

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Uphill struggle

Report reveals size of housing task

COMPLAINTS received by CarillionAmey over the upkeep of Service family accommodation hit a peak of 1,433 in February, according to a National Audit Office report.

That was almost double the average number coming in during the first half of 2015.

The document sheds light on the obstacles the contractor must overcome if it is to perform as well as its managing director wants.

Last month Daniel Easthope told *Soldier* his firm needed to significantly improve by the summer.

Around 1,100 complaints per month were being registered at the time. But the company's contracted target figure is around 650.

The latest report reveals this goal was achieved just once in the 12

months to February 2016.

It also shows that satisfaction levels with accommodation stand at their lowest level for seven years.

CarillionAmey promised to put an aggressive improvement plan in place at a crisis meeting with Defence Secretary Michael Fallon in February.

An MoD spokesman said: "This is a matter of huge importance. No properties below 'decent homes' standards are now allocated to Service personnel and their families."

Later this year the MoD will draw up potential new accommodation schemes for troops and their families.

Soldiers will help shape the plan via a survey due to be distributed in the coming weeks and part of the idea is to help more personnel live in private digs.

However, subsidised units will remain part of the offer.

The long road ahead:
New data reveals the level of dissatisfaction with some Service accommodation

IN NUMBERS:

50,000

Number of Service family accommodation units in the UK

87%

OF IT MEETS THE GOVERNMENT'S "DECENT HOMES" STANDARD

1 IN 2

Armed Forces personnel are satisfied with their SFA

58%

Increase in repairs and maintenance enquiries to the AFF since 2014

SOMME 100

■ REMEMBRANCE services were being held across the UK and France as this issue went to press to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

As part of the effort to encourage communities to get involved The Royal British Legion has launched a special mobile and tablet app.

Available as a free download from iTunes and Google Play, it includes first-hand written and audio accounts, film and photos.

The charity has also launched a campaign to remember the sporting heroes who died in the conflict and is running a series of events at the National Memorial Arboretum until November.

Visit www.britishlegion.org.uk/somme100

Dark day
- p 37-47

SERVICE SATISFACTION WITH REPAIR WORK



PRIDE FOR PERSONNEL

■ THE Royal Military Academy Sandhurst signalled its support for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community by lighting up the famous Old College building in rainbow colours during Pride in London 2016. More than 200 personnel took part in this year's march through the capital's streets.





1 UK

SNIPERS HIT THE MARK

SHARPSHOOTERS from across the British military took on their allies from Germany, France, Canada and Denmark in the annual International Sniper Competition.

The event on Salisbury Plain saw pairings from the Army, Royal Marines and Royal Air Force Regiment compete in live stalk, night engagement, urban and long range contact assessments.

Soldiers from the British Army Combat Shooting Team took top spot, with the Coldstream Guards second and Canadians third.



“
The soldiers
have loved this
”



2 CYPRUS

TEMPERATURES RISE

FUTURE junior NCOs from 159 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps had an array of military skills tested as they took to the blazing heat of Cyprus for Exercise Lion Star.

The package saw 120 Reserve personnel tackle live-firing drills on the ranges of Akrotiri and Episkopi, before getting an insight into dog handling techniques, bayonet training and helicopter sorties.

“The soldiers have loved this,” said WO1 Russell Clarke, the unit’s sergeant major. “They’ve been exposed to tasks they would not normally do as, fundamentally, we’re a supply regiment.”



EYES ON THE PRIZE

Officer focuses on Olympic bid –
pages 76-77

3 TURKEY

TESTED IN TURKEY

A 100-strong contingent from 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh travelled to Turkey for a large-scale multinational training exercise led by the host country.

The personnel of D Company worked alongside counterparts from the USA, Germany, Poland, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

After being dropped at a landing site by Black Hawk and Cougar helicopters, the soldiers attacked a number of positions to clear enemy fighters and hold territory.

Officer commanding Maj Ross MacLachlan said: “Taking part in air assaults is not something we normally do but this allows the guys to get that wider experience.”





IN NUMBERS: **19,240**

Poppy pins commissioned by The Royal British Legion to honour every soldier killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Read about the offensive on pages 37-47



4 EGYPT

FLYING MISSION

AIRBORNE engineers have returned from an arduous three-month construction mission to support stabilisation efforts in the Middle East.

Some 100 troops from 9 Parachute Squadron, part of 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment, deployed to the Sinai Peninsula to update infrastructure at bases used by the Multinational Force and Observers, a non-UN peacekeeping organisation.

“
This allows
the guys
to get
that wider
experience
”

5 BELIZE

JOYS OF THE JUNGLE

AROUND 100 soldiers from 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment have been testing jungle warfare techniques on Exercise Mayan Warrior.

The troops learned how to operate in sweltering temperatures, navigate the lush terrain undetected and strike enemy positions fast and hard from close quarters.

WO2 Stephen Mulhearn commented: "The environment is unforgiving; if soldiers aren't on top of their personal admin they will easily pick up diseases."



6 KENYA

MEDICS ON A MISSION

ARMY medics have been working with the Kenyan government to provide healthcare to villagers in some of the country's most remote regions.

Some 150 Reserve and Regular personnel from 2 Medical Regiment set up outreach clinics across the areas of Isiolo, Laikipia and Samburu as part of Exercise Askari Serpent.

Each clinic lasted two to four days and by the end of the six-week package 5,000 people had been treated.

As well as dealing with common ailments, one patient – a Samburu warrior – came to the centre after dark having been bitten by a highly venomous puff adder.



7 AUSTRALIA

RESERVISTS DEPLOY DOWN UNDER

A JOINT British-Australian training package gave Reservists from 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment the chance to spend three weeks testing their infantry skills in the outback north of Adelaide.

Exercise Morlancourt saw the troops rehearsing patrols, ambushes and attacks in temperatures of up to 40 degrees Celsius, in preparation for taking part in one of the Australian Army's largest annual exercises.

As well as familiarising themselves with their counterparts' tactics, operating procedures and weapons such as F88 Austeyr rifles and F89 Minimi light machine guns, the British soldiers received lessons on heat injuries and snake bites.



"I'm concerned about what will happen to constantly mobile families"

– Home Truths, page 12

DEEPCUT VERDICT GIVEN 20 YEARS ON

■ A RECRUIT'S death from a gunshot wound to the head at Deepcut Barracks in 1995 was suicide, a coroner has ruled.

Pte Cheryl James, 18, was one of four youngsters to die at the base over a seven-year period.

Coroner Brian Barker QC said Pte James fired the gun intentionally.

During the inquest the Service admitted an abuse and misuse of power by some of those in charge of the young trainees.

Brig John Donnelly, Director of Army Personal Services, added that the organisation was "truly sorry" for the low levels of supervision provided for the trainees at Deepcut 20 years ago.

"We have made many profound changes since 1995, which the coroner has acknowledged, but we do recognise that change is a continuous process," he said.

A BBC Two documentary aired after the verdict saw former trainee soldiers speak up about the physical, sexual and racial abuse suffered at Deepcut.

“
The Service has made many profound changes
”

BULLYING: WHAT TO DO UNDER FIRE...

Call the Army's confidential Speak Out bullying and harassment helpline on **96770 4656**

If you would rather not speak to someone directly you can also email army-speakout@mod.uk

Remember that **mistreatment online counts**. Cases of cyberbullying can be reported in the same way and will be investigated.

Consider the **Army Mediation Service**. Around 80 mediators have been trained up in recent years yet only 37 mediations were delivered in 2015.



The longest drop

New record for British paratroopers



SOLDIERS have conducted the longest ever insertion flight by British paratroopers.

Planning and communications specialists from 16 Air Assault Brigade Headquarters dropped into Poland after a transatlantic flight from Fort Bragg on a US Air Force C-17.

The landmark jump marked the start of the international training package Exercise Swift Response, which saw more than 5,000 troops from ten Nato countries train alongside each other.

The paratroopers jumped with their American counterparts after the ten-hour, 7,400-kilometre journey.

Among them was patrol commander SSgt Martin Corbett of 216 (Parachute) Signal Squadron.

"It's quite a thing to have flown the longest insertion by British airborne forces, but this exercise hasn't given me time to think about it," the Serviceman explained.

● Exercise Swift Response – pages 22-27

Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC

Sex assault and rape: do you know all the facts?

ONE hundred sex offence allegations are made against British soldiers every year on average – half of which relate to rape, according to the Army.

In response to this statistic, the Service has embarked on another campaign to educate troops about the issue of consent and what constitutes assault.

Units are being encouraged to display a

series of hard-hitting posters (see page 50) and run short DVD-led training sessions on the issue. A 15-minute sexual consent presentation from the Royal Military Police is also available. The initiative follows a similar awareness campaign run last year.

"Victims can sometimes not report rape because they mistakenly believe that it was somehow their fault or that they will not be

believed," Col Adam McRae from the Army's Directorate of Personal Services told *Soldier* in 2015.

"Talk to someone. Ideally tell the RMP or civil police immediately. Inform the chain of command, the medical officer, the padre or the welfare officer, but tell someone."

For details on the latest campaign and the training materials available read **ABN 79/16**.

"We could definitely do this for real, without a shadow of a doubt"

– Troops make Swift Response, pages 22–27



Tall ambition...



Twas PT with a difference for CSgt Carl Rufferley (Lancs) and double amputee Rick Clement when the daring pair scaled Blackpool Pleasure Beach's 235ft rollercoaster, The Big One.

They were taking part in an abseiling challenge staged by ABF The Soldiers' Charity, which saw Clement hauled to the top of the landmark fairground ride by his comrade in an Army rucksack before descending the drop in a specially modified harness.

The former platoon sergeant lost both his legs after stepping on an IED in Afghanistan in 2010.

"I carried a Bergen for so many years, it was about time that one carried me," the veteran told a local newspaper.

"I thought I might get nervous going over the edge but I didn't. I ended up really enjoying the view."

The ex-Serviceman raised more than £1,200 for the charity.



Python makes its mark

Upgraded system boasts improved user safety

THE latest version of the Python minefield breaching system has been successfully fired at Batus.

Featuring an insensitive munition explosive fill, the new variant is resistant to a bullet attack or other impacts that could trigger a detonation and also boasts improved safety for the user.

Python comprises a 230-metre long explosive-filled hose, which is fired into the air by a single rocket to land in a straight line in front of a towing vehicle. The hose then detonates to clear mines from a path at least 200 metres long and seven metres wide.

Chief of Materiel (Land) at Defence

Equipment and Support, Lt Gen Paul Jaques, said: "These upgrades enhance a piece of kit with a strong history of success."

"It has already proved its worth while deployed on operations in Afghanistan, where it ensured safe passage for the British Army through IED belts and heavily mined legacy minefields."

Service personnel use the Trojan combat engineer vehicle as the lead platform for towing and operating the Python system.

The Terrier is also designed to tow the technology, which can be fitted to other armoured vehicles as well.



It has already proved its worth

“ ”

REPORT DUE OUT

THE long-awaited public inquiry into Britain's role in the Iraq War is due to be published this month.

As this issue was going to press relatives of the 179 UK Service personnel killed between 2003 and 2009 were set to get early sight of the report before its publication on July 6.

Led by Sir John Chilcot, the investigation has examined in detail the country's support of the US-led invasion.

It is expected to be more than two-and-a-half million words long and has taken seven years to complete, with negotiations over publication of previously classified material cited as one of the chief reasons for delay.

Read next month's issue for more on its outcomes.

ALDERSHOT OFFER

SERVICE personnel based in the Aldershot area are being offered a 20 per cent discount on the admission price at the town's Lido swimming pool.

To take advantage of the deal soldiers must present their MoD 90 or Forces Discount Card on entry.

The rate also applies to any family members or small groups.

For details visit [www.placesforpeopleleisure.org/centres/aldershot-pools/lido](http://placesforpeopleleisure.org/centres/aldershot-pools/lido)

IN NUMBERS:

60,000

Amount raised – in pounds – for injured veterans during this year's Blesma Week, which saw supporters around the country take part in charity cycle rides, bungee jumps, collections and street parties.



"We are fitter and better than we were four years ago in London"

– Stanning's ready for Rio, page 76



A PERSONAL
VIEW FROM
SARA BAADE,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OF THE ARMY
FAMILIES
FEDERATION...

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

OUR home is such a big part of us. It is vital for our self-definition and affords security, belonging and privacy, among other things.

Most of all, it's a place that provides us with a centring – a place from which we leave each morning and return to each evening.

As an Army family, that home can often be in constant transit, but it does not mean that it is any less important; I would argue that it is even more significant to us than to many others, considering the ever-changing nature of our wider environment.

A stable home, however, is not necessarily linked to geographic stability.

For example, a family may need to move around as a unit to create a secure base.

In fact, a recent AFF quick poll showed that only five per cent of respondents considered living in one location to be the main driver of family harmony.

This is a very strong message and a particularly potent one now as the

future accommodation model (FAM) is being developed by the MoD.

The housing package is one of the most important factors that affect our Army families.

The current developments around FAM are positive in that they will potentially provide more opportunities for personnel to buy their own houses.

However, I'm concerned about what will happen to those constantly mobile families, where home ownership is not an option.

We are working closely with the MoD to champion the needs of everyone, but we need your voice to guide us and support us in this crucial discussion.

We launched our Big Survey on June 20, which this year focuses on accommodation.

I urge you all to take part and ensure the families' concerns are heard in this important policy development.

The document can be accessed at www.aff.org.uk/bigsurvey until July 20.

66
A STABLE
HOME IS NOT
NECESSARILY
LINKED TO
GEOGRAPHIC
STABILITY
99

QUAKE RESCUE HONOUR

A SERVICEMAN who came to the aid of those caught up in the earthquake in Nepal last April has received an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list.

Maj Andrew Todd (RGR) was leading an expedition on Everest to mark 200 years of Gurkha service to the crown when the tremors caused an avalanche that killed a total of 22 climbers.

Together with his fellow team members he rescued people from the mountain and later coordinated medical support and emergency relief to the villages along their route back to Kathmandu.

The keen mountaineer was among 63 Army personnel to be named in this year's list and said he was "genuinely staggered" to see his name there.

"You think of the individuals who have gone before, who've been given the same award and they're such great people; I never really see myself in their shoes at all," the Serviceman commented.

"We stayed because we are British soldiers and that's what they do. We had a duty to do what we did."



IN NUMBERS

154

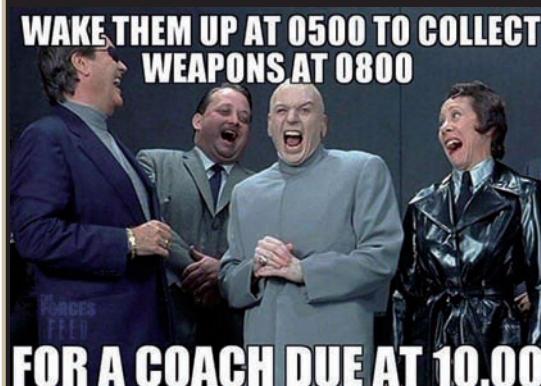
the number of military and civilian defence personnel to receive Queen's birthday honours this year

“
You allow
someone
to spout
this
nonsense
”

Banter leaves bad taste – page 53

MEMES OF THE MONTH...

Share your favourites with us online or via news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



New survey shows almost half of Serving Personnel are dissatisfied with their pension benefits.



The 2016 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey carried out by the MoD shows 45% of Personnel are dissatisfied with their Armed Forces Pension benefits. Dissatisfaction has risen to an all-time high level.

FPS CONTINUES TO GROW

By contrast, membership of the Forces Pension Society continues to grow in popularity and is now approaching 50,000. We are independent and not-for-profit. And we serve the interests of our Members and the wider military community by holding the government of the day to account, arguing for better pensions, fighting against inequities in the pension schemes (for example, winning our battle in 2015 for **all** widows to retain their pension on remarriage) and helping our Members get the most from their Armed Forces Pension.

OUR PENSION EXPERTS

Our Pension Advisory Service has never been busier dealing with enquiries from Members across a wide range of questions. No-one has a more thorough understanding of the intricacies of the four pension schemes currently in operation.

VALUABLE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



When you join the Society, you will have access to a wide range of discounted services from our trusted Affiliates. You'll also receive our e-newsletters and Pennant magazine.

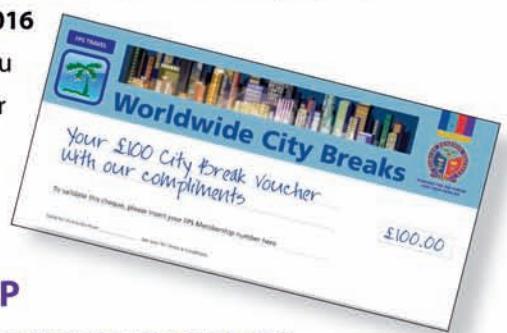
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"Some of the men were picking up their brothers and cousins"

— Voices of the Somme, page 90

More than a college...



EXTRA responsibilities have been handed over to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst by the British Army, making it a larger organisation than ever before in its history.

The Sandhurst Group, as it is called, comprises all officer training corps, the Army officer selection board, the Land Warfare School and General Staff Corps as well as the military academy itself – a total of some 5,000 Service personnel.

The aim, according to commandant Maj Gen Paul Nanson, is to be a centre of excellence for leader development.

To that end, several new initiatives are being introduced by the group.

Among them, a new training package for regimental sergeant majors – the first of which commenced last month – and an education facility for general staff.

The Army Leadership Centre will also open at the site in September for use by any rank.

"If you want to know what the current thinking is on leadership, it's the place to go," said Maj Gen Nanson.

"People assume this is purely an officer sport but it is as much a centre for soldiers as for anyone."

Service with a smile: RMAS is dispelling the myth that officer training is too tough

IN NUMBERS:

60

Percentage increase in applications to become an Army officer since the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst embarked on its myth-busting recruitment campaign



MOUNTAIN HEROICS

A FORMER soldier abandoned his attempt to scale Everest to save the life of a fellow climber. Leslie Binns (ex-LD), who was blinded in his left eye after an explosion in Afghanistan, was 500 metres short of the summit when he stopped to rescue a female mountaineer from India, who was suffering from hypothermia and had run out of oxygen. Together with a Sherpa he helped her back to camp from where she was taken to hospital.



A TEENAGER shed more than three stone in six months in a bid to join the ranks of The Royal Welsh. Joshua Phillips, 18, from Bridgend in Wales had been a student at his local military preparation college and balanced a challenging training plan with a 40-mile daily commute and caring for his disabled mother. He has passed selection.



TEEN SPIRIT



Picture: Graeme Main

'Difficult but doable'

Myth-busting mission begins to pay off at Sandhurst

THE Royal Military Academy Sandhurst's effort to attract more officers is showing promise, commandant Maj Gen Paul Nanson (shown below) has told *Soldier*.

With its last commissioning course some 45 cadets down, the institution took to social media and university campuses to tackle misunderstandings about what life is like at the world-famous training facility.

"The early signs are very positive," the senior officer told *Soldier*.

"Applications to be an officer are up 60 per cent on last year."

The campaign – called With Heart, With Mind – is the Army's first officer recruitment drive in some ten years.

It has seen personnel take to the road to explain life at Sandhurst to both troops and civilians.

"Much of what people know of the Army is based on what they saw on TV during the Afghanistan campaign," the commandant continued. "Of

course the Service is about combat, but it's about many different things as well."

The institution is especially keen to attract higher numbers of women as well as those from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds.

Among the inaccuracies it is trying to address is the perception that cadets are pushed through unbearable levels of exercise.

"Yes, you have to be fit but we develop you while you are here," the general added.

"Nor are women in competition with the men: we have integrated platoons now."

"Of course officer training is difficult, because being in the Army is difficult, but it's achievable."

"It doesn't matter what sex you are or what colour skin you have, there is opportunity here to serve and thrive."

"We already have some fantastic role models who are helping to dispel the myths."

GOOD DRILLS

"The better your circle of friends, the better your career will be

– Veteran wisdom, pages 48-49



For the love of the game

Staff sergeant brings boost to African children

FOOTBALL fanatic SSgt Adrienne Lavery (AGC (SPS)) has been using her love of the game to bring cheer to underprivileged youngsters in Sierra Leone.

Having witnessed their passion for the sport during the early stages of an 18-month embassy posting in the capital, Freetown, the 38-year-old set about collecting kit and equipment that could be passed on to the children.

Premier League giants Arsenal were happy to help and handed over an impressive haul of shirts, balls and hats during the Servicewoman's visit to the Emirates Stadium.

Manchester United were also keen to get involved and the Football Association has donated eight boxes of women's kit.

SSgt Lavery's efforts were further boosted by pledges from

colleagues and friends.

"I got in touch with the charity Street Child and they gave me some contacts in and around Freetown," she told *Soldier*.

"I went to the slums and handed the kit out to the kids. I also visited a school and an orphanage.

"It was met with an amazing reaction. Some soldiers from the Queen's Dragoon Guards were in the country and they came down to help; it was a fantastic day.

"I'm in my element out there. I love the sport and the country.

