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MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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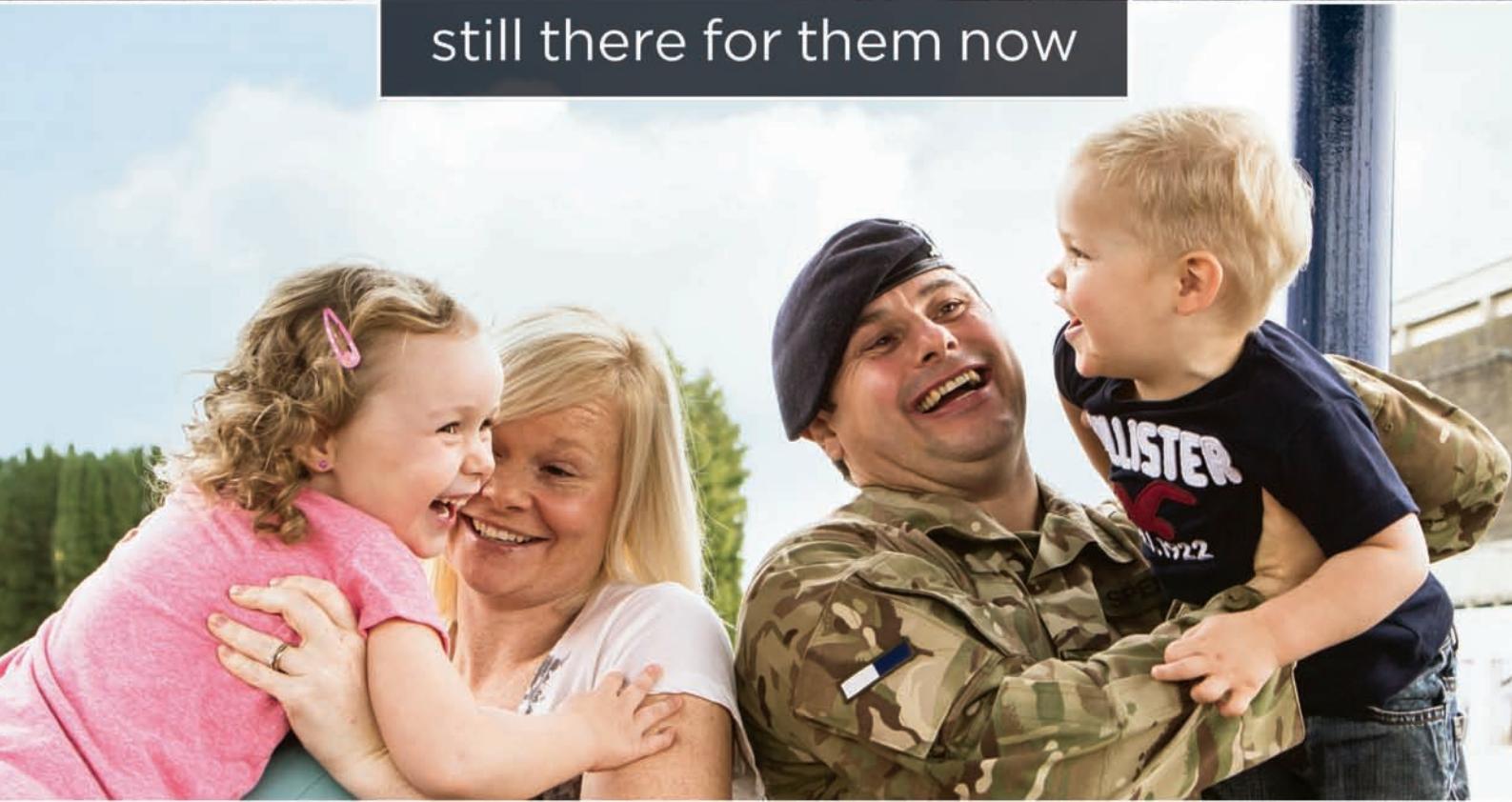
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ARMY

Ready and willing

DURING his recent speech at the Chatham House international affairs think tank the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nicholas Houghton, said he wanted to see an Army "fit for future challenges" and one that was "imbued with the spirit of innovation rather than preservation".

There's certainly plenty of that to be found in the pages of this issue in my humble opinion.

Our report on 16 Air Assault Brigade (pages 23-25) shows the huge effort they've been putting in recently to find the best ways of integrating with their American equivalents in 82nd Airborne Division as part of a multinational high readiness force.

They reveal that comprehending our English-speaking friends on the other side of The Pond isn't always a straightforward task – although it's a piece of cake compared to understanding many of the languages and cultures that are now key to the Army's global-wide defence engagement efforts.

That's why an increasing number of personnel are taking the matter of learning foreign languages much more seriously these days, with career-boosting qualifications and even hard cash rewards proving to be very effective inducements (pages 31-34).

Communications on the battlefield are also being transformed and our visit to see the work of the units in the 11th Signal and West Midlands Brigade (pages 37-41) illustrates just how flexible, highly skilled and mobile that section of the Army has become.

It's striking how these personnel, who have very different roles within the Service, have a common thread running through them – their willingness to embrace the challenges of an increasingly uncertain world.

Gen Houghton should have reason to smile. ■



Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

Turn to pages 43-45 to see how current personnel got on with the historic Lee Enfield rifle



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Cover: Graeme Main

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"Learning a language keeps your grey matter working "

Linguists wax lyrical on foreign communications

p31 Royal Signals explain their vital role on the battlefield p37

"We are enabling the Infantry units to take the fight to the enemy"

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Asylum campaign on move

Ex-captain calls for Afghan colleague to be given sanctuary

A FORMER Infantry captain is calling for an Afghan interpreter he worked alongside in Helmand Province in 2011-12 to be granted Asylum in the UK.

George Tyldesley (ex-Mercian) launched an online campaign asking the government to reconsider the case of a translator known as Khushal, whose quick-thinking he credits with saving the life of his men on patrol.

Some 120,000 people signed the petition on change.org after reading how Khushal had become stranded in Calais having fled Afghanistan last year and making the 4,500-mile journey to the port.

Tyldesley also raised more than £9,000 through a crowd funding page to provide his former colleague with essentials while he remained in the notorious migrant camp known as the "Jungle".

Although initially the former Serviceman tried to help Khushal break into the Eurotunnel terminal, eventually the interpreter stowed away on a boat by himself and made it to England.

Speaking to the *Sunday Times* after they were reunited the ex-Serviceman said: "Any one of the guys who worked with him in Afghanistan would have done it.

"He shouldn't have had to come

to the UK like this.

"They should have looked through his claim and given him asylum immediately. It's such a clear-cut case. The processes are far too long and ineffective."

