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MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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

All enquiries: Tel 01252 787107 / 94222 7107

Fax: 01252 787110 / 94222 7110

Email: news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Editor

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

Assistant Editor

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

Assistant Editor

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

Sports Editor

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

Art Editor

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

Designer

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

Photographer

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

Photographer

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

Managing Editor

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

Business Manager

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

Advertising

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

Subscriptions

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

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Helping out closer to home

WHILE frustrated residents battled flood waters and gave politicians a very public dressing down last month, Army personnel pulled together on what was the organisation's biggest civil emergency deployment since the 1950s.

After some initial grief from the media over the fact that not all troops were furnished with waterproofs from the outset (funny that, for a force that has been throwing everything into a mission in the desert), it soon became clear just how important soldiers were to the effort.

In addition to the heavy lifting and rescue operations Servicemen and women were tasked with (pages 43-45), uniforms alone seemed to be helping put residents at ease.

Possibly to the slight frustration of firefighters and civilian volunteers who had also moved heaven and earth to assist, it showed clearly how British troops attract a level of admiration and trust in this country that is rarely experienced in other sectors.

"We are a lot more welcome working on home soil than elsewhere," one soldier told us.

If that is the case then perhaps a future beyond Op Herrick, and increasingly located back in the UK, will not be as unrewarding as some of our most battle-hardened troops may be fearing. ■



Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

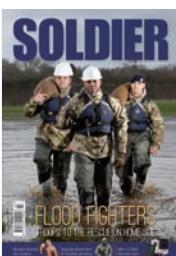


Watchful eyes

The covert world of the British Army's special observers (pages 32-35)

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**There
is no
restriction
on age,
we want
the best
people**



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**“When I was serving this
was frowned upon”**

Reader airs beret-shaping bugbear

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**“This makes me more
determined to come
back in four years’ time”**

Biathlete regroups after Sochi setback

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**“If the public needs us then
we will always act”**

Soldiers step up to fight the floods

p102



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On-the-spot promotion

Army chief singles out rifleman in Mali

ASOLDIER is celebrating receiving the first field promotion by the head of the British Army for more than 60 years.

Rfn Gigar Das (1 Rifles) was helping to deliver infantry training to Malian troops when the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall, decided to bump the 31-year-old up by a rank to lance corporal.

The Serviceman had been conducting a lesson in marksmanship principles at the time, which the visiting chief said had impressed both him and the head of the French Army, Gen Bertrand Ract-Madoux.

When Gen Wall realised that Das was a rifleman, he spoke to the soldier's company commander before making the decision on the spot.

"I wasn't expecting anything like this to happen when I got out of bed this morning," LCpl Das said afterwards. The infantryman has served in the Army for around nine years and deployed on three tours of Afghanistan and one of Iraq.

"It is extremely unexpected and I couldn't be more proud of this honour," he added.

Gen Ract-Madoux presented the Serviceman with his new lance corporal's stripe in front of his colleagues in the European Union Training Team (pictured above).

"I am extremely proud of LCpl Das, this is absolutely no more than he deserves," his company commander, Maj Sam Cates, continued.

"He has been one of the most outstanding rifleman I have ever had the privilege to lead.

"He sacrificed the opportunity to attend the battalion's last junior NCO cadre to take his place on this operational deployment and to be recognised in this unique way is some reward for his dedication."

Although field promotions occur regularly in the Army, this is the first time since 1953 that one has been carried out by the head of the Service.

Lt Col Karl Hickman, the soldier's commanding officer, commented: "I was delighted to learn

of LCpl Das' promotion in the field, which he thoroughly deserved for his sterling service in Mali and operational experience in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"That the chief of the general staff should recognise his exceptional quality shows that, as a thinking rifleman, he follows in the finest traditions of The Rifles."

LCpl Das deployed to Mali in September as part of a 21-man team from his battalion.

● **Mentoring Mali**
– pages 55-57

Q&A

We quiz the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall, on his decision to award a field promotion to Rfn Gigar Das



» **What stood out about this particular soldier?**

» He was doing a brilliant job teaching Malian troops weapon handling. My instinct was that he was either a junior officer or a corporal but I was surprised to see he wasn't wearing a rank slide. It transpired that he was a nine-year rifleman who had forgone attendance on cadres to deploy on combat operations.

» **You visit troops at work all the time. Why don't you award field promotions more often?**

» This was a soldier who perhaps hadn't had the luck he deserved, and was doing an outstanding job in an important situation on operations. We have clear regulations on promotion for good reason but that does not mean that we should prevent commanders using their judgement and making exceptions where the circumstances justify it.

Bumped up to lance
jack: Gigar Das
impressed Gen Sir
Peter Wall (right)

“
It's very
unexpected
and I
couldn't be
more proud

”

NEW APPOINTMENT

■ THE MoD has confirmed that Lt Gen Sir Nicholas Carter is to be the next head of the Army.

Currently serving as commander land forces, the senior officer will take over from Gen Sir Peter Wall as chief of the general staff in September.

PARCEL BOMB PERIL

■ DISSIDENT Irish republicans are thought to be behind a series of parcel bombs sent to Army recruitment centres last month.

According to Scotland Yard, a group using a recognised code word claimed responsibility for the devices, which were discovered at careers offices in Chatham, Aldershot, Oxford, Reading, Brighton, Canterbury and Slough.

Security advice has been reinforced to all troops and a review of the mail screening process was under way as this issue went to press.



1 UK

ARTILLERY TAKE AIM

GUNNERS from 4th Regiment, Royal Artillery completed a two-week firing camp on Salisbury Plain to prepare for their role in the Army's Adaptable Force.

Exercise Sunderland Dagger put more than 300 soldiers through their paces in a range of activities, including urban missions, casualty evacuation and a march and shoot competition.

The serial was designed to prepare them for any potential future deployments.



2 CANADA

BUSY IN BATUS

SOLDIERS have travelled to Batus to rehabilitate the British Army's fleet and prepare equipment for the 2014 training season.

Troops from 1 Close Support Battalion, REME – supported by personnel from 53 other units – have deployed as the winter repair group.

By the time the four-month tasking is complete in April the formation will have mended some 1,209 different vehicles and more than 3,000 pieces of miscellaneous mechanical equipment.



3 FRANCE

COULD YOU TAKE ON THE WESTERN FRONT?

THE Army's national charity is calling on cyclists to take on a unique five-day ride along the Western Front to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

The 350-mile fundraiser in aid of ABF The Soldier's Charity will see 200 riders depart from London on August 4 – exactly 100 years after the Great War was declared – towards France.

"This ride will be physically and emotionally challenging," said Richard Hackett from the organisation.

"We will ride approximately 70 miles each day and visit places of interest, all of them with a moving story to tell."

For details visit www.greenjersey.co.uk/soldierscharityride

“
**This ride
will be
physically
and
emotionally
challenging**
”





4 CYPRUS

CALL FOR CHILDMINDERS ON ISLAND

FORCES charity SSAFA is looking for more childminders in Cyprus.

Prior experience is not required as candidates will be trained, including a paediatric first aid course.

SSAFA coordinator Jill Shaw said: "Childminding offers the opportunity to not only run your own business but to enjoy a satisfying and important job helping young children to learn and develop."

For more information contact a local SSAFA or HIVE centre.



SAPPERS SALUTE LAST DEPLOYMENT

PERSONNEL from 28 Engineer Regiment are nearing the end of their last operational deployment before the formation disbands in June.

Some 280 sappers are serving as United Nations peacekeepers on Op Tosca in Cyprus, a tour that the unit's commanding officer said has been different to previous tasks.

"It is an odd mission," added Lt Col Chaz Story. "We are dealing with personal relationships, low-level issues, keeping things calm and trying to stop minor incidents escalating. It provides a great chance for guys to develop diplomatic skills."

5 NEPAL

EVEREST LOOMS

A TEAM of eight Regular and Reserve soldiers has been undergoing intense training to prepare them for a summit attempt on Mount Everest in two months' time.

The multi-cap badge outfit are tackling the challenge to promote the work of military charity Combat Stress.

"We want to shout from the highest point on Earth that it's okay to ask for help," explained Capt Tim Bradshaw (HAC).

The team undertook their latest round of training in Scotland last month.

"High-altitude mountaineering is hazardous and the Cairngorms are as bleak an environment we can find in the UK to train for it," the officer explained.



Picture: Mark Owens

“

**We want
to shout
from the
highest
point on
Earth**

”

6 AFGHANISTAN

ACADEMY ADVANCE

THE commanding officer of troops who have recently returned from a six-month stint in Kabul has spoken of his pride at their role in providing security to the new Afghan officer academy.

Commenting as members of The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards arrived back in Fallingbostel, Lt Col Ben Catterole said his men had taken to an unfamiliar task with "enthusiasm, professionalism and vigilance".

During the deployment, the unit's rear operations group oversaw the formation's conversion to a light role, exchanging their Challenger 2 tanks for the Jackal.

● 'Thank you Sandhurst'
- page 13



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"IT WAS A TOUGH COURSE AND DIFFICULT TO DECIDE WHICH FOOTWEAR TO USE"
- CROSS-COUNTRY COMPETITION, PAGE 99



FIRST OUT STRUGGLE MOST, SAYS REPORT

■ TROOPS who leave the Forces after short careers find it hardest to return to civilian life, a study has found.

The review into veterans' affairs by Lord Ashcroft reported that those departing the military after four years were more likely to be unemployed and to encounter other welfare-related problems.

According to the Conservative peer, this could be improved by giving early Service leavers the same resettlement programme as personnel departing after six or more years, as well as by establishing an employers' council to help veterans find work.

Further recommendations included work placement schemes, which Lord Ashcroft said could be more effective than some of the courses currently on offer.

But he also called for the government to do more to correct the widespread "misconception" that it is common for those leaving the Forces to have been physically, mentally or emotionally damaged.

"The great majority find work quickly, and, contrary to popular belief, Service leavers as a whole are no more likely to have serious problems than the general population," he said.

An MoD spokesman said it would consider the findings but had already expanded the resettlement provision to early leavers, including increased support in the year after they go.

“The great majority find work quickly”

Early release scaled back

TROOPS should expect to see out their full notice period before being able to leave the Army, it has been announced.

In recent years, soldiers applying for early release from service were routinely granted their request due to the need to reduce manning levels under Army 2020.

But as restructuring progresses, early departure for troops submitting their notice to terminate or applying for premature voluntary retirement will become less common.

However, those wishing to leave before the standard notice period – usually 12 months – can still apply to do so and the chain of command will be able to advise on the factors governing decisions.

The change in policy will not impact on any applications that have already been approved by the Army Personnel Centre.

Read **ABN 06/14** for further details.

British troops step in across south of UK

AS England paid the price for some seriously heavy rainfall, thousands of soldiers deployed to defend the south of the country against damaging flood water.

Last month's emergency mission, named Operation Pitchpole, saw Regular and Reserve troops deliver sandbags, build barriers and rescue stricken civilians.

Read pages 43-45 for the full story on what was the Service's biggest emergency deployment on home turf for more than six decades.



Paratroopers pack a punch on the plain

MEMBERS of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment have honed their skills on two of the most potent and precise missiles carried by the airborne infantry.

Personnel fired Javelin and the Next Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapon during Exercise Blue Panzer on Salisbury Plain.

The assets are used primarily to destroy tanks and lightly armoured vehicles but also provide

an all-weather, day or night capability against fixed defences such as bunkers and buildings.

"It's great to finally use some live rounds after all the training that we've done," said Pte Matt Johnson during the serial.

"I hit my target, which was a good job as all the lads were watching!"

The package also saw troops develop their skills on vehicle-mounted weapons.



Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC

Jumping ship? Early release requests will no longer be routinely approved





"WE WILL GIVE IT OUR BEST SHOT. OUR AIM IS TO NOT LEAK AS MANY POINTS"

- PRESSURE ON IN RUGBY UNION, PAGE 92

SECURITY OVERHAUL

■ A NEW government security classification scheme comes into force next month, placing great responsibility on troops to handle information properly.

Designed to make it easier to store, share and send documents, the overhaul will affect everyone working in the MoD.

Under the new rules, the "secret" header will remain but the old labels of "confidential", "restricted", "protect" and "classified" will no longer be used.

Instead, all information below secret level will be labelled as "official" or "official sensitive" with further sub-categories to denote restricted files.

Maj Nicola Roberts (RLC), of the Army's Information Superiority Directorate, said: "The new system allows for more flexibility but also places a greater onus on individuals."

Further guidance will be distributed down the chain of command and is also available on the Army intranet homepage.



Service script-writing: A new plot in *Eastenders* will introduce a Royal Engineer character

Army marches into Albert Square

EASTENDERS' Albert Square will be echoing to the sound of Army boots for the first time when a dramatic new character joins the BBC One soap later this month.

Danny-Boy Hatchard will play LCpl Lee Carter, a Royal Engineer who has just returned from a tour of Afghanistan.

He arrives in Walford to stay with his parents, Mick and Linda, the landlord and landlady of the Queen Vic pub.

Producers say Jack-the-Lad Lee

will be portrayed as a charming and upbeat character, more interested in having a laugh than pulling his weight.

But he will proceed to ruffle some of the locals' feathers and then suspicions arise that his mischievous manner is hiding something more disturbing when it seems he is reluctant to return to the Army.

For more information about the upcoming storyline log on to www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006m86d

Parachuting possibilities...

REGULAR and Reserve troops are being reminded that they can take advantage of adventurous training opportunities at the Joint Services Parachute Centre in Netheravon.

The facility offers freefall parachute lessons to all standards, from complete beginner to advanced level.

Courses are free and run for either one or two weeks from February through to November, with accommodation provided.

For further information about how to apply read ABN 07/14 or call the centre on 01980 628278.



COLLEGE CONSTRUCTION

WORK is underway to transform the former RAF Lyneham site into a multi-million pound proving ground for military specialists. The Defence College of Technical Training will bring together aeronautical, electro-mechanical, communications and information systems instruction for all three Services in one location. Due to be completed in late 2015, the first phase of the £121 million project includes accommodation.

AN Army veteran has received the Freedom of the City of London for his work with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community to tackle bullying in schools. James Wharton, a former Household Cavalry Regiment lance corporal who appeared on *Soldier's* cover in July 2009, said: "I find it incredible that, in the space of 45 years, we have gone from criminalising gay people to recognising the contribution that we make to UK society."

GOOD DRILLS



LONDON PRIDE

"NO ATHLETE COMES IN WANTING TO FINISH 12TH "
- SOCHI SADNESS, PAGE 97



'BULLYING MUST END'

■ BULLYING in the Forces has hit the headlines after a Welsh politician called for an urgent review into the way the Services deal with harassment.

Bridgend MP Madeleine Moon said a new ombudsman should be appointed to investigate complaints.

Last year's Armed Forces continuous attitude survey revealed a 25 per cent increase in troops claiming to have suffered harassment at work.

Media reports on high-profile cases have also brought the matter into the public eye.

Look out for updates on the Army's zero-tolerance policy on bullying in future issues of *Soldier*.

NEW HELPLINE NUMBER

■ THE Service Personnel and Veterans Agency has changed its helpline number, extended its opening hours and established a partnership with Combat Stress and the Samaritans.

The Veterans UK service can now be reached on 0808 1914 218, which represents the start and end dates of the Great War. Out-of-hours callers can also be routed to the partner charities.

HARASSMENT SURVEY

■ TROOPS are being urged to give their views on how sexual harassment affects their life in the Army.

A survey is being sent to thousands of personnel, the results of which will assist in developing future policy.

Those who receive a questionnaire are asked to complete it by April 28.

ROCK-HARD PUNISHMENT

A HEAVY rock band from Canada are billing the US government for allegedly playing their music without permission at Guantanamo Bay. According to media reports, Skinny Puppy are seeking some £400,000 in compensation after discovering their songs were being used to torment prisoners at the detention centre. A band member said such use of their songs was "offensive".



Can you sum up the
ARMY
in 25 words?
- pages
52-53

'Thank you Sandhurst'

Afghan tells *Soldier* of admiration for Brits

AFGHANISTAN'S most senior soldier has praised the role played by British personnel in the early success of his country's officer academy.

The 2,000-acre facility in Kabul welcomed its second intake of recruits last month and the selection process for a third is already under way.

UK troops have been pivotal in training the Afghan platoon commanders and sergeants who serve as instructors at the centre and Gen Sher Mohammad Karimi (pictured below) is delighted with the progress made.

"I would like to thank the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the leadership of the Army for accepting and approving an academy in Afghanistan for the training of our future leaders," he told *Soldier* during a recent trip to the UK.

"I frequently visit the centre and the students are very enthusiastic. Discipline is high and they are aware of what is expected of them.

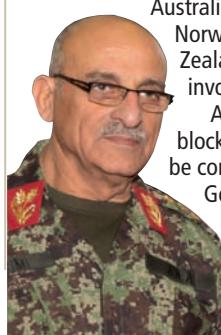
"They are all performing well and the instructors and officers from the British Army are doing a great job."

Service personnel have taken the lead role in mentoring their Afghan counterparts, with troops from

Australia, Denmark, Norway and New Zealand also heavily involved.

Accommodation blocks have yet to be completed but

Gen Karimi was keen to get the academy up and



Picture: Sgt Dan Bardsley, RLC

A welcome influence: UK troops have helped to develop the Kabul academy

running so alternative arrangements were made.

"The students are living in tents," he said. "I was impatient and wanted to start work as soon as possible.

"The instruction and training is exactly the same as in the UK and I'm very optimistic. I know I will have the best platoon commanders for the Afghan National Army."

A further sign of progress was witnessed in the latest intake, which included a platoon of female cadets for the first time.

"One of the challenges we have in Afghanistan is family tradition," Gen Karimi explained. "These students have to be volunteers. They may want to become officers but if their relatives are not happy they will not.

"We want to talk to the families so people are encouraged to volunteer their daughters."

BAD DRILLS

SOLDIERS' working hours are "not healthy or sustainable" in the long term, according to a survey by the Army Families Federation. Some 71 per cent of those polled thought that their hours had increased considerably in the last two years and 64 per cent reported they were working more than ten hours a day. The organisation suggested operations in Iraq and Afghanistan had "normalised" long hours and called for a review. An Army spokesperson said work-life balance was being closely monitored.

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**“PEOPLE ARE REASSURED TO
SEE THE GREEN UNIFORM”
- HOME-TURF HEROICS, PAGE 102**



Picture: Ray Troll, BAE Systems

SINGLE FOR SOLDIERS

■ A CHARITY single has been recorded in honour of the 447 troops who have died during operations in Afghanistan.

Soldier On is performed by The Big Secret Sound and features vocals by Andrew James.

Written in memory of Pte Conrad Lewis (Para), the 353rd Serviceman to be killed in the country, the song was released on the anniversary of the paratrooper's death last month and had reached number 63 on the iTunes download chart within days.

Proceeds will go to the organisation 353, which was set up by the 22-year-old's family to raise money for Forces causes.

His father, Tony Lewis, said: "This isn't about Conrad or us. It's about all those lost in the conflict. It's a great song."

To buy the single visit iTunes.

● Music reviews – pages 82-83

BAND BIDS FAREWELL

■ THE Royal Artillery Band has marked its departure from Woolwich after more than 250 years.

Following the restructuring of Army music the formation has been reunited with its regiment in Tidworth, where the unit moved back in 2007.

During its final farewell, members of the band marched through Greenwich and staged a parade in General Gordon Square.

The musicians hit the headlines over the Christmas period after supporting concerts by Gary Barlow and Katherine Jenkins on Op Herrick.



Soaring success: The unmanned combat air vehicle surpassed expectations during its first flight trials

“Air systems will save lives”

Taranis takes off

THE most advanced aircraft ever built by British engineers could help UK troops on battlefields of the future, it has been claimed.

The Taranis, a next-generation unmanned air system currently under development by the MoD and UK industry, is designed to evade sophisticated defences and to strike targets deep inside enemy territory.

Although it is not yet clear whether this new technology might come into service, a successful maiden test flight has proved the UK is at an advanced stage of being able to deliver platforms that could transform the effectiveness of infantry and armoured units alike.

Speaking to *Soldier*, a spokesman for BAE Systems – the lead commercial partner in the £185 million project – said the

prototype was likely to lead to a new asset developed jointly by Britain and France under their recent military cooperation agreement (page 22).

"We would expect that technologies from Taranis will make an important contribution to the next phase of a joint programme announced recently by the governments," he added.

"Unmanned air systems will save lives. They can provide information on whether roads are safe for troops to drive down, whether there's a massing of munitions at a particular location and even the general pattern of life in a village or area so as to identify any change in behaviour of populace that may pose a threat."

"The Taranis concept is capable of providing all of this crucial intelligence and more."

TAKE OUR READER SURVEY... AND WIN

● TELL us what you think about *Soldier* in ten simple questions and you could win this stylish NFTO insulated waterproof jacket worth more than £500.

The survey can be found via the link below and will be online until April 30. To be in with a chance of scooping this tasty piece of kit, make sure you leave your email address at the end of the questionnaire. All details will be treated confidentially.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/5KXSV3H



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“TWO CONTINUOUS TRAINING PERIODS IN ONE YEAR IS HARSH”

- TALKBACK RANTS ROLL ON, PAGES 63-67



HELP ARMY KICK HABIT

■ TROOPS are being given the chance to win sports kit for up to 22 soldiers in their unit, including shirts, shorts and socks.



The Army's health promotion team will award the prize to the formation that does the most to promote national No Smoking Day on March 12.

To enter the competition, personnel must provide a brief of no more than 600 words on the activities their unit has undertaken to advertise the event, including photographs. Entries should be emailed to Maj Eric Lewis, S02 Health Promotions, or posted to him at Army HQ, DPS(A), Ramillies Building, Marlborough Lines, Monxton Road, Andover, SP11 8HJ.

Submissions must arrive no later than April 10 and the winner will be announced in mid-May.

● Kebab eater to fitness-test beater
—pages 59-60

CROSS CONNECTION

■ A REVAMPED office block on Army barracks in Wales has been named in honour of a soldier who won a Victoria Cross at the Battle of Rorke's Drift.

The newly refurbished William Allen VC building in Brecon houses the regional Personnel Recovery Unit of 160 (Wales) Brigade and shares a number of links with its namesake.

Cpl Allen served on the site before and after he fought and was wounded at the historic clash, as well as being a distant relative of the centre's commanding officer, Lt Col David Allen.

DRESS GRANT CHANGE

■ ARMY Reserve officers who commissioned before April 1, 2013 have become eligible for a No 2 Dress grant of £250 and free issue of a standard Sam Browne belt.

The change has been introduced to recompense troops for items they have had to fund in the past, and applies to those serving in Regular or Group A Reserve units as well as some full-time Reserve service and non-Regular permanent staff.

Eligible troops must present completed JPA F011 forms to their unit administration staff before March 31 to benefit.

Since April 2013 all officers commissioned into Reserve units have been eligible for the full or partial initial outfit grant as part of a package of enhancements for Reservists.

For more details read **ABN 016/14**.

400

Amount of hashish, in kilograms, that was found on the mission



Picture: Cpl Ross Ferrie, RLC

Troops aid cannabis haul

■ OMBS, drugs and bullets were seized after British soldiers and the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) enjoyed one of their most effective joint operations to date.

Troops from the 9th/12th Royal Lancers and 3rd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment supported a major clearance mission near the town of Gereshk in Helmand province.