"The people have been through so much – how could I not help?"

She plans to use the items from the FA to develop an interest in the game among females.

The soldier has also launched a five-a-side league for embassy staff and is helping to create the Sierra Leone Hockey Association so another sport can grow.



WHAT BATTLE?

A POLL by the National Army Museum found that nearly 90 per cent of Britons aged between 55 and 64 claim to know little or nothing about the Battle of the Somme. More than 40 per cent of the 2,000 respondents were unaware that the conflict took place during the First World War and around half were unable to pinpoint that it happened in France in 1916.

● The Blackest Day – pages 37-39



AN American military chief has become one of the most senior figures in the history of the US Navy to be convicted of criminal charges. Rear Admiral Robert Gilbeau admitted destroying documents and computer files to cover up his relationship to a defence contractor, who was under investigation for bribing officers with cash, prostitutes and Cuban cigars. The Bronze Star and Purple Heart holder will be sentenced in August.



ADMIRAL SUNK

BAD DRILLS



Picture: Sgt Jamie Peters, RLC

...OR at least it was for this particular NCO, who completed one leg of a 12-hour endurance challenge in nothing but a pair of Speedos.

Race the Sun, as the competition is known, saw around 600 soldiers from across the UK run, cycle, swim, march and kayak through North Yorkshire in a 15-stage relay.

"I would not recommend that to anyone," Sgt Ian Ashcroft (R Signals) said after his ordeal. "It was the coldest I have ever been in my life."

The event, now in its 27th year, was organised by 2 Signal Regiment.

"It's been absolutely fantastic," said participant WO1 David Jones (R Signals).

"You've got cyclists in their Lyra and cleats competing against blokes in their running trainers. That really captures the spirit of the competition."

The winner in the major units category was 1 Signal Regiment, while Reservists from 39th Signal Regiment scooped the prize in the minor units category.



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"I want to use my knowledge and experience to help the Army"

– Tour rider backs Service cyclists, pages 86-87



Hands on new medal

PERSONNEL have been issued with the Service's newest decoration, the General Service Medal 08.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon presented the first 46 recipients with the honour for their deployment on various missions since January 2008.

Among them was Capt Amanda Willcox-Jones (AGC (ETS)), who went to Libya in 2012 where she designed and taught an English language course for the country's

armed forces.

Other examples of operations covered include capacity building activities in Yemen and support to the French Operation Serval, aimed at halting the progress of insurgents in Mali.

The decoration is struck in silver and features the Ian Rank-Broadley effigy of the Queen on the front, with an image of Britannia and a lion on the back.

Like previous versions, the medal is encircled by a wreath of oak leaves, but the clasps represent regions rather than specific operations or countries.



Medics pass military test

NHS staff and students found out what life is like on the front line during a series of military-themed medical challenges.

The exercise – organised by personnel from 201 (Northern) Field Hospital, a Reserve unit based in Newcastle – saw around 180 participants take part in a host of missions and emergency first aid tasks, which included a boat casualty rescue on the River Tyne.

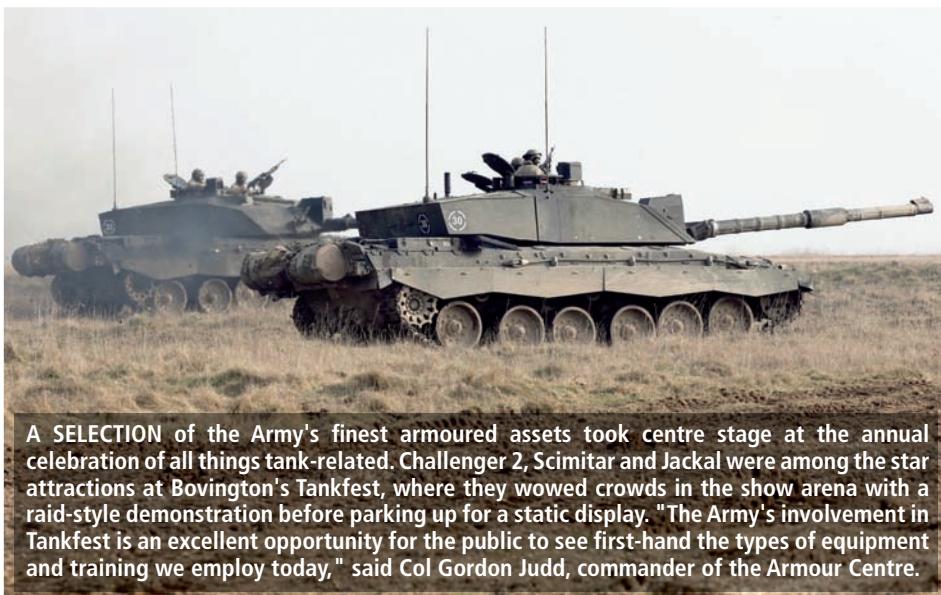
"They get to see how the Army Reserve works and if this is something they're interested in joining," said commanding officer Col Ben Banerjee, who is also a consultant vascular surgeon for City Hospitals Sunderland.

Picture: Cpl Max Bryant, RLC



Newcastle University medical student Sachin Wimalagunaratna said: "It's been amazing, I've learnt a lot – especially about the equipment.

"I'm really interested in doing surgery for the Army. I'd not really thought about it before."



A SELECTION of the Army's finest armoured assets took centre stage at the annual celebration of all things tank-related. Challenger 2, Scimitar and Jackal were among the star attractions at Bovington's Tankfest, where they wowed crowds in the show arena with a raid-style demonstration before parking up for a static display. "The Army's involvement in Tankfest is an excellent opportunity for the public to see first-hand the types of equipment and training we employ today," said Col Gordon Judd, commander of the Armour Centre.

IN MUSIC...



"A new high for a band that have rediscovered their mojo"

★★★

PAGES 67-73



SKILLS ON SHOW

■ ENTRIES are now being sought for the annual Scottish International Military Skills Competition.

Staged at the Barry Buddon Training Area in Angus from September 16 to 18, the event is open to teams of four Reservists and features a range of tasks including rifle and pistol shoots, assault courses and casualty drills.

Personnel from Norway and Germany have already signed up.

For more details and to enter, email co-rfa@rfca.mod.uk or call military 94625 8358.



“
I'm really interested in doing surgery for the Army
”

SETTING THE PACE

■ A TEAM of athletes from ATR Winchester were attempting to complete the toughest road cycle event in the world as this issue went to press – the Race Across America.

Starting in San Diego and finishing in Annapolis, the route stretches from the West Coast to the East and covers a punishing 3,046 miles.

The soldiers are hoping to finish the challenge in eight days in a bid to raise money for three charities, including Veterans in Action.

Army rugby star LSgt Matt Dwyer (WG, pictured) swapped the scrum for the saddle to join the team, while Tom Hughes – a former captain in the 9th/12th Royal Lancers – took to the road on a hand bike.

He suffered a life-changing injury while playing rugby and is paralysed from the chest down.

To pledge your support to the cause visit www.teamendeavour.co.uk

Army Photographic Competition

only 3 months until the deadline

2016

29 September 2016



Meet this year's judging panel



Charlie Brewer Photo Editor of Global Editorial Solutions, MSN International.



Ben Birchall is the Press Association's South West based Staff Photographer. He shoots all across the West Country and wider UK, covering everything from hard breaking news stories to Glastonbury festival.



Warrant Officer Class 1 Will Craig, the Command Master photographer at Army HQ, is the head of the professional Army Photographer trade.



ARMY

more information at www.army.mod.uk/photocomp

"It's a project we'll never come close to finishing"

– Lost lives of the Somme, pages 40-42



WIN

Reversible outdoor jacket

LAST month's spine line clues were inspired by our fact file on the Queen. James, Louise, Peter and Zara are the names of four of Her Majesty's grandchildren.

This month, courtesy of Yorkshire-based outdoor clothing company Snugpak (www.snugpak.com), we have two Sleeka Elite Reversible jackets worth £90 each to give away.

To be in with a chance of winning one – in the black and olive colour combination shown – tell us what links the words on the spine of this month's issue.

Answers to the usual postal address or email via comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by July 29.



GOT A VIEW TO SHARE?

Tell *Talkback* what you think of a news item or issue by emailing mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

We are part of the MoD so you don't need permission to get in touch with us.

NOT MEETING MARK ON MENTAL HEALTH

■ MORE could be done to meet the mental health needs of former Service personnel and their families in Wales, according to a new report.

Although the country has the UK's only veterans' NHS service, the review found that further work is required to increase the system's capacity, improve coordination between agencies and boost support for dependents and carers.

The research is part of a wider one-year review commissioned by the Forces in Mind Trust and covering each of the devolved nations.

IN NUMBERS:



Percentage of veterans who have had an interviewer make reference to post-traumatic stress disorder, according to a survey by Barclays' Armed Forces Transition Employment and Resettlement programme



Speaking on *This Morning*, LCpl Jones explained: "I love my job in the Army so I am going to carry on doing that."



FEARLESS FUNDRAISING

Cash quest in memory of sergeant's daughter

A SOLDIER whose 19-year-old daughter took her own life has embarked on a mission to boost the coffers of the charities that supported him through his bereavement.

Sgt Trevor Bygate (AAC, pictured) has gathered more than £19,000 since Chloe's death in 2014 but, not content with that, he is preparing for another round of challenges in the coming months including the South Coast Ultra Marathon and Great North Run.

"Chloe has given me the determination to help others who are suffering the same pain," the Serviceman told *Soldier*. "She was bright, beautiful and loved her family and friends."

Among the groups to benefit from the airman's efforts so far is The Royal British Legion and Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (Sobs).

"Sobs have been hugely influential for me as we are all people who have lost someone through suicide," Sgt Bygate added.

To support him visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/TrevorBygate>



Money raised:
£19,000
For:
Various charities



THE BIG PICTURE

> THE MALL, LONDON

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

ALMOST 1,500 soldiers from the Household Division marched along The Mall as part of the annual Trooping the Colour ceremony in London.

The parade marked the Queen's official 90th birthday and featured more than 300 horses as well as musicians from all of the division's bands and corps of drums.

Picture: Cpl Daniel Wieden, RLC





ANGRY BIRDS

British and French helicopter crews unleash joint firepower during Exercise Swift Response

Words: Becky Clark Pictures: Steve Dock and Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC





1700 ZULU: Somewhere in Eastern Europe, an enemy force lies in wait.

Hidden in the trees and armed with surface-to-air missiles, the state-backed militia is preparing to fend off an airborne invasion by a coalition of Western militaries.

Months of diplomacy have failed to solve the border dispute between two neighbouring countries and now the international community has dispatched a joint task force to retake territory illegally annexed by the aggressors.

Despite facing the might of a British-French parachute brigade, the hostile fighters concealed in the forest know that its troops will be easy prey as they jump from their aircraft and float

to the ground.

But as they prime their weapons, a menacing rumble drifts towards them on the breeze.

Two Army Air Corps Apache attack helicopters are closing in on the treeline, hugging the ground to evade the foe's radar systems.

Suddenly they appear over the crest of a hill, unleashing the full force of their 30mm cannons.

Working together they flush the defenders out of the canopy, herding them into range of the platforms' fearsome hellfire missiles.

With the threat neutralised the pilots turn for home, as Hercules aircraft thunder overhead bearing the first wave of paratroopers to the drop zone.



**OPERATING IN
THIS HIGH-THREAT
ENVIRONMENT IS WHAT
THE APACHE WAS
DESIGNED TO DO**



For now at least this scenario isn't a real one, but as far as dry runs go, the training is about as realistic as it gets.

The fictional mission was part of Exercise Swift Response, which saw more than 5,000 soldiers from ten Nato countries training together in Germany and Poland.

Working under the US 82nd Airborne Division and the French 11e Brigade Parachutiste, British troops from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment and 4 Regiment Army Air Corps provided ground and helicopter support respectively.

Soldier joined the Army aviators during the Bavarian phase of the package and found out about the complexities of the multinational

chain of command from the unit's commanding officer, Lt Col Paul Hayhurst (AAC, pictured left).

"I lead the Joint Helicopter Force (JHF), and we provide attack aviation through the Apache AH-64 and French Gazelles, as well as the lift capability from RAF Chinooks and both UK and

French Pumas," he explained.

"So we have a French squadron, working for a British Joint Helicopter Force, working for a French brigade, who are working for a US divisional headquarters.

"It gets a bit complicated sometimes, there are moments when it gets a bit fraught, but we work through it because we have the same aim – we all want to deliver high readiness forces in the airborne role that are capable of deploying all over the world."

Accordingly, the exercise put the air and ground crews from each element of the JHF through their paces in a series of challenging tasks, from fire missions to reconnaissance sorties, troop and materiel lifts and medical evacuation flights.

The serials were made more difficult by the presence of a determined opposition force, played by American troops from the Joint Multinational Readiness Centre, Hohenfels.

An Apache pilot from 4 Regt's 664 Squadron, who did not want to be named for security reasons, explained that training against a free-moving, thinking enemy accurately replicated the post-Herrick environment, in



SWIFT RESPONSE IN NUMBERS

5,000

number of personnel involved in the package

**5 Apaches,
3 Chinooks, 5 Pumas
and 2 Gazelles**

The helicopters contributed by 664 Sqn, 4 Regt AAC; 18 Sqn RAF Odiham; 230 Sqn RAF Benson and the French Army's 5e Me Regiment d'Helicopteres de Combat

134

number of vehicles from 4 Regt AAC that travelled in convoy from Wattisham to Hohenfels

EXERCISE SWIFT RESPONSE



IT MAKES US THINK A LOT MORE ABOUT WHERE WE'RE PLACING THE AIRCRAFT AND ABOUT PLATFORM PROTECTION

Need for speed: Swift Response tested the allies' ability to respond to a crisis scenario within 18 hours

which the airframe no longer enjoys the almost untouchable status it had in Afghanistan.

"It's really good having dynamic 'opfor' because rather than static targets you're dealing with people who are trying to outwit you," said the 28-year old.

"They will aim to outflank you or to hide in buildings, wait until you've gone past and then shoot a missile up your tailpipe.

"They also have infrared surface-to-air missiles, radar, a lot of small arms, tanks – very capable very modern systems – and they're using real world tactics, so they'll present us with a nice juicy target and ambush us with something else.

"It's making us think a lot more about where we're placing the aircraft and about platform protection.

"The Americans will also fire actual fireworks at you to simulate missiles, so you do get that indication of smoke going past, which does make you twitch a bit and will set off the warning receivers.

"Operating in this high-threat environment is what the Apache was designed to do.

"Today we were hovering at around

15ft so it's almost like using it as a manoeuvrable tank, a big weapons platform floating in the sky."

Back at the JHF's camp, Forward Operating Base 40S, planners and supporting arms were reacting to a notification of a helicopter in technical difficulty.

The serial saw the downed aircraft recovery team leap into action to prevent the vulnerable asset falling into enemy hands.

In charge of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineer specialists was WO2 Paul Hembury (pictured below), who described how the complex scenario unfolded.

"We were told an Apache had developed a fault and had to land," said the 32-year-old.

"I deployed with three engineers out on the ground and diagnosed the problem based on what the pilots told us and by physically looking at the airframe and consulting our technical publications.

"It was a catastrophic gearbox failure, which we couldn't deal with in ➤



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Make do and mend: Sgt Luke Morris and LCpl Christopher Cartwright (both REME) carry out battlefield repairs on a disused helicopter

» situ so we had to call a repair team to come forward with spares and luckily we were able to fix it and it flew away.

"You quickly start to realise the pressure, particularly if you get attacked and have to wait for the threat to be cleared before you can get on with it."

Among those providing security on the ground to allow the technicians to carry out their repairs was Air Tpr Kylum Kontemeniotis (AAC).

The 18-year-old had only been in the regiment for four weeks and was enjoying the chance to gain experience on a major exercise.

"We deployed by Chinook and set up a cordon around the downed aircraft," he explained.

"The enemy contacted us from quite far away with small arms, so we returned fire and secured the area to make sure the job could be done, which took about three hours in the end."

"I'd never done that kind of thing before and it was good to practise things as they would happen in real life."

"I'm trying to learn as much as I can out here so I can take that back to the regiment and on to potential deployments."

For longer serving members of 4 Regt, Ex Swift Response was not their first time working alongside French counterparts.

Last autumn both sides took part in Exercise Eagles Amarante, an interoperability

rehearsal led by 16 Air Assault Brigade on Stanford Training Area.

Lt Col Regis Mange (below), SO1 Aviation at the Airborne Combined Joint Expeditionary Force headquarters for the most recent package, said major strides were being made towards closer cooperation.

"For several years now we have organised joint training," commented the French Army officer.

"Helicopters are a very important asset for the commander of a multinational force because we are able to travel quickly over long distances, so we need to liaise closely between our aircraft and crews in order to complete mission successfully."

"We have carried out complex tasks, with all of our aviation platforms working together, so it is going well."

According to Lt Col Hayhurst, the fact that both sides had proved their ability to operate seamlessly under each other's chain of command bodes well for any potential real-life deployments.

"We could definitely do this for real, without a shadow of a doubt," he said.

"We've covered the complete spectrum of what aviation can offer an airborne brigade in a congested and degraded environment."

"The most important thing is we all have the same mind set about how we deliver that capability and we all work really well together." ■



Eyes in the sky

Up to ten brigade-level exercises rotate through the Joint Multinational Readiness Centre at Hohenfels every year and those taking part in training are closely scrutinised by the facility's dedicated observers.

Maj Beau Rollie from the US Army was one of 55 aviation mentors – collectively known as the Falcon Team – keeping a watchful eye on the personnel of the Joint Helicopter Force during Ex Swift Response.

He explained that while every nation's operating procedures vary, the aim of his unit is to ensure that each formation's specific training objectives are met.

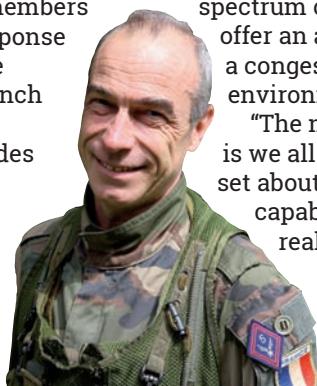
"They give us their aims and measures and we work with them right from the planning stage through to the training to give an objective outsider's look as to how we feel they're performing," he said.

"Each element will have two or three trainers aligned to it."

"For example, if a convoy goes out, we'll sit down afterwards and do a review of how it went, same if an Apache or Chinook flies."

"We find it best to observe the action from actually being out there, so on the ground every convoy will have a vehicle with an observer in it that follows them and listens to the radio, takes part in their briefs and so on."

"It's the same in the air. They'll be there for all the planning and mission briefs and then they get in an EC145 helicopter and fly along, usually high up so they can observe the action and also provide safety oversight."



CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

How do troops rate Army life in 2016? Read on to find out...

THE Armed Forces continuous attitude survey for 2016 has revealed the highs and lows currently being experienced across the military. For all three Services morale appears to be dropping and this is reflected in the specific figures for the Army.

Satisfaction with basic pay has declined 17 per cent since 2010, with just over one third of troops saying they are content.

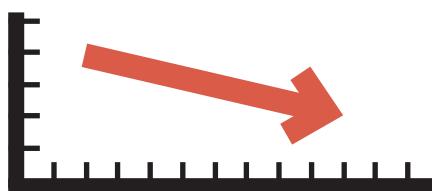
By contrast, opinions on training, development and leave fared well but there is growing dissatisfaction with the maintenance of Service accommodation.

Opinions on value for money, response times and quality of work at military homes have all lowered significantly since last year.

The survey was sent to 1,928 officers and 8,262 soldiers, who were randomly selected by rank to ensure they represent the Army population.

Around 40 per cent of those asked to take part did so.

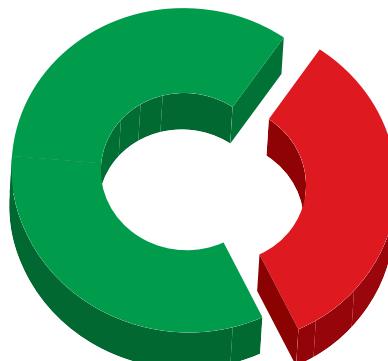
'Opinions on training, development and leave fared well'



MORALE

-5%

Drop in the number of soldiers who rate their morale as "high" compared to three years ago. Just 41 per cent of them give it the thumbs-up but among officers the trend is rising, with 45 per cent saying they are happy.



EQUIPMENT

Two thirds of troops are **satisfied** with **personal kit and equipment** used on operations.



FEELING VALUED

Only a third of other rank soldiers say they **feel valued** by their employer.