The current policy offers sanctuary only to translators who served after 2012 or who can prove their lives are in immediate danger.

Tyldesley is among a number of former officers urging the government to widen the criteria.

A separate petition launched by ex-major James Driscoll has garnered more than 170,000 signatures and has the backing of retired military chief Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, who also met with the Armed Forces Minister Penny Mordaunt to discuss the issue.

An MoD blog on the topic maintains that media claims that interpreters face intimidation and have effectively been abandoned are "completely erroneous".

A statement by Mordaunt reads: "Recognising our connection to Afghans who worked directly with the Ministry of Defence, we have put in place a package of legal and fair policies for the brave men and women who worked with us

"To date, over 150 locally engaged civilians (a total of 330 people including their families) have been relocated to the UK."

“
We have
put in place
a package
of legal and
fair policies
”

Leave options expanded

THIS month sees the introduction of new leave options for Regular, full-time Reserve Service and additional duties commitment personnel.

There are now three choices in addition to existing annual and special paid leave:

Call Forward of Leave – the ability to apply to bring forward up to ten days from your next annual individual leave allowance (ILA) into the current leave year.

Transfer of Leave – enabling serving spouses/civil partners to transfer up to ten days holiday between each other.

Enhanced Leave – providing the opportunity for eligible individuals to take a block of 50 days leave in lieu of ILA.

10 days leave brought forward

50 days in lieu of ILA

There is also an amendment to the career intermission entitlement, which is the opportunity to apply for an unpaid period of absence between three months and three years, with changes to the terms and conditions of your service including a graduated entitlement to Service accommodation.

Detailed guidance on leave options can be found in **JSP760**, or by asking your chain of command.

And a reminder about flexible working...

The MoD also re-issued the contents of a DIN published in 2011 containing guidelines for flexible working practices to raise awareness of the choices that are available.

The details are contained in **2015DIB/27** and **2015DIN01-182** and include eligibility and applications for variable working times, home working and compressed hours.



1 ISLE OF WIGHT ISLAND ESCAPE

SOLDIERS from the Honourable Artillery Company put their surveillance and target acquisition abilities into action on Exercise Vambrace Horizon.

The London-based troops integrated with their aviation and maritime partners on the challenging and unfamiliar landscape of the Isle of Wight to improve their core military skills and to test their communications capability.

Maj Johnny Longbottom (HAC) commented: "It's not often that the regiment has the opportunity to train its personnel away from the mainland and we are very grateful to be extended this privilege."

“
It has
been an
amazing
experience
”



2 CROATIA MERCIANS ON THE MOVE

RESERVISTS from 4th Battalion, The Mercian Regiment tested their military skills in a two-week training package with members of the Croatian Armed Forces.

Exercise Sava Star saw around 100 troops work on basic infantry drills such as patrolling, section attacks and navigation, before joining their counterparts for some integrated serials.

"It was interesting to see their rugged equipment, which is perfect for the terrain here," said Sgt Tim Robinson. "It's been an amazing experience and hopefully we can do more training together in the future."



SWIFT RESPONSE

Airborne personnel on a multinational mission in Germany – pages 23-25

British Army Training Unit Suffield

British Army Training and Support Unit Belize

The Falkland Islands



3 SCOTLAND AIRFIELD UPGRADE

A CONSTRUCTION force from 53 Field Squadron, 39 Engineer Regiment has completed work on a new taxiway at RAF Lossiemouth.

The four-month project allowed troops to enhance their trade skills and develop new competencies by working on a live airfield.

The structure is 250 metres long and 16 metres wide and the sappers took the lead in the design, resourcing and building stages.

Maj Colin McLenaghan said: "It was an excellent learning experience for all involved. They can walk away from this task knowing they have constructed an excellent product."



IN NUMBERS:

12

Teams competing in this month's International Defence Rugby Competition. Reigning champions the Army start their campaign against Australia on October 8.

● Eyes on the prize – page 89



Afghanistan

5

Brunei



4 GERMANY

FRONT-LINE CARE

MEDICALLY trained troops took on the US-led Expert Field Medical Badge to test themselves in a simulated combat environment.

Soldiers from 1 and 4 Armoured Medical Regiments, as well as 16 Medical Regiment, deployed to Grafenwoehr for the two-week course, which also included personnel from Germany, Slovenia and Spain.

Pte Jamie Hall (16 Med Regt) said: "This experience has been really valuable, it has exposed us to the various operating procedures and equipment the Americans use which will help improve our working together on future exercises and operations."

“
It will
uphold
the global
spirit of
the Royal
Artillery
”



5 THAILAND

MONSTER CATCH

A GROUP of wounded, injured and sick Service personnel have completed a monster fishing trip to Thailand.

The two-week adventure was aimed at providing some well-earned rest and recuperation while attempting to catch some of the biggest freshwater fish in the world.

Stuart Gillham, owner and fishery manager of a resort in the Krabi National Park, gifted kit and accommodation to the Help for Heroes party and a total of 25 eager participants took to the water's edge.

Notable catches included a 140lb Siamese Carp by veteran Jamie Lounds and an array of Mekong Catfish that weighed in at more than 100lb.

6 MALI

AFRICA MISSION OVER

SOLDIERS from 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment have just returned from Mali where they formed part of the European Union military training mission, consisting of 500 personnel from 26 nations.

A team of 27 troops deployed in March with the aim of building the capacity and capability of the Malian Armed Forces in order for them to maintain security and build long-term stability in the country.

They trained 300 Malian soldiers in combat and counter-insurgency operations, drawing upon their experiences of similar missions in Afghanistan where they mentored and trained local forces in 2012.



7 MADEIRA

GUNNERS SET SAIL ON ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

ROYAL ARTILLERY troops have embarked on a year-long offshore sailing expedition to mark the formation's tercentenary.

Exercise Atlantic Ubique will see 150 Regular and Reserve soldiers from every gunner regiment taking turns to complete legs on the 10,000-mile route, which encompasses the Canary Islands, the Caribbean, the Eastern Seaboard of North America and the Azores.

Lt Jennifer Price (16 Regt RA), who will be sailing from Grenada to St Lucia, said the experience would be a once-in-a-lifetime voyage for everyone involved.

"The whole regiment, from junior gunners to lieutenant colonels are coming together to challenge themselves, see new places and uphold the global spirit of the Royal Artillery," she added.

The first crew set sail from Gosport on the *St Barbara Vyacht* bound for Madeira as this issue went to press, with the boat due to return to the UK in August 2016.





“COMMUNICATIONS ARE A VITAL PART OF ANY BATTLE”
- SIGNALLERS ON SONG, PAGES 37-41

ARMY 2020 UPDATE



Picture: Cpl Michael Strachan, RLC

HQ AT THE READY

A SPECIAL service was held at York Minster to mark the first operational month of 1st (UK) Division's new headquarters.