The police officers captured some 400kg of hashish that would have been used to fund attacks on security forces across the region, while UK troops secured hundreds of rounds of ammunition and ten deadly IEDs.

“Our mutual understanding and complementary skills have made this a blossoming relationship,” said Maj Angus Tilney, OC A Squadron, 9/12 L.

LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

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FORCE FOR GOOD

SURVEY SUPPORT

The Forces in Mind Trust has awarded a grant to The Royal British Legion to help fund a survey that will allow military charities to assess the changing needs of Service personnel and their families.

QUIDS IN

The Royal British Legion

£5,000

FACE-PAINTING HOSPITAL PUSH

An Army wife whose premature daughter was treated at Great Ormond Street Hospital has been raising money to show her gratitude to the renowned clinic. Jennifer Boucher organised kids' face painting, raffles, car-boot sales and a fun day for families of Guttersloch-based 1 Regiment, Army Air Corps to help the centre buy new lifesaving equipment.

Great Ormond Street Hospital



£500

COASTAL CASH BOOST

More than 30 soldiers and civilians braved the chilly winter swell in the waters off Cornwall for a charity coasteer to raise money for those affected by post-traumatic stress disorder. Held at Newquay Activity Centre, the event saw the group forage for marine life.

Surf Action





“SOME OF MALI’S SOLDIERS WILL COME FROM STRAIGHT OFF OF THE STREETS” - TRAINING MISSION REALITIES, PAGES 55-57

HOME TRUTHS



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



Second-class facilities will not bowl us over

AND so the final round of redundancies have been announced (*Soldier*, February). Although the numbers required are smaller and the fields not as all-encompassing as previous tranches, for those in them the feelings of uncertainty are the same.

The stay-or-go decision is a very personal one but is nevertheless shaped by general circumstances in the wider community.

This time last year Britain remained in the midst of a recession with prospects of finding employment in the civilian world very challenging.

Despite this, the skills and can-do attitude of Service leavers appears to have held them in good stead, with most finding decent jobs.

This year looks even more promising for our ex-Forces personnel, who can head into the marketplace with optimism.

Indeed, the real problem facing the military community may no longer be choosing who must go – it might be that we now have to persuade those still serving to stay.

We're back in the territory of "recruit the soldier, retain the family". Pay, promotion prospects and access to a second partner income, education and housing remain key players in decisions about whether the Army remains the right choice for the whole family.

I have been looking at the rebasing work at Salisbury Plain and Tidworth Garrison in particular.

Significant effort has already gone into the process and I believe the end result can be a location fit to house the Service of the 21st century.

But to ensure we do not miss this once-in-a-generation opportunity all stakeholders need to understand that the sum of the whole must be greater than the individual parts.

It seems education and health care are being carefully considered but there is more to a comfortable home than just good schools.

We have to build a community with more leisure facilities such as coffee shops and restaurants, and viable transport links for the thousands moving into the area.

Military personnel will probably spend much of their career in one place and are therefore unlikely to tolerate second-class amenities.

Our American cousins set a gold standard with their "on-post installations" of cinemas, bowling alleys, banks and retail outlets.

While it is probably unrealistic to demand a similar standard of provision, it is important that these aspects are planned from the start and that profit isn't the key driver.

We will continue to engage with those involved in these decisions.

www.aff.org.uk

“There is more to a comfortable home than just good schools”



Picture: Steve Dock

GOT LITTLE TROOPERS?

A SERVICE charity has launched a monthly campaign to recognise brave and inspirational children from British Army families.

Throughout 2014, *My Daddy is a Soldier Adventures* will select a "little trooper of the month" from nominations put forward by parents, relatives and friends.

The initiative is open to any young offspring of serving Regular and Reserve personnel and winners will receive a prize, a certificate and a special medal.

Louise Fetigan, the organisation's founder, said she hoped the scheme would lift the morale of Service families and acknowledge the unique pressures placed on children by their parents' chosen career.

For more information visit www.mydaddyisasoldieradventures.org



Picture: Graeme Main

CALL TO CAMERA FANS

THE annual Army Photographic Competition is once again open for entries from Regulars and Reserves, cadets, University Officer Training Corps personnel and MoD civilians and contractors working for the Service.

Pictures must have been captured between September 25, 2013 and the closing date on September 5.

For details of this year's categories and how to take part read **ABN 19/14**.

● Hot shots – pages 47-50



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“SMOKING MAKES YOU MORE LIKELY TO GET INJURED BY THE COLD” - EXPERTISE TO KICK THE HABIT, PAGES 59-60

Picture: Giles Penfound



Troops to support D-Day anniversary

BRITISH soldiers will play a key role in marking the 70th anniversary of the Normandy Landings in France.

Alongside their colleagues from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, troops will provide logistic and ceremonial support to events on June 5 and 6.

The commemorations will also see a mass parachute drop by members of 16 Air Assault Brigade to mark the liberation of Ranville by the British 13th Parachute Battalion.

Work on the so-called Normandy 70 event is being led by the newly established Force Troops Command and 3rd (UK) Division – the same

formation that led the assault on Sword Beach 70 years ago – alongside organisations that include The Royal British Legion.

“I’m delighted that the MoD will be supporting the veterans of this historic campaign as they gather to remember on the beaches of Normandy,” said Parliamentary Under Secretary for Defence Lord Astor.

“The 70th anniversary will be an occasion for us all to pay fitting tribute to those who fought for the liberation of Europe, and I know our Servicemen and women will be honoured to take part.”

● Reunion – page 71

A moment to mark:
Personnel played a key role in the 60th anniversary events a decade ago

“
Soldiers will be honoured to take part
”

120

The number of Army personnel to be trained as flood assessors by the Environment Agency.

Turn to pages 43-45 for a full update on the Service’s national relief efforts



PERFECT PASTRY HUNT

■ MASTER bakers from the military community are being invited to enter their tasty pastry in the 2014 British Pie Awards.

A special category has been introduced to this year’s contest to celebrate the quality of Forces cuisine and to commemorate the First World War.

The “pie fit for a hero” class is open to all serving chefs as well as civilians working in military catering establishments and commercial enterprises that supply defence.

A panel of independent pie experts, celebrity chefs and acclaimed food writers will judge the event, which takes place in Melton Mowbray on April 30.

Competition is expected to be fierce and organisers have set a limit of 1,000 entries so anyone interested in showing off their baking prowess should visit www.britishpieawards.co.uk without delay.

The deadline for submissions is April 11.

THIS MONTH IN REVIEWS



MUSIC: “She has swapped edginess for cheese”
★★★★



MOVIES

After topping the UK album chart with her latest offering *Little Red*, the future is looking bright for Brit School graduate Katy B. Read more about her musical journey on pages 82-83

"WE CAN REALLY PACK A PUNCH WITH OUR SKILL SET"
- COVERT COMBAT, PAGES 32-35



Bosnia mercy mission

Staff sergeant's legacy lives on in country

A FORMER Serviceman who dedicated the final year of his Army career to helping a sick Bosnian child is embarking on the same mission for a second time.

Former staff sergeant Wayne Ingram felt compelled to help Stefan Savic after meeting him while stationed in the country with the 9th/12th Royal Lancers in 2003.

Seeing how the youngster was suffering as a result of a severe facial deformity, and because his family could not afford to take action, the troop leader successfully raised £85,000 so he could undergo corrective surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

But ten years later, another £15,000 is needed to further adjust the boy's nose and upper palette.

"I always knew that a further operation was needed around the ten-year point and not wanting to let the family down I have stayed in contact waiting for this time period," Ingram told *Soldier*.

"I have already started fund-raising and have £4,000 saved already."

Stefan's deformity was the result of him being born with a facial cleft. It has led to breathing and sight difficulties caused by his eyes being pushed apart.

Soldier covered the story back in 2003 (pictured right)



Then and now: Stefan Savic before and after the operation funded by former soldier Wayne Ingram

when the youngster was just four.

Now a teenager, Stefan is showing promising signs of improvement.

"He has had three operations already and he has always been brave," Ingram added. "I've never seen him cry."

For more information about the fund-raising effort, or to pledge a donation to the cause, visit the Stefan Savic Facebook page or log on to www.stefansaviceappeal.com



ACTRESS URGES VETERANS TO GET HELP

■ **DOWNTON** Abbey star Joanne Froggatt has thrown her weight behind a campaign to encourage Army veterans to seek help for their mental health problems.

Better known to millions as maid Anna Bates, the TV actress also played the part of a soldier suffering with post-traumatic stress disorder in the 2010 film *In Our Name*.

And after visiting Combat Stress to research the movie role she has now agreed to become an ambassador to the charity.

"Speaking to those helped by this organisation gave me an insight into the world in which those suffering from trauma live," the 33-year-old explained.

"If veterans or their loved ones recognise a change in behaviour, I urge them to call the 24-hour helpline on 0800 138 1619."

Serving troops with mental health concerns can seek help via the chain of command or by speaking to their unit welfare officer, medical officer or chaplain.

THE TAXPAYERS WOULDN'T BE HAPPY IF THEY KNEW MONEY WAS BEING THROWN AWAY IN THIS MANNER

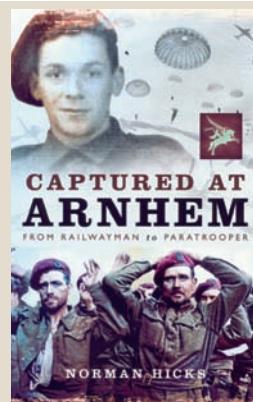
— TALKBACK TAKES ON YOUR GRIPES, PAGES 63-67



MOVIES: "This is a massive comedown" ★★

A TRULY INSPIRATIONAL BOOK THAT YOU MUST READ

★★★★★



TOP GEAR: Helmet-mounted camcorders are put to the test — pages 86-87



“THE MILITARY GAVE ME THE DISCIPLINE NEEDED TO BE A BOXER”
- PRO FIGHTER READY TO RUMBLE, PAGE 91

‘Far too early to call recruitment a failure’

THE most senior serving Army Reservist has told *Soldier* that despite manning levels not yet exceeding 20,000 he remains confident all volunteer recruitment targets will be met.

Maj Gen Ranald Munro, Deputy Commander Land Forces (pictured), said the Service will achieve its goal of bringing 10,000 new Army Reservists into the ranks by 2018 out of necessity and because the required building blocks for finding those numbers are being put in place.

The officer conceded that recruiting levels had got off to a slow start but his long-term outlook is optimistic.

“Recruiting is a challenge and we are trying to fix that,” Maj Gen Munro commented. “It will take time to get the rock moving but I’m convinced momentum will build.”

In December an MoD report said that recruitment during 2013 was significantly lower than historic levels but that the Armed Forces can expect 2,500 enlistments this year.



The officer added: “We started this process back in July – now is not the time to test the temperature and try and gauge whether we’re successful getting to those numbers.

“What we have to do first is set

the conditions in society, which if I’m being honest we’ve not done very well up to this point. But we are getting a lot better.

“I’m asking people to buy into the Army which is now integrated, and that requires a cultural change within the Service

as well as society.

“There is no fallback plan,” he continued. “This has to work because it is the right thing to do both from a financial and also a skill set point of view.

“We’ve made modifications to the system, including at regional clinics where you can actually take people through the application process face-to-face, and that is a game changer. The aspiration is to be able to do this at unit level as well.”

A full review of the recruitment drive will take place in 2015.



GARDENING GAIN FOR TROOPS

■ SOLDIERS undergoing rehab at Headley Court are benefiting from the expertise of a permanent horticultural therapist.

Career organisation HighGround established the role using funding from ABF the Soldiers’ Charity and the Westminster Foundation.

Now in place, the green-fingered expert will continue work that started three years ago, when gardening therapy was first introduced to the site to help troops with their recovery.

“
This
will
take
time
”

UK-France military ties grow closer still

BRITAIN and France have vowed to strengthen the defence cooperation between the two countries following a summit at RAF Brize Norton.

Prime Minister David Cameron and President Francois Hollande agreed to a range of proposals that will see both nations investing in the procurement of kit and the training of personnel.

Recent international peacekeeping missions in Libya, Mali (pages 55-57) and the Central African Republic will be built upon and efforts will be made to continue the development of a combined joint expeditionary force.

Security issues in North and West Africa will also be addressed as the partnering countries agreed to tackle terrorism, as well as drugs and arms trafficking, to achieve long-term stability in the regions.



Cross-Channel class: French and British troops at work

that will see Royal Air Force pilots and engineers gaining experience of the A400M transport aircraft, with their French counterparts taking to the skies in the UK’s A330 Voyager.

Investment will be made in the atomic weapons establishment in Aldermaston to allow safe testing on British and French stockpiles to be carried out, while there will be further cooperation between the two armies in the areas of equipment capability and interoperability.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said: “Britain and France are natural partners for defence cooperation.

“We have made substantial progress since the Lancaster House Treaty was signed in 2010 and we have committed ourselves to go further still.”

Included elsewhere in the plans is a £10 million contract for the development of underwater vehicles capable of tackling seabed mines and an exchange programme

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“THE GUYS ARE ALWAYS DOING EXTRA TRAINING AND THE QUALIFICATIONS ARE FANTASTIC”
– REFLECTIONS ON LIFE IN 2 RIFLES, PAGES 36-41



Soldiers support Helmand moves

Service personnel oversee safe passage of US convoy

BRITISH troops have helped to ensure the safe passage of a 180-vehicle convoy of American forces leaving military bases in northern Helmand.

Soldiers from 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland were part of a multinational manoeuvre battlegroup which secured the route for US personnel redeploying from forward operating bases Shukvani, Faizal and Eredvi.

With the tasking lasting several days the formation had to conduct rolling resupplies – something that has rarely happened on missions over the past decade in the country.

Lt Col James Roddis, commanding officer of 4 Scots, said the three-mile long convoy had completed the 25

miles from Shukvani to Camp Bastion without incident.

“This is testament to the integrated coalition protection provided by the Afghan National Security Forces, ourselves and the Americans,” he added.

The officer said the operation would serve to benefit the UK later this year as Task Force Helmand prepares for the handover of Britain’s remaining bases across the province.

“This has provided us with an invaluable rehearsal for our own redeployment,” Lt Col Roddis commented.

“We will bring that confidence of having completed this task to future manoeuvres.”

● Mission lessons move on – pages 28-30

“This has provided us with an invaluable rehearsal”



UPLIFT FOR APACHE

■ THE British Army’s most fearsome gunship will continue to play a key role after Afghanistan thanks to a large investment package by the MoD.

Some £430 million has been committed to maintenance and support for the Apache over the next five years.

The expert work will be carried out by AgustaWestland at its sites in Yeovil, Suffolk and Hampshire.

“This is an important step in ensuring our Armed Forces have the best helicopters available,” said Defence Secretary Philip Hammond.

An additional £330 million will also see the Royal Air Force’s Merlin Mk 3 and 3a airframes upgraded for use by the Royal Navy’s Commando Helicopter Force.

BUCKING STAMP TREND

■ HORSES from The King’s Troop have featured on a special Royal Mail stamp.

Part of a collection entitled Working Horses, the set celebrates the contribution steeds make to working life in the UK.

The stamps can be bought from post offices or by visiting www.royalmail.com



WIN

...a waterproof Aquapac

LAST month’s spine lines competition was all too easy for the film buffs among you.

(Jamie) Bartlett, (Terry) Pheto, (Naomie) Harris and (Wessel) Pretorius are actors who had a role in the hit movie *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*.

This month, courtesy of waterproof experts Aquapac (www.aquapac.net), we have four Toccoa daysacks up for grabs.

With a RRP of £50, these impressive 28-litre bags are new to the market this year. They weigh 890g, offer 100 per cent waterproof protection and are made from tough 500D vinyl, which resists scrapes and abrasions.

To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue. Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address or to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by March 31. Good luck!



> Winter Olympics, Russia

SOLDIERS IN SOCHI

ARMY athletes took their place among the world's top winter sports stars at last month's Olympic spectacular in Sochi. LBdr Lee Jackson (16 Regt RA) and Cpl Amanda Lightfoot (AGC) tested themselves in the Games' biathlon disciplines, while Cpl Paula Walker (21 Sig Regt) and LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) took to the ice in the adrenalin-fuelled sport of bobsleigh. Read more about their efforts on pages 96-97.

Images clockwise from top left: Lars Baron/Getty Images; Arnd Wiegmann/Reuters; Alex Livesey/Getty Images; Carlos Barria/Reuters



THE BIG PICTURE



ARMED WITH EXP

How operational lessons from Afghanistan have made the Army a more effective fighting force



Report: Becky Clark

THE British Army has always learnt from experience, as the dramatic changes in uniforms and equipment over the years show.

Even the Force that will return from Afghanistan at the end of 2014 looks and operates differently to the one that first deployed to the country in 2001.

And all of this is due to the Service's ability to absorb knowledge gained on the battlefield and adapt its methods accordingly.

The process, which is coordinated by Warminster's Lessons Exploitation Centre, draws on feedback from all ranks, from the private soldier right up to the most senior staff.

Among those tasked with capturing the information is Lt Col David Steel (Scots), who told *Soldier* that recording ideas and observations from those who have recently served was vital to

“IT PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN IMPROVING OUR CAPABILITIES”

improving operational effectiveness.

“A successful ‘lessons learnt’ process should enhance our tactics and procedures, reduce casualties, mould our training so troops are better prepared and lead to the development of better kit,” he said.

“The system ensures the Army remembers and acts on what it learnt during the last fighting system, from every training event and every incident.

“It is vital that personnel at all levels contribute and we’ve worked hard to make sure it’s as easy as possible for people to do so.”

Servicemen and women give their feedback from the sharp end in a number of ways.

Anyone who identifies an area for improvement can tell their chain of command, who will note it in a post-operational report.

In addition, teams of researchers visit units that have recently returned from a tour to conduct syndicate discussions with all ranks and record their views.

Mission exploitation symposiums

EXPERIENCE



also take place after key deployments or training periods, giving personnel from various arms and branches the chance to share ideas.

Finally, troops can submit their proposals directly to the Lessons Exploitation Centre via its page on the defence intranet's Army Knowledge Exchange.

"The process is designed to be a thorough way of extracting information and ensures that everyone in the chain of command can get their point of view across," said Lt Col Steel.

"It plays a significant role in improving our capabilities and will continue to do so as long as personnel persist in reporting their good ideas."

Once the information has been received and analysed, it is

passed to the relevant branch at Army Headquarters to be put into action as appropriate.

The tangible results can be seen in improved personal equipment such as better ballistic glasses and body armour.

But while more complicated technology such as new vehicles can take years to hit the front line, other lessons are translated much more rapidly.

One such example is the one-page guide that is produced and distributed in a matter of days if troops need to be made aware of an urgent operational development. >>



Lessons learnt: Knowledge from recent ops is used to enhance tactics on future deployments

Picture: Steve Dock and Graeme Main

» "The response happens as fast as it reasonably can," explained Lt Col Steel.

"In the best case scenario, an incident could occur in theatre and within about 48 hours, soldiers undergoing training for Afghanistan in the UK could know about a particular threat and how they can counter it.

"For example, about 18 months ago in Helmand a new type of improvised explosive device known as a 'pillow IED' was identified.

"They look a bit like a half-empty sandbag and insurgents could place them on a road surface, where they were very hard to decipher, within about ten seconds.

"They would listen for a vehicle patrol at night, scoot in quickly to lay the bomb and leave again without being seen, which obviously left soldiers very vulnerable.

"The counter-IED community found a device, examined it and were able to devise some simple counter measures, which were emailed around Task Force Helmand within a few hours."

Similar urgency was needed in 2012 to arm troops against a surge in insider attacks on coalition personnel by members of the Afghan forces.

This time new procedures were established and circulated within weeks.

"The commander of 1 Mechanized Brigade, due to deploy on Herrick 18, requested that counter insider threat drills be expressed in pictures in order to prepare soldiers," explained Lt Col Steel.

"Until then, troops serving in theatre had developed local techniques for dealing with the problem, which those deploying next would take over at the beginning of the tour.

"Because the threat had increased, more mandatory measures were ordered by commanders in Afghanistan."

The Lessons Exploitation Centre teamed up with 1 Mech Bde, Collective Training Group and Task Force Helmand to quickly draft guidance based on the latest intelligence.

Lt Col Steel continued: "From early November 2012, formal doctrine was available electronically in around four-and-a-half weeks and hard copy formats within three months.

"Bespoke training was rolled out just two months after the problem was first identified by personnel.

"This illustrates

just how fast the lessons loop can be."

Soldiers may not always get the impression that senior officers are listening to them but examples such as these are proof that their suggestions are being taken seriously and used to enhance the Army's capabilities, both now and in the future. ■

“THE SYSTEM ENSURES THE ARMY REMEMBERS AND ACTS ON WHAT IT HAS LEARNT”



FIGHT FEEDBACK

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Report: Sarah Goldthorpe
Pictures: Steve Dock

WALK through a crowded marketplace in an urban war zone – far away from the gaze of patrolling Service personnel – and day-to-day life may seem pretty normal.

People come and go from ramshackle buildings, children run about and, at first glance, everything appears run-of-the-mill.

But take a closer look at the house across the street.

Through a tiny aperture in a crumbling roof, a hole that is impossible for the naked eye to distinguish, a group of men are carrying out a crucial covert task.

They are members of 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery, who have been sent ahead of their colleagues to be the eyes and ears of the Army and collect crucial information on the pattern of life and enemy movements in the region.

The scenario might be fictional but the capability is not.

Part of 5 Regiment, Royal Artillery, these special observers typically operate in teams of around four to six and view targets using a range of sophisticated equipment – from covert camera systems that can record a stream of live footage and images by day or night to hi-tech satellite communications.

This job requires the mental stamina and skill to live self-sufficiently for up to a week without letting the enemy know they are there.

But it's not just civilians who are in the dark about the work of these specialised personnel.

Better recognised by the Lateo triangle displayed on their arms (page 34), the surveillance and target acquisition patrol soldiers remain something of an enigma across the British Army.

"Servicemen and women often don't know about the job we do, which can be quite frustrating," explained a gunner from 4/73 Battery, who cannot be named for operational security reasons.

"Sometimes it can take a few days or a specific mission for people to understand our role but when they do that is positive because it means they can factor us into future planning."

"We work in small teams but can really pack a punch with our diverse skill set."

As well as keeping a close eye on the enemy, special observers are fighting troops ready for close-range combat.

If required, they can also take control of the full spectrum of joint fires, meaning they can destroy a target as well as observe it.

Such techniques have proved invaluable in every major theatre of operations since this role was introduced into the British Army some 32 years ago.

"We can paint a massive picture for commanders," another member of the battery explained.

"It's a capability that's unique and complements the other reconnaissance units in the Army.

"It's physically demanding and you need a lot of self-motivation. In a small team everyone needs to assimilate a lot of surveillance information and people are relied on a lot more than you might expect of a gunner's rank."

Working remotely from the rest of their colleagues means that total confidence with emergency medical procedures is crucial for these troops.

"Chances are the nearest medic to these guys could be many miles away," a senior member of the specialist unit commented.

"So our training puts strong emphasis on prolonging life beyond that 'golden hour' after a serious injury – stopping the bleeding and stabilising their condition until the medevac team arrives.

"Drills revolve around extraction."

With such varied knowledge required of its soldiers, the 13-week training and selection course to join 4/73 Battery is understandably arduous.

"We welcome all-arms applicants because it brings a variety of skills to our sub-unit," explained the battery commander.