FAMILY LIFE

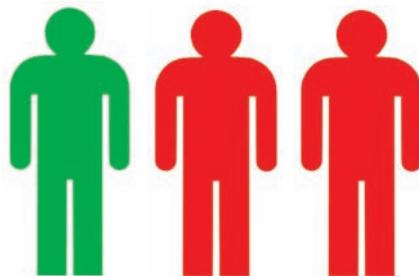
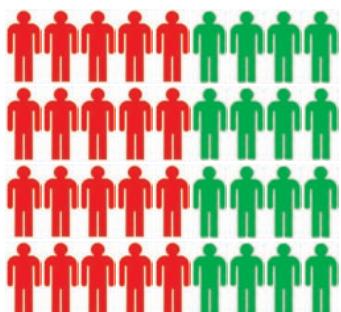
+8%

The increase over two years in **personnel who are satisfied** with the effect of Service life on their **children's education**. It now stands at 28 per cent.

TREATED FAIRLY?

69%

say they are **treated fairly** at work. But 13 per cent of soldiers and nine per cent of officers report they have been **the subject of bullying, discrimination or harassment** in the last 12 months. The top reason for troops not complaining is that they did not believe anything would be done, while officers believed it would adversely affect their career.



ACCOMMODATION

Only **one in three** personnel **express satisfaction** with the response to requests for maintenance or repairs and the quality of the work carried out.



PAY

34%

The **proportion** of other ranks who say they are **satisfied** with their pay, compared to more than half in 2010.



WORKLOAD

1 in 2

Army personnel who report their **workload is "too high"** – a figure that outstripped the other Services.



PENSIONS

Unhappiness with the current **pension provision** continues to rise, with **nearly half** of all those surveyed reporting **dissatisfaction** with the current scheme.

LEAVE

Those **satisfied** with their **leave allocation** has risen five per cent since 2014 and now accounts for around two thirds of soldiers.



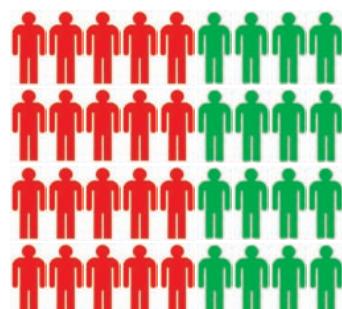
The **majority of personnel plan to stay serving**

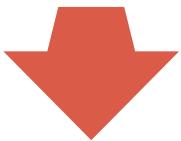
as long as they can or to the end of their current engagement or commission.

Around 60 per cent of those who intend to leave the Army cite the **impact of the Service on family and personal life** as the main reason.

CAREERS

59%



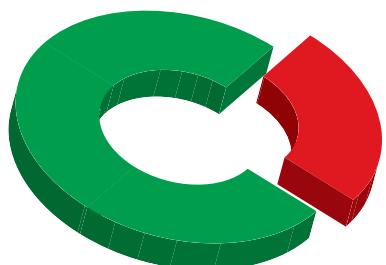


PRIDE

-12%

The reduction in the number who say they are "proud to be in the Army" compared to 2010.

The total now stands at 75 per cent of those polled.



FITNESS AND SPORT

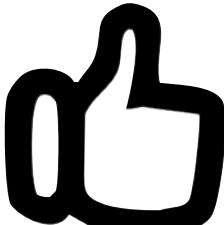
Nearly three quarters of personnel are satisfied with their opportunities to undertake fitness activities.



TRAINING

+7%

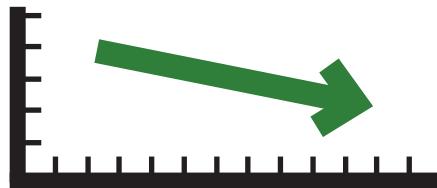
Increase in the number of personnel who are happy with the opportunities for professional development since 2013, with 55 per cent of soldiers and 63 per cent of officers claiming they are satisfied.



RESERVES

+5%

The rise in the number of Regular soldiers who would consider joining the Reserves compared to last year.



ALLOWANCES

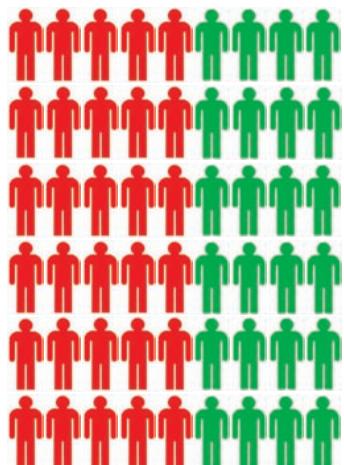
2 in 3

Personnel are satisfied with allowances. But the number of troops and officers feeling this way has decreased by six per cent since 2014.



FLEXIBLE WORKING

One third of other ranks report they are satisfied with the opportunities for flexible working.



JOB SATISFACTION

53%

This is down compared to the 2012 figure and stands at 53 per cent. The level for officers has remained stable at 69 per cent.



AN ACCURATE VIEW?

Disagree with what you see?

Write to *Talkback* with your view. We are part of the MoD so you don't need permission to contact us.

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Top, left and bottom:
Reserve amphibious engineering troops work with German counterparts to cross Poland's Vistula River

Above and top right:
Soldiers from The London Regiment coped well in the heat and arid conditions of Catalonia

Images: Cpl Jamie Dudding, Cpl Pete Brown (both RLC) and Dominic King

BRIDGING THE GAP

VOLUNTEERS GRAB OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP INTEROPERABILITY CAPABILITIES

RESERVISTS have been making an impact across Europe with infantry personnel testing their interoperability with Spanish troops and amphibious sappers achieving some impressive construction feats in Poland.

The London Regiment travelled to Catalonia to take part in Exercise Iberian Star, hosted this year by Spain's 62nd Mountain Regiment, one of the country's elite fighting forces.

They conducted a range of scenarios specifically designed to hone their soldiering skills in a diverse environment.

A group of ten Regular soldiers from 1st Battalion, Scots Guards brought valuable experience and knowledge to the training programme, which included reconnaissance, urban operations, vehicle check point controls, trench warfare, section attacks and night-time operations.

The rugged and mountainous terrain, along with searing temperatures, presented the part-time personnel with conditions they weren't accustomed to operating in.

"I really enjoyed the exercise but the heat was very challenging," said Pte Jack Miller, whose day job is a property manager.

"The trench warfare exercise was hard going and something we'd not normally get to try."

Pte Tom Carr, 37, who works for the Crown Prosecution Service in civvy street, added: "I'm quite a bit older than the other lads so it's been quite a challenge keeping up with them but I'm enjoying the reconnaissance training, which was new to us."

"Overall, it's been a great opportunity to experience a different country and culture and work with the Spanish military."

Meanwhile, elements of 75 Engineer Regiment helped build the longest amphibious bridge ever made with M3 vehicles, at 350 metres, as part of the month-long Exercise Anakonda, involving

30,000 Nato personnel.

Reservists from 107 Field Squadron and 412 Amphibious Engineering Troop, together with 23 Amphibious Engineering Troop, were in Chelmno in Poland.

They worked closely with German counterparts from 130 Pioneer Battalion to build the impressive structure using 30 M3 self-propelled amphibious bridging vehicles.

Spr Benji Galea (RE), of 107 Fd Sqn, said: "This was my first multinational exercise and it was a fantastic environment in which to put my amphibious skills into action."

"Working with the Bundeswehr showed that our techniques are compatible and we formed an effective working routine."

The massive crossing was used by American, German and Polish troops to move armoured vehicles to support paratroopers, including personnel from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, who had already jumped into the country.

The package was being used to train armies from multiple nations to ensure they are able to travel anywhere in the world and work with each other to fulfil common security interests.

Capt Si Mayers (RE) added: "The amount of planning put into Exercise Anakonda has shown that all seven nations involved in the bridging phase can establish a successful working environment."

"Being able to construct a 350-metre M3 bridge in 30 minutes and 23 seconds was further testament to the excellent relationship that we have with the Germans."

"It proved not only the interoperability between both countries, but also that my Reservist soldiers are competent and current enough to do their job."

The United Kingdom has committed a battlegroup to the current Spanish- and Polish-led rotations of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and is due to take the lead in 2017, where it will contribute 3,000 personnel. ■

Being able to construct a 350-metre M3 bridge in 30 minutes and 23 seconds was further testament to the excellent relationship that we have

“

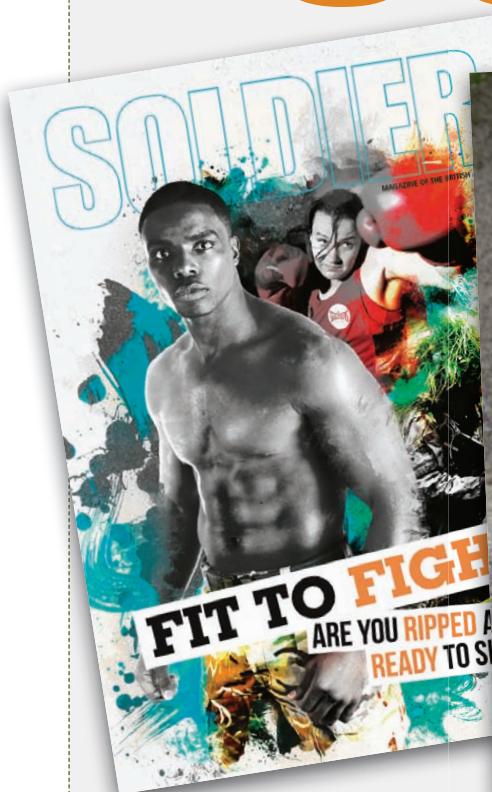


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Readership survey 2016

Soldier cares about what its readers think. To help us continue improving the magazine, please complete this questionnaire and return it to the address printed at the top left hand-corner of this page.

If you prefer to complete the survey online, follow the link: <https://surveys.mod.uk/index.php/926574>

The form will also be accessible via the Defence intranet and the Army's and Soldier's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

● Demographics – We would like to find out a bit more about you

Q1: Are you?

a: Under 18 d: 35-44 g: 65+
 b: 18-24 e: 45-54
 c: 25-34 f: 55-64

Q2: Are you?

a: Male c: Prefer not to say
 b: Female

Q3: Please tell us which group you belong to:

a: Army Regulars
 b: Army Reserves
 c: MoD civil servants
 d: Army families
 e: Veterans
 f: Army cadets
 g: Defence contractors
 h: Royal Navy Regulars

i: RAF Regulars
 j: Royal Navy Reserves
 k: RAF Reserves
 l: Members of the public – please explain why you read Soldier:

Q4: Please tell us your geographical location:

England

East Midlands South West North East
 London Yorkshire & Humber South East
 North West East Anglia West Midlands

Scotland

Edinburgh, Fife & East Glasgow & West Tayside & Central
 Highland Islands North East, Orkney & Shetland

Wales

North West South East South West
 Mid North East

Northern Ireland

Abroad (please specify)

Please tell us where you are currently working (if you are a member of the Armed Forces please state your unit location)

● Section A

Please select what best describes you

Reader (Subscriber and Non-Subscriber) - Please go to Section B

Non-Reader - Please go to Section C

● Section B – Reader (subscriber and non-subscriber) We would like to have your thoughts on Soldier

Q1: How long have you been reading Soldier?

a: New subscriber (1 year or less) b: 1-4 years c: 5 or more years

Q2: How often do you read Soldier?

a: Every issue b: Every other issue c: Occasionally d: Very rarely

Q3: What sections of Soldier do you read and how would you rate them? (1= very bad, 5= very good)

Yes I read No, I don't read 1 2 3 4 5 Why?

a: News	<input type="checkbox"/>						
b: Features	<input type="checkbox"/>						
c: Regulars	<input type="checkbox"/>						
d: Talkback	<input type="checkbox"/>						
e: SoldierSport	<input type="checkbox"/>						
f: Bullet Points	<input type="checkbox"/>						
g: Sports Lottery results	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q4: On average, how much time do you spend reading Soldier each month?

a: Up to 15 mins b: Up to 1 hour c: Up to 3 hours

continued over the page

● Section B – Reader (subscriber and non-subscriber) – continued

Q5: Where do you get your copy of *Soldier*?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Subscriber	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Mess/common rooms
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Workplace	<input type="checkbox"/> f: Other – please specify:
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Local newsagent	
<input type="checkbox"/> d: Friend's copy	

Q6: If you get your copy from the base area, how many editions per year approximately are made available to pick up and read?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Every, or nearly every, issue	<input type="checkbox"/> c: 2-3 issues per year or less
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Roughly every other issue	<input type="checkbox"/> d: none

Q7: Where do you generally read *Soldier*? (Please select all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> a: In the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Local newsagents
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Mess	<input type="checkbox"/> f: Other – please specify:
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Home	
<input type="checkbox"/> d: Welfare facilities	

Q8: How many people are likely to read your copy of *Soldier*?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Just me	<input type="checkbox"/> c: 2-3 people
<input type="checkbox"/> b: 1 other person	<input type="checkbox"/> d: More than 3 people

Q9: How much of *Soldier* do you read?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: All of it	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Just the headlines
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Almost all	<input type="checkbox"/> f: Less than half
<input type="checkbox"/> c: More than half	<input type="checkbox"/> g: Almost nothing
<input type="checkbox"/> d: Half	

Q10: Overall, how satisfied are you with *Soldier*?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> d: Dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Very dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Neither satisfied / nor dissatisfied	

Q11: How satisfied are you with the layout and presentation of *Soldier*?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> d: Dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Very dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Neither satisfied / nor dissatisfied	

Q12: How satisfied are you with the quality of writing in general in *Soldier*?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> d: Dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Very dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Neither satisfied / nor dissatisfied	

Q13: How satisfied are you with the overall content in *Soldier*?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> d: Dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Very dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Neither satisfied / nor dissatisfied	

Q14: How often would you prefer *Soldier* to be issued?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> d: Bi-monthly
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Fortnightly	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Monthly	

Q15: How would you prefer to access *Soldier*?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Online	<input type="checkbox"/> d: Other – please specify
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Digital app	
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Print	

Q16: How well does the content of *Soldier* align to your expectations?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Exceeds my expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> c: Below my expectations
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Meets my expectations	

Q17: If you don't subscribe, please tell us why briefly:

(Large empty box for writing)

Q18: In one word, please tell us how you would describe *Soldier*:

(Large empty box for writing)

Q19: What other source of Army publications do you use other than *Soldier*?

(Large empty box for writing)

Q20: Please provide us with any comments or suggestions to make *Soldier* better:

(Large empty box for writing)

● Section C – Non-Reader – We would like to find out what we can do in order to encourage your readership

Q1: Are you aware of *Soldier*?

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> b: No
---------------------------------	--------------------------------

Q2: Please tell us the reasons you don't read or subscribe to *Soldier*:

<input type="checkbox"/> a: Have never seen it	<input type="checkbox"/> d: Never heard of	<input type="checkbox"/> g: Other – please specify
<input type="checkbox"/> b: Not interested	<input type="checkbox"/> e: Too expensive	
<input type="checkbox"/> c: Content not relevant	<input type="checkbox"/> f: No digital app	

Q3: What would *Soldier* need to include to encourage your readership?

(Large empty box for writing)

Q3: What other source of Army publication do you use instead of *Soldier*?

(Large empty box for writing)



Above: A British casualty lies in a trench after the Battle of the Somme. **Below:** King George V meets with Gen Joffre, President Raymond Poincare, Gen Ferdinand Foch and Gen Sir Douglas Haig during a visit to France

The BLACKEST DAY



The first day of the Somme, 100 years ago this month, was an unprecedented catastrophe for the British Army, but what was the impact of the wider campaign on the course of the conflict? Retired officer and military historian Mike Peters (ex-AAC) reveals why it was a tragic but unavoidable chapter in the First World War.

HERE is no denying that the events of July 1, 1916 justify its description as the worst day in British military history. Official casualty figures for those first hours make grim reading. Out of a total of 57,470 casualties, a staggering 19,240 soldiers were listed as dead, 35,493 as wounded and the remaining 2,737 as missing or prisoners of war.

This costly failure was almost incomprehensible after months of meticulous planning, training and preparation.

The scale of the tragedy was further amplified by the fact that, apart from a single battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, the entire attacking force was made up of British volunteers who had enlisted in response to Lord Kitchener's recruiting campaign at the outbreak of war.

It is these men and their first disastrous experience of armed conflict on that opening day that most people associate with the Battle of the Somme.

But to understand the campaign and measure its overall influence on the outcome of the war, we must look beyond their initial → bloody sacrifice...



'The armies that emerged from the crucible of the Somme were far superior in every way'

→ **An unavoidable battle**

Closer scrutiny of history reveals that the clash was unavoidable.

In spite of reservations about the preparedness of their new forces, the British high command had no option but to assist their French allies, who were locked in a vicious ten-month battle with the Germans around the city of Verdun.

After a year of war Britain could no longer be the junior partner while France wrestled with a formidable enemy; she had to commit troops in meaningful numbers.

Kitchener's hurriedly-trained volunteers formed the core of the new British Third and Fourth Armies, which began arriving on the rural plains of the Somme from February 1916.

Tactical and technical advances

The British Army learnt some very hard and costly lessons at the Somme and over the following days, weeks and months gained invaluable experience while also developing much greater

technical knowledge.

We were now fighting on an unprecedented scale and learning quickly how to employ artillery, developing a better understanding of the value of machine guns and making huge progress toward closer integration of the Royal Flying Corps.

Critically, the new infantry battalions were becoming battle-hardened and adapted innovative tactics and procedures, which they used by day and night.

As the campaign progressed the staff officers of the Army, division and brigade headquarters improved their understanding of this new industrialised warfare and honed their planning skills.

The Kitchener armies, joined by new Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, South African and Indian formations, repeatedly battered away at the German defences.

All of these divisions learned to fight alongside each other in corps and Army groupings against a determined and skilled enemy.

The constant struggle to retain the initiative accelerated technological developments in the air, on the battlefield and even underground, where personnel from the Royal Engineers conducted extensive tunnelling and mining operations.

In September 1916 a new secret



SOMME STATS

1.2m

estimated number of casualties on both sides at the Somme between July and November 1916

893

average number of British fatalities per day

7

distance in miles that the British advanced in four-and-a-half months

15

length in miles of the front line, from Gommecourt to Maricourt

1.7m

number of shells dropped on the Germans by British artillery in the week before the attack on July 1

weapon was unleashed by Fd Marshal Haig – the tank was committed to battle for the first time.

The lumbering, slow moving machines achieved mixed results on their debut but a new form of warfare had been born that would have been unthinkable just two years before.

The “muddy grave” of the enemy

To understand and measure the progress made by the British and Commonwealth armies it is important to consult their opponents on the other side of no-man’s-land as well.

In January 1917, Lt Gen von Fuchs of the German high command reported: “Enemy superiority is so great that we are not in a position either to fix their forces in position or to prevent them from launching an offensive elsewhere.

“We just do not have the troops... we cannot prevail in a second battle of the Somme with our men; they cannot achieve that any more.”

While the British and Commonwealth forces had grown in size, effectiveness and experience, the Germans had lost thousands of irreplaceable veterans at Verdun and on the Somme.

In order to avoid another British offensive in the spring of 1917 they would abandon their positions and withdraw to new defences.

Another German witness to the battle, Capt von Hentig would describe the Somme as “the muddy grave of the German army”.

A turning point?

The Somme campaign eventually ground to a halt on November 18, 1916 – 141 days after it began.

The planned breakthrough had not materialised and casualties had been heavy – numbers that would be unthinkable by today’s standards.

But this was not the 21st century and there was no alternative but to continue to fight a remorseless war of attrition until the deadlock could be broken.

The armies that emerged from the crucible of the Somme were far superior in every way to the fledgling formations that had gone over the top in the previous July.

It would be another two years before the Armistice, but the tactical initiative had shifted.

Perhaps we should challenge the accepted popular perception of the Somme as an exercise in futility and look beyond the first day.

● Mike Peters is chairman of the Guild of Battlefield Guides and co-director of specialist battlefield tour operator Staff Ride Ltd.



‘I don’t buy the idea that the Somme was a necessary battle. It’s a bit like saying the loss of the Titanic was necessary for the improvement of ship design’

Author blasts top brass for strategic failures – p67

MORE THAN A NUMBER

The project putting faces to the missing of Thiepval

FEW memorials embody the industrial-scale slaughter of the First World War more poignantly than Thiepval.

Its imposing walls bear the names of more than 72,000 men who not only gave their lives at the Somme, but whose bodies were never found amid the mud and chaos of the battlefield.

That so many soldiers simply ceased to exist is hard to grasp; even more so the personal stories behind the numbers.

But thanks to painstaking research by husband-and-wife team, Pam and Ken Linge, an ever-growing tally of the missing have been rescued from the depths of obscurity.

Since 2003 the duo have put faces to the names of some 12,000 of the fallen and their photographs and biographies can be viewed via a computer database at the monument's visitor centre.

Like historical detectives, the Linges use resources such as military records, newspaper cuttings and local memorials to piece together a picture of each Serviceman, many of whom also feature in their book, *Missing But Not Forgotten*.

Talking to Soldier about the scale

of the undertaking, Ken said: "It's a never-ending project and one we started knowing we'll never come close to finishing.

"It would have been difficult even if we started 100 years ago but the important point is that every one we find is one more than the day before and it gives an insight into who the man was.

"It all comes back to remembrance – in finding out a little bit about who the individual was you are remembering him."