The formation, which commands 25,000 Regular and Reserve troops, has moved from Germany to Imphal Barracks in York.

The ceremony was attended by more than 100 staff and began with the reading of a roll of all units from the structure currently deployed on operations overseas.

Maj Gen Giles Hill (pictured), General Officer Commanding 1st (UK) Division, also gave a reading and those who had recently died were remembered.



DRAGOONS DELIGHT

PERSONNEL from the Queen's Dragoon Guards attended a reception at the Castle Museum in Norwich to officially mark their arrival in Norfolk.

The unit, known as the Welsh Cavalry, has moved from Germany to Robertson Barracks in Swanton Morley as part of the Army's rebasing plans.

"We have an exciting year ahead with deployments varying from Kenya to Salisbury Plain," said commanding officer Lt Col Dan Duff.

"Our home, however, is now Norfolk and we will make every opportunity to support and benefit from this part of the UK."

“It is vital that we look at the future threats our Armed Forces might face”

“

Future vision unveiled



SENSOR-laden body armour, a smart watch that monitors life signs and glasses with integrated cameras have been included in the future vision of military kit unveiled by the MoD.

The concepts are part of an ongoing plan to ensure the next generation of British soldiers are supplied with high quality equipment that utilises the latest innovations.

It is believed these items could be used on the battlefield in the 2020s and current military research and emerging commercial technology have heavily influenced the designs.

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory has developed the first phase with input from the Army and industry partners Kinnair Dufort and SEA.

"In an uncertain world it is vital that we continually look at the future threats our Armed Forces might face," said Defence Secretary Michael Fallon.

"Our £160 billion equipment plan and the very best of the UK's science and technology expertise demonstrates a commitment to ensuring our personnel have the kit they need to keep the country safe."

Known as the Future Soldier Vision, the programme provides the MoD with an aim point for what a soldier could look like a decade from now.

Picture: Toby Bennett

A closer look at the possible kit for soldiers in the 2020s



► A head sub-system concept incorporating hearing protection, lightweight sensors for information sharing and an integrated power supply



► A robust hand-held computer enabling better information sharing and communications between personnel on the battlefield



► Smart glasses with a heads-up display, integrated camera and headphones to increase situational awareness without compromising hearing levels



"IT'S NOT THAT DIFFERENT TO WHAT WE USE TODAY"

- ENFIELD UNCOVERED, PAGES 43-45



Picture: WWF International



EXPERT INSIGHT

Heather Sohl, chief adviser on species at WWF UK, answers Soldier's questions on the mission to save the forest elephant...

► How big is the poaching problem?

We are in a global poaching crisis. There's been an unprecedented spike in illegal wildlife trade in recent years, increasingly involving large-scale, organised crime.

Around 30,000 African elephants are killed each year. Central Africa is the worst hit with a rate that is twice the continent's average.

► Why is ivory so lucrative and what is the market for this?

China is the world's largest consumer market for illegal ivory where it is mainly bought as carvings, jewellery and decorative items because consumers associate it with rarity, luxury and status.

As well as protecting elephants in Africa, stamping out demand and breaking up illegal trade routes is crucial to government strategies to stopping this serious crime.

► How likely is the animal's extinction?

It's not looking great and populations have declined in recent years. Over 60 per cent of central Africa's forest elephants were lost between 2002 and 2011 due to habitat destruction and poaching.

This is not just a sentimental exercise – elephants are a precious resource for local communities who benefit from the animals as they keep vital ecosystems healthy.

► What is your reaction to the Army's role?

It's a good example of how developed nations like the UK can do their bit for conservation and the rule of law worldwide. Park rangers are often ill-equipped and inexperienced to tackle ruthless poachers.

African assault

Personnel join the fight against Gabon's poachers

THE British Army has answered a call for help from the president of Gabon as the country continues its battle against the ivory poachers who have brought forest elephants to the brink of extinction.

Soldiers from a range of units including 2nd Battalion, The Rifles and 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland have flown to West Africa, where they will be working with park rangers in tackling the escalating crisis.

The team will be sharing operational experience and training their counterparts in surveillance and analysis techniques as well as the collection and use of criminal intelligence to support the successful prosecution of gangs responsible for the slaughter.

In the past decade, poachers, who sell the ivory to a lucrative Asian market, have killed more than 15,000 of the estimated 22,000 forest elephants in Gabon's Minkebe National Park.



Maj Mark Shercliff (2 Rifles, pictured with his team below), the officer heading up the UK contingent, spoke about the scale of the problem prior to departure.

"With a range of forests across a hilly environment it is not a straightforward task," he explained.

"We have junior soldiers with a range of tactical abilities and have strong and experienced instructors who work with troops deploying all over the globe.

"This allows us to focus on low-level skills as well as building the teams that will be needed within the park agencies."

And he is also under no illusion that it will take a huge

international and political effort to end the poaching.

Maj Shercliff added: "Military input cannot solve this alone. There is a lot of work to be done in getting countries around the world to combat poaching in a way that is joined up.

"This phenomenon does not belong to a single nation or continent."

At risk: The ivory trade is threatening the future of the forest elephant

IN NUMBERS

80%

Of herds were lost in some African regions during the height of poaching in the 1980s

2-5

The weight, in tonnes, of the forest elephant – which is lighter than the savanna elephant, the other subspecies of African elephant



“I KNOW I WILL BE JUDGED ON WINNING THE INTER-SERVICES”
- NEW COACH TALKS FOOTBALL, PAGE 85

Taking the long way home

AS his comrades boarded an aircraft for a long awaited flight home, Capt Ed Lloyd Owen (R Wx Y) opted for the scenic route – on foot.

During six-months on Op Tosca in Cyprus he decided on the idea to raise funds for Walking with the Wounded – a charity helping injured personnel find new careers outside the military.

Setting off in late March he recently returned from his 2,800-mile odyssey with £27,000 for his efforts.

Often sleeping rough the officer would cover 25 miles a day carrying 14kgs with a rest on every sixth day. Occasionally he would treat himself to a luxury hotel and a square meal.

His journey led him through northern Cyprus where he caught a ferry to the Turkish mainland. From there he trekked up to the Dardanelles travelling from Asia to Europe.

After visiting the battlefields of Gallipoli the officer marched



on through Greece, Macedonia and Albania before crossing the Adriatic Sea to the Italian city of Bari.

He then trudged through France to Dunkirk, where a ferry took him on his penultimate leg to London.

“This has been an astonishing life experience,” Capt Lloyd Owen said. “But it has also been a

challenge like absolutely nothing else I could possibly have imagined.