"We can offer a great two-year posting or a permanent change of direction for personnel but they need to be mentally and physically fit and robust and up for the challenge of this job."

Having provided continual covert surveillance and joint fires support in Afghanistan since April 2006, the last members of this sub-unit have now returned to the UK from their final Op Herrick deployment.

As such, it remains anyone's guess whether their next overseas mission will see them digging underground observation posts in freezing cold environments or blending seamlessly into bustling urban landscapes.

One thing, however, is clear: the qualities demanded of special observers are timeless.

As a result, Servicemen and women of every cap badge can look forward to the support of these guys on operations for many more years to come. ■



In numbers:

12

number of the last 15 tours of Afghanistan which members of this unit have deployed on



Up to the job?

PERSONNEL can become special observers by joining the Royal Artillery and volunteering for 4/73 Battery selection during basic training or by applying to join the unit from any other part of the Armed Forces.

All troops must complete the 13-week surveillance and target acquisition patrols course. This package, which begins each August, covers fitness, navigation, medical procedures, communications, patrol skills, observation post construction, live firing and a final test exercise.

For more details read 2013DIN07-164 or email Sra-473bty-bto@mod.uk

In hostile territory

The covert surveillance soldiers supporting all major Army operations



“Guys often don’t know about the job we do”

Going underground:
A special observer
conducts static covert
surveillance of a target
from inside a sub-
surface observation post

Covert quests

Three past missions undertaken by 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery



Battling the Balkans Op Agricola, 1999

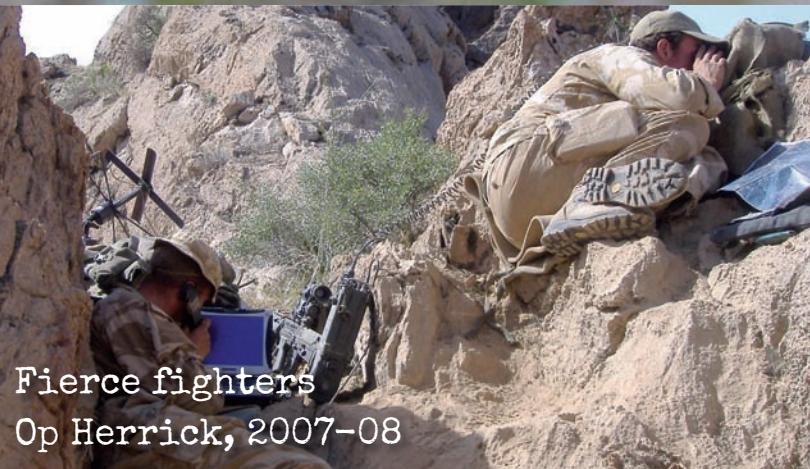


● MEMBERS of the battery deployed to Macedonia as part of the Nato force preparing to intervene in Kosovo in response to a humanitarian crisis caused by Serbian military action. During this time, the troops conducted a mixture of standing patrols and observation posts to watch for possible Serbian infiltration and develop an understanding of the area. Two patrols were part of a helicopter insertion which carried the first Regular Army personnel into Kosovo, tasked with ensuring key routes were clear before the main force began their advance.

Eyes in Iraq Op Telic, 2006



● IN November 2006 a troop from the battery deployed on Op Telic 9. As part of the multi cap badge brigade surveillance company, the soldiers' task was to provide the formation with a discreet, covert capability. This included establishing a six-month observation post to watch the area where the leader of the Jaish al-Mahdi paramilitary force attended Friday prayers. This mission provided critical intelligence for a successful strike operation on the target by Iraqi forces.



Fierce fighters Op Herrick, 2007-08

● OPERATION Herrick 7 was another high-risk tour for members of 4/73 Battery, seeing them deploy as the brigade reconnaissance force for 52 Infantry Brigade – the first time a non-Infantry sub-unit had been given this task. The soldiers went from a static covert surveillance role to take on a mounted close combat reconnaissance task, providing a steady flow of information to the brigade commander. The force conducted numerous direct-

action operations to destroy insurgent positions, ranging from vehicle borne raids to dismounted platoon attacks. The challenging mission also saw the battery set up an observation post for 14 days from a mountain near the town of Nowzad. Covertly watching the insurgent command and control location, personnel established a pattern of life, positively identified enemy locations and directed air-delivered ordnance.



High risk tasking: Members of 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery during training in Catterick



7 things to know about special observers:

- 1 THEY have deployed to every major theatre of operations since their formation in 1982.
- 2 THEY offer a unique surveillance capability to all parts of the Army.
- 3 THEY operate in four- to six-man teams, working independently of friendly forces and in close proximity to their targets.
- 4 THEY are specifically trained to operate in high-risk environments.
- 5 THE role is performed by both Regulars and Reserves. The battery is paired with the Honourable Artillery Company.
- 6 YOU can become one straight out of basic training if you pass the selection course (page 32).
- 7 IN future the capability will sit within the British Army's new Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Brigade.

National recognition

AFTER deploying on 12 of the last 15 tours of Afghanistan, members of 4/73 Battery were recognised in last year's Millie awards.

Shortlisted in the best unit category, they visited Downing Street to give David Cameron their own take on the progress being made in Helmand province.

At the time the battery commander commented: "These troops have stepped up time and again for tours of the most dangerous battle spaces, putting themselves in vulnerable positions for the purpose of surveillance and target acquisition.

"The fact that people have recognised us is pretty humbling."

READY AND WITNESS

2 RIFLES BRACED FOR THE CHALLENGE OF ANOTHER HECTIC YEAR

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock

WHEN it comes to operational deployments, overseas exercises and support missions to foreign forces, there are few British units who have seen more action than 2nd Battalion, The Rifles in recent times.

The Northern Ireland-based soldiers have two Herrick tours under their belts and also deployed to Iraq and Kosovo before offering their support to the military effort at the London Olympics in 2012.

Further commitments have been completed under the banner of the Army's short-term training teams, with the riflemen's expertise spreading to countries such as Oman, Nigeria, Kenya and Saudi Arabia.

And with 2014 now in full swing the pace shows no sign of slowing down as a return to Afghanistan looms on the horizon along with a summer move from their base in Ballykinler to a new home in Lisburn.

The change of scenery will see the unit relocate from a rural setting to an urban environment, a process that will end their long association with the village.

"The challenge we have at the minute is the relative isolation, we are located 30 miles from Belfast and

22 from Lisburn," 2iC Maj Tim Jackson told *Soldier*.

"Down here the population is not anti-Army but we are unlikely to get a freedom parade at the end of a tour.

"Lisburn will be better for personal lives outside the Service, although we may continue to use some training sites in Ballykinler.

"The facilities here are second-to-none and this is the best camp I've been to in terms of ranges and the general estate.

"On the whole, the move has been welcomed, most people appreciate it will be better for the families but some details regarding schools and quarters have yet to be confirmed, which we are trying to address."

With relocation plans well under way the battalion has also been focused on its return to southern Afghanistan, with the future deployment looking rather different to what has gone before.

Significant casualties were sustained on a tough and demanding Herrick 10 and personnel returned to theatre as the brigade advisory group on Herrick 15.

As the operational landscape changes, troops from A Company are preparing for a new role running reception, staging and onward integration packages in Camp Bastion, while personnel from B and C Companies will deploy to Kabul. ▶



» "We will provide force protection for the infrastructure and personnel based there, including the Afghan officer academy," said Lt Rhys Jones, the 2iC of C Coy.

"That will be one of the last British-run facilities in Afghanistan so it is an interesting time to go. Kabul is relatively stable but there is still stuff happening there.

"We are a light role battalion but we are going to be using vehicles a lot. It is important to be flexible; there will be a big push to get us on Foxhound between now and when we deploy and everyone is looking forward to it."

Maj Richard Wood, officer in charge of B Coy, said the high number of new personnel in 2 Rifles means the majority of its troops will experience their first operational tour this year.

"It will be a nice way to end to the battalion's time in Afghanistan," the officer added.

"Herrick 10 was very kinetic, Herrick 15 less so but it was still dangerous. It will be different in Kabul, we are not fighting the insurgency directly but our presence will be a lot more noticeable – we are not going to be hidden away in a forward operating base.

"However, we cannot let the blokes relax and our training will cover all possible eventualities."

The pattern has been repeated for those within A Coy, where a number of soldiers will be getting their first taste of Helmand province including 2iC Lt Nick Dawnay.

"The guys will be doing a lot of teaching and packages on the ranges," he said.

"They are feeling positive. Many of them are quite new and there will be opportunities to do other things in Bastion such as education and sport.

"The NCOs have been through all this before so it is going to be good for them to have a quieter tour this time."

Once their Herrick commitments are complete the battalion will invariably switch its attention to its next challenge, with a deployment on Op Tosca in Cyprus already in the pipeline.

In the meantime 2014 will follow the pattern of the past decade as personnel remain as busy as ever while meeting every demand placed on them. ■

LIFE ON THE EMERALD ISLE



IFE in 2 Rifles presents an almost unique set of challenges within the Army due to the battalion's location in the remote village of Ballykinler.

Given the isolated nature of the posting every effort is made to cater for the welfare of personnel, with sporting opportunities and adventurous training also figuring prominently in their calendar.

The battalion's rugby union team made it to the quarter-final stage of this season's Premiership Cup and the boxing squad have been performing well in the Army Championship.

"I have been in Ballykinler for my entire Service career so it will be weird when we move," commented Rfn Daniel Wood.

"In terms of facilities it has got everything we need, the only problem is the fact it is located in the middle of nowhere."

"There is so much on offer over here but the lads don't always take that on-board."

"Rugby is massive, as is football and boxing, and I've been involved with the cricket team. The guys in the battalion take a lot of pride in sport."

In terms of adventurous training, events such as canoeing, rock climbing, diving and sailing have been offered to troops, while a team from 2 Rifles trekked to Everest base camp last year. »





Left, Ballykinler life: Sports such as rugby union figure prominently within 2 Rifles Below: Troops are put through their paces in the CO's weekly PT session; the camp's stunning backdrop offers a perfect escape from Service life and family welfare is at the heart of the unit

THE FACILITIES HERE ARE SECOND-TO-NONE AND THIS IS THE BEST CAMP I'VE BEEN TO



OPS IN NUMBERS

Missions since 2 Rifles formed in 2007:

2006/07

Op Telic 9
(Iraq)

2008

Op Valero
(Kosovo)

2009

Op Herrick 10
(Afghanistan)

2011/12

Op Herrick 15
(Afghanistan)

2012

Op Olympics
(London)

2014/15

Op Herrick 20
(Afghanistan)



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BOOSTING THE BEST

» CAREER development is also at the forefront of 2 Rifles' philosophy and the unit started the year by running a junior NCO cadre at its home in Abercorn Barracks.

"They are already wearing the lance corporal rank slide and the idea is it's theirs to lose," said Maj Richard Wood, part of the team delivering the course.

"We will do everything we can to help them get through. Some of these guys look quite young but the commanding officer's attitude is 'if you're good enough, you're old enough'.

"There is no restriction on age, we want the best people."

The cadre was led by tutors from within the battalion, who started the programme with a focus on defence instruction techniques.

"Getting into the infantry and soldiering side of things will feel a lot more comfortable for us," said instructor Cpl Joe Ells (pictured right).

"The potential junior NCOs enjoy it more as well. They are keen to get out, rather than being in a classroom.

"This cadre is a bit different to what has gone before. There is no real operational focus and it is more about conventional war fighting."

» ATTACHED elements gain crucial trade experience during their time with 2 Rifles and those in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' light aid detachment (LAD) spoke of the value of a posting to Ballykinler.

"This is an Infantry unit so as an armourer it is good to get my hands on the full range of weapons and sights," said SSgt Alex Shaw.

"We are face-to-face with the guys using the equipment and it is quite rewarding to fix things that are required out on the ranges.

"There is a purpose to us being here but it is also quite a sharp learning curve."

As well as servicing weapons the LAD is responsible for maintaining the unit's vehicles.

"This is one of the best postings," said LCpl Thomas Johnston. "We are working with the Infantry and are required to reach their standard while keeping up with our own jobs as well."

"We have to go out on the ranges and show we can shoot."

The battalion also keeps personnel from the Adjutant General's Corps on their toes with administration tasks coming thick and fast.

"I'm the A Coy clerk and I deal with everything from pay to booking flights home," said Pte Hannah Mooney (pictured right). "It is



Comfortable in combat: Potential junior NCOs go back to basics during a recent cadre



I enjoy being here, it's a good unit and we can get to Belfast or Lisburn for a night out

J

challenging and keeps me busy.

"I enjoy being here, it's a good unit and we can get to Belfast or Lisburn for a night out.

"I also got to go skiing last year. It is something I've always thought about so to have that opportunity was amazing."

» THE signals platoon is a mainstay of battalion life and a number of courses were open to personnel in the build-up to their latest tour.

"The guys coming to us now are a lot more IT savvy," said WO2 Alex Rennie, the regimental signals warrant officer.

"They pick this role as they recognise the qualifications they can gain. The kit is getting far more advanced and technical so we must find the right people for the job."

One of 2 Rifles' more experienced signallers is Cpl Shaun Maddison-Clow, who has completed two Herrick tours as well as a deployment on Op Telic.

"When I saw the signals side of things it appealed to me straight away," he said.

"It is far more difficult than just sitting in a room. The guys are always doing extra training and the qualifications we gain are fantastic. They will set me up for the future – not just within the Army." ■



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The Face of AFiD

Stuart Mason is a retired Late Entry Officer who joined the Army at the age of 16 and throughout his 31 years as a soldier has gained a wealth of financial and administrative experience. For the latter 10 years he has fulfilled the role of Regimental Administrative Officer within the Adjutant General's Corps. Stuart decided to retire from the Army in 2014 and is looking forward to maintaining an affiliation with the Armed Forces to promote the debt advice services of AFiD, to all personnel, whether they have previously served or currently serve on a full or part time basis.



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WARRIORS

Soldiers help defend against natural disaster in biggest civil emergency tasking for six decades

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Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

WHEN vast areas of the UK were left underwater following brutal storms and unprecedented rainfall last month the Army was deployed en masse to assist with the civil emergency.

In a situation far removed from their desert encounters with the Taliban, troops found themselves on the Armed Forces' biggest civil deployment of this type since the east coast floods of 1953.





With thousands more military colleagues on standby to assist them, soldiers battled to rescue stricken residents and property destroyed by the powerful forces of nature.

At its peak, some 3,500 Regulars and Reserves were deployed on Operation Pitchpole to build flood defences along the Thames, Itchen, Test and Severn rivers plus the Somerset Levels, and to help evacuate or assist those affected by the rising water levels.

Part of the tasking was managed from Runnymede Fire Station in Surrey, where troops from 36 Engineer Regiment responded to calls for assistance with their specialist boat unit.

"We've been linked straight to the fire service on 999 calls and we've mainly been rescuing elderly people and animals," WO2 Baz Gorman (RE), coordinator of the formation's mission, told *Soldier* during the effort.

"We're used to working with fast boats in Chatham but that's usually on the rivers – this is different because it's a changing situation and it's in an emergency capacity."

"We anticipated being called in as we saw the water levels building up over the UK and it was a no-brainer to deploy us."

"The job has gone really well and we've integrated with the fire service brilliantly."

Soldiers deployed to the roads-turned-rivers armed with Whisky 525 inflatables and Avon Redcrest two-man reconnaissance vessels in order to take on the unusual challenge.

Some taskings required the sappers to make house-to-house visits along whole streets that had been cut off from the road network by water.

The main effort was to provide a floating taxi service to people who needed to be evacuated from their homes. Without the Army's boats there was no way out.

"It's not the usual sort of thing we do but we're just helping out however we can," added Cpl Madise Khanda (RE).

Kyla Armstrong, an Egham resident, was one of those to be transported through the deep water by dinghies normally used on covert operations.

"I wanted to stay in my house for as long as possible but the situation kept getting worse," the 22-year-old explained.

"I've been trying to keep the water out but then just had to leave – it was lucky the Army arrived outside and were able to take me across to the dry land."

"We're very thankful to the soldiers who've helped – they've done a great job."

"I wouldn't usually expect to see the military doing this sort of thing as I just think of the Army in Afghanistan but this shows they are very useful at home too."

With the defence secretary, the chief of the general staff and even the prime minister out on the ground observing the military contribution, troops were under no illusion about the importance of such a mission.

"Usually we would be operating like this in canals in warzones, that's why we're in covert kit," LCpl Antonio Sivo (RE) continued.

"But people loved seeing the Army presence and it's good to be able to assist in our own country."

A few miles up the road in Berkshire troops from the Household Cavalry were sent to the villages of Wraysbury and Datchet to issue sandbags to hundreds of residents as they tried desperately to save their properties.

As the rising water lapped around homeowners' front doors Service personnel created makeshift barriers and ensured those remaining inside were kept safe.

"I'm just thankful that the Army were able to come in as it was all a bit disorganised until they arrived on the scene," commented Caroline Pryer of Horton Road.

In Datchet the cavalrymen turned the community centre into an operations room and coordinated a mass delivery of hessian sandbags to those who needed them.

Soldiers formed a human chain to load and unload four-tonne trucks with temporary flood defences while swans took to the water in what were previously fields.

Summing up the mood of all those at work, Tpr Joe Bool (HCR), said: "The Army represents resilience and robustness so as much as anything we boost morale for the locals."

"They know that we can and will operate in any conditions – even waist-deep if needs be."

Operation Pitchpole is likely to continue for as long as extra manpower is required to help the flood relief efforts and the Army will also be providing 120 personnel to be trained as flood defence assessors by the Environment Agency.

This is showing the Service in a capacity rarely seen by the UK. Op Herrick may be drawing down but British soldiers remain alert for any task, at home or abroad.

● Final word – page 102



Left to right, Defensive Force: Reserve Soldiers of 7 Rifles reinforce a dam near Reading; Members of 1 RRF fill sandbags; Around 22 Royal Engineers work to divert the River Test

Pictures: Cpl Richard Cave, RLC, and Graeme Main

I wouldn't usually expect to see the military doing this sort of thing as I just think of the Army in Afghanistan

● FLOOD rescue work was a joint undertaking between the Armed Forces, emergency services, Environment Agency and residents themselves.

Royal Marines from 40 Commando lay sandbags in North Moor, Somerset, while in Chieveley over 200 members of the Royal Air Force filled and laid sandbags on behalf of the Environment Agency.

Around 100 more Royal Marines worked across the Somerset Levels, moving and filling sandbags, filling Hesco barriers, relocating pumps and providing general support to the local authorities and emergency services.

Over 450 Royal Navy personnel also laid over 10,000 sandbags in the Winchester and Romsey areas of Hampshire.

TEAM EFFORT



Picture: IAI (Phot) Rhys O'leary, RN



FLOOD FIGHTERS:

areas where British soldiers came to the rescue



GLoucestershire

- Imjin Barracks, home of HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, was made available to support those mobilised to help with relief efforts in the local area
- Personnel with 2 Royal Welsh were attached to 3rd (UK) Division under the command of 43 Wessex Brigade to provide additional manpower where needed

WORCESTERSHIRE

- Some 200 members of 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment provided reassurance and assistance to locals, such as ferrying civilians in Upton-upon-Severn, flood defence reinforcement and reconnaissance

SURREY

- More than 360 military personnel from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles and 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh – as well as elements from both 19 and 47 Regiments, Royal Artillery – assisted the multi-agency relief effort across the county
- Personnel from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles and 2nd Royal Tank Regiment helped to erect a 600-metre Aqua Dam flood barrier along the Chertsey Bridge Road. The equipment was brought over from Sweden
- Royal Engineers boats supported the local fire and rescue service on the River Thames
- In Croydon and Kenley Army personnel including members of 19 Regiment, Royal Artillery placed sandbags and constructed flood defences while 4 Rifles carried out reassurance activities

Picture: Shutterstock

HEREFORDSHIRE

- Troops from 1st Battalion, The Rifles used their Land Rovers to ferry nurses from the Wye Valley NHS to their patients in flood-hit areas

ISLE OF WIGHT

- A Chinook helicopter of 27 Squadron, RAF Odiham was called to transport 22 Reservists from 7th Battalion, The Rifles to flooded areas while 25 troops from 3rd (UK) Division, Signal Regiment assisted locals and conducted flood risk assessments

DORSET

- At Chesil Beach troops from 39 Engineer Regiment used eight earth-moving vehicles to assist the Environment Agency with rebuilding shingle flood defences that were destroyed by waves



HAMPSHIRE

- Around 100 personnel from the Royal Engineers constructed metal sheet barriers to stem and divert the River Test around the town of Romsey

BERKSHIRE

- Some 100 troops from 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers helped out in Wraysbury, while more than 300 military personnel were deployed to Windsor, Datchet and Bisham
- 7th Battalion, The Rifles worked to reinforce the dam around an electrical substation near Reading
- More than 30 personnel from 9 Theatre Logistic Regiment created a sandbag wall at Southcote Mill, Reading

WATER RESCUE IN NUMBERS

3,500
Army personnel deployed on the nationwide operation – 1,000 more than during the foot-and-mouth disease crisis of 2001

5,000
troops put on standby to assist

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THE ASTONISHING WORK OF ARMY PHOTOGRAPHERS



Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe

HOW many trades can claim to have scooped an Oscar for serving personnel?

It sounds unlikely. But believe it or not, military photography falls into this category.

The role dates back to the Second World War when extraordinary footage captured by the Army Film and Photographic Unit in *Desert Victory*, a film about the Battle of El Alamein, won British soldiers a 1943 Academy Award for best documentary (page 48).

Since that conflict, when it was quickly realised the front line was no place for civilian photographers, the profession has gone from strength to strength.

A call was made to recruit existing soldiers into the trade and more than 70 years later the Service's team of 38 photographers are still as keen as ever to promote their work to fellow personnel.

"We are always looking for newcomers who are enthusiastic about photography to help drive the trade forward," said Cpl Si Longworth (RLC), who transferred to

the job in 2012 after a high-adrenalin career with the Army Air Corps.

"I get a lot of stick from people when they find out I used to be a pilot but it's such a great role," added the former sergeant.

"You literally see the best that the British Army has to offer around the world."

At first appearance this particular Royal Logistic Corps role may not seem like a life-or-death tasking.

But the high demand and dangerous situations the Service's team find themselves in appears to tell another story.

As well as producing images for reconnaissance and surveillance purposes, Army photographers are crucial in documenting history and showing the media what UK troops are doing.

And for the few who have never encountered the work of these guys on the British Army's Facebook posts or splashed across national newspapers, a trip to the Imperial War Museum shows how crucial their images will be for future generations (pages 49-50).

With no two days the same, few get as close to the action of the military as these troops. »





» They slog away to capture everything from royal occasions and other ceremonial events to training exercises and front-line operations.

"One of the main challenges of this role is trying to convince troops that we are actually friendly forces," continued Cpl Longworth.

"We carry all the same weaponry and kit as our colleagues but with cameras as well.

"Army photographers can defend against the enemy on the ground if necessary too, which means we are not a hindrance on missions.

"We are part of the same team and understand how combat works; that allows us access to a lot of areas.

"Although we aren't a huge team what we provide is so beneficial to the Service.

"When soldiers and officers see our images we always get an invite back to their unit."

However, anyone wishing to pursue a career as an Army photographer needs to possess more than a desire for a new direction.

Moving around so much and working with so many different formations means candidates need to be physically fit, approachable, good communicators and, most

obviously, good at taking pictures.