As well as the thousands already identified, they also have leads on up to 5,000 more.

The task may be daunting but, as Pam explained, it is far from a thankless one.

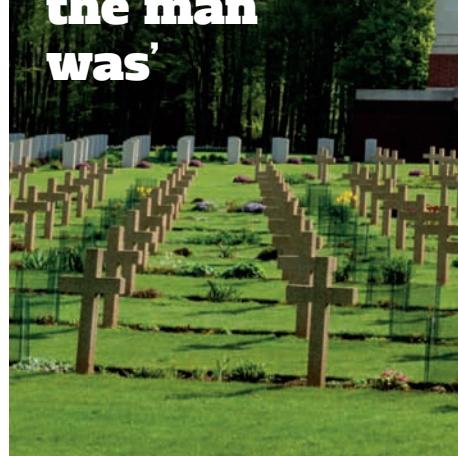
"Numbers are just numbers – they are difficult to comprehend," she said.

"But putting a face to the name helps us to understand.

"They were people before they were soldiers and they hoped they would get to be people again – but sadly many of them didn't have that chance."

From sportsmen to poets, underage soldiers to seasoned campaigners, and decorated heroes to those whose bravery went unrecognised, death did not discriminate at the Somme, as this tiny snapshot of the fallen shows...

'Everyone we find is one more than the day before and it gives an insight into who the man was'



Above, Memorial to the missing: The Thiepval Memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932

Below: British war photographer Lt John Warwick Brooke records King George V visiting a war cemetery at Thiepval in 1917





Picture: Shutterstock

Ill-fated “Pals”

WITH a desperate need for manpower at the outbreak of war, Lord Kitchener decided men would be more likely to join en masse if they were able to serve alongside their friends, neighbours and colleagues, and so, the Pals' battalions were born.

After lengthy training, many of these units saw action for the first – and last – time at the Somme.

Some, like the 16th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, or 2nd Salford Pals, were all but wiped out by the enemy's guns.

One of their number was Company Sergeant Major Joseph Patrick Hastings (left), who died at Thiepval on July 2. A seasoned veteran, the 41-year-old had retired after 26 years' service in 1913, the same year he got married.

‘Always did his best of the lads’

Nonetheless, when hostilities broke out months later he signed on again.

A lance corporal described how Hastings was first injured in the hand by shrapnel while going over the top: "... whilst retiring to the trench he was hit by a bullet in the middle of the back, death taking place immediately.

"He was a soldier brave, cool and feared nothing. He died a soldier hero... he was always cheery and bright, and always thought well of the company, and always did his best of the lads."

Boy soldiers

WHILE the legal age limit for service overseas was 19, an estimated 250,000 underage soldiers fibbed their way to the front line. Pte Edward Hope of the 15th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry was shot by a sniper during fighting in the Fricourt area on July 1, 1916. He was just 17.

Having enlisted two years earlier at the age of 15, he had already seen his fair share of action by the time he went over the top at the Somme, even earning the Distinguished Conduct Medal in January 1916.

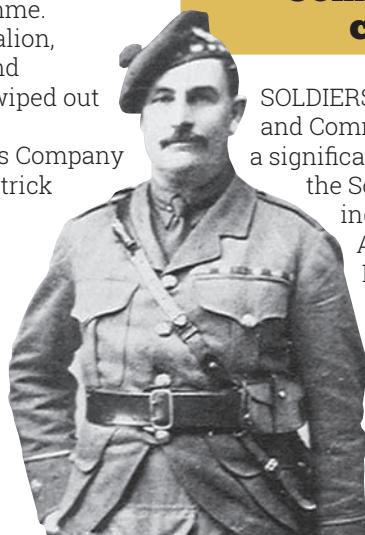
In a letter home on the eve of his last attack he wrote: "I received your ever-welcome parcel this morning and was ever so pleased to receive it because if it had been a day late – well I might never have got it, as we are in for it now... A chap has only to die once."

Unaware of his son's death, his father wrote to the Infantry Records Office on July 4, applying for his relegation to the Army Reserve on the grounds that he was too young for foreign service.

Commonwealth comrades

SOLDIERS from the Empire and Commonwealth made a significant contribution to the Somme campaign including troops from Australia, India, the West Indies, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Canada and South Africa.

Lt Alexander Young of 4th



Regiment, South African Infantry (South African Scottish) was a veteran of the Sudan campaign, the Boer War – during which he was awarded the Victoria Cross – and the later native and Zululand rebellions.

In 1914 he fought in German East Africa as part of the Cape Mounted Police and was one of the first to volunteer for service in France.

Wounded in July 1916, he spent time in hospital in England but returned to the front line in September. He lost his life on October 19, during a German counter-attack at the Butte de Warlencourt, aged 43.

Creative minds

THE First World War snuffed out the creativity of countless artists, authors and poets.

Among those to fall at the Somme was 35-year-old Ewart Richardson, a second lieutenant of 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, who died at Martinpuich on September 27.

A gifted writer, his sisters later published a book, *War Notes and Sketches*, which contained extracts from his diary and letters.

In one he compared the conditions in the trenches to prison: "There is no criminal in England today who is condemned to sleep in such a narrow, foul, vermin-infested cell as those in which our soldiers snatch their few hours of broken rest.

"Men's thoughts grow depressed, even at times despairing. The dull, colourless prospect, the weary waiting for the unknown, the strain of endless watching, imprison and bind the mind, even as the body is enclosed by the sand-bagged walls."

Family tragedy

THE Battle of the Somme would visit grief upon hundreds of thousands of families, but for many, including the relatives of Roy Duncanson, it would not be their only bereavement.

The second lieutenant from the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) was killed at Contalmaison a week into the Somme campaign, aged 26.

His family suffered further tragedy the following year when the war claimed the lives

of his brother and – unusually – his sister.

2nd Lt Ian Ferguson Duncanson, of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, perished on October 12, 1917 and on December 31, Una Marguerite Duncanson became one of eight Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses to die when the transport ship *Osmanieh* struck a mine in Alexandria harbour, Egypt, with the loss of 201 souls.



Sports stars

THE slaughter at the Somme showed no mercy to the many talented sportsmen who had enlisted.

Capt John Robert Somers-Smith of 1st/5th Battalion, The London Regiment was a keen rower during his days at Oxford University and won a gold medal in the Coxless Fours at the London Olympics of 1908.

Awarded the Military Cross at Ypres, the 28-year-old died at Gommecourt on the first day of the battle.

His colonel wrote to his widow: "Alas! I have to break to you the very, very sad news that your husband has met a true soldier's end in action in the enemy trenches. I am writing this at once, hoping you may get it before the official telegram. We all feel his loss most awful."



"We all feel his loss most awful"



Missing But Not Forgotten, by Pam and Ken Linge is published by Pen and Sword, priced £25.

If you have information you would like to share with the Thiepval project contact pam_ken.linge@btinternet.com

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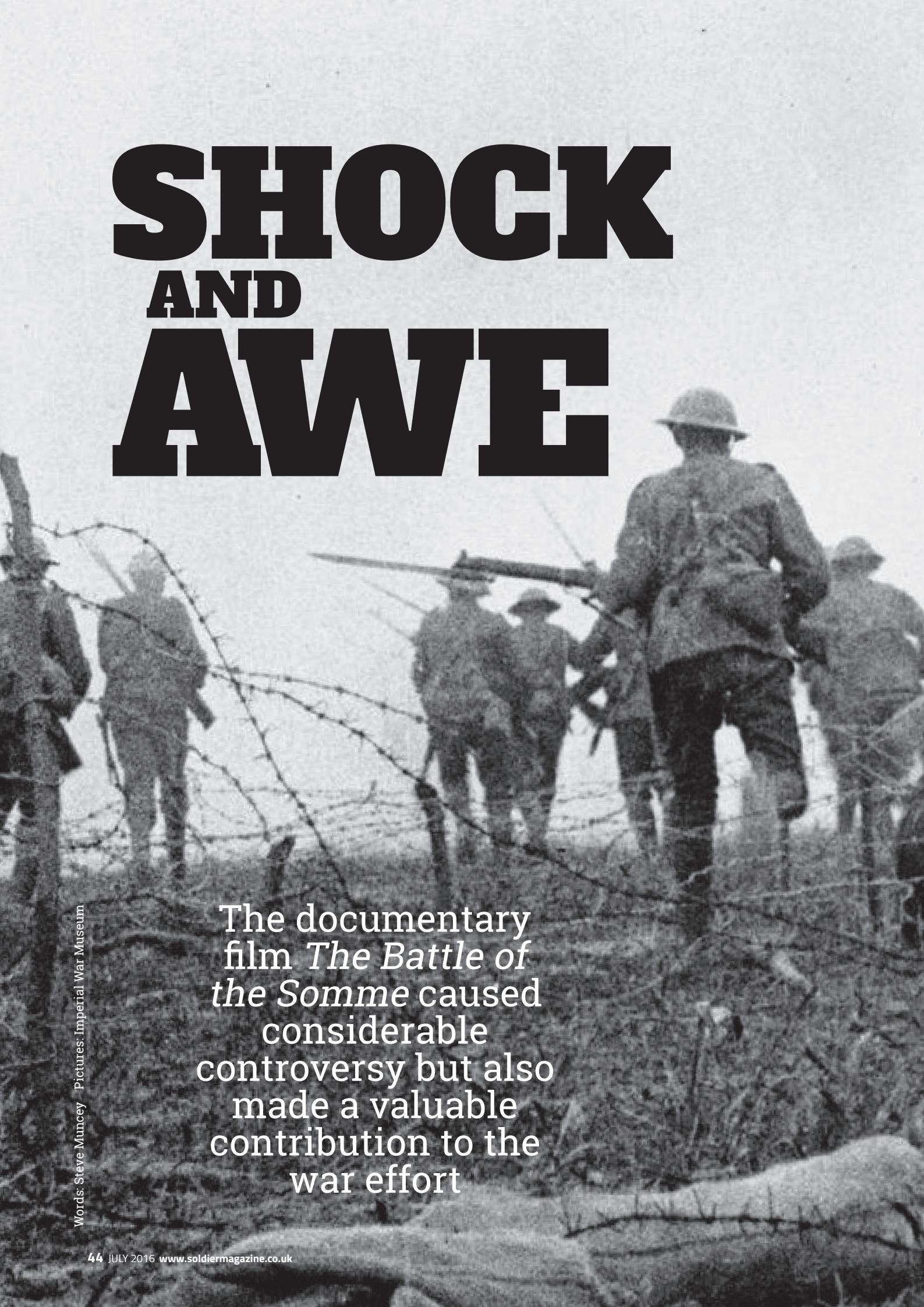
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SHOCK AND AWE



The documentary film *The Battle of the Somme* caused considerable controversy but also made a valuable contribution to the war effort

Words: Steve Muncy Pictures: Imperial War Museum



'People were really struck by the fact that it was so realistic'

Above: A soldier rescuing a comrade under shell fire on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, July 1, 1916.

Left: A still from *The Battle of the Somme* showing British troops advancing was staged for the camera at a training school behind the lines.

Right: Lt Geoffrey Malins records on camera the preliminary bombardment of the big push in July 1916

THE Somme offensive will always be regarded as one of the Great War's most savage conflicts and a symbol of the horrors of battle and the futility of trench fighting.

But it's also significant for being the subject of the first ever war documentary – and the shocking scenes it revealed of real combat made a huge impression on the general public back home.

In today's media-drenched age, where video streams of gun battles and war-torn suburbs are commonplace, it's hard to imagine not knowing what a battlefield looks and sounds like.

Yet that was the case for the vast majority of the general public back in 1916.

The War Office had enforced a ban on all photography and filming on the Western Front for security reasons but then did an about-turn and sanctioned the making of a special film, *The Battle of the Somme*.

A population starved of information about their boys fighting in France was transfixed.

"It's hard for us now to appreciate the effect the film had on the people back in Britain," says Toby Haggith, Senior Film Curator at the Imperial War Museum.

"Before the First World War, the Army had been a relatively small professional force; since the Battle of Waterloo it had rarely numbered more than 200,000 men.

"As a result, most civilians had little direct contact with the military or knew what it meant to fight overseas so there was a dislocation between the experience of the men serving in France and what people at home believed was happening out there.

"To give you an example, during the first few months of the war *The Times* newspaper used to regularly print a notice asking people not to send flowers to France and not to travel to the battlefields to visit the graves of their loved ones."

Released in August 1916, while the Somme offensive was still raging, the documentary was seen by around 22

million people – half the population of the country at the time.

Some went back to see it over and over again while many cinemas across the nation had to add more screenings to their schedules due to popular demand.

"In Londonderry the authorities even laid on special trains to bring people from the regions into the city's cinemas; it really was that big of a deal," says Dr Haggith.

"Also, at this time reviews of films weren't published in newspapers but this movie generated huge amounts of column inches.

"People were really struck by the fact it was so realistic and a visual glossary of what a battlefield looked like.





'In terms of impact there's been nothing quite like it since'

Many had never seen trenches, barbed wire, artillery pieces, mortars or even what soldiers wore in battle.

"They now had a better feeling for what their husbands, fathers or brothers were going through."

Not surprisingly, what made the greatest impression of all were the scenes containing dead German and British soldiers, in full view.

"That really shocked people, some were traumatised," explains Dr Haggith.

"It provoked a debate about morality and what was good taste or not.

"But interestingly, while most people agreed these scenes were upsetting they also believed they should be shown so they could appreciate what their loved ones were experiencing."

In order to obtain this stunning footage, two cameramen – Geoffrey Malins, an experienced newsreel

photographer, and John McDowell, a senior film producer

and director – were given unprecedented access to the front line by the War Office.

Malins filmed the iconic image of a huge mine detonating under the German lines which signalled the initial infantry attack (above right).

He also captured scenes of British troops in the distance advancing across no-man's-land.

The output was supposed to be made into a series of short films but the results were so striking the producer, an American called Charles Urban, decided they should form a single 70-minute feature.

One problem Urban faced was that Malins had only filmed from a distance and McDowell's attack footage was unusable.

One point of controversy about the documentary is that Malins was sent back to France to recreate the attack at a British training school behind the lines to film some close-ups.

This attention to detail wasn't just for the public's benefit, however, because the War Office had underlying reasons for making the footage as impactful as possible.

"The film had a number of purposes," says Dr Haggith.

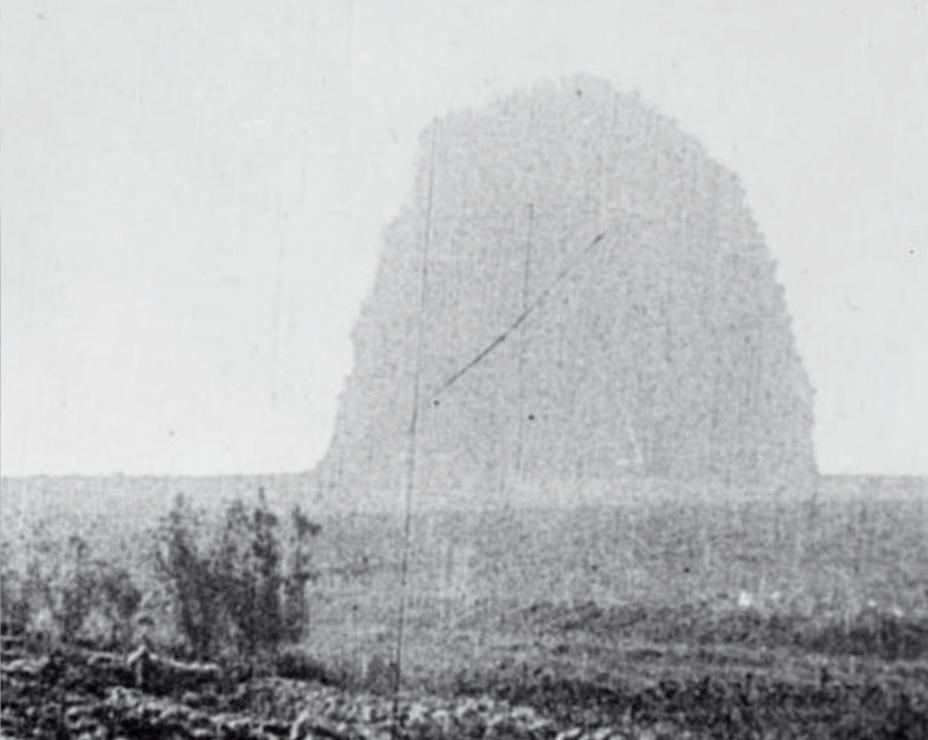
"The key one was to boost the morale of the British public after a series of defeats and setbacks and give them confidence that the British Army was an effective military machine and, most of all, that the Somme offensive had been a success."

But there were other motives too.

The British ambassadors to neutral USA and Romania

Above: Official photographer Lt Ernest Brooks (left) with cinematographer Lt Geoffrey Malins (also shown below left recording during the battle) at a coffee stall behind the lines on the Somme, 1916





Above and below: The *Battle of the Somme* film showed all aspects of the reality of war in the trenches to the British public for the first time



argued that cinema could encourage these countries to join the war on Britain's side.

It was also seen as important in helping boost the production of munitions, especially after the shell crisis of 1915 that created a shortage of ammunition on the front lines and political upheaval in Whitehall.

The words "shell", "shelling" and "munitions" occur twelve times in the captions and there are 16 scenes that focus on artillery and ammunition stores and dumps.

One caption even reads: "Along the entire front the munitions dumps are receiving vast supplies of shells thanks to British munitions workers".

Dr Haggith explains: "The message couldn't be clearer – the screen time occupied by this subject is sizeable, taking up 195 seconds of the film."

The footage was also used to apply pressure on those men who had avoided conscription, the first time this enforced enlistment method had been undertaken in Britain, and it had become a controversial policy when extended to married men.

"According to one account, 93,000 men nationwide had failed to respond to call-up papers," adds Dr Haggith.

"In late August, the South Eastern Gazette, covering Maidstone and the surrounding area, printed a review of *The Battle of the Somme*, announcing when it was to be screened.

"Right alongside this article was a list of the names of 95 local men, with their ages and addresses, which had been published by the area recruiting officer, requesting information as to their whereabouts."

The whole film project could have backfired badly for a government

that was grappling with an uprising in Ireland that was diverting resources and damaging Irish volunteer numbers, as well as serious discontent at home due to Zeppelins seemingly dropping their bombs at will on the civilian population.

The shocking scenes of dead soldiers also challenged the very conservative values of the day.

But, according to Dr Haggith, the gamble largely paid off.

"Overall, it solidified support for the war effort not the pacifists," he says.

"The public saw the dead, the sacrifice of the British Army and also their stoicism and cheeriness in deeply disturbing circumstances and they were very impressed by that; they thought they must support them however they could.

"In terms of impact there's been nothing quite like it since.

"Cinema was in its infancy then and the government hadn't worked with film-makers before; they didn't know what they were playing with but on this occasion it worked out."

The filming of a later stage of the battle, released in 1917 as *The Battle of the Ancre and Advance of the Tanks*, contained no scenes of battlefield dead and, indeed, they have never been included since in any officially-sanctioned footage.

Despite the ad hoc manner in the way this film was planned and put together, *The Battle of the Somme* remains one of the most important documentaries to have been made and in 2005 it appeared on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, the first ever British document to be included.

● The Imperial War Museum is staging a major new exhibition *Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies* that goes behind the scenes of some of this century's iconic war films, starting with *The Battle of the Somme* and other blockbusters such as *The Dam Busters*, *Where Eagles Dare*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Battle of Britain*, and *Saving Private Ryan*.

Go to www.iwm.org.uk for more information.

Hard-won lessons

This month a Balkans and Iraq veteran who battled back from devastating facial injury shares with Soldier his pearls of wisdom on work, mates and 'civvy speak'...

Name: Simon Brown

Age: 37

Dates of service: 1997-2010

Cap badge: REME

Standout operations:

● Op Agricola (Kosovo, 1999) as part of the convoy that led the way in.

● Ops Telic 1 and 9 (Iraq). Hit in the face by sniper fire during a rescue mission on the latter tour, destroying his left eye and severely damaging the right in which 20 per cent vision remains.

Current status: Working a busy full-time role at the HQ of Blind Veterans UK on the charity's No One Alone campaign (www.noonealone.org.uk)

WORK HARD. You never know when the job you are doing is going to be in a life-and-death situation. If you do it well all the time you don't need to worry.

WORK HONEST. If you're someone who doesn't work hard and pretends they've done a good job, you will get found out. You can hide in some jobs but not in the military, and there's a vested interest in doing it right. In the REME, for example, if you're out on ops and haven't done a repair properly someone might have to go and retrieve the vehicle under fire. It's a bigger problem you're causing than just doing a bad job.

LOOK AFTER YOUR MATES. The Army can be a lonely place so the better your circle of friends, the better your career will be – both professionally and socially. They can also hold you up. When I was at home, broken after my injury it was my mates who rallied round.

DURING DIFFICULT TIMES, TRY TO FIND A FOCUS AND NOT A DISTRACTION.