“The pain, discomfort, cold, heat, hunger, thirst, loneliness, stress, sheer terror, homesickness and a multitude of other emotions have been far beyond what I had reckoned.”

For more details visit www.shortwalkhome.co.uk



DERBY DRAWS PRAISE

REGIMENTAL mascot Derby the ram has been promoted to lance corporal.

The Swaledale sheep was awarded his first stripe at the formation day parade of 2nd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment in Chester.

Praising the junior NCO's conduct, commanding officer Lt Col Ben Wilde said: "This is the latest in a long line of 'Derbys' to have served as our mascot and not all of them are as well behaved as our newest was today – he deserves his promotion."

The tradition dates back to the siege and capture of Kotah during the Indian Mutiny Campaign of 1857-58.

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING

MARATHON MISSION IN MEMORY OF BROTHER LEE

THE brother of former Grenadier Guard Lee Hastings (pictured) – who died last year from a brain tumour – is embarking on a fundraising mission in memory of his sibling.

Ross Hastings has already raised more than £1,300 for The Brain Tumour Charity thanks to a staff waxathon with colleagues at the Marks and Spencer store in Bexhill and a car boot sale. He is also hoping to enter the Poppy Half Marathon. To help his efforts visit [www.justgiving.com/MARKsandSPENCER-Bexhill-BrainTumourCharity](http://www.justgiving.com/MARKSandSPENCER-Bexhill-BrainTumourCharity)



GOLF QUEST PAYS OFF

MEMBERS of the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham took to the course for their annual charity golf day.

Money raised: £3,800
For: ABF The Soldiers' Charity and the On Course Foundation



RUNNER RACKS UP THE ROAD MILES

FORMER soldier Nikki Savings, who served in the Adjutant General's Corps, completed a gruelling seven marathons in seven days.

The endurance runner was inspired to take on the challenge after meeting one-year-old Frankie

O'Connor, who was born with an extremely rare brain condition. Visit www.justgiving.com/Nikki-S

Money raised: £8,300
For: The Joshua Deeth Foundation



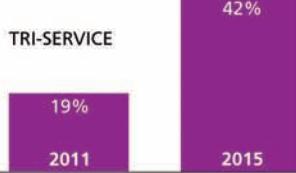
More than 40% of those serving are dissatisfied with their pension*; good reason to join the Forces Pension Society



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Rising dissatisfaction with Pension Benefits. 5 years: 2011 - 2015



* 2015 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey

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“WE ARE EMBRACING THE PRESSURE AND THE ATTITUDE IS GOOD”

- REDS SET FOR GLOBAL TEST, PAGES 88-89



CALL FOR CARE BOOST

■ AN amputee veteran has called for a restructuring of health services to end the variable standard of care given to wounded personnel.

Former Royal Marine captain Jon White (pictured) was commissioned by the limbless veterans' charity BLESMA to compile a report on the care given to 160 of the most seriously injured troops by the NHS.

In his paper, Mr White, who lost both legs and his right arm in an IED blast during Op Herrick 12, acknowledged that increased funding and the establishment of regional prosthetic centres has helped but he believes that incorporating technology from American orthotics company Hanger could make the UK a world-leader in patient care.

“These are young, fit, determined former Forces personnel with huge potential for society yet they can experience daily frustration, delay and complications on a needlessly lengthy medical journey,” he commented.

“My recommendations will help veterans return to independence as wage earners, tax-payers and to raise families, released from the psychological and physical burden of sub-optimal care.”

Mr White's report has been delivered to government and health service chiefs.

PINC POLL

THE Army's highest-ranking transgender officer – Capt Hannah Winterbourne (REME) – has been named the most influential LGBT person in Wales.

Published by Wales Online, the Pinc List champions “those who have put their heads above the parapet to make the country a better place”.



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

“There is a huge range of assistance for Service leavers, veterans and families”

HOME TRUTHS



Help is always at hand

LAST month a post was circulated on social media that depicted a homeless veteran begging outside a supermarket and lots of comments followed along the lines of “why isn't anyone supporting our brave heroes?”

It's great to see the British public backing our soldiers but at the same time it's really unhelpful that such a view still persists.

There is a huge range of assistance for Service leavers, veterans and families from a wide array of charities and organisations.

Things have improved further still with vast amounts of Libor bank fine money aiding the military sector. This includes £40 million for veterans' housing and has also covered many other projects from practical help for those with PTSD to business start-ups.

But as long as this myth exists we are continuing to spread the message that there is nothing out there for our most vulnerable.

We need veterans and their families to know that, whatever their issue, there's an organisation that can support them.

Collaborative efforts are being made to get the best for people and this sees bodies that offer different services pooling resources to provide a holistic approach.

Of course these charities continue to need money but the funds they have are being used efficiently and effectively to rebuild lives.

In reality most Service leavers will make a very successful transition and it is a much smaller number who get into difficulties.

But I am wholly confident that if they are directed to our military charities and they engage in the process they will find the help they need to put them back on track.

The issues facing the Forces population are not new and we are fortunate to have experienced, empathetic and capable people at the helm of such causes.

They will not judge those who get in touch. The greatest danger to our Service leavers is not a lack of provision but a lack of knowledge about the help that is out there, which may make personnel and their families reluctant to come forward.

Once a soldier leaves the Army and lives in the big wide civilian world it's more difficult to communicate this message.

So you can help by spreading the word next time you're on leave or by correcting people when they make the false claim that no-one is helping our veterans.

www.aff.org.uk

"YOU NOTICE THE EXTRA REVENUE" - FROM REGULAR TO RESERVE, PAGES 26-29



Scout receives new badge

THE family of Scout specialist vehicles has been renamed Ajax "to better reflect the multi-role capability of the platform", the Army has announced.

This will be the generic designation for the group of tracked assets but it will also be the tag given to the reconnaissance and strike version.

Each of the other variants will have their own individual names, inspired by various Greek gods or heroes (see panel below).

Ajax will be the Service's first fully digitised land-based combat vehicle and is due to be delivered in 2017.

The first units should be equipped and trained up to an operational standard by 2020.

The asset will then become a key ground force element, providing a sophisticated target acquisition and reconnaissance capability.

Around 590 vehicles consisting of six different variants filling nine roles will eventually be delivered, equipping the three armoured cavalry regiments, their support troops, as well as artillery fire support teams, engineer reconnaissance formations and their attached arms.

Ajax will also eventually be distributed to the armoured and armoured Infantry battlegroups, including their close reconnaissance units and the command and control elements of battlegroup and formation headquarters.



Riflemen aim to fire up recruitment

MEMBERS of The Rifles have launched a major recruitment drive in towns across England.