Applicants identified as suitable by the team are sent on a week-long selection course at the Defence School of Photography, with further opportunities for professional development later.

"Despite being scattered around the world, there is massive camaraderie among the photographers – we have a very active closed forum on Facebook and meet up at our annual seminar once a year," added Cpl Longworth.

"You can wake up each morning and, hand on heart, say that you absolutely love the job.

"The variety it gives can't be found anywhere else in the Army.

"This year alone I have been to Afghanistan, the Houses of Parliament, stood on the roof of Salisbury Cathedral and visited the Falkland Islands.

"We don't spend a lot of time in locations, and hence don't get stranded in Kenya or Batus for weeks on end like others."

At the end of each year the hard drives of Army photographers are sent away for archiving by the Imperial War Museum.

And in such a fast-paced,

No standing on ceremony: Army photographers find themselves snapping a huge range of missions and events

multimedia age, their work has arguably never been more important.

Could you have what it takes? Applications are open to lance corporals or corporals with a passion for the discipline.

For more about life as a military cameraman visit <http://britisharmy.wordpress.com/tag/photographer> or send an email to Cpl Longworth via armyphot@gmail.com ■

AWARD-WINNING WARRIORS

AS well as the Army Photographic Competition that is run each year to celebrate amazing images from the ranks (page 18), Service snappers have two Oscars and a plethora of front-page images to their names.

The 1943 Academy Award-winning documentary film *Desert Victory* can be viewed on YouTube. The second film to scoop the same honour was the 1945 title *The True Glory* about the campaign in north-west Europe. It can also be viewed on YouTube. Both Oscars are preserved in the archive of London's Imperial War Museum. Visit www.iwm.org.uk



UNFORGETTABLE

HISTORIC MOMENTS CAPTURED ON CAMERA
THANKS TO BRITISH ARMY PHOTOGRAPHERS

FRONT-LINE FEATS ...

» Images clockwise from top:

Troops from 16 Air Assault Brigade move along a ridge during a patrol in the early days of the Iraq War in 2003

Picture: WO2 Giles Penfound

An infantryman takes cover in a shell hole as a Sherman tank advances near Geilenkirchen during the Second World War

Picture: Sgt Bert Hardy

A soldier of 1st Bn, Irish Guards looks for possible enemy positions as Royal Engineer technicians prepare to cap a burning oil well in Basra, Iraq, in 2003

Picture: WO2 Giles Penfound

An Infantry attack during the Battle of the Somme

Brig Rupert Jones, Comdr Task Force Helmand, arrives by Chinook to visit troops in the desert

Picture: Cpl Simon Longworth



... CIVILIAN EXPERIENCES OF WAR ...

» Images clockwise from top left:

Crowds watch the destruction of the last hut at the Belsen concentration camp in 1945, two days after it was finally evacuated

Picture: Sgt Bert Hardy



Soldiers from The Queen's Royal Lancers work closely with the local community and Afghan policemen in the area surrounding a patrol base in southern Helmand

Picture: Cpl Gary Kendall

Terrified Iraqi refugees flee during the Battle of Basra City in 2003

Picture: WO2 Giles Penfound

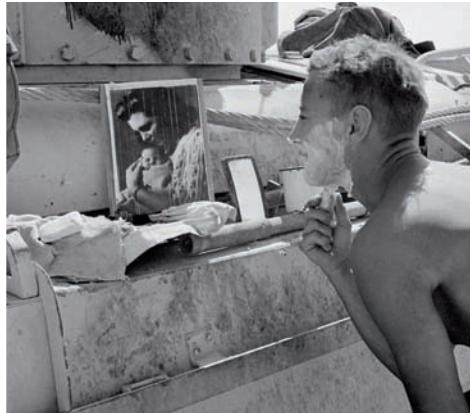


... EVOLVING WAY OF LIFE IN THE ARMY

» Images clockwise from far left:

Hurdlers at the 21st Army Group Sports Day during the Second World War

Picture: Sgt Bert Hardy



LCpl Matt Forster (REME), a member of the Army downhill mountain bike team, during the British downhill series at Bringewood in 2010

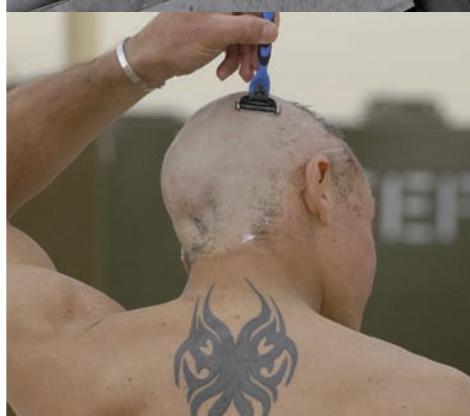
Picture: Sgt Dan Harmer

A soldier of the Royal Tank Regiment shaves beside his Valentine tank in 1942. More than 60 years later, LCpl J Knox of 1st Bn, R Irish, shaves his head at a temporary base in Kuwait during Op Telic

Pictures: Sgt Silverside and WO2 Giles Penfound

George Formby entertains troops in July 1944

Picture: Sgt Bert Hardy



David Beckham meets soldiers based with 101 Military Working Dogs at Camp Bastion in 2010

Picture: Cpl Baz Lloyd

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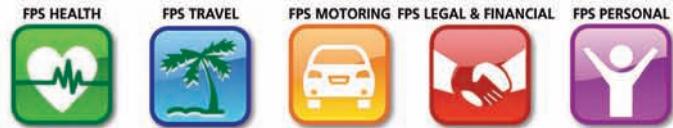
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Can you sum up the **BRITISH ARMY**

Users of the Army Knowledge Exchange, an online forum for operational information, have been attempting to sum up the Service's 'way of war' in 25 words or less. Here, we share some of their best efforts...

Discipline not initiative desired.
Most expensive not productive
on parade or in staff work,
Intoxicated and in debt,
One and all enjoy a fight.

The means are currently austere,
Ends a little unclear,
Therefore, to prevent future muddling,
Through doctrine befuddling,
I state here correct:
The ways are indirect!

"NEVER IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN CONFLICT HAS SO MUCH BEEN EXPECTED BY SO MANY OF SO FEW "



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Outsource,
Outsource.”



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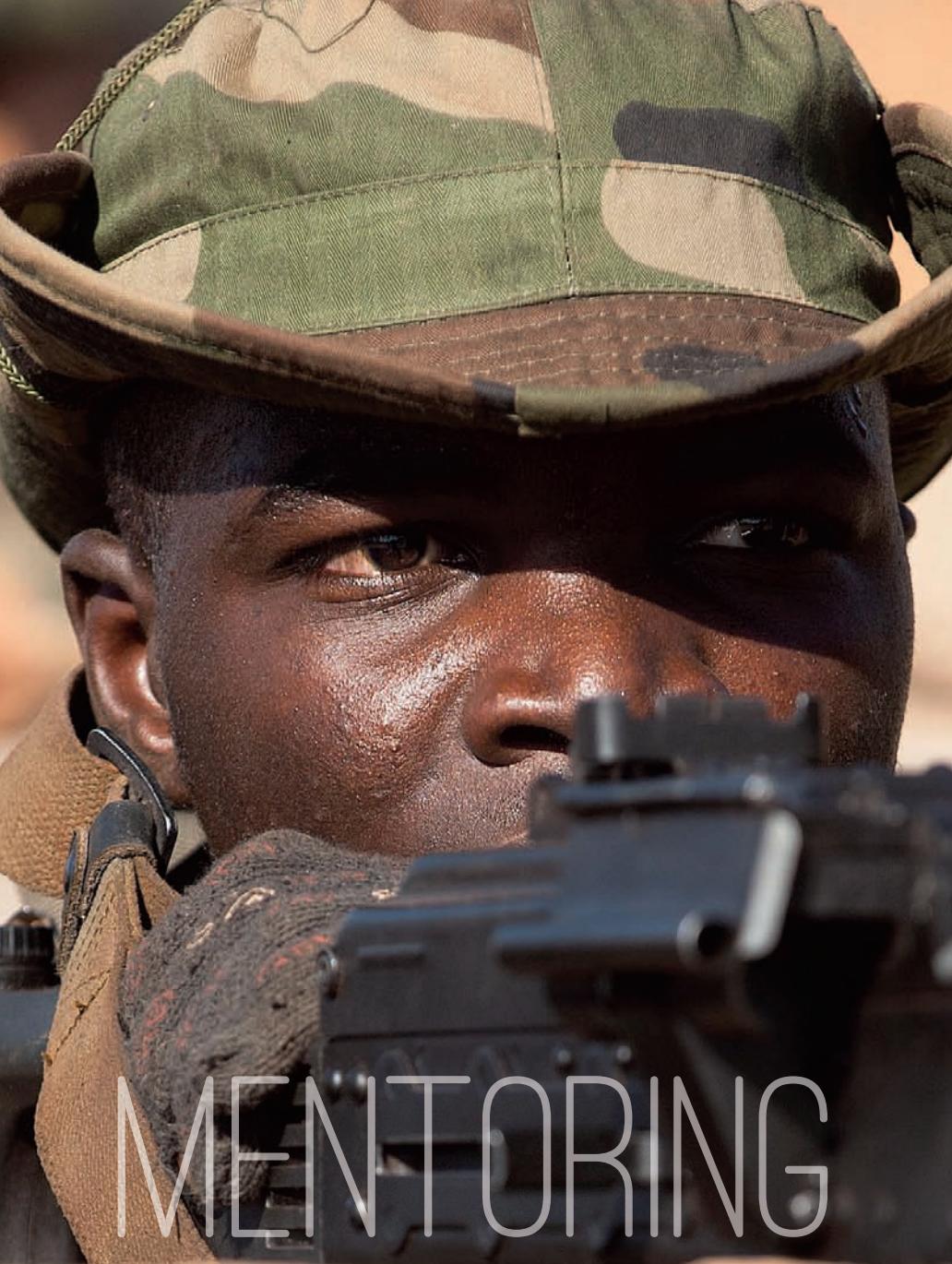
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MENTORING MALI

BRITISH TROOPS TRAIN AFRICAN PERSONNEL TO KEEP THE PEACE WITHIN THEIR OWN BORDERS

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: SAC Dek Traylor, RAF

WHILE the combat role for British troops in Afghanistan draws to an end, another mission in one of the world's poorest countries is marking a successful year.

The landlocked country of Mali in West Africa has faced a political, humanitarian and security crisis but for the last 12 months UK Service personnel have been helping the country get back on its feet.

Operating as part of a European Union training mission under a United Nations resolution, personnel from 1st Battalion, The Rifles will this month make the 2,750-mile journey to join Britain's fourth training stint with local troops.

Taking over from fellow 1 Rifles colleagues already serving on Op Newcombe, members of the Chepstow-based unit explained how their focus has moved far beyond the battlefields of Helmand province.

"As part of the Adaptable Force we are now committed to being flexible and working wherever in the world we are required," explained Maj Jake White, officer commanding the battalion's Support Company.

A 21-strong team of his 1 Rifles colleagues, supported by six soldiers from the Irish Defence Force, will deliver a ten-week training package to the country's personnel.

In a French-speaking country where 83 per cent of the population is illiterate, the challenge for these riflemen will be to bring their counterparts up to a high standard while providing various commanders' courses.

And success will see the Malians able to conduct operations to defeat the insurgents and rebel groups who operate in the north of the country.

"We will be delivering training to a mix of new and old soldiers," said Maj Phil Bray, commander of the Infantry Training Team for the deployment.

"The Malian troops will come together for the first time at Koulikoro Training Centre and focus on everything from individual skills to company and battlegroup attacks.

"In addition they will be working on counter-insurgency and conventional war-fighting in order to help stabilise the region.

"It's a great responsibility and privilege to be tasked with getting personnel to a point where they can defend their country."

Although the Malian troops are generally recognised as good soldiers, they lack command and control skills and Britain's expertise in these areas means its assistance is important.

"We will use our experience to deliver this package to a full range of ranks," Maj Bray continued. ➤

→ "There will be a language barrier but working via interpreters, with lots of visual demonstrations, we'll be able to develop all infantry skills including weapons handling and tactics".

As with the missions that have gone before it, the aim of the latest tasking is to create four brand new battalions from a large group of personnel with experience levels ranging from senior officers to raw new recruits.

"The feedback we've received from the guys already in Africa is that the Malians are very keen to learn and are absorbing things extremely quickly", the officer added.

And with four blocks of ten-week courses delivered under previous missions, the training has also proved its worth in giving local soldiers a clearer understanding of the standards required by the EU from those engaged in combat and counter-insurgency operations.

After being mentored in all aspects of soldiering, Malians waste no time and head straight out on operations to increase security in the northern regions.

During their final preparations at the Rogiet Moor ranges in Wales last month, the British troops were getting to grips with the reality of the task ahead.

"We will be advancing a very underdeveloped military in a country which has been at breaking point," reflected LCpl Elliot Niescior (1 Rifles).

"They've got a foothold against the enemy at the moment thanks to those who have already been out to assist them and I think we too can achieve our goals of getting the Malians up to a high fighting standard swiftly."

Cpl CK Martin (1 Rifles) agreed there would be challenges.

"Some of Mali's infantry soldiers will be more or less straight off the streets and we need to get them up to a level to defend against and defeat the insurgency and rebels," he commented.

"Although this is a completely different mission to Afghanistan, we did work via interpreters there, so our skills and experience will be useful for training a non-English force."

The British Army's involvement in the African desert will not require any combat action but training troops to maintain security is a huge responsibility.

The political situation has been improving in Mali since the initial intervention in January 2013 but there is still some way to go in terms of peace and security.

However, with the passing of mostly-peaceful parliamentary elections last year UK troops deploying on this mission can undertake their work in the knowledge that the British Army is already helping to turn this country's fortunes around. ■

African ambition: Soldiers from 1 Rifles support the European training mission by teaching Malian troops key aspects of combat before they deploy to the north of the country to tackle rebels

IT'S A GREAT PRIVILEGE
TO BE TASKED WITH
GETTING SOLDIERS TO
A POINT WHERE THEY
CAN DEFEND THEIR
COUNTRY



SITREP: OP NEWCOMBE, MALI

FIGHTING in the north of Mali erupted in early 2012 and the violence forced hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee from their homes.

As well as a terrorist threat, a criminal economy has developed across the country, with a marked increase in human rights violations.

Rebel forces and al-Qaeda-linked terrorists were making territorial gains in Mali in January 2013 and threatening key strategic towns.

From the UK perspective, an al-Qaeda-dominated country would have posed a real threat to regional and international security. Britain welcomed the French military intervention, which was made at the direct request of the Malian government.

The French-led operation removed all major population centres in northern Mali from terrorist control but security in the

region remains fragile.

The assignment, to which 22 other nations are also contributing, is currently under the command of France's Brig Gen Bruno Guibert.

Designed to promote stability, development and governance, the mission headquarters, which includes a contribution of four UK personnel, is based at Bamako and the training is carried out at Koulikoro (some 60km north-east of Bamako).

So far more than 200 international instructors have been deployed, as well as support staff and a protection force, resulting in a total involvement of around 550 military personnel.

The mission was mandated for an initial 15-month period. However, as this article went to press negotiations for an extension were taking place.



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Picture: Cpl Barry Pope, RLC

KEBAB EATER to FITNESS-TEST BEATER



How this soldier ended a 30-a-day smoking habit and turned his health around for good

Report:
Sarah Goldthorpe

AFTER 26 years as a smoker, it might have been assumed that Sgt Paul Bolam (REME) was done with trying to quit.

But after becoming a grandfather the Reservist decided he needed to end his 30-a-day habit once and for all.

"I had tried to give up many times before but my daughter gave birth and that was the kick I needed – I didn't want to be one of those old, knackered grandads," the 41-year-old told *Soldier*.

After visiting his local medical centre for advice the Serviceman finally went cold turkey on national No Smoking Day in 2012.

And like many British soldiers, having those around him tell him that he would "never do it" only spurred him on.

With some help from nicotine patches and gum in the first few months, he successfully gave up.

But that move wasn't as straightforward as he first thought. Shortly afterwards Sgt Bolam's weight soared from 13 to more than 15 stone, which aggravated his

rheumatoid arthritis and led to him being medically downgraded.

"That was a blow," the Iraq veteran admitted.

"So I decided to start running. I kept going, every single day, and now I'm down to 11 stone and doing ten miles regularly."

The Reservist soon found that he was able to finish the personal fitness test's one-and-a-half mile in an impressive nine-and-a-half minutes.

"I couldn't do that when I first joined up 15 years ago," he said.

Service smokers.

"It does get harder to quit the older you get," he warned.

"My health has completely changed as a result of quitting and I am doing things I struggled with before."

"You can often spot the people who smoke because they have no air left in their lungs on exercise. But they become blind to that."

"If you give up you can definitely tell the difference, though."

"I went from being a beer-drinking, kebab-eating soldier to having the attitude of 'if it's not healthy or green I don't want it'."

After reaching the top of his game, Sgt Bolam was finally declared fully deployable at the end of last year.

He was due to deploy on his first Herrick tour as this issue went to press.

Last year No Smoking Day encouraged around one million people to attempt to give up.

And this year's "V for victory" slogan is set to inspire just as many, if not more, to win the fight against cigarettes on March 12.

If anyone is capable of triumph in the face of this difficult but worthwhile battle, it is surely British soldiers. ■

NO SMOKING DAY March 12

Visit nosmokingday.org.uk to start your own battle plan or to speak to other quitters

#nosmokingday

So was it worth all the effort of quitting in the first place? And does he still spend his days craving that nicotine hit?

"I tried a friend's cigarette while on exercise in Germany last year and it made my physically sick. I couldn't stand it," Sgt Bolam added.

Of course, it is not uncommon for personnel approaching middle age to stop taking their health for granted.

But this Army mechanic has a clear message for even the very youngest

PROFESSIONAL HELP in



Smoking and addiction expert Prof Robert West gives *Soldier* his top five tips for kicking the habit

5

STOPPING smoking is tough when you have time on your hands, there are a lot of smokers about, you enjoy a drink or are under stress.

But for soldiers there are more reasons to quit than most.

You need to be fit to fight, and smoking damages your lungs and circulation.

What you might not know is that this habit also makes you more likely to get injured by the cold when you are on exercise. That is because it reduces the blood supply to your hands and feet.

The moment you stop, this improves.

Here are five tips to help you pack in smoking for good on March 12...

1. GO COLD TURKEY

Strange as it may seem, you are far better off to smoke your head off right up until the point when you are going to stop and then to quit completely rather than trying to cut down gradually. So set a quit time and date – that is when the clock starts ticking on your new life.

2. TAKE SMOKING OUT OF YOUR IDENTITY

The way we think about ourselves has a massive effect on what we can achieve – from climbing Everest to running a marathon. I hear so many smokers tell me that they stopped when a light bulb went on in their heads and they thought “this is not who I am”. Whatever the tobacco industry tells us, we can still be tough, a rebel, a professional, hard – whatever – as non-smokers.

3. CONSIDER USING AN ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE

If you don't want to use a medicine or one of the licensed nicotine products, try an electronic cigarette. There are loads on the market and some give you almost no nicotine while others give a pretty decent

hit. You will hear claims that they are dangerous but this is nonsense. Even at their worst they are 100 times safer than smoking. I suggest going for one of the “second generation” ones with rechargeable batteries that you can refill. They end up much cheaper and you can try out different strengths and flavours until you find one that suits.

4. USE SOMETHING TO CONTROL THE CRAVINGS

Don't be afraid to use one of the stop smoking medicines or nicotine products. Get yourself the strongest nicotine patch you can and use one of the faster-acting products such as gum, lozenges or nasal spray. Research tells us that this combination is much better than just one item alone. Don't be afraid to use as much of it as you need, for as long as you need it – it is not macho to skimp on the medicine. If you are still craving a cigarette you're not using enough of the product – remember it's not the nicotine that kills smokers, the tar and carbon monoxide are what do that.

5. KEEP ON ROLLING

If you don't manage to stop, don't beat yourself up. It's like rolling dice – if you keep going you will get that double-six. So relax, recharge your batteries and keep your nicotine product or e-cigarette handy to use every time you can instead of smoking. You'll know when you are ready to have another go. ■



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TEN
million
people who currently smoke in the UK

100K
British smokers who die each year of causes related to their habit

4,000
DIFFERENT CHEMICALS FOUND IN A SINGLE CIGARETTE

35
if you give up smoking by this age it is likely you will live just as long as a non-smoker

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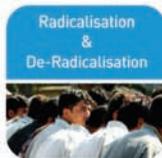
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YOUR letters provide an insight into the issues at the top of soldiers' agendas... but please be brief. Emails (mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk) must include your name and location (although we won't publish them if you ask us not to). We reserve the right 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

'Women deserve to earn wings'

I HAVE served for several years in 16 Air Assault Brigade and it really bothers me that there are no female soldiers wearing parachute wings.

I've been given plenty of excuses as to why girls cannot seem to pass the P Company test, from their hips are not designed for parachuting down to, allegedly, instructors simply refusing to let female candidates succeed.

I am a lot fitter than the majority of my male colleagues and feel if the instructors are that insecure about letting a woman through then they should be moved on!

The extra money would be an added bonus too. – Cpl Beth Boyden, RAMC.

Col Jacko Jackson, Deputy Commander 16 Air Assault Brigade, responds: There is no bar to females attempting P Company.

Indeed, a number have done so in the past. They are welcome to apply and will be given the same support and assessment as male candidates.

Similarly, there is no block on those within 16 Air Assault Brigade undertaking the basic Para course if the appointment they are to fill is a parachute entitled one.

Female soldiers cannot be employed in all roles within the brigade and this is not an Army issue but a tri-Service policy that excludes women from ground close combat roles.



'Lost vehicle qualifications driving me round the bend'



Over the hill: Some driver courses taken before April 2003 have been "lost" in the system

I HAVE only two years of service left after 22 years in the Army and I'm one of many who have been told our driving qualifications are no longer extant.

This is due to the fact that for some of us there's no electronic evidence of having successfully completed driver training conversion courses.

My driving licence shows that I gained my B driver qualification in 1988 and C and E in 2000 (allowing me to drive large vehicles with trailers) but my conversions to Land Rover and DAF were conducted in-house through a Service driving instructor.

They were recorded and documented but not transferred to JPA and I'm being told I have to do these conversion courses again. Can someone tell me why we are sending

personnel on training that has already been done? – SSgt P Snow, RE.

WO1 Andrew Butterworth, Command Master Driver, replies: There were and are some qualifications that were not awarded a JPA competency and the likelihood of Land Rover and Leyland DAF familiarisation being one of them is high.

If the conversions were placed in your driver training records as you state then the proof of qualification is still in existence. In that case you will not have to complete the courses again.

Your driver training records should accompany you from unit to unit and as mandated in current defence transport policy, all proof of instruction is to be held within them.

If you underwent the tuition after April 2003 you would have completed general service module one and there would be a record of this at the Defence School of Transport in Leconfield.

If, as your length of service suggests, you completed this training before that date, try speaking to your local master driver who can advise you.

The good news on complaints

I RECENTLY pursued an official complaint in response to an equality and diversity issue and I would like to provide my Army colleagues with some positive feedback.

I have served both in the ranks and as a commissioned officer and, like many, had formed the opinion that Service complaints were sometimes platforms for general whingeing.

However, I've come to realise that they are a world apart from circumstances where an individual suffers genuine harm.

It was this latter cohort that I sadly found myself in – and the thought of taking formal action was terrifying.