You need to focus on achieving something as opposed to distracting yourself. Because once the distraction goes away you are back to the same shitty place you were in before. But if you achieve something it can act as a platform to new things.

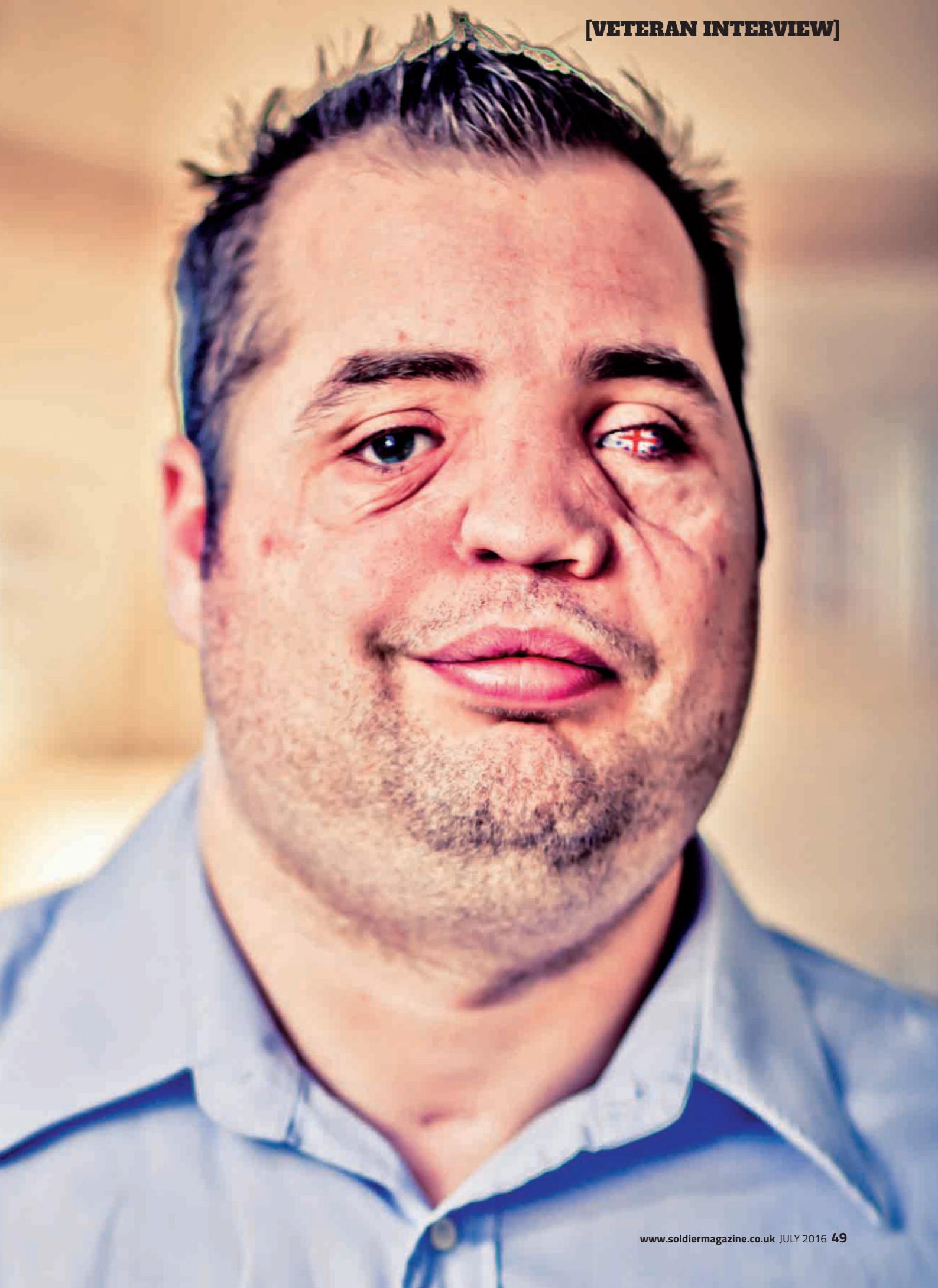
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE RESETTLEMENT SYSTEM. A lot of people just pay it lip service but there's useful stuff there.

LEARN TO "SPEAK CIVVY". Soldiers have a lot of transferable skills, like leadership, the ability to plan and punctuality, and it's important to learn how to use those things to your advantage in civilian life. Even when working in London, where no one is ever on time, I will be at a meeting five minutes early.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING.

You look even more stupid when you have to admit that you don't know what you are supposed to be doing.

When I was at home, broken it was my mates who rallied round



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AD0105887

“

TALKBACK

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

”

Big hole in training damaging careers

I AM a Regular soldier who has been serving for many years.

I've been to lots of places and worked with numerous commanders but until recently have never found any of them reluctant to allow their troops to develop and strengthen their careers by doing trade and adventurous training courses.

They would always encourage us to participate as long as the regiment wasn't engaged anywhere else at the time.

However, my current chain of command have been telling us not to attend any of these activities unless the squadron's second-in-command authorises it.

He insists that our manpower is required every day and therefore we cannot be released even though we all know there are no important activities such as assistance table tasks, exercises and other regimental commitments being planned.

As far as I know, every soldier has the right to attend military courses as long as his or her absence doesn't hamper the unit. – **Name and address supplied**

Brig Robert Walton-Knight, Assistant Chief of Staff Support, Headquarters Field Army, replies: The huge range of activities available to the Army's people is a fundamental part of the "offer".

These range from career and technical courses, which are now generally accredited to civilian qualifications, through study days and briefings, to sports and adventurous training.

All personnel are encouraged to participate – to do so benefits the



individual and the Service.

People, and their skills, are our greatest asset.

All commanders have a responsibility to ensure personnel get the very most from the opportunities the Army provides.

Naturally, this must be balanced with a unit's commitments, which do have primacy. The answer, therefore, lies in an individual taking ownership of their career, consulting their chain of command – who should allow them to attend courses if at all possible – and seizing the many opportunities the Service makes available.

Has bounty level been set too high?

I AM a Reservist and have been told training nights, regardless of activity, are not bounty qualifying.

I've also been told we must complete seven of ten mandatory weekends, which totals 17.5 days, plus the 15-day camp.

Therefore, we have to undertake a minimum of 32.5 days in addition to training nights in order to qualify for the bounty rather than 27 days which is in our contract.

Are you able to confirm whether the training requirement has been increased? – **Name and address supplied**

Col Jeremy Hughes, Army Training Branch, Army Headquarters, replies: No it hasn't. Assured training came into effect on

April 1 and was introduced to enhance the capability of the Reserve by helping commanding officers improve collective and specialist training opportunities. The policy for this is in Reserve regulations 1978 (amendment 39), chapter two.

The commanding officer designates key unit or individual training activity as an assured training event.

This can take place any time during the week, during an annual deployment exercise or be a course in lieu. Regional Reservists must do seven out of ten events designated as such, while national Reservists should finish three out of five – the total not exceeding 27 and 19 man training days respectively.

'PROPER FORM IS NOT OLD HAT'

I N the magazine I have noticed the increased customisation of the way berets are worn.

In my day this headgear sat with the rim half an inch above the eyebrows and the badge over the left eye.

It seems common now to wear the rim on the bridge of the nose, the badge near the left ear and the beret pulled to look like a flat cap.

I realise this has little to do with performance in the field but it looks silly. RSMs need to get a grip of these people! – **Simon de Buisseret, Royal Hospital Chelsea, London**



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RANT OF THE MONTH

Get it off your chest and on social media



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine



David Hunter

I want to complain about an article

[Final Word, June issue] and in particular to the mag's editor for allowing this rubbish.

Yeah, *Soldier* magazine is supposed to support all arms, but nooooo... you allow somebody to spout this nonsense.

I would recommend he spends some time with the artillery so he can see how much of a one-trick pony we really are!

Inter-Service banter is par for the course where we all make fun of each other, but for the actual "Soldier" magazine to let some complete **** on its pages is beyond comparison.

TLDR; editor = k***b



The managing k*b replies:** Inter-Services banter has never been off limits to *Soldier*.
David Hunter = SOHF



'We need scream savers'

HOW has the introduction of civilian contractors to manage IT saved the Ministry of Defence money or provided a better service?

The single point of contact service appears to be staffed by people with little technical knowledge, and they obviously work through a set checklist when diagnosing problems.

You are often referred to engineers, but are not able to speak to them directly and end up playing a game of phone tennis as the operator talks to them on another line.

I had a scanner delivered with no software installation disc and after a 12-hour wait for the contractor to find a catalogue number they sent an engineer to install the software, a task that took five minutes to complete.

Also, I tried to change an email address and it took me six phone calls over three weeks to complete.

These are not an isolated incidents and attempts to complain about the service are actively ignored – **Capt Chris Fawcett, RMP**

Cdr Alan Adams, Head Information Systems and Services, Customer Services, replies: The experience you describe is not what we are aiming for and I am sorry you have suffered this inconvenience.

The single point of contact and IT service catalogue have been included in a number of contract changes which came in to effect on May 1 this year.

This transition has been challenging as it marked the end of a facility which was in place for over ten years.

Part of the contract renegotiation will bring back key parts of IT systems into defence, which will enable us to design,

deliver and contract for this provision more effectively.

Our agents always endeavour to achieve a first-time fix during the initial telephone call.

If they cannot resolve the incident within 15 minutes they will refer it to the appropriate team and you may be asked to be placed on hold while this occurs.

Our staff have had to learn a number of new processes and this has caused temporary delays and backlogs which might be the cause of the issues you have experienced.

We recognise that services require further improvement and their performance continues to be monitored daily.

CREDIT FOR GAMBLER

- FULL credit to the soldier who talked about his addiction to gambling in the May issue of *Soldier*.

It takes courage to self analyse your own flaws and problems – even more to stand up and ask for help.

Given that in the Queen's Regulations all forms of gambling are prohibited on Army premises and taking into account the potentially harmful health and career consequences, why is more not done to help soldiers with this problem?

And why is at least one gambling machine located in every junior ranks' hub or NAAFI establishment?

We have alcohol awareness drives, anti-drug and diet and health campaigns so why can't we get rid of these ridiculous machines?

Is the Army not a modern, forward-thinking organisation that cares for its people? – **Name and address supplied**

SLICE OF SERVICE LIFE

This month's ruminations from the ranks...





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No cash to splash on flash

WHILE serving in Cyprus I witnessed a variety of uniform changes, most recently a move back to the old-style 95 MTP shirts to accommodate working in the heat.

However, it appears there isn't enough money to supply patches for each soldier's garment – there's not even enough funding to provide one such item for each individual.

My badge has seen many years of service and while looking fairly smart and representative it is also weathered and full of "character".

Even though budgets are tight there really is no excuse for this.

We already have to pay for other regimental items that aren't compulsory but the Army should provide recognition flashes. – **Name and address supplied**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: Although the Army is looking to find the funding, currently neither tactical recognition flashes nor formation flashes are issued at public expense because both are still considered to be optional items.

Maybe not in Cyprus but

elsewhere there will be occasions when a jacket needs to be worn over a shirt and both require the appropriate flashes on each arm.

You'll need to purchase the items concerned and have them sewn onto the new shirts to replace those which are no longer considered serviceable.



In demand: Recognition flashes like this one are an essential item of uniform, but should soldiers have to pay for them?

“**WE HAVE TO PAY A 100 PER CENT PREMIUM ON OUR COUNCIL TAX BILL**”

SCOTTISH LAW IS UNFAIR TO SOLDIERS

● I HAVE just left the Army and now face a hefty and, in my opinion, totally unfair council tax bill because of my military service.

It stems from the fact that I owned a family home in Scotland during my time in the military.

As a result, I'm paying almost four times more council tax than my counterparts in England and Wales.

The law in this country has not been brought into line with the rest of the UK and councils class a soldier's personal dwelling as a second home if not occupied – even if deployed or living away in Service accommodation.

Consequently, I pay a 100 per cent premium on my council tax bill initially, and then after 12 months fork out an additional 200 per cent.

In England and Wales a home owning Serviceman or woman is considered to be living in Armed Forces accommodation "for job-related purposes", and as such is exempt from such charges.

I'm currently lobbying the Scottish Parliament to bring our law into line with the rest of the country.

If anyone is interested in supporting me please go to Facebook and search for "reverse the HM Forces premium" – **John McGlinchey, ex-RLC**

Karen Ludlow, Brigade Secretary, HQ 51 Inf Bde, responds: Setting council tax is a local authority issue and is devolved through the Scottish Government.

In England and Wales soldiers get an automatic 50 per cent discount but in Scotland, if a soldier leaves his own home unoccupied but furnished, then he can apply for a cut ranging from 10-50 per cent, depending on local authority rules.

If personnel contact us we can often help them obtain the maximum discount available as we cite the Armed Forces Covenant that local authorities signed to support our troops which states that military personnel should not be disadvantaged by their service.

The question is, did you leave your house furnished and, if so, did you tell the council?

Will Reserves get upgrade?

● I AM a Regular soldier who has recently joined the Reserves.

While signing for my uniform and equipment I was told that the unit had no Mk 7 helmets available.

Do you know they will be issued to Reserve units and, if so, when? – **Name and address supplied**

David Stevenson, Assistant Head Personnel Capability, Army Secretariat, replies: Regular and Reserve soldiers are issued with either the Mk 6, Mk 6A, Mk 7 or Virtus designs.

The types soldiers receive is down to availability and operational requirements.

The only demands for the Mk 7 version that will definitely be satisfied are those from personnel on operations, training establishments and units which have soldiers with unserviceable kit.

All others will be reviewed in order to prevent the uncontrolled replacement of older helmets with



On its way: Virtus helmets are gradually being phased in

newer models.

Additional funding has been approved to alleviate the issue but the plan is to transition over time to the Virtus helmet.

There will still be a refurbishment programme in place for the Mk 6A and Mk 7 helmets but no more Mk 6 models are to be reconditioned.

Older stock will gradually reduce over time as each item is eventually rated as beyond economic repair and they are replaced by Virtus headwear.

BULLET POINTS

BITE-SIZED DATA TO KEEP YOU IN THE KNOW



CAREERS

Transition Force uses a combination of technology and events to provide personalised career support for ex-Service personnel nationwide. To register visit www.transitionforce.com/events

Ex-Military Recruitment assists former Service personnel from specialist technical regiments trained in electrical and mechanical engineering, logistics and telecommunications in finding similar civilian careers. For details visit www.xmr.co.uk



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winners: SSgt Colin Fawbert, Northwood, Middlesex; Angus McBain, Dundee



DIARY

June 29-January 2018: *Wounded, Conflict, Casualties and Care* at the Science Museum London. The exhibition explores the pioneering innovations of the First World War and parallels to the treatment and care of soldiers in modern conflicts. Visit www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/wounded for more information.

June 30-January 8, 2017: *Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies* at the Imperial War Museum London. Marking the 100th anniversary of the release of *The Battle of the Somme*. Adults £10; children (15 and under) £5; concessions £7.

July 1: Over the Top. Remember the Battle of the Somme and watch football at Surrey Sports Park, Guildford. Some 20 teams – military and civilian, male and female, adults and youth – will play each other to honour the sacrifices made by local men from the South East, who 100 years earlier kicked footballs “over the top” to encourage an advance. Chelsea, Southampton and Aldershot are among the clubs taking part. For details email Fred Hughes via se-comms@rfca.org.uk

August 6-7: Military and Flying

Machines Show, Damyns Hall Aerodrome, Upminster, Essex. Military vehicles, living history displays and trade stalls plus fairground and 1940s fashion show. For details visit www.militaryandflyingmachines.org.uk



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

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

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

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

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

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

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

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

Combat Stress:

01372 841600;
www.combatstress.org.uk

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

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

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

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Falklands – #6111; from operational theatres – Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) – 0044 1980 630854

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

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

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

Remount:
01451 850 341; www.remount.net

Royal British Legion:
0808 802 8080;

www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

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

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

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

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

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www.stoll.org.uk

The Not Forgotten Association:
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www.nfassociation.org

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

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

The Veterans Charity:
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info@veteranscharity.org.uk

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

INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 79/16: Sexual offences education and awareness

ABN 78/16: 2016 Birthday honours

ABN 77/16: Minor amendments to continuity of education allowance



ABN 76/16: Defence vehicles dynamics

ABN 75/16: Employer recognition scheme awards expenditure

ABN 74/16: MATTs 2 fitness

ABN 73/16: Service Cotswold Centre broadened entitlement

ABN 71/16: Black Asian minority ethnic mentoring circle programme

ABN 70/16: Battle of the Somme – path of the remembered

ABN 69/16: Army Dependents' Trust membership for Army Reserves

ABN 68/16: The award of the Carrington Drum Trophy

ABN 67/16: 2016 Armed Forces continuous attitude survey

ABN 66/16: Reserve Day 2016

ABN 65/16: Prize draw for the Army Festival of Learning

ABN 64/16: Diversity and inclusion conference 2016

ABN 63/16: EU Referendum registering and voting

ABN 62/16: 2016 Pay award for Service medical and dental officers

ABN 61/16: Nursing officer transfer scheme

ABN 60/16: Regular Army Service leavers visit to Army Reserve units (updated)

DIN 2016DIN01-093: MoD education support fund 2017

DIN 2016DIN01-092: Support available for staff giving evidence in legal proceedings

DIN 2016DIN01-091: Reserves Day 2016

DIN 2016DIN01-090: 2016 Government knowledge and information management professional skills framework released

DIN 2016DIN01-087: Healthcare provision in British Indian Ocean territory directory of local health services and medical screening advice

DIN 2016DIN01-086: Recruitment

of Commonwealth nationals into the Armed Forces

DIN 2016DIN01-085: Ramadan and Eid ul Fitr 2016

DIN 2016DIN03-023: Establishment of the Defence Medical Services defence engagement function

DIN 2016DIN03-022: Requesting support from the Joint Helicopter Command

DIN 2016DIN04-106: Declaration of obsolete – recorder, sound ranging Mk3

DIN 2016DIN04-105: Special tools and test equipment scales with the existing DMC of STTE are to be made obsolete in 2016

DIN 2016DIN04-104: Movement of private vehicles at public expense

DIN 2016DIN04-103: AESP-2630-A-409-301 tyres solid and cushion including rubber track laying treads

DIN 2016DIN04-102: AESP-2300-A-310-201, B vehicle corrosion prevention

DIN 2016DIN04-101: Declaration of equipment obsolescence – aircrew CBRN assemblies (AR5)

DIN 2016DIN04-100: Declaration of obsolescent general purpose test and measurement equipment tester, torque wrench NSN: 6635-99-7052709 (CM1000)

DIN 2016DIN04-099: Declaration of obsolescent general purpose test and measurement equipment tester, torque wrench NSN: 6635-99-4418378 (CM400)

DIN 2016DIN04-098: Declaration of obsolescent general purpose test and measurement equipment tester, torque wrench NSN: 6635-99-2126367 (CM40)

DIN 2016DIN04-097: Declaration of obsolete SIMRAD/SNS KN202G

DIN 2016DIN04-096: Declaration of DMC SISTA UOR equipment

DIN 2016DIN04-095: Secure management radio equipment obsolescence

DIN 2016DIN04-094: Lynx

helicopter drawdown and disposal

DIN 2016DIN04-093: Required information on movements documentation to support compliant UK customs declarations

DIN 2016DIN04-092: Confidence tester NSN: 6665-99-225-3523 used with the manportable chemical agent detector and the chemical agent monitor

DIN 2016DIN04-091: Declaration of obsolete – ECM generic fill gun system

DIN 2016DIN04-090: Declaration of obsolete – CUGSS and DUGSS used on DEWDROP and remote ground sensor systems

DIN 2016DIN04-089: Declaration of obsolete – trailer glider support first response

DIN 2016DIN04-088: Tri-Service policy and guidance for the acquisition and management of batteries and fuel cells

DIN 2016DIN04-087: Ambulatory blood pressure monitor

DIN 2016DIN06-014: JSP 403 Volume 1 – *Range Safety Policy Letter (RSPL) 16-02* update to JSP 403 – *Handbook of Defence Range Safety*

DIN 2016DIN06-013: Rewrite and transfer of ownership of JSP 790 *Defence Rail Regulations to ACDS Log Ops*

DIN 2016DIN07-084: Tri-Service university short course programme – academic year 2016/17

DIN 2016DIN07-083: Information management courses for September 2016 to July 2017 at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham

DIN 2016DIN07-082: Helicopter load slinging equipment inspector course

DIN 2016DIN07-081: Declaration of obsolescence MAPRIC qualification

DIN 2016DIN07-080: Training courses for wounded, injured and sick Service personnel schedule April 2016 to March 2017

DIN 2016DIN07-079: MoD civil servants and MoD-sponsored civilian

visitors communication, negotiation and behaviour detection

DIN 2016DIN07-078: MoD civil servants and MoD-sponsored civilian visitors pre-deployment training

DIN 2016DIN07-077: Tactical Medical Wing course schedule training year 2016/17

DIN 2016DIN07-076: Qualified warfare instructor intelligence surveillance reconnaissance course

DIN 2016DIN07-075: UKRFA Scottish Military Skills Competition 2016

DIN 2016DIN07-073: Joint Equality and Diversity Training Centre: Equality, diversity and inclusion specialist training 2016/17

DIN 2016DIN07-072: Adventurous training – planning expeditions to Morocco in 2017

DIN 2016DIN08-006: Non-entitled cash casual meal charge for financial year 2016/17

DIN 2016DIN08-005: Credit Union services – access for Armed Forces personnel and former personnel in receipt of an Armed Forces pension

DIN 2016DIN10-028: British Army motorsports event – Saxon Express 2016

DIN 2016DIN10-026: Inter-Service and Tri-Service Ice Hockey Championships, June 7 to 10, 2016

DIN 2016DIN10-025: Army Lawn Tennis Championships 2016

DIB22/16: Guidance ahead of the EU Referendum

DIB21/16: Publication of the results of the Armed Forces continuous attitude survey 2016

 **REUNIONS**

The Army Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum summer ball at St David's Spa and Hotel in Cardiff on July 9 at 1830. Drinks reception followed by three-course

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

REUNIONS CONTINUED

meal, guest speakers, entertainment and charity raffle. Serving personnel and veterans welcome. Tickets, £50, from Sgt Alastair Smith on 07970 785913.