The tour visited Leeds, Sheffield, Wakefield, Doncaster, Barnsley, Mansfield and Rotherham last month and saw riflemen stationed in town centres and Jobcentre Plus offices to talk to the public about careers and life in the regiment.

Organiser Capt Gary Case explained that this is the first time the formation has simultaneously targeted several major cities in its catchment area.

"We find that using riflemen to recruit from their home town works because the potential recruit can relate far more to a soldier who possibly lived on the same estate and went to the same school as they did," he said.

On track: The Army's Ajax family of armoured vehicles will fill a variety of roles on the battlefield

IN NUMBERS

590

Ajax platforms are scheduled to eventually become operational

2017

The year the first variants should reach armoured cavalry squadrons

US OFFICER IN POST

A SENIOR US Army officer has become the first American general to serve within a British Army division.

Brig Gen Mike Tarsa has been appointed the deputy commander of 3rd (UK) Division, a brand new post that has been established as part of plans to tighten relations between the British and US forces.

Speaking at a welcoming ceremony in Bulford the officer (below) said the assignment was a "distinct honour" and added: "I'm proud to be stood here in your ranks."

Brig Gen Tarsa has deployed on multiple tours of Iraq and has held a number of senior positions within the American military.



CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT?

FORMER Servicemen and women who had administrative action taken against them as a result of a police caution received between December 2008 and September 2011 may have grounds for complaint.

A change to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act in 2008 made it illegal for employers to impose additional sanctions on those cautioned by the police but the practice continued in the Forces until 2011.

The MoD has now written to all serving personnel concerned to make them aware that they could submit a complaint but officials have been unable to contact all of those who have since left the military.

If you believe you may be affected, email ArmyPersSvcs-PS2-SC-Helpline@mod.uk or phone 01264 382 746.

STAMMERING SUPPORT

THE Defence Stammering Network has been launched at a House of Lords reception hosted by Baroness Whitaker.

It provides support to civilians and members of the Armed Forces and enables its members to share their experiences and problems online, as well as obtaining support and advice.

The forum is on Facebook and Defence Connect.





WELFARE

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“THE BIGGEST ISSUE WE HAD WAS JARGON”

- AIRBORNE TROOPS ABROAD, PAGES 23-25



Picture: Graeme Main



NEW REMEMBRANCE

■ THE popularity of the 150-acre National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire has led to work starting on a new national Remembrance centre following a well-supported funding campaign.

With £10.7m raised by a drive led by HRH The Duke of Cambridge, trustees of the arboretum have pushed ahead with the project.

The completion date is set for late 2016 and the centre will cater for around 500,000 visitors a year.

Support has come from, among others, the Heritage Lottery Fund. Further details are available at www.thenma.org.uk



African soldiers honoured

THE enormous contribution made by African soldiers to the British Army's efforts in past conflicts has been recognised with a special memorial that was opened at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst last month.

Around 140 guests who have associations with the Royal West African Frontier Force, King's African Rifles, East African Forces, Northern Rhodesia Regiment and Rhodesian African Rifles attended the ceremony, which saw the unveiling of eight large graphics boards charting the achievements and sacrifices made by the units.

The Viscount Slim, President of the Burma Star Association, who led the occasion, said: "It is a great honour to dedicate these boards here today.

"This is a wonderful moment and long overdue."

Around 105,000 African (excluding South African) troops lost

their lives in the First World War – more than the number of Australian, Canadian or Indian soldiers killed,

Around 90,000 African personnel, including a Nigerian brigade in the Chindits, fought in Burma during World War Two, compared to 100,000 from the British Army.

African troops also fought and defeated the Vichy French in Madagascar in 1942 and the Mau Mau in Kenya a decade later, as well as participating in the Malayan Emergency.

The new memorial includes a selection of citations for African soldiers from several hundred medals awarded for acts of conspicuous gallantry.

They include ten Victoria Crosses, one of them awarded to Nigel Leakey, a distant cousin of recent VC winner LCpl Josh Leakey (Para), posthumously decorated in 1941 for action with the King's African Rifles in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia).

Unsung heroes:
Nigerians serving in Burma (below) are among the many Africans whose service has now been recognised



MAIL SERVICE EXPANDS

■ MORE personnel will be entitled to the Enduring Families Free Mail Service after it was extended by the MoD last month.

Now, all troops deployed in joint operational areas around the globe can benefit from the service, which allows family and friends to post letters – known as "blueys" – and small parcels up to two kilogrammes to loved ones for free.

It's estimated around 1,200 Servicemen and women will benefit from the expanded provision.



Picture: Shutterstock

Medics stand firm on Rock

REGULAR and Reserve soldiers from 16 Medical Regiment have been working together in a testing two-week training exercise in Gibraltar.

The trip focused on core military medical skills and included a series of casualty extraction drills that



were made even more demanding by the complex 34-mile tunnel network that lies beneath the rock.

Reservists from 144 Parachute Medical Squadron were also validated at role one level, which means that they are allowed to deploy at short notice and provide front-line support.

UNDERSTANDING AFF

A SHORT film has been released by the Army Families Federation to explain its role and to enhance its links with other charities, companies and local authorities.

"Our aim is to serve our families better than ever before," said an AFF spokesperson.

The film can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/135458906>



“BRITS HAVE A REPUTATION FOR BEING QUITE LAZY” - FINAL WORD, PAGE 90

GURUNG RECOGNISED

■ MILITARY Cross recipient LCpl Tuljung Gurung (RGR) has received further recognition for his bravery at the Asian Achievers Awards in London.

The soldier collected the accolade during the ceremony at Park Lane's Grosvenor House Hotel, following his actions in Afghanistan, where he fought off two Taliban fighters who attacked his base.



GURKHAS CELEBRATE

■ SOLDIERS from the Queen's Gurkha Signals received the Freedom of the City of York last month in recognition of their 200th anniversary.

More than 160 soldiers were on parade in and around the streets of the city as they joined colleagues from 2 Signal Regt to march through with bayonets fixed to the music of the Band of the Queen's Division.

Guests and members of the public were also entertained by a display of traditional Gurkha Kukri dancers wielding the sharp Nepalese knives for which they are famous.



SIKH SOLDIERS' HONOUR

■ SARAGARHI Day was marked by leading members of the British Sikh community on September 12 to commemorate the battle on that day in 1897 when 21 Indian Army Sikh soldiers fought to the death against 10,000 Afghan tribesmen.

The ceremony took place at Armoury House in London and was attended by serving Sikh personnel.