I'm an officer who is unafraid of hard work and I think I'm respected as a resilient and hardy individual.

I was terrified of others perceiving me as weak or someone needlessly generating work for stretched desks.

But after due consideration I decided to proceed with my official complaint in order to hopefully prevent others from

experiencing similar distress to me.

I was pleasantly surprised when, right from the initial call to the Army helpline, I received nothing but compassion and clear direction. I've been constantly updated and supported fully throughout what has been an immensely difficult time in my career.

The equality and diversity staff, including the mediation team, were wholly professional, clear, engaging and honest.

Their compassion and commitment to resolving the matter was unswerving and it was this that enabled me to continue to do my job. For this I am very grateful.

When things go wrong, as they sometimes do, it is comforting to know that you can rely on these tested systems that are effective and seek resolution. – Name and address supplied.

The editor replies: While *Soldier* welcomes letters on all topics we cannot help to resolve Service complaints.

DIGITAL DOSSIER

THIS MONTH'S ELITE TWEETS

#WINTER OLYMPICS P. 96

@TeamArmyUK

Congrats to Lee-Steve JACKSON who almost had the very rare perfect shoot in today's 20 km Ind in Sochi

#SOLDIER MAGAZINE

@AmandaGregson

Pleasant surprise to see @GaryBarlow in this month's @soldiermagazineshould have a regular column!

@ROSSTHEBOSS_B

Just had a good photo shoot with @soldiermagazine from what I've heard it's gonna be a good spread on #RossTheBoss & @chrishobbsboxer

@ninjaB0ke

I won a DVD through @soldiermagazine in a comp! So excited, i never win anything!

#FLOODING FOCUS (p. 43)

@Clairemorgan12

gotta show respect... They're putting lives back together n cleaning up the mess!!

@AshyeomanJaf

always fighting our corner

@SherriLeejo

fantastic men and women

@BeckyTitchner

Army at the park next to my house building a dam. These floods aren't all bad then!

@ForcesReviewUK

@BritishArmy wow even a Warrior battalion is mobilised

#RECRUITMENT

@g11nk

#BombAlert in #Canterbury near #ArmyRecruitment office! What's wrong with these crazy people #WeWontBeIntimidated

@Michael_Ellis1

Just visited the Northampton @BritishArmy Recruitment Office in the Market Square. All those who serve deserve our greatest support.

@d0bb0b683

British Army recruitment centres are useless! Having to sort stuff I have already done! Better when careers office sorted things!

@soldiermagazine

Kitchen revamp leaves a bad smell

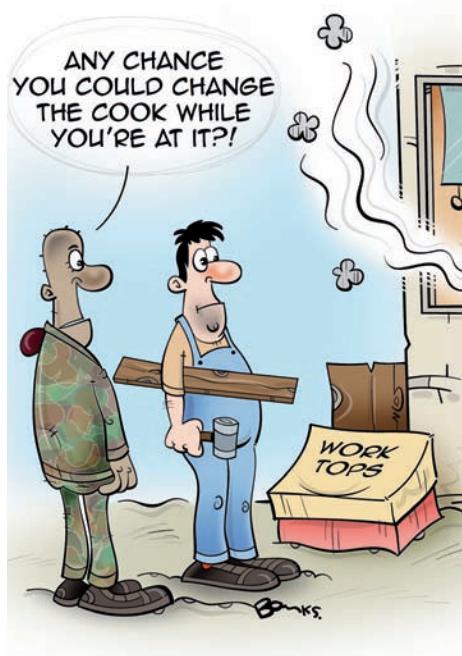
DURING the last quarter of 2013 tenants in our local area received letters stating that a kitchen refurbishment programme was going to take place.

In November, a number of workmen were carrying out maintenance at the house next door to me and I noticed they were fitting new kitchen units.

When I asked one of the tradesmen if they were starting on the new kitchen project early he informed me that they were simply putting in new worktops and cupboards at this particular household.

I told him it was a waste of time as all the kitchens were going to be completely replaced shortly and he informed me that this sort of thing happened regularly.

I am astonished that money is being wasted in this manner and I'm sure that taxpayers wouldn't be happy if they knew their funds were being thrown away so needlessly. – [Name and address supplied](#)



When this extra funding had been allocated to a property, a process was in place to ensure EMIS improvement work was not carried out in the same part of the house. Unfortunately, in a small number of cases duplication did occur.

Where improvements have been completed under EMIS, we now assess the requirement for any other alterations to be made.

Staff are aware of the issue described and have taken steps to ensure that this does not happen again.

Penalised for living with daughter

I AM writing about a failed attempt to claim food and incidental allowance (FIA) and the interpretation of JSP 752's regulations in this area.

I'm a full-time Regular soldier and I recently became a single parent. I was then posted away from my battalion.

As my new role is within 50 miles of my privately-owned home I'm ineligible for Service families accommodation (SFA) or substitute single service accommodation (SSSA).

Upon meeting my new colleagues I found that one of the single soldiers was in receipt of FIA as he lives in his privately owned home and there is no mess facility within three miles.

After checking JSP 752, chapter 3, section 5, I thought I was eligible for FIA so I attempted to claim the allowance but couldn't due to the fact that my ten-year-old daughter lives with me.

I fail to see why this makes me any different to a single soldier living on his own in exactly the same type of accommodation. – [Name and address supplied](#).

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds:

The aim of FIA is to compensate single and married unaccompanied personnel with additional costs of living in SSSA when they do not get lodging allowance.

However, as you are a single parent you are not entitled to SLA but instead should be living in SFA, substitute SFA, or under private arrangements (rented or owned).

I assume that the reason why you are not entitled to SFA or substitute SFA in your new posting is because you have taken advantage of the long service advance of pay.

However, you are eligible for a wide range of entitlements including home to duty travel and some not available to single and unaccompanied personnel such as continuity of education allowance, school children visits, families assistance for visits abroad allowance, full rates for disturbance expense, movement and storage of personnel effects and the accompanied rate of local overseas allowance if in SFA abroad, plus the child supplement.

Searching for Royal Artillery Reservists

Varied careers: Royal Artillery Reserve roles include operating unmanned aerial systems



THE January edition of *Soldier* contained a letter from a former AGC(SPS) officer who wished to join the Army Reserve but who had found it difficult to contact one of the Central Volunteer Headquarters (CVHQ).

As commander of CVHQ Royal Artillery, I would be delighted to hear from that officer or any other officer or soldier who wishes to join my unit.

Despite its title, only half of the Reserve personnel in CVHQ RA are

gunners. The rest are from every other cap badge and they form the all arms staff pool that provides individual augmentees to Army formations.

CVHQ RA is a national Army Reserve unit and as such our members do not have to live near the London base but can come from anywhere in the UK.

I currently have vacancies for officers including captain and major of all cap badges and for soldiers of all ranks.

Anyone wishing to know more should visit our page on the British Army website or email us at cvhqra-ihub-mailbox@mod.uk. – Lt Col Bob Christopher, Royal Artillery.

'Reserve bounty qualifying needs clarifying'

I HAVE a question about the Reserve bounty payment and, in particular, the qualifying requirements.

I am a Reservist who served on Op Herrick 17.

I have been informed by my chain of command that in order to qualify for my Reserve bounty and commanding officer's certificate of efficiency I am still required to undertake the full complement of continuous training for the year 2012-13.

This will have a profound impact on my civilian annual leave entitlement because more than 20 days will be taken up with military training.

Colleagues of mine who have returned from past tours have not had this issue and, to the best of my knowledge, my mobilisation and deployment pattern was similar to theirs.

I was mobilised in June 2012 and deployed to theatre in October that year, returning the following April. My mobilisation

lasted until June 2013 and I returned to my parent unit's training in August.

I understand the importance of military annual training tests and I'm working towards them diligently as per my company training programme.

But as more Reserves are being recruited and encouraged to deploy on operations, the requirement for two continuous training periods in the one year is harsh – especially when it comes to asking employers for more time off.

In my case – and I'm sure others are in worse situations – I'm facing being financially penalised during the year after my deployment, which is hardly an incentive for new recruits.

Any clarity you can provide on the applicability of my mobilisation and tour to the bounty qualifying period would be appreciated. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds:
Assuming that you

were called out prior to your unit annual camp for training year 2012-13 then for bounty-earning purposes you may count 16 days of mobilised service so your bounty for training during that 12-month period is admissible.

Owing to the period that you were mobilised for, you become eligible for exemption from the annual camps for both 2012-13 and 2013-14.

But in all cases at least one day's non-continuous training must be undertaken with your unit and this must be completed in the year either before or after you have been mobilised.

This period of service also goes towards any additional training requirement for bounty purposes, with one calendar month of mobilisation counting as one day in this respect.

If you are having difficulty in finding time to train, your CO has the authority to extend the training year to April 30, 2014 and the brigade commander may extend it to June 30, 2014.

However, because your mobilisation is a factor, exceptional extensions may also be granted by the Directorate of Personal Services (Army) PS4 or by the Joint Pay/Allowances Casework Centre.



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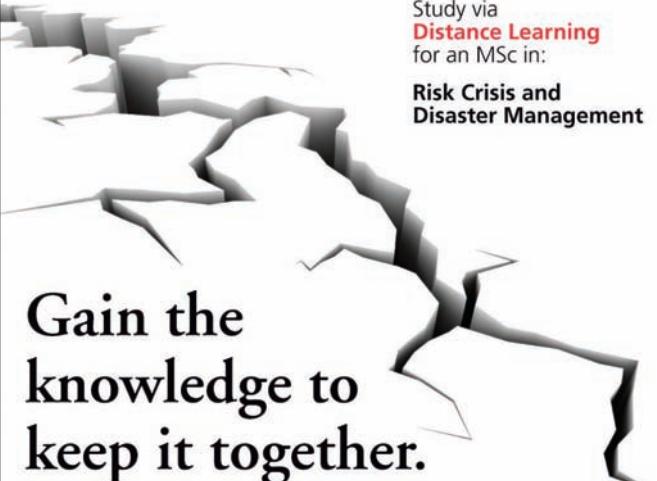
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'Change of rules has left me out of pocket'



Financial fix: Batus postings now only pay temporary rates of LOA

WHILE I was working at the British Army Training Unit Suffield (Batus) in Canada, a decision by the Ministry of Defence to change the rules regarding pay meant I lost out on up to £434 per month.

I received a posting order stating that I would be there from April 18 to at least November 8, 2013.

That's 211 days in total.

I thought I was entitled to the full rate of local overseas allowance (LOA) and because I was involuntarily apart from my wife and family, longer separation allowance (LSA) as well.

But during my posting a new directive was put out saying that instead of being given the full rate of LOA we were to be paid the temporary rate, which comes to £14.40 less per day.

Although we were temporary duty staff, JSP 752 clearly states that a tour of 183 days or more is classed as a permanent assignment and personnel are entitled to the full rate.

However, during my posting the JSP had an insert put in saying that Batus and British Army Training Unit Kenya (Batuuk) temporary duty staff would only be paid the temporary rates of LOA and LSA from August 26, 2013.

I find it abhorrent that the MoD finds it acceptable to change these rules halfway through our assignments.

It is not difficult to work out why morale is so low and why Service personnel in their thousands have decided to volunteer to be made redundant.

My pay took a substantial drop, which I could ill afford.

The fact that the full rate of LOA was still being paid to me and then the difference being deducted from my wages is a joke.

Apparently, because of my assignment

order, it could not be changed to a temporary rate of LOA, which tells me that they were wrong in applying this.

I just want to be paid what the JSP says I am entitled to. — **Name and address supplied.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds:
There is no definitive entitlement to both LSA and the full rate of LOA.

You received LSA because you were on temporary duty yet you received LOA on the basis that your assignment was to be treated as if it were permanent.

It figures that you cannot be both.
The impact of this inconsistency was

that those serving for just over six months were being paid much more than those posted for just under six months.

This situation had to be altered, not only to ensure that we act within the spirit of the regulations but also to ensure that the allowance provision is fair.

The priority was to preserve the payment of LSA to temporary staff as this accumulates throughout their career, which meant that LOA had to give.

That allowance subsidises your daily costs and while I appreciate it dropped for the latter part of your tour the temporary rate of £21.66 per day (non-taxable) was still a significant amount to receive.

Is over the left eye right?

I WOULD like to know why certain personnel insist on wearing their beret with the cap badge on the left side of their head like a Paratrooper.

This doesn't just concern Regular and Reserve soldiers.

I am a civilian assistant with Army cadets and some of the staff wear their berets with the cap badge shifted to the left of their heads as well.

When I was serving this was frowned upon. Your cap badge was always worn over your left eye or if you were a "tankie" it was in the centre.

Can someone in authority tell me if the dress regulations have changed when it comes to wearing the beret? — **Glyn Morrison, Ex 9/12L.**

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops replies:
Army dress regulations state that all cap badges worn with a beret are to

be positioned to the front about two centimetres above the band.

The badge should be offset on the head so that it is positioned towards the left eye.

It is for the chain of command to ensure the regulations are followed.



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The Paras' style could be spreading

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2	86%	Wycombe Abbey	76	45%	Kent College
3	81%	St Swithun's School	77	45%	St Leonards
4	80%	QE College	78	45%	Harrogate Ladies' Fyling Hall School
5	79%	Concord College	79	44%	ACS Cobham School
6	74%	Brighton College	80	44%	Christ College
7	72%	St Mary's Ascot	81	44%	Mill Hill School
8	71%	Badminton School	82	43%	St Bees School
9	71%	Benenden School	83	43%	Ampleforth College
10	71%	St Catherine's	84	43%	Windermere School
11	71%	Wellington College	85	43%	The Leys School
12	68%	Faculty of QE	86	42%	St Mary's Shftbury
13	68%	St Mary's Calne	87	42%	Stonyhurst College
14	68%	Canford School	88	41%	King William's Coll
15	67%	Hurtwood House	89	41%	New Hall School
16	67%	Oundle School	90	41%	Wellington School
17	66%	Dulwich College	91	41%	Burgess Hill Girls
18	65%	St Clare's	92	41%	King's School
19	64%	Headington School	93	41%	Royal Dungannon
20	64%	Malvern St James	94	41%	Wells Cathedral S
21	63%	Godolphin School	95	40%	Queen's College
22	62%	Caterham School	96	40%	Glenalmond College
23	62%	Moreton Hall	97	40%	St Margaret's Bushey
24	61%	Bromsgrove School	98	39%	St Edmund's College
25	61%	Royal High Sch Bath	99	38%	Purcell School of Music
26	60%	Ruthin School	100	38%	Bruton School for Girls
27	60%	St Michael's School	101	38%	Stamford School
28	59%	King's School	102	38%	Wrekin College
29	58%	Marlborough College	103	38%	Victoria College
30	58%	d'Overbroeck's Coll	104	38%	Leighton Park School
31	57%	St Leonards-Mayfield	105	37%	Welbeck College
32	57%	City of Ldn Freemens	106	37%	Tring Park School
33	56%	Talbot Heath School	107	37%	St James Senior Boys'
34	56%	Haileybury	108	35%	Ratcliffe College
35	56%	Queenswood	109	35%	Rossall School
36	56%	St Peter's School	110	35%	Kirkham Grammar
37	55%	Warwick School	111	35%	Lord Wandsworth Coll
38	55%	Woldingham School	112	35%	Ashville College
39	55%	Queen Margaret's	113	34%	Plymouth College
40	54%	Rugby School	114	34%	St Edmund's Cantbury
41	54%	Roe deer School	115	34%	St Joseph's College
42	54%	Bedford School	116	34%	Pocklington School
43	54%	Uppingham School	117	34%	Stamford High School
44	54%	Bishop's Stortford	118	33%	The King's School Ely
45	53%	Lancing College	119	33%	Bede's Senior School
46	53%	Haberdasher Girls	120	33%	Sutton Valence School
47	53%	Oakham School	121	33%	Langley School
48	53%	Gresham's School	122	32%	Battle Abbey School
49	53%	St Francis' College	123	31%	Felsted School
50	52%	St Teresa's, Eff	124	31%	Kelly College
51	52%	Brentwood School	125	31%	Ackworth School
52	52%	Surbiton High School	126	30%	Millfield School
53	51%	St Mary's Cambridge	127	30%	The Oratory School
54	51%	Loughborough Gram	128	30%	Sedbergh School
55	51%	Merchiston Castle	129	29%	Farringtons School
56	50%	Bootham School	130	28%	Shebbear College
57	50%	Dauntsey's School	131	28%	Clayesmore School
58	50%	Reed's School	132	28%	Box Hill School
59	50%	Marymount School	NR	28%	Giggleswick
60	50%	Kingswood School	NR	28%	Polam
61	49%	Ipswich School	133	26%	Tettenhall College
62	49%	Merchant Taylors B	134	25%	St John's College
63	49%	Prior Park College	135	25%	Woodhouse Grove
64	48%	Tudor Hall School	136	24%	Sibford School
65	48%	Downside School	137	24%	Culford School
66	48%	St John's School	138	24%	Friends' School
67	47%	Mount School (York)	139	24%	Lincoln Minster School
68	46%	Chigwell School	140	24%	Hampshire Collegiate
69	46%	Chetham's Music	141	23%	LVS Ascot
70	46%	Sidcot School	142	22%	Seaford College
71	46%	Kimbolton School	NR•	21%	Barnard Castle
72	46%	Bradfield College	143	20%	Trinity School
73	46%	Cheltenham College	144	18%	The Royal Ballet School
74	46%	Bury Grammar Girls	145	18%	Fulneck School
			NR•	16%	Read School Drax



HighGround is a charity providing land-based skills and experience to serving and ex-Service personnel, helping them move into civilian life. Four "rural weeks" offering career advice in this sector will be held this year. For details visit www.highground-uk.org

ForceSelect is a specialist recruitment consultancy for Service leavers and veterans. For further information visit www.forceselect.com or email info@forceselect.com

Jobs4Reservists is a website developed by the South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association to match veterans and Reservists who are seeking employment with vacancies. For more visit www.jobs4reservists.org.uk

X-Forces helps ex-military personnel embark upon the journey to business ownership. For more information visit www.x-forces.com

DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

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.armedforcesthumanists.org.uk

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

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society: www.armybirding.org.uk

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

National Ex-Services Association:

www.nesa.org.uk

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

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

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

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

Royal British Legion: www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

Scottish Veterans' Residences:

0131 556 0091; www.svronline.org

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

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

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

The Not Forgotten Association:

020 7730 2400; www.nfassociation.org

The Poppy Factory: 020 8940 3305

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

COMPETITIONS

Spine line winners: SSgt Matthew Parmenter, Dental Laboratory, Aldershot.

Nothing Left to Fear DVD: Capt Stephen Gibbons, Ashby de la Launde; CPO Iain McCallum, DE&S, Yeovil; Cpl S Haggerty, QDG, BFPO 16; Kimberley Newton, Manningtree, Essex; SSgt Cowie, BFPO 39.

The Railway Man: L Matthews, Basildon, Essex; G Crandles, Edinburgh; Sharon Jackson, Kempston, Bedfordshire; Maj A Fisher, BFPO 39; K McMurtrie, Edinburgh; Sally Rowles, Shrewsbury; Pat Smith, Fort Halstead, Kent; Ian Yates, Clitheroe, Lancashire; R Smith, Redruth, Cornwall; C Duckworth, Shefford, Bedfordshire.

DIARY

March 13: **Boarding Schools' Fair 2014.** The chance to see and talk to more than 70 independent schools from across the country at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Shrivenham from 1800-2030. For details contact tdrake.serco@defenceacademy.mod.uk or sduffy.serco@defenceacademy.mod.uk

Until March 30: **Facing-Recovering.** A partnership between the Personnel Recovery Centre Colchester and a local arts organisation, this exhibition confronts preconceptions of the modern soldier. The event is at University Space, Lewis Gardens, Colchester CO1 1JH and entry is free. For details call 01206 577067.

Until March 31: **Unseen Enemy.** National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea. This free exhibition tells the story of IEDs, including first-hand accounts. For more details visit www.nam.ac.uk/unseen-enemy

BULLET POINTS

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

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

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

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

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome: www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 18/14 Application to withdraw NTT or PVR

ABN 17/14 Javelin fratricide prevention – tactical commanders course

ABN 16/14 Army Reserve officers No 2 (Service) Dress grant

ABN 15/14 Recruiting Group update

ABN 14/14 FTRS dismount via RMTC

ABN 13/14 Army Reserve forms

ABN 12/14 Career Management Handbook

ABN 11/14 Accrued rights for Reserve Forces pension scheme 2005

ABN 10/14 Army Reserves employer notification

ABN 09/14 British Army Review readership survey

ABN 08/14 AFCAS FAMCAS 2014

ABN 07/14 JSP(N) training courses

ABN 06/14 The early release scheme

ABN 05/14 Borona programme SFA contract award – Stafford

ABN 04/14 Defence security culture survey

ABN 03/14 The Armed Forces Covenant annual report

ABN 02/14 Launch of the Regular and Reserve Army recruiting campaign

ABN 01/14 New ATAB process

DIN 2014DIN01-039: Relocation allowances – rewrite of disturbance expense and movement and storage of personal effects regulations

DIN 2014DIN01-038: Purchasing added pension

Continued on page 70

DIN 2014DIN01-032: Increase in the rate of excess fares allowance from April 6

DIN 2014DIN01-030: Introduction of a new pay structure for Defence Fire & Rescue Service fire officers

DIN 2014DIN01-028: Launch of finance competence framework, version 2

DIN 2014DIN01-026: MoD provision of passports for Service personnel, MoD civilians and their dependants living in the UK

DIN 2014DIN01-025: Band B high potential development programme

DIN 2014DIN01-023: Engagement with suppliers, contractors and former bidders following termination of the materiel strategy GOCO procurement

DIN 2014DIN01-022: Armed Forces Buddhist (Spiritual and Moral Leadership) Conference, June 6-8

DIN 2014DIN01-021: Revision of cost of living addition salary bands

DIN 2014DIN01-020: Late entry commissions in the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

DIN 2014DIN01-019: Chain of command guide regarding non-Regular permanent staff affected by restructuring

DIN 2014DIN01-018: Chain of command guide regarding full-time Reserve service personnel affected by restructuring

DIN 2014DIN01-017: The Armed Forces legal aid scheme 2011: changes to financial eligibility criteria for publicly funded legal representation

DIN 2014DIN01-016: 56th International military pilgrimage to Lourdes

DIN 2014DIN01-015: Transfer of Support to Operations Policy and Training Team to Joint Forces Command

DIN 2014DIN01-014: Regular Army transfer policy

DIN 2014DIN01-012: Electoral registration – members of the Armed Forces and their spouses or civil partners

DIN 2014DIN01-011: Army compulsory redundancy DIN – tranche four

DIN 2014DIN01-007: Pension rights accrued by members of the Reserve Forces pension scheme 2005

DIN 2014DIN01-006: Late entry commissioning in the Army Air Corps

DIN 2014DIN01-005: All England Lawn Tennis Championships – Wimbledon 2014

DIN 2014DIN01-004: Guidance notes for Service personnel applying for unsecured and secured credit

DIN 2014DIN01-003: Regimental career management officer

DIN 2014DIN01-001: Support to operations kit and equipment

DIN 2014DIN02-003: Laptop encryption using BeCrypt products

DIN 2014DIN02-002: Volunteers for specialist HUMINT duties – Op Samson

DIN 2014DIN02-001: Procedures for defence visitors to Canada

DIN 22014DIN03-003: Resubordination and renaming of TDV to the defence explosive ordnance disposal and trials and information section