Dover Grammar School CCF 100-year anniversary dinner on July 9. All ex-cadets are welcome to attend. For further information email Capt Matt Peall via 2ic-dgs-ccf@armymail.mod.uk

Royal Green Jackets 50th anniversary veterans' day on July 9 at ATR(W), Sir John Moore Barracks, Winchester. Open to all past and present riflemen and their families. For full details contact Maj (Retd) Roy Stanger on 01962 887916 or email roy.stanger787@mod.uk

26 Regiment, Royal Artillery Big Weekend Bash on July 23-24 at Mansergh Barracks, Gutersloh. Open to all past and present members and their families. A parade and fun day on July 23 will be followed by a church service and lunches in the messes the following day. For further details on the events, travel queries and attendance, contact the QM, Maj Gary Leadbitter, via 26ra-qmdept-maint-qm@mod.uk

24 Field Squadron, Royal Engineers reunion on August 5-7 at the Waterfront Hotel, Brighouse,

West Yorkshire. Members of the squadron who served between 1963 and 1965 at Kingshill Camp, Hoo and Aden are welcome to attend. For further information contact Tony Saunders on 0113 285 2621 or Alex Watson on 01484 715330.

AAC ACC 7th intake (1974-1976) 42nd anniversary reunion dinner, August 13 at the Victory Services Club, London. Members of the 7th Intake (A and B Coy) and partners are welcome to attend. For further information email Stephen Carroll via stephencarroll441@btinternet.com

The LG Groves Memorial Award ceremony will be held on September 6 in Somerset. All previous winners are invited to attend. Please contact Doug Fowler on 030679 88403.

13 (Martinique) 1809 Battery reunion on April 7-9, 2017 at the Copthorne Hotel, Merry Hill, Dudley. For details email Kevin Brooks-Usher at k.brooksusher@hotmail.co.uk

ROADSHOWS

The Army Engagement Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a reception, is followed by a presentation, questions and culminates with refreshments. There will be a range

of military personnel on hand to answer any of your questions. Call 01276 412880 or email your name and address to armymediacom-aeg-mailbox@mod.uk with the event you want to attend.

July: 14, Carmarthen; 19, Newcastle

SEARCHLINE

Former soldier John Linley, who served with 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, is calling for

Servicemen and women to submit their funny stories from life in operational theatres with a view to having them published in a book. Details of name, rank and unit will be required, along with the location and timeframe of the incident. Email maclinley@hotmail.com

Trevor Kirkman is trying to trace **John Edward "Taffy" Davies, who is believed to have served with 302 Brigade in 1945.**

Anyone with information is asked to email enid.trevor@ntlworld.com

Suzanne Fernando is trying to trace any **photographs and video footage taken during the Queen Mother's visit to Guildford Barracks in 1991.**

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NO. 896

JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed in this photograph of Army musicians from the Household Division bands and corps of drums during the major general's review in advance of the Queen's birthday parade.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 896, Soldier**,

Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU no later than July 29.

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

First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win £100; the second and third

will receive £25 gift vouchers.

The results will be announced in the September issue. Usual rules apply.

May's winner: Brett Jouny, Swindon, Wiltshire. **Runners up:** Barry Thomas, Imjin Barracks, Innsworth and Jordan Dickinson, Churchill Barracks, Leeds.



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Living as a member of a Forces' family is an unusual experience and not normally one understood by those unfamiliar with service life. Civilians find it difficult to imagine a job where you can be moved at little or no notice and where you can be sent into a hostile zone with no regular means of contacting your family.

Rest assured we understand the pressures that your family has to go through. About a fifth of our pupils come from Forces' backgrounds and we work hard to support those children and the difficulties they face being away from home and worrying about their serving parents.

The College has seen another outstanding year with its A-Level results. 80% of grades at A-Level were A*-A and 98% were A*-B. The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's, which offers students the opportunity to do more vocational subjects at BTEC, celebrated some of its best results ever. 80% of grades at A-Level were A*-A (up from last year's

76%) and 96% of grades were A*-B (up from last year's 90%). The Faculty's 88% Distinction*-Distinction pass rate at BTEC (equating in UCAS points to an A/A* grade at A-Level) shows equal strength in these qualifications.

Over the last few years our Combined Cadet Force has gone from strength to strength and we have a thriving contingent with cadets split between the Air Force and the Army.

With the backing of The Collegiate Charitable Foundation we are able to guarantee that your contribution to fees is no more than £795 per child per term. This makes us one of the most competitively priced boarding schools in the United Kingdom for Forces' children. With our investment now standing at £100m, 2015 has seen more facilities come online including new sport science lab, state-of-the-art gym and Activity centre with further developments underway for 2016. Please see our dedicated sports

village website for further information, including Elite Rugby (supported by Yorkshire Carnegie) and Netball (with Yorkshire Jets). www.sportsvillageqe.org. With the number of young people we have living on campus it is important that there is always a range of things to do in their spare time. This is the idea behind our new Activity Centre. Packed full of all the favourite things young people like. Combining outdoor energetic activities and challenges such as a huge climbing tower, assault course, trampolines, roller boating, go-karts, Segways and professionally built BMX track with indoor activities like electronic games, musical activities plus much more. Don't just take our word for it, pay us a visit and see for yourself.

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

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→ **More British Forces children than any other boarding school - because we care.**

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

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	4	Winchester College	84.2%
	5	Sevenoaks School	82.9%
2	6	Queen Ethelburga's College	82.5%
	7	St Paul's Boys School	81.4%
	8	Eton College	80.7%
	9	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	80.2%
3	10	Concord College	79.9%
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	12	St Mary's School Ascot	77.1%
	13	Cheltenham Ladies' College	74.5%
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	15	Wellington College	72.8%
	16	Ruthin School	72.8%
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	20	Westbourne School	69.7%



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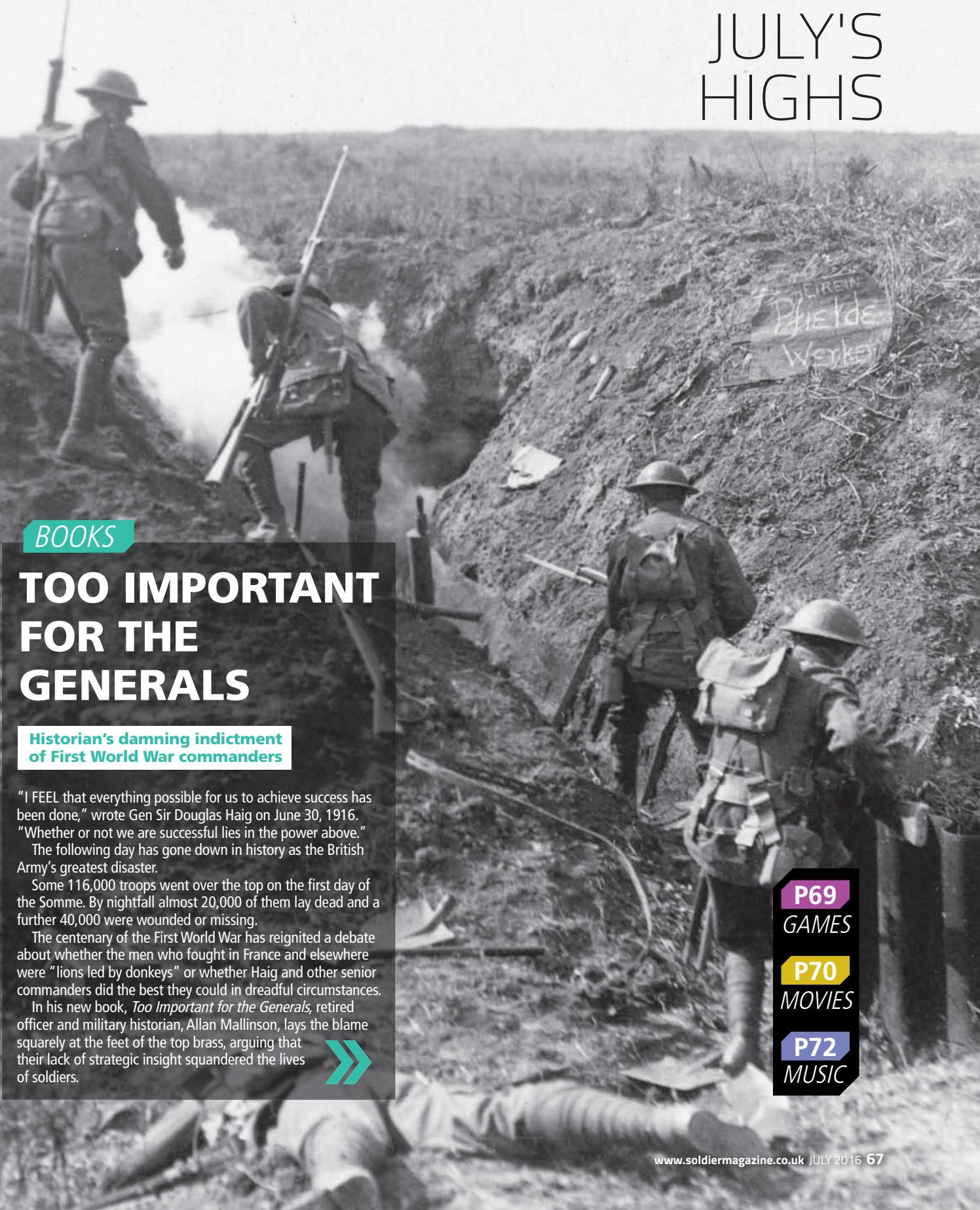
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REVIEWS

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BOOKS

TOO IMPORTANT FOR THE GENERALS

Historian's damning indictment of First World War commanders

"I FEEL that everything possible for us to achieve success has been done," wrote Gen Sir Douglas Haig on June 30, 1916. "Whether or not we are successful lies in the power above."

The following day has gone down in history as the British Army's greatest disaster.

Some 116,000 troops went over the top on the first day of the Somme. By nightfall almost 20,000 of them lay dead and a further 40,000 were wounded or missing.

The centenary of the First World War has reignited a debate about whether the men who fought in France and elsewhere were "lions led by donkeys" or whether Haig and other senior commanders did the best they could in dreadful circumstances.

In his new book, *Too Important for the Generals*, retired officer and military historian, Allan Mallinson, lays the blame squarely at the feet of the top brass, arguing that their lack of strategic insight squandered the lives of soldiers.

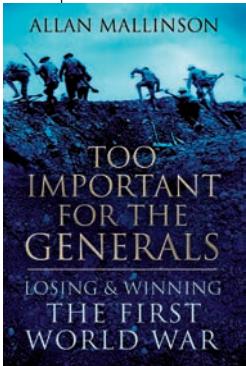


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BOOKS



"Fighting without a coherent strategy just piles up the casualties," explained the author.

"My central charge is that the generals did not find another way other than attrition, not because there wasn't another way, but because they seemed unwilling or unable to look beyond the Western Front.

"You don't take ground solely because it's there.

"You don't train armies by killing or wounding half of them. You don't trade life for life merely to reduce the enemy's numbers.

"That's not generalship. I would describe it rather as military accountancy."

Since the Allies lacked the technical means to defeat the Germans in Belgium and France, Mallinson suggests commanders should have recognised the need to weaken the enemy indirectly, through naval blockades and exploiting alternative fronts in the Dardanelles, Salonika or Italy earlier and to better effect.

The fact that politicians such as David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill had pressed for such an approach is evidence, he believes, that they had a sounder grasp of strategy than those in charge of the Army.

It is this theme that inspired the book's title; upon hearing of another costly offensive, future French prime minister Georges Clemenceau is said to have remarked, "war is too serious a matter to entrust to the military".

Mallinson, whose previous title *1914: Fight the Good Fight* was named Army Book of the Year in 2014, contends that the lack of dialogue between the military and political spheres contributed to the stalemate, not least in places such as the Somme.

Challenging the view that the campaign was a necessary step in defeating the Germans, the ex-cavalryman continued: "I don't buy the idea that the Somme was a necessary battle.

"It's a bit like saying the loss of the Titanic was necessary for the improvement of ship design.

"And it wasn't just the Somme, which was a repetition of futile attacks in 1915 and was repeated at Passchendaele in 1917.

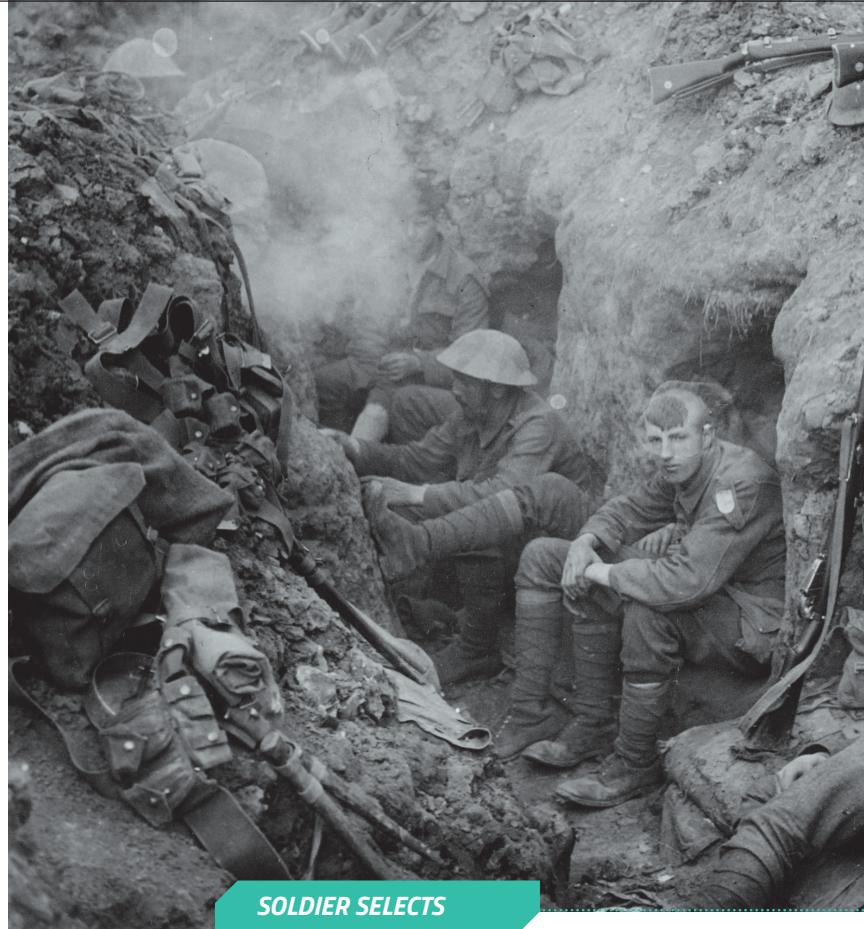
"If the Germans had not attacked first in 1918 and obliged the Allies by leaving their strong defences and giving us a chance to face them in the open, where they ran out of steam, I think we would still have been mounting the same sort of offensives throughout that year and getting the same bloody nose."

The book also explores what implications leaders' mistakes had beyond the Armistice. Had the Americans been properly incorporated into the Allied strategy once they joined the fight and had a generation of French and British men not been sacrificed on the Western Front, the world may not have found itself at war again just 20 years later.

Historians writing about the First World War from the safety of the 21st century have the benefit of hindsight, but Mallinson bases his case on information that was available to decision makers at the time and argues persuasively that those charged with sending men into battle should have given a better account of themselves.

As the nation commemorates one of the darkest chapters in British Army history, it is hard to disagree. ■

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK



SOLDIER SELECTS

VERDICT:

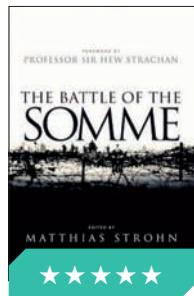
A compelling read, guaranteed to stoke debate



First Day of the Somme by Andrew MacDonald

TAKING the same title as one of the most well known Somme histories is a bold statement of intent by the author. The hierarchy of books in the genre is long established and rarely shifts in order. However, I think that this refreshing new offering may find its way to the top end of the pile. The narrative has an insightful 360-degree view of the battle linked by numerous previously unpublished first-hand accounts including a proportionate number from German combatants, good maps and plenty of data. It is head and shoulders above the crowd of reprints and well ahead of the pack of new titles.

Mike Peters, ex-AAC



The Battle of the Somme Edited by Matthias Strohn

DO we really need another study of Britain's bloodiest battle, even in this centenary year? The answer, it turns out, is yes. This series of essays rises above the mud and the blood to provide new insights for a 21st century readership. Thus we learn that the Germans were so shocked by their losses they considered suing for peace; that the lessons of the five-month campaign probably saved hundreds of thousands of lives in ensuing years; that, overall, the French contribution was greater than the British; and that, in many instances, German commanders failed to make the most of their strengths.

Douglas Jackson, historical novelist



Left: Welsh guards in a reserve trench. Above: Author Allan Mallinson
Previous page: Troops bombing the Germans out of their deep dugouts

Pictures: IWM; Graeme Main

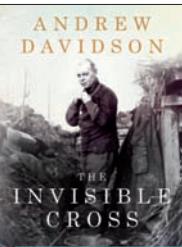
The Welsh at Mametz Wood

by Dr Jonathan Hicks

THIS book takes us on a journey from the Welsh villages to the Somme and a place called Mametz Wood, where unsuspecting soldiers were thrust into a shamble of errors. Poorly navigated routes, broken communications and lack of information about enemy gun positions doomed the attack from

the start. What struck me most was the average age of these brave young troops. As one officer put it: "The men followed me gallantly, and it was cruel to see them fall between a hail of bullets; they gave their lives cheerfully." I think those words sum up this thought-provoking read perfectly.

Tony David, ex-RE

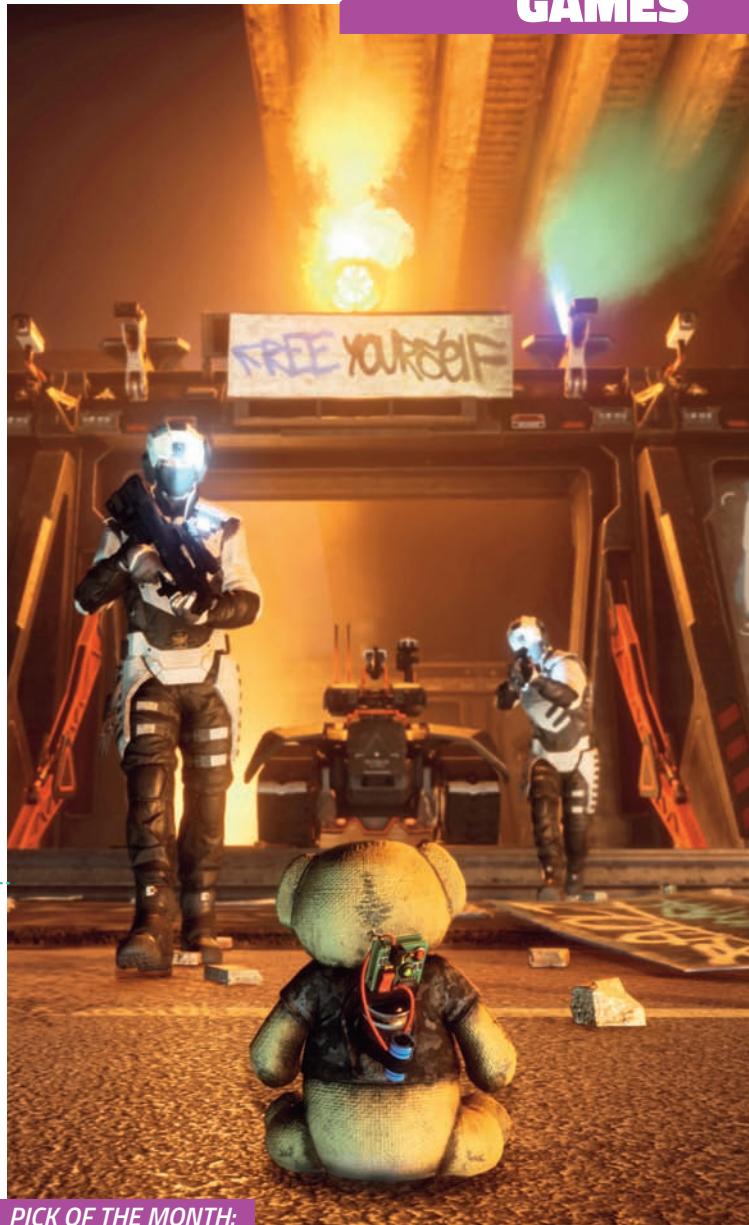


The Invisible Cross

by Andrew Davidson

PUBLISHED to mark the centenary of the Somme, this very compelling book is based on letters written by Lt Col Graham Chaplin, the war's longest-serving front-line commanding officer, to his wife back home. Chaplin led the 1st Cameronians through three years of brutal trench warfare from 1914-17. It is a strange title as it is like listening in on a telephone conversation where you only hear one side of the tale – he burnt the letters from home to prevent anyone reading them if he was killed. Some of the correspondence are extremely personal, giving a revealing insight into his state of mind.