One of the few: Former paratrooper Nathan Forster participated in the Battle of Britain anniversary flight



Picture: David Wiseman

“It was phenomenal to have this opportunity, the Spitfire is a British icon”

Army veteran flies high

A FORMER paratrooper played a leading role in the celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Nathan Forster, who suffered serious injuries to his legs, neck and back from an IED in Afghanistan had the privilege of flying one of the 40 or so Second World War aircraft in a display at Goodwood in West Sussex last month.

The event produced the greatest gathering of Spitfires and Hurricanes since 1945 and Forster's chance to be part of it came courtesy of the Spitfire Scholarship, which is delivered by

Endeavour Fund and the renowned Boulbee Flight Academy.

The fund, created by the Royal Foundation, provides sporting and adventurous challenges to help injured Servicemen and women rediscover their self-belief and fighting spirit through physical activity.

The scheme allowed Forster and Cpl Alan Robinson of the Royal Air Force to complete a flight training programme culminating with flying the legendary fighter aircraft.

“It was phenomenal to have this opportunity, the Spitfire is a British icon,” said Forster.



...superb thermal wear

LAST month's spine lines clues would have been a piece of cake for aficionados of military history.

(WO1 Kim) Hughes, (LCpl Matthew) Croucher, (Maj Peter) Norton and (Tpr Christopher) Finney are all winners of the George Cross.

This month, courtesy of the thermal sock maker Heat Holders (www.heatholders.co.uk), we are offering six lucky readers a snug set of outdoor kit including blanket, socks and gloves.

To be in with a chance of winning one of the bundles, worth £40 each, just tell us what links the clues on the side of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by October 30. Good luck!





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Purchase Fee (included in monthly payments)	£0.00
Initial Payment	£295.70
34 Monthly Payments	£295.70
Final Payment	£17,808.00
Total Amount Payable	£33,907.50
Duration of Agreement	36 months
Representative APR%	6.9% APR
Interest Rate (Fixed)	6.72%



THE BIG PICTURE

> KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

ACADEMY UPGRADE

THIS is the range of newly-opened permanent facilities that have replaced the tented city that used to house the Afghan National Army Officer Academy. Cadets and British Army mentors are now able to utilise two assembly rooms, a dining room, accommodation blocks with separate quarters for females, classrooms and a library, all with enough capacity for the 1,000 or so individuals in training at any one time. More than 750 personnel have graduated from the academy so far, the most recent in June when the first 19 female officers qualified alongside 262 male cadets.

Picture: Cpl Alex Scott, RAF

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FRIENDS: IN HIGH PLACES

British personnel learn integration lessons with Nato allies during major crisis response exercise

In Afghanistan the British Army became used to cooperating closely with its Nato partners under the International Security Assistance Force umbrella.

But with the shift towards contingency, the Service now needs to develop and maintain relationships with its key allies through carefully planned serials.

One of these is Exercise Swift Response, the largest multinational airborne test in Europe since the end of the Cold War, which saw British Apache attack helicopters and paratroopers from 16 Air Assault Brigade play key roles.

The package brought together 4,800 soldiers from 11 Nato members to train together in southern Germany to improve their ability to operate efficiently as a high readiness formation.

3 Regiment, Army Air Corps commanded a joint helicopter force of 12 platforms.

It planned and executed strike missions by four Apaches from 663 Squadron, as well as moving troops and equipment with two Chinooks from the Royal Air Force's 18 Squadron, plus two CV22 Osprey tilt-rotor platforms and five UH-60 Blackhawks from the US Army. »

Words: Gareth Palmer Pictures: Cpl Georgina Coupe (RLQ); SAC Nicholas Egan (RAF)



H
WE NEED TO
UNDERSTAND
THE CAPABILITIES
OF OUR
DIFFERENT
AIRCRAFT
H



» "We need to understand the capabilities of our different aircraft, how we can talk to each other, how we can sustain operations and plan and carry out missions as one force," said Lt Col Mike Neville, commanding officer of 3 Regt, AAC.

"This exercise is about establishing how well we are able to operate together and identify the areas that need fixing so that when conflict chooses us we are in a position to meet the challenge."

In one scenario, a joint force, built around the US 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, had to restore security to a country dealing with the aftermath of a failed coup and the threat of international terrorism.

It involved a pair of Apaches from 663 Sqn circling over a small village, known to them by the innocuous name of Objective Goldfish.

Following swiftly on their heels was a pair of RAF Chinooks and a US Air Force CV-22 Osprey, which landed to disgorge American Rangers and German and Italian paratroopers.

The Apaches provided cover as the troops destroyed a surface-to-air missile site and captured an insurgent leader.

This assault cleared the way for 1,300 paratroopers to be delivered by 13 transport aircraft in two waves, among them 120 men from 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment who were partnered with the Italian 183 Reggimento Paracadutisti Nembro.

They dropped into the Hohenfels Training Area from two RAF C-130J Hercules aircraft and secured an airfield to carry out a non-combatant evacuation operation and then, as the security situation worsened, launched offensives against insurgents.

For Capt Ben Johnson (AAC), the experience proved extremely valuable for learning to work under American command.

"The biggest issue we had was jargon," he said.

"Our planning process is very similar, but the stages have different names. However, after a couple of missions we developed a mutual understanding and planning became more efficient.

"We've learnt a lot and it'll be smoother the next time we do it, which is what training is all about."

For ground crew, the exercise provided the experience of mixing with different nationalities, balanced with the challenge of maintaining the Apache from forward arming and refuelling points.

LCpl Matt Davies (AAC), an arming loading point commander with five Herrick tours under his belt, said: "We're doing exactly the same work as in Afghanistan,



THIS IS REAL
BACK-TO-BASICS
SOLDIERING



Above:
German troops
on-board a
British Chinook
Left:
Working with
the Italian 183
Reggimento
Paracadutisti
Nembo



but we've now gone back to how we trained when the Apache first entered service.

"Compared to Camp Bastion, this is real back-to-basics soldiering; we're living in harbour areas and having to take more responsibility for force protection and logistics.

"Supplies have been limited by what can be flown in, so we've had to really think about the minimum equipment and spares we need to maintain a very sophisticated aircraft in austere conditions."

This exercise provided a key step towards 16 Air Assault Brigade being ready to operate within the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division by 2016, as set out in a 2013 agreement between the two armies.

"The relationship with them is important and one we want to develop and maintain," continued Lt Col Neville.

"We already exercise regularly in the USA, for the environmental conditions and live fire ranges, and we're now looking at how we can link with the Americans to do more interoperability training."

With exercises like Swift Response becoming part of the Army's regular drumbeat, its ability to integrate seamlessly with our closest allies is set to improve by leaps and bounds in the years ahead. ■



REGULAR 2 RESERVE

WHY TROOPS SHOULD CONSIDER EXTENDING MILITARY LIFE AFTER FULL-TIME SERVICE ENDS

THERE aren't many times in your life when you can have your cake and eat it but, arguably, one of those occasions is when Regular personnel ranked at captain or below leave the Army.