DIN 2014DIN03-002: MoD strategic detention policy

DIN 2014DIN03-001: Procedures for applying for shipping space on defence strategic

sealift assets

DIN 2014DIN04-016: Withdrawal from service of the collimator kit – L115/1240-99-500-6283

DIN 2014DIN04-015: Current policy regarding the L111A1 Heavy Machine Gun, 0.50in quick change barrel

DIN 2014DIN04-014: Decontamination kit personal 1

DIN 2014DIN04-013: Declaration of obsolete – Ptarmigan

DIN 2014DIN04-012: Water test kit

DIN 2014DIN04-011: Modification of Hilti gun ammunition

DIN 2014DIN04-010: Withdrawal from Service of the gun Riot, 37mm, L104A1; DMC RIOTG, NSN 1095-99-839-9754

DIN 2014DIN04-009: Updates to CAL, provisioning schedule and OBD to show supersession and remove obsolete items

DIN 2014DIN04-008: Notification of end of life – PJHQ Promina network

DIN 2014DIN04-007: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2014DIN04-006: Declaration of obsolescence – Cormorant

DIN 2014DIN04-005: Declaration of obsolescence – Project Kestrel

DIN 2014DIN04-004: Removal from service of generator smoke training N5 Mk 1

DIN 2014DIN04-002: Light weapons equipment failure reporting

DIN 2014DIN04-001: Extension to out-of-service date of multi-shot grenade launcher, 40mm, L14A1

DIN 2014DIN05-007: Defence munitions customer complaints procedure

DIN 2014DIN05-006: Formation of 736 Naval Air Squadron

DIN 2014DIN05-005: Records management – reduction in the 30-year rule

DIN 2014DIN05-004: Integration of Defence Dental Services with Defence Primary Healthcare

DIN 2014DIN05-003: Creation of civilian, joint and single service websites and registration of mod.uk domain names

DIN 2014DIN05-002: Assistant chief of the defence staff (logistic operations) – functional transformation

DIN 2014DIN05-001: Revised communication working practice for aeromedical evacuation update

DIN 2014DIN06-003: JSP 403, volume 2, range safety notice 1/14 CQM practices on FDA ranges

DIN 2014DIN06-002: Publication of revised regulations JSP 430 *Management of Ship Safety and Environmental Protection*

DIN 2014DIN06-001: Pollution control contracts – pollution control sorbents and the emergency pollution response service

DIN 2014DIN07-040: Air Warfare School – air battle staff course successor courses

DIN 2014DIN07-039: Adventurous training planning expeditions in 2015 to Nepal

DIN 2014DIN07-038: Adventurous Training Group Army course and concentration schedule 2014/15

DIN 2014DIN07-037: Spouse/partner language training for overseas postings

DIN 2014DIN07-036: Defence Medical Services training group organisations changes

DIN 2014DIN07-035: ETS support to the officer career development programme 2014/15

DIN 2014DIN07-034: Army Education Services support to NCO and WO command, leadership and management

DIN 2014DIN07-033: Joint Medical Command schedule of courses

DIN 2014DIN07-032: Middle East – individual pre-deployment training

DIN 2014DIN07-031: 2014/15 Tri-Service chemical biological radiological and nuclear defence training and centre information

DIN 2014DIN07-030: The Defence Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Extraction Training Organisation course details

DIN 2014DIN07-028: Authority to conduct physical development activities and duty status applicability

DIN 2014DIN07-027: Mandatory military appraisal writing course for civilians

DIN 2014DIN07-026: Joint Service adventurous training sub-aqua diving on Ascension Island – risk assessment and emergency assistance plan

DIN 2014DIN07-025: Joint and single Service security, intelligence, photographic and geo-spatial training courses for training year

DIN 2014DIN07-024: Launch of the revised joint Service adventurous training rock climbing scheme April 1, 2014

DIN 2014DIN07-023: Joint Service alpine meet 2014

DIN 2014DIN07-022: Policy for units wishing to conduct training/trials/exercises/sport in Cyprus

DIN 2014DIN07-020: Joint Service stress and resilience training management

DIN 2014DIN07-019: Training – Defence School of Policing and Guarding courses to be held April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

DIN 2014DIN07-018: Corporate accountancy training scheme recruitment

DIN 2014DIN07-015: Exercise Cambrian Patrol, October 17-26, 2014

DIN 2014DIN07-014: Joint Service adventurous training gliding scheme

DIN 2014DIN07-013: Defence Centre of Training Support course schedule April 2014 to March 2015

DIN 2014DIN07-012: Exercise Caribbean Wings 2014/15 – exercise instruction

DIN 2014DIN07-011: Exercise Arctic Express 2014 – exercise instruction

DIN 2014DIN07-010: Volunteering for duties with Defence Cultural Specialist Unit

DIN 2014DIN07-009: Exercise Jutland Snake

DIN 2014DIN07-008: Tactical medical wing course schedule training year 2014/15

DIN 2014DIN07-006: Joint Service Paragliding Centre, paragliding course schedule 2014/15

DIN 2014DIN07-004: Instructions for the learn blood transfusion and apheresis courses

DIN 2014DIN07-002: Mountaineering in Indian Himalaya: AMA India Expedition 2014

DIN 2014DIN08-002: Annual report and accounts 2013/14 – closure of feeders

DIN 2014DIN08-001: Charging rates and accounting for indulgence and concession non-fare payer travel

DIN 2014DIN09-004: Normandy 70 – 70th Anniversary of D-Day

DIN 2014DIN09-001: New Year Honours list 2014 – MoD civilian recipients

DIN 2014DIN10-019: Army motorcycle road racing participation 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-018: Military equitation courses 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-016: Basic gliding courses at

the Wyvern (Army) Gliding Club – Upavon

DIN 2014DIN10-015: Exercise Solent Venture (ASA Regatta) 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-014: Shotokan karate introduction course August 11-15, 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-013: Shotokan karate development course August 4-8, 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-012: Army motorcycle road racing participation 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-011: Cheviot 2000 fell race June 14, 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-009: Army kitesurfing courses and events 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-008: HQ Operational Shooting Training Team – 2014 courses

DIN 2014DIN10-007: The Combined Services Chess Championships 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-006: Kendo novice and intermediate course March 10-14, 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-005: The Army Martial Arts Association Open Championships 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-004: WTK tae kwon do course April 14-18, 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-003: The Army Martial Arts Association and forecast of events 2014

DIN 2014DIN10-002: Army Squash Rackets Association sponsored championships 2013/14

DIN 2014DIN10-001: Army Bouldering Championships 2014

DIB06/14: Publication of Lord Ashcroft's veterans' transition review

DIB05/14: Performance appraisal – end of year process guidance

DIB04/14: The new government security classification system – practical guidance for staff

DIB03/14: PUS writes to all civilian personnel about changes to terms and conditions of service

DIB02/14: Final tranche of the Armed Forces redundancy programme

DIB01/14: Update on the progress of the Armed Forces pension scheme 2015



REUNION

LGBT Veterans' Ball. All those who have served since the 1940s and identify as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are invited to this event at the Union Jack Club on June 7. For details email smith.alastair@me.com

The regimental band of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment will be holding a reunion on June 21 from 1400 at the Duke of Wellington's Public House, Commercial Street, Halifax. For details visit their Facebook page or email 1dwrbandreunion@gmail.com

521 Specialist Team, Royal Engineers well drillers will be celebrating their 50th anniversary on June 27-28 in Chilwell. This ticket-only event is open to all current and former personnel. For more details contact Sgt Chris Fury on 0115 957 2857 or via christopher.fury443@mod.uk

West Rhine Golf Club (Javelin Barracks, Germany) will stage a three-day event on June 27-29 to mark its 60th anniversary and would like ex-members (serving and non-serving) to attend. For details email secretary@westrhinegc.co.uk

16 Regiment, Royal Artillery Old Comrades Association will be holding their reunion on July 26 at Wortley House Hotel, Scunthorpe. Contact Stuart Goodall via stuartgoodall@ymail.com



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 drinks 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 apt.mod@btconnect.com with the event you are interested in attending.

March: 11, **Sale:** April: 29, Croydon; 30, Haringey. **May:** 1, Islington.



SEARCHLINE

HQ 2 South East Brigade

Personnel who have presented items to the brigade and who wish to reclaim them are asked to contact Maj Huw Williams in writing by June 30 at HQ 2 (SE) Bde, Somerset House, Sir John Moore Barracks, Shorncliffe, Folkestone Kent CT20 3HF.

With the disbandment of 28 Engineer Regiment this summer, personnel of 23 Amph Engr Sqn who have presented items and wish to reclaim them are asked to contact Sgt R J Errington on 28enegr-23-412-tp-cpl@mod.uk

23 Pioneer Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps is to disband later this year. Anyone who has donated property to the regiment or any Royal Pioneer Corps unit and wishes to have the item returned should email 23pnr-144-oc@mod.uk

A writer is trying to trace the family of **53 Squadron Blenheim crew members who flew in France in May/June 1940: Sgt Christie, AC2 Bence, Sgt Farrow and Sgt Stride**. If you are related to any of these people contact Victoria Bacon on 01379 608722.

NO. 868

JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed in this picture of members of The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery with a new range of special stamps featuring their own charger.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 868, Soldier, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road,**

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

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

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

results will be announced in the May issue. Usual rules apply.

January's winner: First correct entry drawn at random was LCpl M Forrester-Frame, Aldershot, Hants. **Runners up:** SSgt S McQueen, Shrivenham, Wiltshire and Mike Smith, Corsham, Wiltshire.



WIN
£100

The advertisement features a collage of military-style accessories including a wide-brimmed straw hat with a red band, a pair of dark leather belt buckles, a pair of socks with a red, yellow, and green chevron pattern, and a collection of belts with various patterns. In the center, a smiling man is shown from the chest up, wearing a white shirt, a blue and red patterned waistcoat, and a black bow tie. He is standing in front of a background of red, black, and gold diagonal stripes. In the top left corner, there is a small black and white photograph of a person's hand holding a small object. The top right corner features a large, ornate gold star-shaped badge with a red cross in the center, surrounded by the text 'THE REGIMENTAL SHOP' and 'LONDON'. The bottom right corner shows a silver-toned wristwatch with a black dial and a red, white, and blue striped strap, displayed in an open black case. The bottom left corner contains three circular pins or badges, each featuring a different heraldic bird (possibly a falcon or eagle) in profile.

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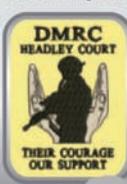
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An advertisement for Vista Ties. The top half features a large, stylized 'Vista' logo with 'Since 1971' underneath. Below the logo is a colorful array of ties in various patterns like stripes and solid colors. The background is a dark blue with the word 'Vista' repeated in a lighter blue in a diagonal, slanted font. The bottom right contains a quote from Sir Alex Ferguson. The bottom half of the image shows a white background with a red and black striped tie on the left and a white background with a red and black striped tie on the right. The overall layout is clean and professional.

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REVIEWS



HIGH FLIERS

MARCH'S MADNESS

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reviews@soldiermagazine.co.uk

MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH: THE PATROL

CONTROVERSIAL COMBAT

THE NEW TITLE LIKELY TO DIVIDE
OPINION AMONG HERRICK VETERANS

Interview: Joe Clapson

AN ARMY veteran has written and directed the first ever feature film about British troops fighting in Helmand province.

The independent offering from Tom Petch, a former captain with The Queen's Royal Hussars, has used a relatively unknown cast to tell a story that will certainly ruffle a few feathers.

"The plot is based on what I heard about Afghanistan during 2006 and I know the situation has got a whole lot better as the level of kit and manning has improved," the ex-Serviceman told *Soldier*.

He may have left the military before Op Herrick began but this director has done his homework.

"I spoke to some of the guys coming back and it seemed that they were pretty stretched," Petch recalled. "I heard about a lack of helicopters and equipment and as I was working in the filmmaking business I decided to write about what I was being told by friends and people in the Services."

The Patrol follows a six-man unit as it attempts to assist the Afghan National Army and defend against Taliban insurgents.

Its scenes portray an operation lacking in resources and manpower, where tensions between soldiers and officers are frayed.

However, the low-budget title differs from Hollywood counterparts such as *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Hurt Locker* and the recent blockbuster *One Survivor* in that it doesn't contain huge amounts of action or endless explosions.

"I really did not want to make conflict look glamorous because it isn't," the veteran continued.

"There are too many war films that are jingoistic with one lone soldier achieving success but in reality that's not how it happens.

"I didn't want people to finish watching my title thinking war is brilliant because that's not true."

Petch's fictional scenario sees a unit exposed and in extreme danger, with low morale in the ranks and troops questioning their bosses.

"Hopefully the movie shows that, yes, these individuals are soldiers but they are also human beings and they still have an opinion," he said.

"Service personnel often don't talk to their families or the media about what happens at work so most people don't know the reality."

The 47-year-old veteran of Bosnia, Cambodia and Northern Ireland said his chief motivation for the project was to get the nation talking.

"I'd like people to start discussing the strategy that has been taken for Operation Herrick and whether it was the right way to do business," he added. "Going forward, I hope people think a bit more about going into battle – particularly the politicians who send in the troops."

Given the provocative nature of the movie it could well be described as anti-war and will probably split opinion among the military community.

However, the man behind it, who served in the Army between 1989 and 1997, is keen to emphasise his admiration for those currently in uniform.

"I know the guys have done an excellent job on recent operations," he said.

"*The Patrol* isn't disparaging about their work, it's negative about those sending them into conflict to do jobs that are unclear."

"It's too late to influence the war in Afghanistan but I'd like to start a debate in case this type of thing happens again."

The Patrol is out now at selected cinemas and will be released on DVD on April 7. ■



RUNNER RUNNER out now

WITH Ben Affleck, Justin Timberlake and Gemma Arterton you might expect this to be a decent movie. However, it proves to be a massive comedown for Affleck following his Oscar success with *Argo*. He plays Ivan, the owner of an online gambling empire in Costa Rica, who lures a student into a shady operation. The film has grand intentions but ends up as a predictable youngster-in-with-the-mob tale.

Joe Clapson, Soldier

VERDICT: Star-studded but not groundbreaking



BLACK WATER VAMPIRE out March 24

DOCUMENTARIAN Danielle works with three others to make a movie in the town of Black Water about the murders of four women. Predictably, one of the team goes missing while researching a crime scene and trouble then strikes the remaining members as a vampire attacks and kills all of them, except Danielle. Oddly, in a film that produces little in terms of scares, the protagonist ends up giving birth to a child vampire.

Cpl Nick Reader, Rifles

VERDICT: A plain, cheap-looking film that will send you to sleep



OUTPOST III out March 31

THIS simple movie starts with a Russian Spetsnaz team taking out a German convoy during the Second World War. After the ambush the Russians are hunted down by a group of Nazis who take them to a secret bunker and pit them against foul beasts which are the creation of enemy experiments on soldiers. With plenty of good fight scenes throughout, this will appeal to anyone who loves a gore-fest.

LCpl Andrew McEwen, RE

VERDICT: Exceeds expectations and is a decent time-filler



ENDER'S GAME out now

WITH the premise that Earth is searching for a brilliant strategist to lead the planet against an impending alien attack, this movie has some spectacular space fleet engagements. But it's the story of Ender Wiggin's struggle as he copes with the consequences of his decisions that is really engrossing. The title strikes a great balance between special effects and compelling character development. A great film.

Cpl Paul Thomas, Int Corps

VERDICT: A brilliant, thought-provoking sci-fi adventure



THE BOUNTY out now

A CHINESE comedy that follows a bounty hunter chasing his quarry through Hong Kong. The over-the-top silliness at the start is hilarious and creates high hopes that this might be another Asian hit like *Shaolin Soccer*. However, the jokes are replaced by a romantic plot and the whole tempo lags when the film becomes overly serious. Some short fight scenes end some of the dullness but this is a struggle to watch.

Cpl Paul Thomas, Int Corps

VERDICT: Ludicrously funny at times but the pace falters



WIN... ESCAPE PLAN

THE dream pairing of one-liner legends **Sylvester Stallone** (*Rambo*, *Rocky*) and **Arnold Schwarzenegger** (*Terminator*, *Predator*) triumphs here as the action heroes join forces in an attempt to break out of an "escape-proof" master prison. *Soldier* has teamed up with Entertainment One to offer a copy of the DVD to five lucky readers. To be in with a chance of winning one just tell us who is older, Sly or Arnie? Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: March 31

MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH: LITTLE RED

BACK IN THE GROOVE

BRIT SCHOOL GRADUATE ENSURES
SUCCESS CONTINUES

Review: Richard Long

JUDGING by the clubland undertones of debut album *On A Mission* it is fair to say that Katy B is not your typical graduate of the Brit School talent factory.

While artists such as Adele and Jessie J have soared to mainstream success their contemporary has simmered just outside the limelight thanks to her embrace of niche genres and urban beats.

However, this approach has not been without acclaim as her first record spawned three top-ten singles along with nominations for several awards, including the Mercury Prize and two MOBOs.

With a promising start behind her the singer has returned with follow-up offering *Little Red*, which sees her reunited with chief collaborator Geeneus while venturing into more emotional terrain.

"This whole chunk of my life has gone vroom," the 23-year-old said.

"I'm growing up a bit. The first album had a certain innocence about it, whereas this record has a bit more experience.

"My relationships have got more serious, I've moved out of my parents' house, I'm dealing with issues on my own.

"My friends are all going through that transition as well – those questions you ask of yourself as an adult."

Work on the release began after she completed her last tour in late 2011 and she soon found herself with around 40 tracks to choose from.

"I wanted to write with more chord sequences instead of loops," she explained. "I want there to be more highs and lows in my sets. I want it to be a real performance."

The emotional feel of her new material was immediately obvious and Katy has been quick to highlight the differences between her two offerings to date.

"I can listen to my old album and just enjoy it," she said.

"Whereas on this record I can listen to it and cry on a good four songs.

"But I still want something to dance to."

Hints of what was to come first surfaced on 2012's *Danger* EP and its standout offering *Aaliyah* resurfaces here.

The track is a collaboration with fellow Londoner Jessie Ware and features an energetic rebirth of the Dolly Parton hit *Jolene* in a nightclub setting.

Lead single *5AM* maintains the artist's dance-floor credentials – albeit at a slightly slower pace – whereas the inclusion of ballad *Crying for No Reason* is nowhere near as painful as first feared.

While inching further towards the centre *Little Red* reaffirms Katy B's credibility as a skilled musician, rather than another clone that has just dropped off the plastic pop production line.

Her vocals fair well and her songwriting skills are surprisingly strong, which means this album will have a broader appeal than initially thought. ■

VERDICT: Dance-floor diva continues to blossom on strong second album

Feels Like Home by Sheryl Crow

I REALLY wanted to dislike this release, just as I have disliked everything **Sheryl Crow** has ever produced. However, *Feels Like Home* is a pleasant surprise. She has swapped edginess for cheese and it has resulted in a solid, albeit rather template, nu-country album. The songs are straight from the country music staples list and it makes very easy listening. But this should not detract from the joy experienced by letting the clichés roll on tracks that cover everything from homesickness to waterproof mascara.

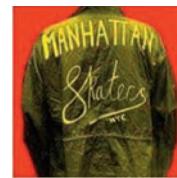


Maj Euan Mathieson, Yorks

VERDICT: A surprising and successful country stroll

Manhattan by Skaters

THIS is the first full-length album from punk rock outfit **Skaters**. The New York band have been busy on tour and recently played sold-out shows in the UK and US. Lead single *Deadbolt* is three minutes of sliding riffs and harmonious vocals. This is not the sort of music I would normally listen to but after a few plays I actually liked it and their sound is reminiscent of *The Clash*. *Symptomatic* and *Band Breaker* are among the standout offerings but be warned – one of these has a reggae feel that changes things completely.



Sgt Ben McDaniel, COSU Cyprus

VERDICT: Pure punk pleasure with a New York twist

St Vincent by St Vincent

AS a newcomer to the world of **St Vincent**, aka **Annie Clark**, I was looking forward to listening to a different artist. However, by the end of the third song on this self-titled album I was hoping it would just end. Each track seemed to have the same beat and I found it hard to differentiate between them. The lyrics also made little sense. I'm sure her fans will enjoy the constant collaboration of electric guitar and percussion played on repeat but this will not be everyone's cup of tea.



LCpl Andrew McEwen, RE

VERDICT: An attractive voice but a change in style is needed

Augustines by Augustines

HAVING heard that **Augustines** were the next big thing in British rock I thought I was in for a treat. How wrong was I? They have tried to blend the best bits of **AC/DC** and **Bruce Springsteen** but have instead produced a limp-wristed **Kings of Leon**. The only saving grace was *Nothing to Lose But Your Head* which was straight out of the **U2** songbook. The rest of the tracks seem to interchange with each other to the point where I couldn't tell which was which – so the only thing I could do was switch off.



LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

VERDICT: Backing music for a dull advert from a budget airline

Is There Anybody Out There

THE debut offering from New York-based indie act **A Great Big World** opens with the electrifying *Rockstar*, which sets a fantastic tempo thanks to its nostalgic piano beat. This superb effort makes the group instantly likeable and throughout the record they master a great embrace of varying tracks that peel a new layer for the future of music and point to a glittering start for this exciting duo. If this album is anything to go by their follow-up releases will only solidify their status in the pop world.



Sgt Craig Backhouse, Coldrm Gds

VERDICT: An album that will go far very quickly

So Long, See You Tomorrow

INDIE quartet **Bombay Bicycle Club** veer down an electronic path on their fourth album – *So Long, See You Tomorrow*. Having established themselves as a constantly evolving band this new diversion hits the mark thanks to a succession of vibrant beats and hooks that flow effortlessly through each song. *Home By Now* is the undoubtedly highlight but *Eyes Off You* and *Whenever, Wherever* play a strong supporting role. With no weak links on the track list it is definitely worth checking out.



Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: A change in direction that certainly pays off

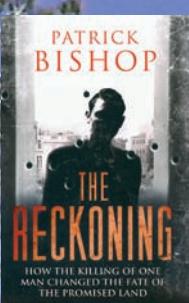
BOOKS



PICK OF THE MONTH:
THE RECKONING

THE MAKING OF A MARTYR

A HISTORICAL WHODUNNIT
AND THE BIRTH OF A NATION



Available to purchase
now, priced £20

Interview: Becky Clark

AS the Second World War engulfed the globe, a small but determined group of Jewish dissidents in British Mandatory Palestine was waging a battle of its own against its colonial masters.

Although at the time it was a sideshow to a much more immediate threat to international stability, their fight would trigger events that would shape the future of the Middle East.

Bestselling author Patrick Bishop is bringing this story to life for a new audience in his latest offering, *The Reckoning*.

Focusing on the cat-and-mouse game between top British detective Geoffrey Morton and the gang's leader Avraham Stern, the book reads like a historical whodunnit.

"The tale seemed to me to have great dramatic potential," said Mr Bishop of his interest in the saga.

"There are these two strong characters, a manhunt, a mystery about what happened at the end – it's a detective story that had huge political consequences.

"Morton and Stern were on opposite sides of the law but they shared a zealousness that meant that when they did collide, sparks were going to fly."

Following a series of bloody bombings carried out by his faction, Stern met his own violent demise when he was cornered and subsequently shot by Morton.

The central question was, had the policeman murdered his quarry in cold blood or in self-defence as he claimed?