Andy Kay, ex-RS



PICK OF THE MONTH:

HOMEFRONT REVOLUTION

Xbox One, PS4 and PC

► *HOMEFRONT: The Revolution* presents an alternative history, where North Korea becomes the market leader in information technology, handheld devices and sinister military hardware.

As a result the United States is relegated to underdog status, so to speak.

The game kicks off with Ethan Brady waiting for Benjamin Walker – the man at the top of the national resistance movement – to visit an outpost but the Koreans attack before he arrives, taking everyone prisoner.

After redecorating the walls

with fellow revolutionary brain, Walker turns up just in time to prevent his comrade from being added to the decor.

Things then go from bad to worse as the duo attempt to make contact with another resistance cell before the enemy raid the leader's safe house, when he is taken into captivity.

This offering is a mix of first-person shooter moments, fetch missions and events that all lead towards garnering public support for the revolution.

The tasks are fairly straightforward, but often repetitive, as is the gameplay. The aiming is twitchy, resulting in frustrating firefights against a superior foe, and the graphics are a little disappointing in parts.



GAMES CONTINUED



The enemy AI is also fairly predictable and the opportunities for utilising stealth are woefully isolated and underused.

However, you can modify firearms to make them more effective and the only mode of transport other than running around is a motorbike, which is easy to control.

The acting and story is as repetitive as the missions, resorting to tropes and clichés throughout, instead of offering a more emotional and resonant alternative to the typical brash, cigar-chomping stereotype.

The result was a resistance movement that seemed unintelligent and rash, instead of calculating, intelligent and ruthless.

More distracting and alienating for me though, was the game's lack of perceived player-involvement.

You constantly find yourself being "talked to" instead of conversing with fellow resistance members. I don't expect it to be the "best thing since sliced bread" but at least have my character reply to comments other people make, instead of sitting me in the corner like a naughty child who daren't talk back.

All in all, *Homefront: The Revolution* isn't a bad title. It features open world exploration – to a degree – and you can modify weapons and improve your arsenal along the way.

But its reluctance to identify as a bespoke style of play is a noticeable hindrance. Any future iteration would benefit from a clear identity, varied mission types and enemies that provide a greater palette of opposition instead of being fairly generic. ■

REVIEW: DAVID McDougall, CIVVY

VERDICT:

Repetition is not the key in this average offering **★★★★★**



PICK OF THE MONTH:

DAD'S ARMY

Wartime sitcom given modern makeover

► **TAMPERING** with a comedy classic is always a risky business.

The standard tactic of trying to appeal to both the modern audience and diehard fans of the original series usually ends up pleasing no one, so I wasn't expecting much from this feature-length remake of *Dad's Army*.

Admittedly, the TV version comes across as dated nowadays but I was sceptical that this **Oliver Parker**-directed effort could retain any of the old-fashioned charm.

In the end I was pleasantly surprised. The film brings the Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard back to life with some genuine laughs and plenty of "don't panic" and "we're doomed"-style nostalgia thrown in.

A strong cast put in some decent performances, especially **Michael Gambon** as elderly medic Godfrey and I think **Arthur Lowe** would have been proud of his successor, **Toby Jones**' portrayal of loveable idiot, Capt Mainwaring.

Bill Nighy as Wilson lacked the **John Le Mesurier** delivery we came to know and love and I don't recall the relationship between him and Mainwaring being quite as sour in the series but that was more to do with the script than Nighy's acting.

Had he been appeasing Mainwaring rather than battling him, I think it would have been better.

Appearances by some of the original cast were a welcome sight, including **Ian Lavender** – formerly Pte Pike but promoted to brigadier in the movie – and **Frank Williams**, who reprised his old role of Reverend Farthing.

But I would have liked to see more of the





long-running battle for supremacy with Air Raid Warden Hodges, which was entertaining back in the day but doesn't feature much in the film.

The previously peripheral wives and girlfriends get beefed up roles in this remake and at times threaten to steal the show.

The inclusion of Mainwaring's much more capable ATS officer spouse was an excellent touch as it showcased the important work carried out by these women during the war.

Sarah Lancashire was also good as Pike's long-suffering mother and love interest of "Uncle" Arthur, a character seldom seen in the sitcom.

Talking of Pike, **Blake Harrison**'s turn as the hapless private was one of the few negatives for me; his style was too hammy and over the top.

Just as in the series, the plot is highly predictable but then it was never meant to be *Poirot*.

A Nazi agent – **Catherine Zeta-Jones**, injecting some star power – exploits the buffoonery and vanity of Mainwaring et al to help the German invasion.

I don't think it's too much of a spoiler to say that they wise up just in time to stop her dastardly plan; the point is along the way the film manages to stay faithful to the spirit of the *Dad's Army* of old, while offering a modern twist.

Perhaps understandably it got mixed reviews when it debuted in cinemas but I think it suits the smaller screen format and would recommend the DVD for a rainy day if nothing else. ■

VERDICT:
Good harmless fun with a hefty dose of nostalgia
★★★★★



REVIEW: SSGT MIKE OWENS, RE

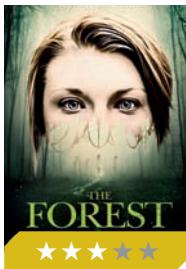


The Choice out now

RENNED author **Nicholas Sparks** has already seen the likes of *Dear John* and *The Notebook* converted to the big screen and this latest romantic offering

will undoubtedly appeal to the weeping masses. The story centres around Travis Shaw (**Benjamin Walker**), a young veterinarian committed to one night stands and a carefree lifestyle, and Gabby Holland (**Teresa Palmer**), a beautiful and ambitious medical student who is preparing to settle down with her long-term boyfriend. However, fate takes a hand and they end up living next door to each other and, rather predictably, they fall in love. They are confronted by a number of other obstacles – just to make the film even longer – and it all stumbles towards an obvious conclusion. This is not a bad effort and you'll be advised to have the tissues ready if the course of true love makes you cry.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

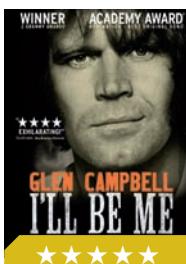


The Forest out now

NATALIE DORMER (*Hunger Games* and *Game of Thrones*) plays the role of twins in this very predictable horror movie. She approaches this dual role very well

and shows how flexible she is as an actress. The story made me jump out of my seat on many occasions so it kept me interested throughout. However, I soon realised which direction the movie was heading in and that took the edge off things. Without giving too much away, this is the tale of a twin looking for her sibling in a haunted forest but it is worth a watch.

Julie Jessup, civvy



Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me out now

INSPIRING, uplifting, heart-warming, personal and so much more. Whether you are a country music fan or not this is definitely a

must-see film. **Glen Campbell** is an inspiration to anyone who suffers from or knows someone who has Alzheimer's. This is a personal view from inside the lives of his family and friends, as well as the great man himself. The stories are amazing and from start to finish you are glued to his humour and his battles. It is well made and very well presented with contributions from a whole host of celebrities and stars.

Darren McCall, ex-AGC (SPS)

PICK OF THE MONTH:

LOVE AND HATE

Michael Kiwanuka

AS winner of the BBC's *Sound of 2012* accolade singer-songwriter **Michael Kiwanuka** had seemingly guaranteed himself a place among music's heavy hitters.

While debut offering *Home Again* drew critical acclaim his career has yet to mirror the path of fellow recipients **Adele, Ellie Goulding and Sam Smith**.

But after a four-year absence the Londoner, born to Ugandan refugees, is back in the spotlight and the strength of new album *Love and Hate* could soon see him standing proudly alongside his cohorts on the main stage.

Produced by Brian Joseph Burton, aka **Danger Mouse** – whose collaborators include **Gnarls Barkley, Gorillaz and the Black Keys** – the record has been two years in the making and is far more experimental than his previous material, which was highly polished and served as the ideal platform from which to announce himself.

"The first album was way more technical," Kiwanuka explained. "It was like 'okay, we need exactly the right drum sound and an old mic, and the near perfect guitar sound'.

"I love that stuff and always will but Brian changed my perspective on it. I realised the music wasn't just about deconstructing the instruments, it was to feel."

The single *Black Man in a White World* stands triumphantly as the highlight of the record, with the singer's American blues approach proving the perfect accompaniment to a difficult subject matter.

Talking about the track, he explained: "That song is about all the sadness and frustrations of childhood, of being one of the very few black kids in Muswell Hill and never feeling like I fitted in.

"It's about not feeling like I could be a rock star, of always being categorised as jazz, of attending the Royal Academy of Music and seeing no black people on the course and thinking just how much I was a black man in a white world."

From here the album maintains an impressive trend, flitting between hints of gospel, sweeping strings, soul and rock as Kiwanuka showcases his true diversity.

These elements are perfectly captured on the outstanding title track, which builds to a thrilling crescendo that hinges perfectly on a stunning guitar solo.

Spirituality comes to the fore on *Father's Child*, while themes of love and relationships are explored on the likes of *Cold Little Heart* and *Final Frame*.

One More Night – with an intro akin to **Amy Winehouse's** *You Know I'm No Good* – serves as another high point and on the whole it is difficult to find fault with this excellent offering.

Kiwanuka was shortlisted for the Mercury Prize on the back of *Home Again*, on the strength of this evidence he may go one better and win the coveted gong in 2016. ■

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG

VERDICT:

Diverse and captivating; this is an essential listen

★★★★★





SOLDIER SELECTS



★★★★★

This is Your Life

by Augustines



★★★★★

THIS third album from **Augustines** comes alive with a great opening track in *Are We Alive*, which showcases **Billy McCarthy's** resounding vocals. The journey gets better with the upbeat *When Things Fall Apart*, while the mellow *The Forgotten Way* is particularly pleasant with its perfect string accompaniment. Even though there are plenty of ballads in this atmospheric collection, don't worry, as there are just as many of the band's typical numbers to keep everyone happy. Check out the foot-stomping title track *This Is Your Life*, which is an anthem in the making.

Janet Dornan, ex-R Signals



★★★★★

Vanilla

by Evans the Death

LONDON five-piece **Evans the Death** return with their most ambitious and experimental offering to date. *Vanilla* bounces wildly between styles, lending a real, if confusing, energy to the flow of the album. It is a dark, howling, ragged storm of a record that resists categorisation – a far cry from the bland, unimaginative music that pervades the airwaves and marks a new chapter in the story of a band that never fail to surprise. I knew my auditory senses were in for an interesting experience but only a couple of the tracks were understandable – once I realised my CD player wasn't running backwards, that is. I'm afraid that's about as good as it got.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



★★★★★

The Wild Swan

by Foy Vance

WHAT a fabulous, unique sounding album this is. There's a hint of **Van Morrison** on a few tracks, but you'd expect this from a fellow Northern Irishman, and **Foy Vance's** growling voice is exceptional throughout, especially on the title track. He is a 41-year-old troubadour who seems to have finally found his home after signing for **Ed Sheeran's** Gingerbread Man label, where his hometown sound mixed with an American Louisiana style is appreciated. The record kicks off with the foot-stomping *Noam Chomsky* and flows seamlessly through the 12-track set. Vance has hit a home-run here and shows he can finally hold his own with any singer-songwriter around.

Tony David, ex-RE



★★★★★

The White Album

by Weezer

WEEZER are back with another eponymous album defined by its colour. Like many fans, I was hoping for a return to form after a decade of lacklustre efforts. Previous records have seen the group experimenting too much with very little result but this goes back to their earlier sound, which is illustrated through songs like the joyous *California Kids*, the anthemic *Thank God for the Girls* and the hedonistic closer *Endless Bummer*. By going back to basics Weezer have remembered what they are good at and this is a new high for a band that have rediscovered their mojo.

Damian Hern, ex-AGC (SPS)

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SOLDIERSPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long

Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Ready for Rio: Rowing ace Capt Heather Stanning (RA) will go for gold in the women's pair at this summer's Olympics. Discover her thoughts on the Games on pages 76-77...





TEAM GB'S GOLDEN GIRL

With the Rio Olympics just a few weeks away the coaches and selectors at Team GB are now finalising the line-up for a squad they hope will become firm fixtures on the podium in Brazil.

The inclusion of Army star Capt Heather Stanning (RA) comes as no surprise. As one half of rowing's women's pair, the officer heads to South America as a defending champion and, in some eyes, is almost guaranteed gold given the fact she and partner Helen Glover are unbeaten in more than four years.

SoldierSport sat down with the athlete to learn more about her preparations for the sporting showpiece and how she is coping with the pressure of the "favourites" tag...

» Your selection was seemingly nailed on but how do you feel now your place is finally confirmed?

It is nice to get the go-ahead from Team GB and have that box ticked. Some people thought it was a formality but you still need that confirmation. It is the end of our preparation and we now face the challenge of getting everything right in the two months leading into the Olympics. The World Championships have been seen as a stepping stone to this year and the World Cup races have proved really important this season. We have taken something from each event and are going to Rio in good shape.

» You had to withdraw from the World Cup event in Lucerne through illness. That setback aside, how have your preparations been in 2016?

It has been fairly straightforward really. We've had a few more things to deal with compared to the build-up to 2012 but it has been okay. During the winter it was about keeping on top of the coughs and colds and we had to limit the training a bit more than we wanted. Ahead of the last Games we didn't miss a single day of training but our preparation has still been really good and we're pleased with where we're at. We are fitter and better than we were four years ago in London.



WE ARE FITTER AND BETTER THAN WE WERE FOUR YEARS AGO IN LONDON

» How pleased are you with your form ahead of Rio?

It is coming together nicely. We were a little box fresh at the European Championships, we knew our main rivals were not there and we came into that on the back of some heavy training. We attacked the World Cup in Lucerne. We were pleased with our speed and other elements of our performance and the semi-finals went really well. Although we missed the final there were still a lot of positives to take.

» There is one last World Cup event in Poland before the Games. How important are those races in terms of your preparation?

That is our last international



race before we start our final training camp. It is the last chance to test ourselves on a two-kilometre course and face some of our potential rivals in Rio. The Americans won't be there as they've returned to the US for final selections but the New Zealanders will be present and they are strong competitors. The main European nations such as Denmark and Romania will be there so it will be a tough test.

» How much attention do you pay to your rivals and how they are performing?

We can only influence ourselves and what we do. Our main focus is on us being the best athletes we can be. But we would be naive to not take an interest in who we are racing against. When we go to regattas we can see how they progress and approach the heats, semis and finals. However, that does not effect how we go about things.

» What are your thoughts on competing at an overseas Games and what it is like being considered firm favourites for gold?

Four years ago there was

a lot of excitement for the Games as a whole and that was great for us as it was our first Olympics. Now, the excitement is still there but there is a lot more interest in us as a combination. Before London 2012 nobody knew who we were and this time round we are much more in the spotlight.

We still expect the same standards of ourselves; we will be the best we can be, race hard and do everything our coaches have taught us. The external pressure has changed; we were the first crew to be announced but that is a nice thing. We have worked very hard over the last four years.

» You and Helen are unbeaten as a pairing in more than four years. Does this create added pressure and can complacency become an issue?

It is a nice record to have

and is quite a cool statistic. The last time we lost was in the final of the World Championships in 2011. It is a long time and in a way that focuses the mind on what we can do to beat the opposition; we do not worry about losing. However, there is no complacency on our part.

I respect my competitors 100 per cent and we know that nothing is handed to us on a plate. Our rivals do not go into a race wanting to win silver or bronze, they are going for gold like us.

» The British rowing team is expected to return from Rio with a healthy medal haul. What is it like to be part of such an esteemed set-up?

The support we have around us is incredible and that is what makes us the athletes we are. The coaches get us on the start line in the best shape possible and we produce the results. But it is also important

to acknowledge the funding we receive from the National Lottery, without that we would not be where we are.

» Do you know much about the rowing venue being used in Rio?

We went on a recce in 2014, when we got all the tourist things out of our system. We also had a training camp to get used to the climate. The lake is shaped like a boot and is in the city, with a main road running round it. At Dorney there are crosswinds all the way but in Rio there will be shelter at the start before the course opens up in the middle section. It will be different but it's important we experience both.

» And finally, what are your thoughts post-Rio? Will you be pushing for a place at Tokyo 2020?

I'm not going to make any decisions until after the Games. The Army has been incredibly supportive and I will be going back to my unit. If I carry on to Tokyo my military career would have to take the back seat so that is something I will have to think about. ■

2011

The last time Capt Heather Stanning (RA) and Helen Glover lost a race, in the final of the World Championships

MONTH in sport

July's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services Swimming Championships

WHEN: Wednesday, July 6 to Friday, July 8

WHERE: RAF Cranwell

COMMENTS: The cream of the Army's swimming talent will descend on Lincolnshire, with the women looking to continue their dominance of the pool



WHAT: Inter-Services Athletics Championships

WHEN: Wednesday, July 13

WHERE: RAF Cosford

COMMENTS: Having seen the men's and women's team complete an emphatic double in 2015 the Reds head into the annual track and field showdown as firm favourites



WHAT: Army v Australian Defence Force

WHEN: Monday, July 18 (1100 start)

WHERE: Army Cricket Ground, Aldershot

COMMENTS: The Australians lock horns with the Inter-Services T20 champions as part of a two-week UK tour



Picture: Peter Davies

Strongmen star in Wallop workout

SERVICE athletes flexed their muscles in a series of five punishing events at the Middle Wallop strongman showdown.

A field of 14 male and three female competitors assembled for the contest, which started with the single arm giant dumbbell press.

The action then moved to the sled pull/duck walk, which saw personnel hauling 80, 100 and 120kg weights over a 20-metre course.

After two rounds former soldier Toni Whiteley (ex-REME) had a clear lead in the women's competition, while Capt Rich Butterfield (RE) and LCpl James Rocke (RLC, pictured above) topped

the novice and intermediate categories respectively.

SSgt Aiden Carbutt (REME) produced the performance of the day in the tyre flip, where he completed two repetitions with a 300kg tyre that was four times his body weight.

The loading medley – which saw athletes sprint with implements including 40kg ammunition boxes and 80kg duffel bags and then lift them on to a platform – offered a stern cardiovascular test, before the day concluded with the feared Atlas stones.

"The crowd went wild for the last event," said organiser SSgt Adam Austin (REME).

"Even though all of the categories were very close

it didn't stop the athletes cheering each other on.

"That made a big difference in the guys getting the bigger stones up and breaking their personal best lifts.

"With the Forces strongman fraternity growing year on year I would encourage anyone who is thinking about competing to give it a go."

Whiteley, Butterfield and Rocke maintained their form throughout the day to claim the individual titles. ■

 For more details on the sport join the Forces Strongman Facebook group or email adam.austin968@mod.uk

Reserves relish tour test

A SQUAD of 16 footballers travelled to Cyprus to represent the Army Reserve during a recent three-match tour.

The opening fixture proved particularly challenging as temperatures in excess of 30 degrees Celsius welcomed players to the pitch. However, the soldiers held firm and battled their way to a 3-3 draw against Royal Air Force Cyprus, with Gnr Wayne Duxbury (RA, pictured) hitting the equalising goal.