Thanks to the Regular to Reserve (R2R) initiative they can carve out a rewarding career on civvy street and maintain links with the military by becoming a Reservist. And, if they sign up within six years of leaving their full-time Army career behind, they will receive a healthy signing-on fee into the bargain.

The number of former full-time personnel joining the Reserves under this scheme has doubled since its launch nearly three years ago and the strong impetus on increasing the size of the part-time section of the Service means the machinery of R2R has been engineered to make enlistment quick, easy and financially attractive.

Those now leaving the Regulars who wish to take advantage of the offer should undertake a familiarisation visit to a Reserve unit in their final few months.

A special transfer system has been created for those leaving to re-engage in the Reserves, in most cases at their existing rank.

Here, we look at the ins and outs and talk to three former Regulars who were attracted by the proposition...

Report: Greg Copp Pictures: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

How the scheme works...

There are two levels of commitment for ex-Regular personnel who left in the last three years

Option one:

Reduced Commitment for three years

The annual training requirement is reduced from 27 to 19 days without the need to attend a 15-day annual training period (ATP).

The mandatory military training tests (MATTs) requirement is reduced, as is the call out liability.

Option two:

Commitment Bonus (CB)

Limited to captains and below under the age of 35 and including non-commissioned ranks, CB aims to provide an incentive to committed service by paying £10,000 in staged payments over four years.

The annual training requirement is 27 days including a 15-day ATP plus a full MATTs requirement.

Tax-free bounty

As well as cash incentives for those choosing option two, a bounty is paid to those who qualify by meeting their MATTs and annual training obligation.

This is dependent on length of service. The maximum is £1,725 after five years' service or more.

Pay and expenses

Pay is structured to a level similar to the Regular Army. Mid-week evening training pays a minimum of a quarter day's pay while a weekend qualifies personnel for a minimum of two-and-a-half days' pay.

Travel expenses from home or place of work are also covered.



Rfn Lee Olen

AFTER eight years of service with 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, Rfn Lee Olen called time on his career in the Regular Army.

But after obtaining a civilian job as a part-time welder he decided to resume his military career earlier this year as a Reservist with 7th Battalion, The Rifles, the unit closest to his home in Essex.

The former soldier, who deployed on Op Telic 11 and completed two Herrick tours, was then surprised to learn that there was a financial bonus waiting for him.

"One of the recruiting team told me I was entitled to an incentive payment scheme of £10,000 over four years and asked if I would sign for it – I did not need asking twice."

With his bank balance looking a fair bit healthier, Rfn Olen is now enjoying the camaraderie of military life once again.

"I like the Rifles' banter, it is not much different to the Anglians', and being in the machine gun platoon I am with the more experienced blokes.

"Some of the guys are a bit older than me and some are understandably not quite as fit as my previous Regular mates but there are some good professional soldiers here."

"My high point so far was being in the team that won the Fentiman Shield patrol competition – where we smashed the other companies.

"The guys were keen and fit – two of them were just out of basic training.

"We were on a buzz the whole time with everyone working to the max – just what I joined to do."

Despite having to travel an hour to get to weekly drill nights Rfn Olen remains committed to the cause and managed to complete three training weekends in July.

He added: "We did two range weekends inside four weeks – which is the way it should be if you want to get your shooting skills up.

"Do I do it for money? To be honest, I just love soldiering."

'He asked me if I'd sign for it – I didn't need asking twice'



WO2 Stuart Shepherd-Garner

THE tempo of duties as a Reservist perfectly fits the lifestyle of WO2 Stuart Shepherd-Garner (AAC).

That's because he has developed a successful civilian career as a film extra, providing lucrative but sporadic bouts of employment.

"When I left the Army I registered with Military Film Services who supply extras to the movie industry," he explained.

"Working on big sets is a fantastic buzz and usually well paid."

When WO2 Shepherd-Garner left the Regulars in 2013 he not only signed up as a movie extra, he also joined the Reserves under the commitment bonus scheme.

"It was quick and easy and within 30 days of leaving the Regular Army I was a Reservist sergeant major of D Squadron, Royal Wessex Yeomanry," he recalled.

"When two years was up I looked at the Army Air Corps.

"They had lots of positions for warrant officers and I subsequently landed a job as the regimental recruit mentoring team warrant officer for 675 Squadron."

He continued: "This is an additional duties contract post requiring a big commitment from me and being responsible for phase one recruit training it is a very rewarding job.

"From a financial perspective, the money from being a Reservist is a bonus to my pension and civilian income.

"If you are clocking up the training and qualifying for bounty you notice the extra revenue.

"On top of this the ex-Regular incentive payment incentive keeps the family happy," said the senior NCO who served as a Regular with The 14th/20th King's Hussars.

Under the bonus scheme he received £2,000 soon after joining the Reserves and a sum of £3,000 followed in May 2014.

This year's £3,000 instalment paid for a holiday to Florida and his final £2,000 is due in 2016.

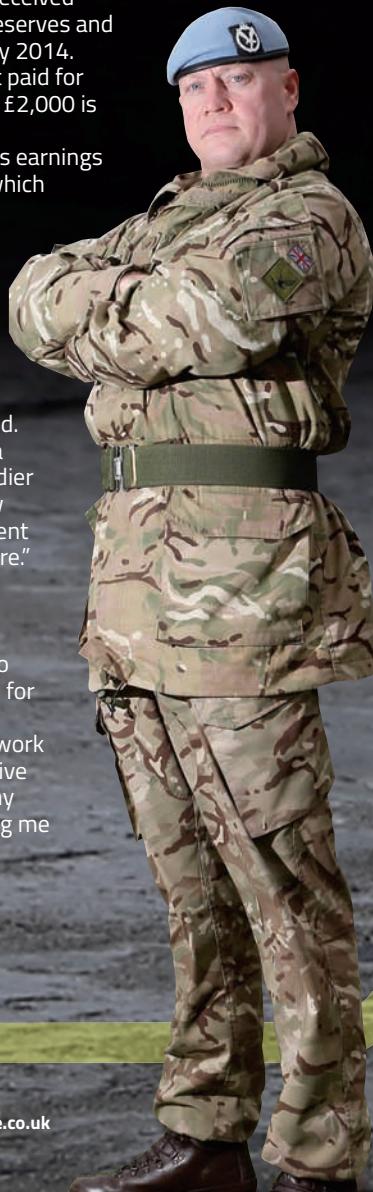
It is a useful supplement to his earnings from his movie industry work, which began almost as soon as he left his full-time Army job.