Delving into the archive of Haganah, the Jewish paramilitary organisation, Mr Bishop unearthed startling new evidence.

"I found a document that seemed to suggest the British policy was to kill Stern, not take him prisoner," he explained.

"As far as I'm aware no British researcher had seen that before, so that is always exciting as a historian.

"We can't know for sure but the mood appeared to be that Stern was not going to get out alive."

Whatever the truth of the matter, his passing was to have profound repercussions.

In life, Stern's extreme policies had marginalised his group but death made him a martyr and galvanised his sympathisers.

"It would have been more sensible to capture him because his personality was quite self-destructive so if they had put him in prison he would probably have imploded," commented Mr Bishop.

"His importance would very quickly have waned but by killing him they turned him into an icon."

"In combination with other acts of British colonialism, his shooting persuaded moderate Jewish opinion that the UK was indeed an obstacle to an independent Israel."

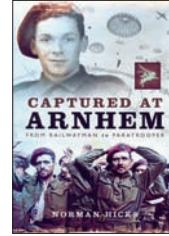
As history would show, the campaign for sovereignty became increasingly bitter until, just six years later, Britain terminated its mandate in Palestine.

A personal drama played out against the demise of an empire, *The Reckoning* is also a good place to start for those seeking to understand the origins of one of the world's most politically complex regions. ■

Interview: Becky Clark

Captured at Arnhem

by Norman Hicks



THIS account of Tom Hicks' time as a Nazi prisoner of war after Operation Market Garden is told by his son and captures perfectly the triumph-over-adversity spirit which typified the veterans of that era. Delivered in a matter-of-fact style, the prose brings to life the pride and humour of Hicks and his paratrooper comrades, every one of them true heroes. Recommended to anybody with an interest in military history, airborne operations or just an appetite for a great story.

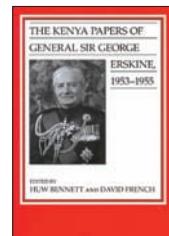
Cpl Adam Jackson, 3 Para

VERDICT: Truly inspirational – you must read this book



The Kenya Papers of General Sir George Erskine

by Huw Bennett and David French



ERSKINE took charge of the campaign against the Mau Mau in Kenya in 1953. Here, the story of his command is told largely through his own words but the commentary is first-rate. He planned a coherent strategy, prevented atrocities to the best of his ability, worked with civilian authorities and toured widely to encourage morale. The lessons for modern-day counter-insurgency operations are many.

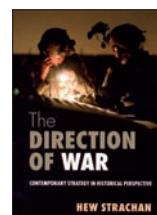
Dr Rodney Atwood, military historian

VERDICT: An excellent account with contemporary relevance



The Direction of War

by Hew Strachan



THE various chapters in this book are based on previous work by the author but updated to add fresh matter. The text is not readily digestible and the reader will require the mental agility of an intellectual Olga Korbut, as well as constant reference to the Oxford English Dictionary, if there is to be any prospect of following the writer's line of reasoning. The inclusion of a few interesting anecdotes, whilst most welcome, does little to compensate for the tedious and convoluted prose.

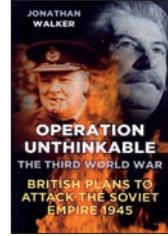
George Robey, ex-GH

VERDICT: Seemingly aimed at academics and of little wider appeal



Operation Unthinkable

by Jonathan Walker



THIS is a gem of a book about British plans to attack the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Drawing upon copious amounts of unpublished and primary source documents, the author has traced the political and diplomatic shark tank that was the relationship between the three great powers in 1945. He has painted an engaging and sobering portrait of the struggle amongst the so-called Allies and the desperate strategy drafted at the direction of Churchill.

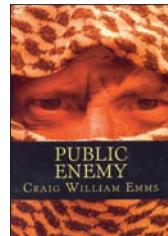
Maj Chris Buckham, RCAF

VERDICT: Excellent read – very highly recommended



Public Enemy

by Craig W Emms



THIS is a good old-fashioned, rip-roaring action thriller. After saving a plane of hijacked hostages and an eventful stint in jail, the hero is sent to rescue the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge from kidnappers bent on forcing the government to commit to caring for injured troops. Throughout all of this he is being chased by an IRA man whose brother he had supposedly killed. A fun story and good escapism if you can overlook the improbable plot.

Andy Kay, ex-RS

VERDICT: A fast-moving, easy read if you ignore reality



Human Game

by Simon Read



RECOUNTING the murder of 50 Allied escapees from Stalag Luft III, this book reveals the painstaking efforts of a British policeman to get to the truth – no easy task in a country devoid of specific crime scenes and raw from six years of war. The drama is eloquently told and is clearly ready for a film adaptation. A thrusting producer would do well to seize upon this tale of wartime pluck coupled with meticulous and determined peacetime detective work.

Maj Euan Mathieson, Yorks

VERDICT: An insight into the other side of the Great Escape



top gear



PICK OF THE MONTH:

COOL CAMS

HEAD-MOUNTED KIT THAT LETS YOU SHARE
YOUR ADRENALIN RUSH WITH THE WORLD

Review: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

HEAD-MOUNTED camcorders can provide a jaw-dropping perspective of daring sports like skiing, surfing or hang-gliding and with a growing propensity to share every experience with the world through social media, it's no wonder sales of these amazing little machines have gone through the roof.

Although GoPro is the leading brand in the market with its Hero range, there are plenty of worthy competitors and Ion's Air Pro 2 is one of the most promising.

With full HD resolution and a Wi-Fi function, it generated a huge amount of interest when it was launched last year.

Now I've tested it I'm not surprised – this is a really robust and versatile piece of kit.

Unlike the boxy GoPros, the Air Pro 2 uses the "bullet" camera format and looks like a stubby flashlight.

I lent it to a team of lads to take into water-filled foxholes, drop on muddy ground and kick about "accidentally", yet it stayed intact and perfect working order.

One of the best features is the Podz system, which allows add-ons to be slotted on such as Wi-Fi and a waterproof remote control.

It has a superb 180-degree wide-angle lens that produces very high quality shots and can be linked to an iPhone or iPad.

Usefully, the Air Pro 2 takes stills as well as film and the controls are very intuitive with just two rubber buttons on top.

Another great function over rivals is its built-in vibration when you turn the device on and off. This helps you to operate it in the dark or when it's on your head.

The Air Pro 2 has loads of different mounting options including straps, clips, a mini tripod and webbing belts. You'll struggle to find something you couldn't attach it to.

But one downside is its weight. At 130g it is rather heavy and has to be mounted on the side of your head due to its cylindrical shape.

Those who tested it found that it was weighty enough to cause their headgear to start sliding about, which drove them mad. It sticks out quite a bit too.

By comparison, the GoPro Hero is not only lighter but its shape means you can mount it on the front of your headwear.

The Air Pro 2's battery life is better, however, and it will go for about two to three hours before needing a recharge.

You receive 8GB of free cloud storage and it takes 32GB micro-SD cards.

The audio is also excellent, picking up conversations within a short range.

While I am a big fan of GoPro Hero devices, they often come with plastic housing for underwater work while the Air Pro 2 is waterproof to a depth of ten metres. That makes it great for extreme sports coverage.

With a recommended retail price of £300 this camcorder compares favourably with this market leader.

But should you buy one?

I'd say yes. It looks pretty cool and the quality is up there with the best – just make sure your chinstrap is nice and tight. ■

VERDICT: A sound piece of kit that is worth the headgear-related niggles ★★★★★

CAMCORDERS FOR YOUR CROWN

GOPRO HERO 3+ BLACK

THIS is 20 per cent lighter than its bestselling predecessor but is around the same weight as the Air Pro 2 with its waterproof housing. It delivers improved image quality over the previous version, along with new features such as wide-angle video mode.

Battery life: Up to 2 hours

Storage: Up to 64GB capacity supported

Weight: 74g or 136g with housing

VERDICT: Pricey but a brilliant all-rounder

★★★★★



£360



£359

CONTOUR PLUS 2

FEATURING Contour's exclusive GPS system, this model adds location, speed, elevation and distance overlays to your sports video so your friends can admire your speed, skill and bravery on the piste, pitch or track. A 60m waterproof case is included.

Battery life: Up to 2.5 hours

Storage: Up to 32GB capacity supported

Weight: 156g

VERDICT: Heavier but easy to use

★★★★★



£199

SONY HDR-AS15

THE main selling point of this model is Sony's image stabilisation technology called SteadyShot, which not only negates a shaky hand but also allows smooth-looking films to be made even in very bumpy conditions. Add-ons can be pricey for this model.

Battery life: Up to 2.5 hours

Storage: Up to 64GB capacity supported

Weight: 90g

VERDICT: Versatile but add-ons cost

★★★★★



£200

DOGCAM BULLET HD2

THIS is a beautiful-looking and great value device. It's also one of the smallest and lightest "bullet" cameras on the market. Waterproof to a depth of ten metres, it offers software-controlled brightness, contrast, saturation, resolution, frame rate and microphone sensitivity. But its relatively short battery life may be a factor against it and the device has no Wi-Fi function.

Battery life: Up to 1.5 hours

Storage: Up to 32GB capacity supported

Weight: 70g

VERDICT: Small size will please, fewer playback functions won't ★★★★★



WIN A GOPRO HERO 3+ BLACK

AS this month's reviewer found, the GoPro Hero is the helmet-mounted camcorder to beat. The latest model includes new features such as wide-angle video mode and a sharper lens. Thanks to our friends at GoPro (<http://gopro.madison.co.uk>) we have two of these great gadgets – worth £360 each – to give away. To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us the battery life of the Hero 3+. Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by March 31. Good luck!

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SOLDIER SPORT

EDITED BY RICHARD LONG PICTURES BY GRAEME MAIN AND STEVE DOCK



Main man: Former soldier Ross "The Boss" Burkinshaw makes his professional comeback in Sheffield this month. Read more about the boxer's hopes and expectations on page 90...

LORDS OF THE RING

Boxers eye professional pride in new career outside the Army

WITH an injury-ravaged three years firmly behind him, ex-Serviceman and bantamweight fighter Ross Burkinshaw is hitting the comeback trail.

The 27-year-old returns to action at Sheffield's Octagon Centre this month for a bout that will hopefully kick-start his march towards title contention in the sport's professional ranks.

As a former super flyweight English champion he is no stranger to success at the top level but after tearing cruciate ligaments in both knees – as well as having a titanium pin inserted in his shoulder – his progress has been halted in recent times.

Burkinshaw enjoyed a ten-year Army career before falling victim to redundancy in December 2012 and with his military commitments complete he has been able to fully focus on his efforts in the ring.

A rushed comeback last summer ended in defeat but with a new team behind him the proud Yorkshireman is plotting a sustained winning run.

"I moved up in weight to compete for a central area title after being out for a year," he explained. "It was the wrong thing to do and I was beaten.

"I went back to the drawing board after that. I've now got a new trainer in Ryan Rhodes, who is a two-time British and European champion and fought for a world title on four occasions.

"I know I have the ability but in the past things have not been right.

"I'm going back down to bantamweight and I want to make the division my own. I hope to get a world ranking within a year and I want to win another title."

Burkinshaw served with 3rd Battalion, The Rifles and was a mainstay of the Army boxing team before turning professional in 2006.

During his time with the squad he won two Combined Services titles and was an Amateur Boxing Association Championship finalist in 2005.

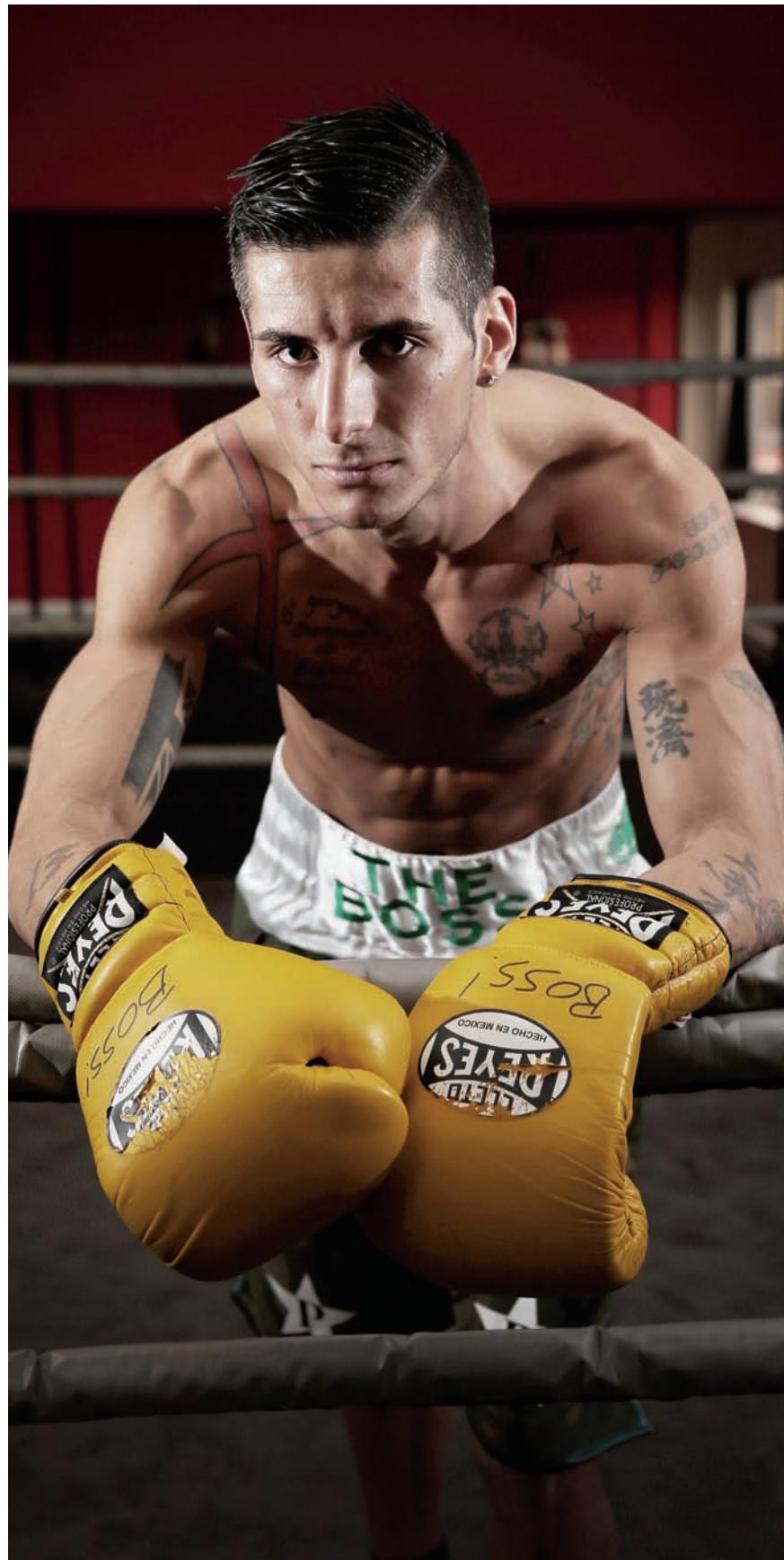
"I had a really good amateur career with the Army," he added. "I wish I could have that now, having my teammates around me got me through a lot.

"I had the best of it. The Service really looked after me and I went all round the world with the boxing team and got some great experience.

"As a professional they continued to support me, with fellow soldiers marching me out for fights.

"However, everything has to come to an end.

"Once the redundancy notice came I knew my time had come but it was a chance to continue my boxing career and it meant I could focus on the sport."





Tale of the tapes

● Ross "The Boss" Burkinshaw will face a Russian opponent at Sheffield's Octagon Centre in his comeback fight on Sunday, March 2. For tickets and more information on the show follow [@ROSTHEBOSS_B](#) on Twitter

● Chris Hobbs returns to action on Friday, March 21 on the undercard of southern area lightweight champion Floyd Moore at Portsmouth's Mountbatten Centre. For ticket details follow [@chrishobbsboxer](#)



HAVING tasted life on the front line in Afghanistan light heavyweight prospect Chris Hobbs is preparing himself for a new battle as a challenger in boxing's professional ranks.

The former soldier has made an unbeaten start to his fledgling career and with more bouts scheduled for the coming months he wants to push for a title at the end of the year.

While his talent flourished at a young age it is the discipline learnt during his time in uniform that set him on the path to the top.

"I was quite aggressive and was heading down the wrong path but the Army made me what I wanted to be," the 26-year-old told *SoldierSport*.

"It was like an extended family and I had my brothers around me at all times.

"The military gave me the discipline I need to be a boxer. I live a similar lifestyle now in the fact I'm up early every morning and out running.

"When my mates go clubbing I'm at home in bed, that is the way I live."

Hobbs served with 16 Signal Regiment in Germany as an electrician and was responsible for fixing generators and ensuring power systems remained in operation. He also doubled up as a driver.

"It gave me a trade," the fighter explained. "I got all my licences and that was handy to have as a back-up."

"I deployed on Op Herrick in 2008 and it was a good tour until we lost someone from our regiment in the

final week. That brought us all down to earth quite badly.

"People do not really think of the Royal Signals taking hits but it happens to everyone in Afghanistan."

With his tour complete and family life figuring more prominently Hobbs walked away from the Army to pursue his other passion – boxing.

He returned to his old club in Southampton to compete as an amateur before injury ruled him out for six months. After regaining fitness he turned professional and has won all four fights to date.

"It is good but there is a lot of hard work," he said. "I am on the bottom

rung of the ladder at the moment but I am climbing.

"I would not have left the Army unless it was to do

something better. Boxing has always been close to my heart and I did not want to have any regrets.

"I thought 'let's do it and see what happens' and I'm now trying to get some quick fights under my belt.

"I'm training with former world champion Tony Oakey and that is pushing me to the next level.

"I want to be challenging for a major belt by the age of 30. I'm not going to be a punchbag, I will always fight to win and give 100 per cent."

"A lot of guys from the regiment come to cheer me on and the local troops are there as well."

"The Army is my main support base and that is something I really appreciate; it is so humbling." ■

"I WOULD NOT HAVE LEFT THE ARMY UNLESS IT WAS TO DO SOMETHING BETTER"

Reds plot positive path

WITH the countdown to this year's Twickenham showdown well underway the pressure is on the Army to deliver another victory in rugby union's showpiece fixture.

The Reds cruised to a 43-26 triumph over the Royal Navy last season and head coach SSgt Axel Rees (REME) is hoping for a repeat performance when the two sides take to the turf on Saturday, May 3.

Preparations for the big match began with back-to-back wins over Oxford and Cambridge Universities in recent weeks but the soldiers face a sterner test this month as they lock horns with Premiership outfit Worcester and Northampton.

The fixtures have provided a number of challenges for Rees, who has had to blood new talent due to the absence of

a host of established stars. He has also appointed a new skipper in the shape of LSgt Mattie Dwyer (WG, pictured).

"We were expecting a bumpy ride as 13 players from my starting line-up in last year's Inter-Services were unavailable for the opening games," he told *SoldierSport*.

"More boys have joined professional clubs so we will not see them until later in the season.

"Oxford put out a really strong side so that was a pleasing result. Cambridge were decimated with injuries but we are still developing – I went there with only five players with caps to their name.

"But we know we have quality to come back into the full squad. If we can

get results and good performances with those guys still to return it shows we are moving in the right direction."

Rees has seen a number of key performers join the ranks of elite clubs, with LCpl Samesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) leading the charge at Bath.

LBdr Sam Speight (RA), LCpl Ricky Reeves (RE), LBdr Ifereimi Boladau

(RA) and Dwyer are also on the books of professional sides and while their selection is seen as a positive it also creates some frustrations.

"As a coach it is difficult and I have mixed views," Rees explained. "Long term we know we are getting a better product but the clubs dictate when we can have them.

"We know they will be here for the Inter-Services but sometimes we need them to be released a little earlier.

"Roko and Sam have earned international honours this year but they have both picked up injuries. With every top-flight game there is the fear they may be ruled out long term."

In the meantime, the coach is focusing on his side's upcoming fixtures and the significant challenges posed by Premiership opposition.

"We will give it our best shot," Rees said. "Our aim is to not leak as many points as last season and we have brought in a defence coach to help us.

"Most people think it is all about the Inter-Services but we also want to give a better performance in these games.

"Some of the new guys will be involved due to the unavailability of others. It is a massive step up; they have the raw talent and if they have the belief I'm sure they can do it." ■

"WE KNOW WE HAVE QUALITY TO COME BACK INTO THE FULL SQUAD"



2014 Fixtures

- Oxford University – won 15-7
- Cambridge University – won 64-5
- Worcester (away) – March 12
- Northampton (away) – March 19
- RAF (away) – April 16
- Navy (Twickenham) – May 3



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Woolwich Cup semi-final
Royal Artillery 4 – AGC 3

A LAST-gasp goal from Gnr Nathan Tidy completed a dramatic comeback by the Royal Artillery as they defeated the Adjutant General's Corps to book their place in the Woolwich Cup final.

The gunners were trailing 3-2 as the match headed into the dying minutes but Gnr Peter Williams snatched a deserved equaliser before Tidy was left unmarked to head home and seal a 4-3 win.

Bdr Doc Holliday (pictured above) opened the scoring midway through the first half but LCpl Dallie Mandson fired a rasping effort into the top corner to draw the AGC level.

The winger doubled his tally just short of the hour mark before Holliday immediately restored parity.

However, the gunners failed to capitalise on their momentum as Mandson was hauled down in the area and Cpl Jacko Jackson converted from the spot.

With the clock ticking down the Artillery pushed forward and their late salvo set up a showdown with the Royal Signals in the final.

"When we were trailing we never stopped but the game could have gone either way," victorious skipper Gnr Marvin Molyneux (pictured below) told *SoldierSport*.



Reds start in style

Under-23 Inter-Services

Army 2 – Royal Air Force 0

GOALS from Sig Luke Noble (R Signals) and LCpl Calum Wilkinson (RLC) fired the Army to a comfortable 2-0 win over the Royal Air Force in the opening match of the Under-23 Inter-Services.

The forwards struck either side of half time to give the Reds a perfect start against a below-par light blues side that rarely troubled the hosts' defensive line.

With head coach Capt Joe Collins (R Signals) adopting a "one team" philosophy this season the soldiers line-up boasted a raft of players with senior experience and they asserted their superiority from the outset.

Skipper LCpl Jack Smith (REME) was the first to test the visiting keeper with a low drive from 25 yards and Noble unleashed a stinging shot at the near post that was well saved moments later.

Wilkinson then had an effort from range tipped over and from the resulting corner LCpl Dec Shuttleworth (REME) saw his header cleared on the line.

But the Army's persistence was rewarded on the stroke of half-time. Some neat passing involving Gnr Nathan Tidy and Gnr Peter Williams (both RA) released the unmarked Noble and he calmly found the back of the net.

Gnr Tom Broadbent came close to doubling the Reds' advantage shortly

after the interval but the full back's rasping strike went just over the bar.

However, further chances failed to follow and the home side had to wait until the 77th minute to finally seal the contest.

The ball was worked to Wilkinson midway inside the RAF half and the striker used his strength and pace to run clear of the defence and emphatically fire home.

With a second goal to their name the Army cruised through the game's closing stages to complete a comprehensive victory.

"We were hard to break down," Smith told *SoldierSport* at full-time. "They had a couple of counter-attacks but it would have been nice if to put a few more chances away.