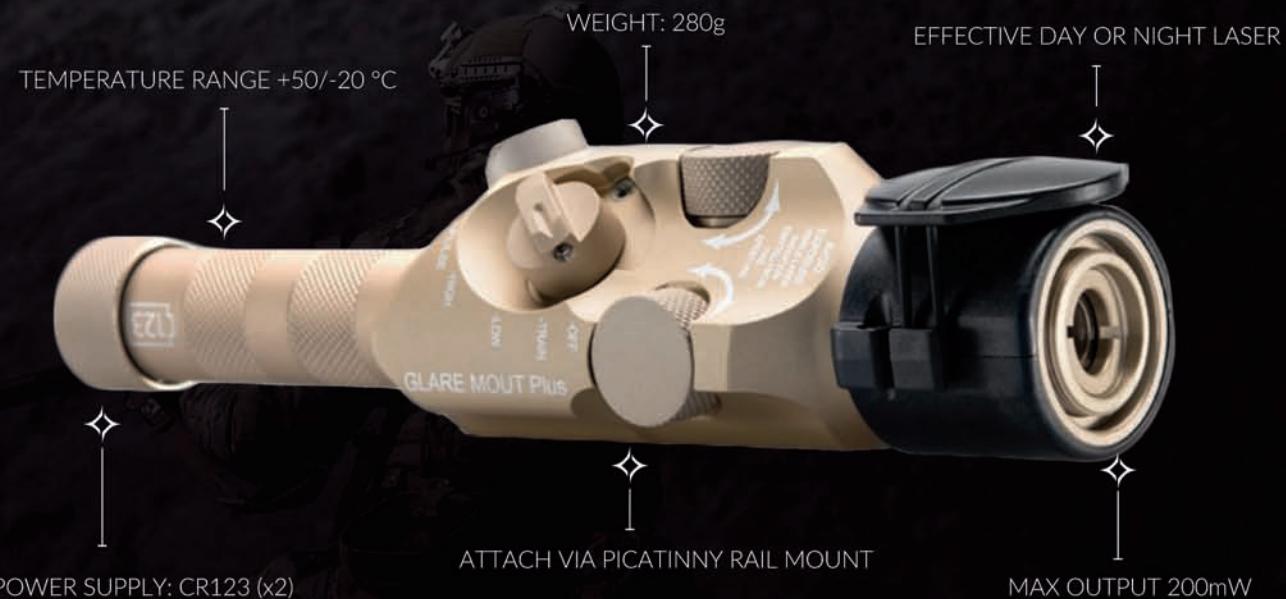
A 4-2 win over an Army team selected from personnel based on the island proved the highlight of the trip before they slipped to a 1-0 defeat to a Combined Services outfit.





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SPORT SHORTS



Drammeh delivers

» ARMY athletics ace Rfn Alhagie Drammeh (5 Rifles) hit top form on the track to claim a silver medal at the German National Championships.

The 400 metres runner was handed a difficult draw in lane six for the final but put the setback behind him to produce a scintillating performance in one of the races of the day.

However, a photo finish declared he missed out on gold by just three hundredths of a second.

Drammeh was competing for Gambia at the African National Games in Durban as this issue went to press, with a view to qualifying for the Rio Olympics.



Picture: SBS Photography

Students surge past Services

Associations Cup

GB Armed Forces 26
England Students 36

THE Great Britain Armed Forces rugby league team relinquished their grip on the Associations Cup as they crashed to a defeat against England Students in Featherstone.

A healthy Army contingent was selected in the squad but they failed to prevent a 36-26 loss – despite producing a battling performance.

The Services' outfit used their impressive size and power against their fast-flowing opponents but it was the students who took the lead in the second minute.

However, they fired a swift response when Cpl James Hutchinson found the waiting LCpl Sonoma Veikune (RE) and the soldier burst over.

SAC Josh Scott then forced the students into a series of errors as the Forces side seized control.

Former captain Flt Lt Chris Gordon came on for Scott in the 20th minute and continued to provide huge hits but their rivals snuck home moments later.

A second score from Veikune, converted by LCpl Daniel Hunter (LD), pulled GB back into contention before Gordon rolled back the years with a great try, side-stepping two would-be tacklers and sprinting to the line from 20 metres out.

His effort saw the military men lead 16-12 at the interval

but a blitz of three tries in 15 minutes saw the game drift from their reach.

Army powerhouse Pte Micky Hoyle (Yorks) ran the length of the pitch for a consolation before PO Ben Taylor crossed, but with the damage already done the Forces could not prevent the defeat.

"We came up against a very good England Students side who are just about to take part in the Four Nations," said head coach Flt Lt Damian Clayton. "This is all a process for the military world cup next year; some of the players I fielded found it tough and for a few it's probably too soon."

"It was a good opportunity to look over the guys and we were in it until the 80th minute. I am positive about what I saw; we've got some really good players here." ■

Top honours for football's finest

ENGLAND women's star Karen Carney was guest of honour at the inaugural Army Football Association awards ceremony.

The Chelsea player, who has more than 100 caps at international level, presented honours to the Service's standout performers in 2015/16 and it is hoped the celebration will now become a firm fixture each season.

Fullback LCpl Matt Evans (REME) – part of the victorious Inter-Services squad – was named Army player of the season, while forward Pte Aidan Kirby (Yorks, pictured) took the equivalent accolade for the Under-23 side.

Cpl Hayley Sloan (QARANC) secured the individual prize for the women's team, with Pte Keith England (RLC) claiming the Reserves' honours.

The Royal Logistic Corps and Army Air Corps were presented with the Massey League One and Two trophies respectively, while the Adjutant General's Corps collected the women's corps title.



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Foreword by HM THE QUEEN

Messages from Prime Minister The Rt Hon David Cameron MP,

Prime Minister of Australia The Rt Hon Tony Abbott MP, Prime Minister of New Zealand The Rt Hon John Key MP,
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Field force blows rivals away

Women's Inter-Services Twenty20

Royal Air Force 46-6
British Army 52-1

Royal Navy 67-7
British Army 68-3

TWO ruthless displays in the field sowed the seeds for a resounding victory for the Army women in this season's Inter-Services Twenty20 cricket showdown.

The Reds restricted the Royal Air Force to a meagre total of 46 in their opening match and they maintained the pressure against the Royal Navy, where some tight bowling and superb catching saw the Senior Service stutter their way to 67-7.

Neither target proved challenging for the hosts as star batter Sgt Amanda Potgieter (REME, pictured) top scored in both innings to secure back-to-back victories.

The RAF made an encouraging start to their match with the Army but having left the field for a rain delay they lost momentum as play resumed.

Inspired bowling from Potgieter (2-8) and Sgt Rachel Hay (2-10) kept the scoring in check and as the overs ticked down the light blues found themselves well short of a competitive score.

The run chase proved a formality as Potgieter blasted a rapid-fire 20 to steer her team home in the seventh over – the all-rounder finishing proceedings with a booming six to the leg-side boundary.

Having won the toss against

the Navy the Army elected to field and a succession of early wickets put them in control.

Opener Hazelle Garton – who earlier hit a half century against the RAF – was the first to fall before Capt Mel Vaggers (AGC) took two wickets in two balls to blow the top order away.

The Navy failed to recover from such a devastating setback and they limped through the remaining overs to finish on 67-7.

Vaggers kick-started the reply with two boundaries but she perished at the hands of Garton, who ripped a delivery through her defences and on to the stumps.

She claimed two further victims as the Reds lost their way but Potgieter led the recovery and finished 32 not out as the soldiers won by seven wickets. ■

In Numbers



Runs from Sgt Amanda Potgieter (REME) in the tournament. The all-rounder was not out in both innings



Wickets from Capt Mel Vaggers (AGC) in two games – including a spell of 3-10 against the Navy

Potgieter praises progress

STAR performer Sgt Amanda Potgieter (REME) leaves the Army later this year and speaking afterwards she praised the efforts of the team and their improvement in recent seasons.

"The progress we have made has been great," she added. "Sometimes, in friendlies, we can barely scrape 11 players together but we have come here with a squad of 16 and lots of new faces."

"It is always good to win, especially against the Navy. They were low scoring games but we made the most of it."

"One of the girls took a stunning catch and that shows the others that a brilliant piece of fielding or a superb shot can change a game."



BAVARIAN BATTLE: THE CURTAIN CAME DOWN ON ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SEASON IN THE RING AS THIS ISSUE WENT



REDS PASS NATIONAL TEST

England's finest swept aside as Army boxers press their case for international honours

THE might of the England boxing team proved no match for the Army's ring warriors as they fought their way to a stunning 5-3 win on an energy-charged evening at ATR Winchester.

Victories for LCpl Shamim Khan (RLC), Gnr Ryan Fillingham (RA) and LCpl Alanna Murphy (RLC) saw the soldiers race into a 3-1 lead at the interval and with the bouts split evenly between the sides after the break the Reds were left to celebrate a famous triumph.

Fighting at 55kg, Khan (pictured bottom right) set the tone with a confident display against Muzie Fuyana in the night's opening contest.

Some well judged right-left combinations saw the Serviceman take control in the first round and he connected with a stinging left hook in the second as his rival came into range.

Fuyana upped the tempo late on but Khan closed out the fight to win on a split decision.

"I fought a few days

earlier and that meant I came into this match without any ring rust," the victor told *SoldierSport*.

"I felt really good out there. With so many people watching in the crowd the buzz was amazing and I enjoyed it.

"I was due to face him in the ABAs but I unfortunately lost in the quarter-finals so I'm glad it happened tonight, and against the England team.

"It puts me on their radar. I've been around the circuit for a while and I need to start knocking on the door."

Lightweight star Fillingham maintained the momentum with a strong showing against Jake Clarke, a fighter who defeated him at the ABA finals in Liverpool's Echo Arena a month earlier.

Two fierce right jabs put the soldier on the front foot in the opening round and after a tight second

he finished in style with a flurry of scoring blows in the third.

"He was the first person to stop me in 70-odd fights so I came here eyeing revenge," Fillingham (pictured) said afterwards.

"But I didn't want to go in all-guns-blazing, trying to knock him out. It was more about thinking my way through the fight.

"We knew he would be looking for a strong body shot as that's how he beat me last time. I thought I won every round; the jab worked perfectly and I was following well with the right over the top.

"I guess I've redeemed myself following the ABAs and it is good to set the record straight."

Fillingham also spoke about the thrill of facing such prestigious opposition, which he sees as deserved recognition for the progress made by the Army in recent times.

"It shows how good we are," he added.

"It is an honour and privilege to box against these guys. We are not here to make up the numbers; we want to put on a good show and win.

"I've had a brilliant season and hopefully next year I can fight for England. I've got my junior vests and a senior call would be a fantastic achievement."

LCpl Ben Rees-Davis (1 R Welsh, pictured bottom left) suffered the Reds' first loss in a tight contest with the classy Mason Smith but Murphy got her team back on track as she secured a unanimous verdict over Paige Murney.

LCpl Connor Vian (Para) claimed the first bout after the break but back-to-back defeats for LCpl John Marvin (PWRR) and LCpl Chrissy Nealon (Rifles) brought the English boxers back into contention.

However, skipper LCpl Chez Nihell (PWRR) settled the nerves as he defeated Josh Quailey on a split decision to seal a superb team victory. ■

IT IS AN
HONOUR AND
PRIVILEGE TO
BOX AGAINST
THESE GUYS





PEDALLING WITH THE PROS

Tour star throws his weight behind Army cyclists as four-year progression plan takes shape

BRITISH time trial champion Alex Dowsett has endorsed the rapid strides made by Army cyclists in recent years by becoming ambassador to the men's race team.

The Movistar rider, who has an outside chance of competing in this summer's Rio Olympics, officially joined the set-up last month when he met with Service athletes and officials at the Redbridge Cycling Centre.

Team manager SSgt Ben Bradley (RE) used social media to make initial contact with the Grand Tour stage winner earlier in the season and once the request for help was received Dowsett was eager to get involved.

"This is all about raising the profile of the sport and having Alex on-board is a massive draw for young athletes," a delighted Bradley told *SoldierSport*.

"We had 200 riders at the first event of this year's Army Road Race Series, which shows how much cycling has grown and it is still growing.

"That is where our talent comes from and every member of our team started at that level. That, in conjunction with British Cycling results, is where we select our riders from.

"Hopefully Alex can attend some of the races and speak to the guys about how they can make improvements.

"We have got a four-year plan of where we want to be and we are firmly on course to achieve our aims."

The Army has already posted some impressive results in the Surrey League,

the most notable of which saw LCpl Richard Jennings (RLC) finish second in a three-day team event, with Sgt Mark Robertson (REME) claiming the race's "king of the mountain" title.

Performance manager WO1 Al Ridler (RE) was welcomed into the group at the start of the season and believes Dowsett's input can help the soldiers build upon such encouraging displays.

"We have a plan in place that will take us up to 2020," said the former Army rider. "Our goal is to get a guest spot in the National Tour Series, which is the best competition in the country.

"Realistically, we would be unable to sustain a regular place but to be involved in a

couple of races is achievable.

"Having Alex on side supports the professional image we are trying to create. Our guys now have the chance to speak to one of the best riders in the world and learn from him; that will be a huge inspiration for them."

Ridler's return to the fold comes after a three-year absence and he has been pleasantly surprised by the progress made during his time away.

He added: "It is exciting to see how the sport has developed. The younger riders are having success and are competitive on the regional and national stage.

"The support they get has come on so much over the past few years and seeing the commitment and dedication at corps level, which feeds into the Army team is amazing." ■

THIS IS ALL
ABOUT RAISING
THE PROFILE
OF THE SPORT



Perry pushes on

» WHILE the Army has mighty aspirations for the future they already have an athlete who is forging a fearsome reputation at national level.

Capt Ryan Perry (REME) is in full-time training and was due to face Dowsett at the national 25-mile time trial as this issue went to press.

"He has been a regular top-20 finisher in British Cycling's Spring Cup Series and his focus has now switched to the time trials," explained Col Stuart Williams, chairman of the Army Cycling Union.

"To compete at the level he's at he has to be in full-time training. Alex Dowsett is a professional athlete and Ryan is one of his rivals, while also being a serving soldier."

Elsewhere, female cyclist Lt Ejay Harris (RAMC, pictured below) saw her fine form rewarded with a place on the Podium Ambition team that competed at the four-day Tour of California.



AMBASSADOR'S AIMS

AS a Grand Tour stage winner and former world record holder, cycling star Alex Dowsett knows what it takes to succeed at the upper echelons of his field.

SoldierSport sat down with the rider to learn more about his involvement with the Service squad and to discuss his hopes for the 2016 season – including the upcoming Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro...

» **Why were you keen to get involved with the Army team?**

There were some comments on social media from a few of the guys and I got in touch straight away. This is something I'm really proud to be part of – it is a great initiative. I've had some involvement with the Army Benevolent Fund and Help for Heroes so to come in at a sporting level is brilliant. There are a lot of similarities between the discipline and focus we need to compete at the highest level, and what these guys do as a day job.

» **What will your role as an ambassador entail?**

Hopefully I can get out and ride with the team and we are also looking to stage

an event with my company, Cyclism. I want to bring the knowledge and experience I've gained by racing at world tour level and help Army cycling progress.

» **How impressed have you been by the set-up the Service has in place?**

When I saw the flow charts and patterns of progression I realised they are very similar to the system I came through with British Cycling. That put me where I am now and it is something that clearly works. I've spoken to a few of the lads on Twitter and they are a good bunch. They are keen to learn and want to pick my brain; at the same time I'm fascinated to know how things work in the Army, so it is a two-way street.

» **On a personal level, what are your aims for the current season?**

I'm gunning for a place at the Tour de France and training has gone very well. We also have the Tour of Britain later in the year. Rio is a possibility but the course there is more suited to the climbers so it might be difficult to get a place but it is something I will try for.

» **And finally, what are your thoughts on going head-to-head with Army star Capt Ryan Perry (REME) at the national time trials?**

He has been putting in some fantastic times. I won that championship last year and he was third, so we shared a podium. It should be another great event.



SPORT SHORTS



Championship call

THE Inter-Services Lacrosse Championships will be held at RAF Halton on September 9.

A training camp has also been planned for September 7, with prospective male and female players welcome to attend.

For more details email Maj Brett Bader via 540bader@armymail.mod.uk or call 01202 470715.



Brazilian boost

A TRI-Service team of paragliders sampled the beauty of Brazil from the sky during a ten-day tour to South America.

They started by flying off the Ibiturana Massif, near Governador Valadares, before moving to Baixo Guandu.

The tour concluded in Rio De Janeiro but the dream of flying over Christ the Redeemer was thwarted by the weather. However, they were able to use the Sao Conrado launch to gain stunning views of the city.



Team of the month

Army Blades Ice Hockey Team



THE Army Blades hit the goal trail as they surged to a fourth successive victory at the Inter-Services Ice Hockey Championships.

A 14-1 demolition of the Royal Navy was followed by a 7-2 win over the Royal Air Force as the soldiers spectacularly underlined their dominance of the sport and with a raft of new talent coming through the team is well placed to maintain its advantage.

The defending champions signalled their intent from the outset and once they opened their account against the Senior Service the net was bulging at regular intervals.

Forward LCpl Fraser Kerr (R Signals) started the rout when he fired home from distance and two further strikes saw the Army lead 3-0 in the first period.

A goal-laden second spell – including a hat-trick for Capt Ross Walker (R Welsh) – saw the scoreline

stretch to 10-0 before a low-key final instalment closed proceedings.

Kerr followed Walker in completing his treble and the impressive Cfn Timo Lindgren (REME) slotted a second goal as the tally reached 14.

With the airmen also prevailing against the Navy the tournament was decided in the final fixture, where the Army produced another ruthless display to secure the title.

"We have got a pretty strong team this year," net minder Maj Rob Warrington (RE), secretary of UK Armed Forces Ice Hockey, told *SoldierSport* after the opening win.

"This has been going for ten years and has built and built; we are now the best we have been."

"We've got new guys coming through and making themselves known and a lot have come straight from phase two training. The sport is really growing

across the Army."

The Service's spell on top comes after a barren run in which the RAF consistently triumphed but Warrington believes his side can continue their winning form.

"If we can keep people coming through there is no reason why it cannot be maintained," he added.

"It is so important for us to have the ability to get guys released from work to play sport."



Inter-Services Ice Hockey Championships 2016

Army 14 Royal Navy 1
Army 7 Royal Air Force 2

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Final word

We step back in time to find out from troops who fought in the Battle of the Somme what the carnage of July 1916 was like



Sgt Charles Quinnell, Royal Fusiliers

We realised that something big was being prepared because we could see the number of guns – new guns – that were arriving on the front; the amount of shells that were coming. There'd been a great shortage before but now you could see the railways were loaded up with guns, ammunition, wagons and so forth.



Sgt Harry Wheeler, Royal Field Artillery

The firing was going on for weeks beforehand, on and off, and getting heavier. But the bombardment, when that started, it was what I always called the dance of hell. It was boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom! Shells bursting all the time, guns firing all the time. It was a dance of hell, right enough. Those poor boys who had to go through it. My God.

Lt Norman Collins, Seaforth Highlanders

I was told to get on with the job of burying the dead. I had a squad of men to help me, carrying picks and shovels, and also stretchers. Of course, some of the men they were picking up were their brothers and cousins and they were very upset. Their number included my two particular friends Smith and Mclean; both had been killed in the action.



Lt Maurice Laws, Royal Field Artillery

My job was to observe the fire of the battery on our various targets all day. I could hardly read anything because my eyes were so strained from looking through prismatic glasses all that time. And you see, shooting at a trench you've got to be exact and you've got to be very careful. It went on day after day, there were hours and hours of so much daylight, I wished to God it was midnight!

Pte Walter Hutchinson, York and Lancaster Regiment

We hadn't gone far up a trench before we came across three of our own lads lying dead. Their heads had been badly damaged by a shell. We had to go scrambling over the poor fellows – in and out, in and out. It was one of the most awful sights I had ever witnessed.



Pte Maurice Symes, Somerset Light Infantry

We just scrambled over the trench and walked forward. I could see people going down, all the way round, getting shot. It wasn't a very pleasant feeling. And then I got hit myself, it knocked me out. They said I was more surprised than anything else, really. I wondered what the devil had happened. It felt just like somebody had kicked me in the stomach; a funny sort of feeling but I knew I couldn't go any further. I just dumped everything except my water bottle and crawled into a shell hole and stayed there for a bit.





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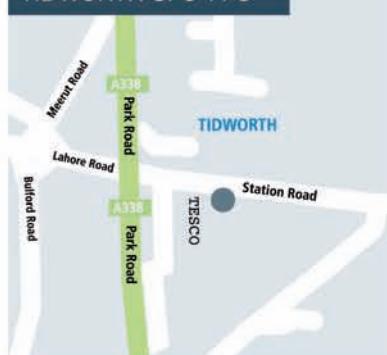
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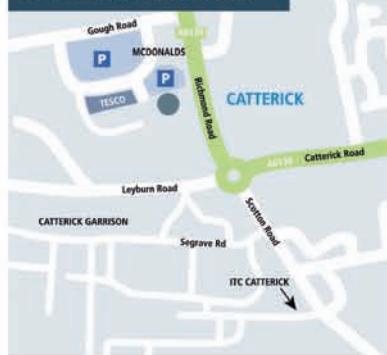
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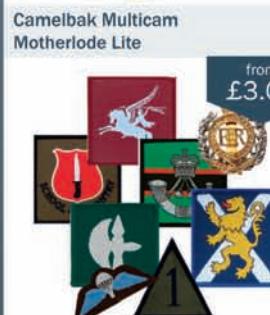
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