"It took us nearly 80 minutes to get the second goal. At 1-0 it is always a bit nerve-racking and a lucky strike would have got them back into it.

"Our back four were solid throughout and Calum did well up front. We are now looking forward to our clash with the Royal Navy.

"We've not seen much of them; we have our game plan and we will go with that."

The Reds were in action against the Senior Service as this issue went to press.

Army: Carroll, Evans, Broadbent, Shuttleworth, Carvell, Williams, Noble, Smith, Wilkinson, Tidy, Rose.
Subs: Creamer, Spence, Meacham, Lonorgan, Short, Kirby, Gale. ■



Narrow defeat: The Reds gave a strong showing against the Metropolitan Police but the team's mistakes were ruthlessly punished in a 4-3 loss

Army downed in trophy thriller

Grenadier Guards Trophy

Army 3 – Metropolitan Police 4

DEFOENSIVE errors proved costly for the Army as they finished on the wrong side of a seven-goal thriller with the Metropolitan Police in the **Grenadier Guards Trophy**.

Having led 2-1 at half-time the Reds conceded three goals after the interval before a late header from LCpl Gav Greenfield (RE) reduced the arrears and offered faint hope of a comeback.

The result was somewhat harsh on the soldiers, who impressed for long spells as the team's new expansive style came to the fore.

Gnr Nathan Tidy (RA) opened the scoring midway through the first half when he found himself on the end of a neat pull back from Gnr Peter Williams (RA) and passed the ball into the net.

But the advantage was short-lived as the Army were punished for squandering possession on the edge of the area. LCpl

Declan Shuttleworth (HCR) did well to force striker Saul Atobo wide but Rob Carrick had the simple task of heading home from the resulting cross.

The setback failed to deter the hosts and when LCpl Jay McAnespie (R Signals) was fouled in the box Sig Luke Noble (R Signals) restored the advantage from the penalty spot.

With further chances failing to materialise the Reds looked in control but a three-goal burst after the interval saw the match turn on its head.

Atobo levelled after the Army failed to clear a deep free kick from the left and substitute Anthony Kojakis gave the visitors the lead after he was allowed time and space to pick his spot from inside the area.

The Met Police sealed the win moments later as Tyrone Pink raced clear of the defence and calmly slotted the ball past home goalkeeper Cpl Andrew Billingsley (R Signals).

Greenfield rose unmarked to convert a corner from the impressive Williams but

further opportunities did not arise as the Army slipped to a 4-3 defeat.

Speaking at full-time head coach Capt Joe Collins (R Signals) said he was disappointed with the result but pleased with the way his team performed.

"We have been working really hard on looking to play the ball and I'm not going to discourage the lads from doing that," he told *SoldierSport*.

"Perhaps we need to think about the areas we play in."

"We had six lads from the under-23s out there tonight and they proved they can make the step up against a well-drilled Met Police side."

"We want to win every game. Our aim is to lift the Inter-Services trophy at under-23 and senior level and I think we have a great chance."

Army: Billingsley, Haley, Lonorgan, Shuttleworth, Greenfield, Rizza, Noble, Tidy, McAnespie, Williams, Kirkby. **Subs:** Cooper-Tomkins, Evans, Smith, Poulter, Price, Rosy, Riley. ■

Soldier's star man

GNR PETER WILLIAMS (RA)

ANOTHER composed performance from the midfield man who has made a seamless transition to the full Army team this season.

Williams created the opening goal for teammate Gnr Nathan Tidy (RA) with a neat cut back from the byline and his late corner was headed home by LCpl Gav Greenfield (RE) for the Reds' third.

The Artillery star linked well with Tidy and skipper Sgt Barry Rizza (R Signals) in the middle of the park and expertly retained possession for his side.



Inter-Services fixture list

● **Army v Royal Navy** – Wednesday, March 12 at the Aldershot Military Stadium (women 1500, men 1900)

● **Royal Navy v Royal Air Force** – Wednesday, March 19 at Westleigh Park, Havant (1930)

● **Royal Air Force v Army** – Wednesday, March 26 at Shrewsbury Town Football Club (men 1900). Women's match to be played at RAF Cosford (1400)



Tough going: Army skiers push themselves on the gruelling Ruhpolding course during Ex Rucksack

Rucksack hits new high

THE Service's winter sports stars descended on the Bavarian town of Ruhpolding for the annual **Nordic Skiing Championships** – Ex Rucksack.

Nearly 250 athletes from 42 military and civilian teams competed in a series of gruelling biathlon and cross-country races, with a number of international athletes also joining the field.

The Australian Defence Force, German Army and the Ukrainian national squad were among those represented, while the Royal Navy/Royal Marines challenged the Army for prizes at Inter-Services level.

SSgt Adele Walker (29 Regt RLC) and Cpl Nerys Jones (AGC) were the frontrunners in the women's biathlon races and the latter proved to be slightly faster on the skis.

However, Walker's consistency with the rifle reaped dividends as she shot well throughout the competition – including 100 per cent accuracy in the 12.5-kilometre race – to finish ahead of her rival.

Former Olympian SSgt Tom Clements

(2 R Welsh) was also in fine form, dropping only his final shot of 20 in the 20-kilometre individual biathlon, while Pte Jordan Foley (17 Port and Maritime Regt RLC) finished second in the 15-kilometre classic despite competing as a junior.

Foley's unit won the classic relay by more than two-and-a-half minutes but Cpl Carl Gibson (2 CS Bn REME) produced the fastest individual lap time to help his team finish second.

Skiers from 1 Logistic Support Regiment dominated the men's patrol race as they lifted the Princess Marina Cup for the 11th time in 14 years, making them the Army's champion skiing unit in both Alpine and Nordic disciplines.

Participation in the regional championships that feed into the competition increased this season and the purchase of 150 new biathlon rifles helped boost the sport.

This saw a rise in entries among the infantry, with 3rd and 4th Battalions, The Royal Regiment of Scotland and 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh taking part. ■



Picture: L Cpl Marcel Laponder

Russian advance

ARMY biathlon star Cpl Amanda Lightfoot (AGC) has vowed to return to the Olympic spotlight after a disappointing debut campaign at the Sochi Games.

The soldier missed five targets on the shooting range as she finished 71st in the women's 15-kilometre individual event, an effort that followed her 75th place in the 7.5-kilometre sprint.

"It didn't really go to plan," the 26-year-old (pictured) said.

"It was my first Winter Olympics so it has been a learning curve for me but I am a bit disappointed.

"Unfortunately I made the wrong ski selection and that was the reason for being slow up the hills.

"My head wasn't very good on the range and I haven't been very confident in my shooting.

"I need to get that back together but this makes me more determined to return in four years' time."

Teammate LBdr Lee Jackson (16 Regt RA) was making his second appearance at the Winter Games and came 67th in the men's 10-kilometre sprint, an effort that was followed by 42nd place in the 20-kilometre pursuit.

"I had one miss on the range and that's pretty perfect for me," he explained. "Hitting that would have guaranteed top 30 but I didn't feel in that sort of shape."

"The course was very hard. The hills were so tough and long and you climb from the very start of the race."

"But I'm now closer to the podium places than I was four years ago, so that's really encouraging."

"I'm in better shape, I was better prepared mentally and my percentages behind the top guys have improved."

Walker rues corner scrape

BOBSLEIGH pilot Cpl Paula Walker (21 Sig Regt) claimed a 12th place-finish on her return to the Olympic spotlight in Sochi.

The soldier was 11th at the Vancouver Games four years ago and clocked an overall time of 3mins 54.23secs alongside Rebekah Wilson in the two-woman event.

Her efforts saw the duo trail the gold medal-winning Canadian crew by more than three-and-a-half seconds and Walker said problems on their third run proved decisive.

"With this track the characteristics are such that if you make a mistake before corner six it is game over and I made a monumental error between corners two and three," she added.

"We lost about half a second. On the

fourth run we just had to come back and I drove as well as possible.

"No athlete comes in wanting to finish 12th at the Olympics but to put it into perspective both Rebekah and I have had a long, long journey in different ways. I think we have done ourselves proud."

LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) came 23rd in the two-man bobsleigh and was competing in the four-man event as this issue went to press.

He said: "It was a huge bonus to qualify in the two-man as it's not my best discipline.

"To finish in the top 30 is a fantastic achievement. The track in Sochi is very unforgiving; if you make mistakes at the top it kills your speed as I found out in the second heat" ■



Picture: Reuters/Andrea Wagnleitner



Nordic novices

ASPIRING winter sports stars were given a taste of cross-country skiing and biathlon during a highly successful Ex Nordic White Fist.

More than 140 novices took to the Austrian snow for the annual championships, which are open to personnel from the Household Cavalry, Royal Armoured Corps, Royal Artillery and Army Air Corps.

A total of 199 athletes from 27 different regiments took part in five gruelling races that culminated in the high-octane biathlon relay.

Skiers from 1st Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment were exercise champions and the team from 39 Regiment, Royal Artillery took the women's crown.

Cpl Paul Birmingham (1 RTR) and WO2 Kelly Hanniver (39 Regt RA) were named best male and female respectively, while Lt Benji Barkes (LD) and Lt Jen Waterfield (39 Regt RA) claimed the best novice awards.

"The racing was incredibly competitive with the huge numbers of novices skiing hard to prove who was the best," said event director Lt Col Marcus Evans (RTR).

"White Fist is the springboard for less experienced teams to cut their teeth and gain valuable experience before advancing to the Regional Nordic Championships in France."



Picture: POA Owen Cobain, Royal Navy

INTER-SERVICES WINTER SPORTS

ARMY athletes gave another strong showing at the annual Inter-Services Alpine, Snowboard and Telemark Championships in Meribel.

The French slopes proved to be a happy hunting ground for Capt Lizzie Cranfield (AAC) who secured gold medals in four events as she emerged as one of the Service's top performers.

She opened her account with victory in the downhill and also took top spot in the super giant slalom, super combined slalom and giant slalom. The officer added to her haul with silver in the slalom.

Capt Angie Fewster (RA) offered valuable support with three medals in the Alpine disciplines, while Maj Chrissie Elesmore (Int Corps) spearheaded the Service's challenge in the snowboard events – which were dominated by the Royal Air Force.

The officer finished third in the slopestyle and parallel slalom and also claimed second place in the final of the snowboard cross.

In the men's competition, Gnr Rob Collier (RA) and Cpl Sven Benavides (Rifles) secured an Army one-two in the slopestyle, while Capt Si Nicholson (REME) won the snowboard cross.

The Royal Navy were the side to beat in the Alpine skiing but Capt Rob Ronz (RA) broke the stranglehold by taking top spot in the downhill, with teammate SSgt Dougie MacPherson (RLC) finishing second. The latter also took silver in the combined slalom.

The pairing of Maj Chippy White (RE) and Maj Tiggs Chohan (RLC) starred in the Telemark events but the Senior Service triumphed in the giant slalom team competition.

● Cpl Dougie Bray (AAC)

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SPORT SHORTS

■ ARMY rugby union star LCpl Samesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) made his England Saxons debut in the side's 16-16 draw with Scotland A last month.

The Bath winger played 45 minutes of a match staged in challenging Glasgow conditions where free-flowing moves were at a premium as the boot dominated.

Good luck messages were sent to the Serviceman from Kabul, where his unit is currently deployed, and the 26-year-old gave a fitting example of military discipline by standing to

attention for the national anthem.

"It is important to me," he said. "I am a soldier playing rugby while the boys are out on tour."

"The least I can do is show my support and do what is expected when the anthem is played."

■ THE Army have been handed an away tie against Great Britain Police in the second round of rugby league's Tetley's Challenge Cup.

Having defeated Askam ARLFC

12-8 in their opening fixture last month the Reds will travel to Leeds in confident mood. They will also be buoyed by the fact they enjoyed a commanding win against the same opposition last season.

"We beat them 40-16 and it was a fairly comfortable game for us," Maj Dave Groce (RLC), secretary of Army rugby

league, told *SoldierSport*.

"We have got a strong squad so we are quite optimistic."

"The match with Askam was a hard-fought battle in what were truly hideous conditions."

"It was a tough encounter with lots of big tackles and some great running. They were no mugs so it was a really good win."

The Army were in action against the police as this issue went to press.



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Hard slog: LCpl Nicola Van Staden (RE, in blue) takes her place in the leading pack at Sandhurst

Rain runners

Army Cross Country Championships

Men's winner: Maj Ady Whitwam (RLC)

Women: LCpl Nicola Van Staden (RE)

Major units: 2 RRF

Minor units: ASPT

Women's team: 9 Regt, RLC



■ SERVICE athletes faced a true test of their endurance capabilities during a wet and windy Army Cross Country Championships at Sandhurst.

More than 500 runners took to the start line for the event and some impressive times were posted despite the heavy rain and howling gales.

Maj Ady Whitwam (RLC, pictured) triumphed in a strong men's race as he completed the course in 30mins 15secs – an effort that saw him defeat defending champion WO2 Gaz Watkins (RE), who finished second, and third-placed Sgt Sean Byrne (RA).

"I was happy to get away from the field but it was a tough course," he told *SoldierSport* afterwards.

"It was difficult to decide which footwear to use. I went with

spikes but there were sections where road shoes would have been better.

"There was a strong field of runners and the turnout is improving year on year. There is a real enthusiasm for cross country at the moment."

LCpl Nicola Van Staden (RE) won the women's race in a time of 27mins 29secs, while 9 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps took the female team title.

Runners from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers lifted the men's major unit crown and the Army School of Physical Training were victorious in the minor units' category.

"The weather was awful and the wind was howling in some of the exposed parts," said Maj (Retd) Jim Wood, secretary of the Army Athletics Association.

"However, it was one of the best courses we have seen and the guys at Sandhurst did a great job."

"We have identified new talent and some good athletes have come out of the woodwork. We need new blood to filter into the senior set-up."

The Army team was in Inter-Services action as this issue went to press. ■



SPORT SHORTS

■ THE Army ladies hockey team finished the indoor season with a strong showing at the national league division two tournament in Nottingham.

Having posted impressive results at competitions in Exeter and Worcester the Reds were in confident mood as they locked horns with a series of challenging sides.

They started the opening day with one win and one loss before producing a superb 5-3 victory over Stourport in their first fixture of the second day. Unfortunately, the soldiers' campaign finished with back-to-back defeats as they finished in fourth place.

The result saw them ranked 22nd in England at the end of the campaign.

■ FIGHTERS from The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment have gone head to head in the first boxing match to be held between the formation's two battalions.

Staged at York Hall in London, the encounter featured nine bouts and was watched by a crowd of more than 1,000 soldiers and guests.

The 2 PWRR team dominated the early contests and raced into a 6-0 lead thanks to victories from Pte Brett Felix, Pte Mitchell Popman, LCpl John Ratcliffe, Pte Billy Farrimond, LCpl Terry Ratcliffe and Pte Danny Bannister.

But 1 PWRR fought back in the heavier weight categories with Pte John Marvin leading the charge in the bout of the night against Cpl Andy Hornbuckle.

The former landed a series of combinations to the head and body to take victory via a unanimous decision and earn the colonel of the regiment's best boxer trophy.

Cpl Leon Nihell and Pte Joshua Woods succeeded in the cruiserweight and heavyweight categories respectively but 2 PWRR ran out 6-3 winners on the night.



Fit to fight: The Battle Buddies crossfit competition at ATC Pirbright welcomed nearly 50 teams

Battle of the buddies

A NEW activity has arrived on the Army's sporting landscape in the shape of the energy-sapping exercise discipline crossfit.

Almost 50 two-man teams took part in the recent Battle Buddies competition at ATC Pirbright, where the duo of LCpl Barry Mairs and LCpl Louis Plumridge emerged victorious on behalf of 24 Commando Engineer Regiment.

The event saw soldiers going head to head in four stands, where they had to perform a variety of cardiovascular and weight-based exercises against the clock.

The team recording the most repetitions was declared the winner.

Crossfit has a wide appeal within the Service due to its focus on fitness and Steve Donnelly, a training coordinator at Pirbright who helped run Battle Buddies, is predicting a bright future.

"The Army has embraced this over the last four years and it is now coming to

the fore," he told *SoldierSport*. "We held an event in October and had around 15 teams – now we have 46.

"You have to have the right mentality to take part and because the competitions are constantly varying you are not training for just one discipline.

"This allows individuals to focus on their weaknesses and improve.

"We want to keep it growing. More and more people are buying into this and we are introducing some of the functional exercises into our physical training so the guys are getting used to it."

Crossfit has also reached Inter-Services level where the Royal Navy have won the three competitions to date.

The next competition – the Forces Throwdown – will be held at the Army School of Physical Training in Aldershot on June 11. For more information on the event contact SSgt Adrian Jessey on military 94222 8066. ■

ARMY INDOOR TENNIS



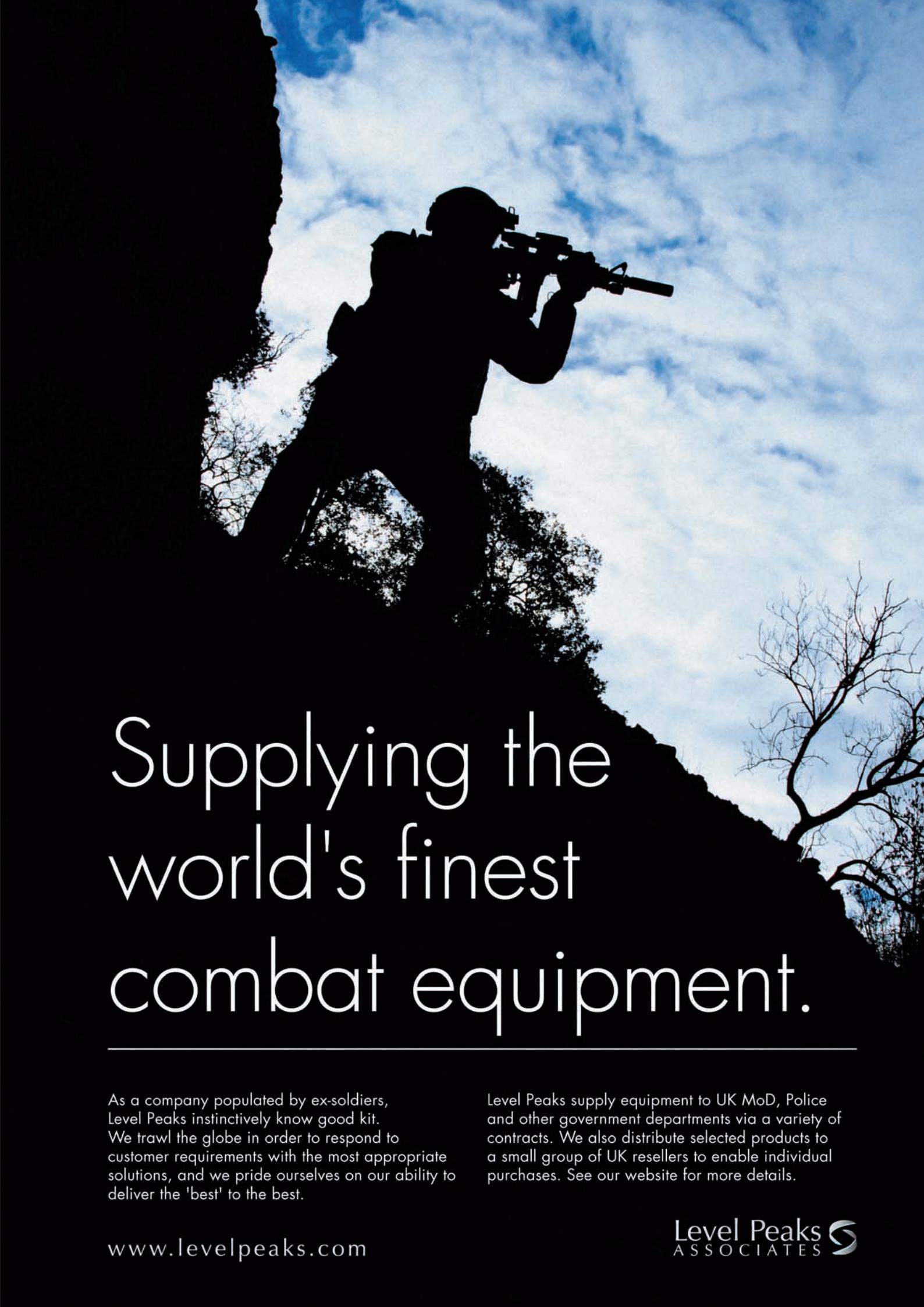
THE Service's tennis players returned to the court at the annual indoor championships in Aldershot last month.

A competitive field gathered for the event, which was staged over three days and featured 110 matches thanks to a record number of entries.

Rising star 2nd Lt Ben Rogers (RA, pictured left) defeated the experienced WO2 Jamie Friend (RLC) 6-4 6-1 in the men's final.

Cpl Hilary Greig (AMS, pictured right) retained her women's title with a 6-1 6-2 victory against Cpl Hannah Bacon (AGC (SPS)) in what was a repeat of last year's final. Cfn David Perry (REME) was named best newcomer.





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Final word

With thousands of troops deployed to defend the UK against flooding (pages 43-45), we asked soldiers involved in the mission what it was like helping out closer to home.



Tpr Nathan Gawin (HCR)

I've never done anything like this operation before and it didn't take us too long to settle down and prioritise the tasks. As soon as I saw the floods on the TV I thought we'd be deployed and to be honest I thought we'd be called out a bit quicker. Now that everyone is aware of our capabilities hopefully in future people will have us in their minds as soon as emergencies like this arise.



CoH Jim Hogg (HCR)

I've done several of these types of missions before – the firefighter strike, foot-and-mouth disease and Op Olympics – and the common theme is that we are helping the civil population in a time of need and doing it well. You can't train specifically for something like this but you can prepare to be adaptable, which is what we do. In the future I think we could be a first thought rather than a last resort in people's minds because the Army deals with crisis situations very well.

LCpl Peter Forster (HCR)

The public really appreciate what we have done and it's been great working alongside civilians in towns and villages. This isn't the type of thing we would expect to do but if it comes to it the Army will undertake anything. I can definitely see soldiers working more with the fire and police forces on jobs like this in future.



CoH Jason Ashford (HCR)

If the public need us then we will always act, especially when the situation is so close to where we are based. We enjoy working in our own country because it's not something we get to do very often and it feels good assisting at home. People are happy to see us too, which is nice to know.



Tpr Joe Bool (HCR)

Although as soldiers we're not trained to defend against floods we are always ready to act at speed. If these severe weather incidents continue to happen I think we will be seeing a fair bit more of the Army working at home and we probably need to prepare more for it. The military represents a certain sort of work ethos that people, in times of crisis, place their trust in.



LCpl Marc McQuade (HCR)

Getting called out was a bit of a fastball but we were ready to go and glad to be able to help. It's been nice to show the general public that the Army cares about them. Also, the residents were pleased to see us, which boosts morale as we're only used to seeing people on homecoming parades.



Cfn Sean Mosley (REME)

My colleagues and I usually work with trucks and tanks but we got to grips with this mission well. Putting out sandbags has been our main role but providing peace of mind has also been a massive part of the job. At the start people were crying but after we got to work they ended up a bit happier, given the awful circumstances.



LSgt Jon Consterdine (REME)

We are a lot more welcome working on home soil than elsewhere and people were very happy to see us, although I think they would have preferred to see the Army a bit sooner because they were in desperate need of help. Members of the public realise the Service knows what it's doing – they are reassured by the green uniform.



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