"Former and current serving personnel are valued in the movies as they have the relevant skills, bearing and self-discipline to play a variety of interesting military roles," he said.

"This saves a lot of time and a huge amount of money as a soldier can quickly turn his hand to new drills and skills, as well as different weapons past, present and future."

Since starting life as an extra he has starred in *The Kingsman*, *24: Live Another Day* and *The Interceptor* and will appear in two major blockbusters that are due for release soon.

The Serviceman added: "The work will never be a regular nine-to-five job but it fits perfectly around my Reserve commitments, providing me with a near-perfect lifestyle."



'It was quick and easy and within 30 days I was a Reservist'

Yeoman to big screen extra: WO2 Stuart Shepherd-Garner (above) and SSgt Dave Walls (right) at their day jobs and in their Reserve role



SSgt Dave Walls

THE former senior NCO in the Adjutant General's Corps decided to take voluntary redundancy three years ago, however the pull of military life proved too strong to resist.

"Like many Regular soldiers the Service had become my life but the opportunity in 2012 was too good to ignore," he told *Soldier*.

"On top of a large payout, having done more than 18 years I still qualified for the full pension, and as a result I decided to have my cake and eat it."

However, SSgt Walls, who completed two Op Telic tours, deployed on Op Herrick 11 and completed four postings to Northern Ireland, quickly found the nearest Army Reserve Centre.

"I contacted my local unit – A Squadron, The Royal Yeomanry – who had a vacancy for an AGC sergeant. It was a case of Regular one day, Reservist the next – even my JPA account transferred with ease."

"I wanted something different from the AGC, and The Royal Yeomanry equipped with WMIKs was exactly what I was looking for," he explained.

In 2014 they rebadged as The Royal Wessex Yeomanry, becoming the only Reserve unit with the Challenger 2.

"I have since picked up a promotion to staff sergeant and with it the position of squadron quartermaster stores," added SSgt Walls.

"It is a job I love as you can make a huge difference to the guys on the ground."

The former Regular soldier has managed to combine his Reserve activities with a civilian career, initially with Capita and then Serco, both of which offer tremendous support to those serving on a part-time basis.

Serco gives an extra 12 days paid leave on top of the normal holiday allowance, while extra unpaid time can be negotiated.

But on top of civilian work and his redundancy pay, SSgt Walls also managed to benefit from the bonus scheme.

A year after joining the Reserves he applied retrospectively, which can be done within three years of leaving full-

time service.

A first incentive payment of £2,000 followed shortly afterwards and a second sum of £3,000 came in 2014.

The third instalment of £3,000 was paid this year and the final £2,000 is due in 2016.

SSgt Walls added: "The pay makes a difference when you are doing 100 days a year and qualifying for £1,725 in tax-free bounty every spring."

"I now appreciate what those Reservists I saw on tour had to contend with."

"It can be a fine line juggling your civilian life with your military career but it is worth it."

He added: "We recently had four Regulars who came to the squadron on a familiarisation visit and none had any real knowledge of the Reserves, or the commitment of its soldiers."

"But when they left they all had a different take on the matter."

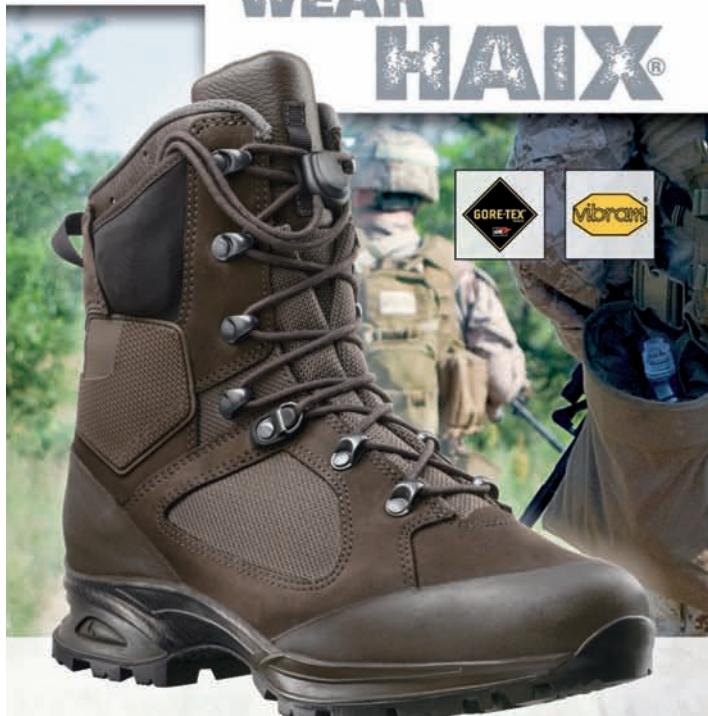
"For me the Regular to Reserve assimilation was an easy process and I love every day." ■

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LEARNING THE LINGO

HOW THE ARMY IS MAKING SURE ITS TROOPS CAN TALK THE TALK ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Words: Becky Clark



HOUTING loudly in English and gesticulating might be the go-to method of communication for the average Brit abroad, but the Army is taking steps to make sure its soldiers don't conform to that stereotype when working with their international counterparts.

With the increasing focus on contingent operations and partnering, the need for personnel to speak a second language is greater than ever, from basic conversational skills for troops on short missions overseas to complete fluency for those in roles requiring them to liaise with foreign forces at the highest levels.

Opportunities for budding linguists have always existed in the Service, including financial incentives linked to formal qualifications, but a number of initiatives have recently been introduced to make proficiency in other languages more routine.

From 2018 for example, officers aiming for sub-unit command appointments will have to demonstrate survival-level speaking and listening competence in another language.

Maj Stuart Allen (AGC (ETS)) from the Army's education directorate explained that training for those affected is already well underway.

"Since January around 500 individuals have undertaken courses such as French, Arabic, Spanish and German, including other ranks, as the overall aim is to train up to 2,000 personnel per year in survival language skills.

"We are also offering around 45 individuals per year the opportunity to undertake long language training, which would normally only be available for people going into specific roles.

"This initiative allows the Army to invest early in those with talent who may go on to fill key defence engagement posts in the future."

Maj Allen added that there are also plenty of opportunities for self-study for those not involved in formal training.

"There are 1,000 Rosetta Stone licences, which are available from a network of administrators within brigades," he commented.

"And we have invested a huge amount in learning resources for the Army Library and Information Service to offer for loan."

The financial rewards for Servicemen and women willing to put the effort into learning a second tongue are significant, with fluent speakers of difficult and operationally important languages in line for the biggest cash bonuses.

At the lower end of the scale, someone who masters functional Spanish will receive £576, while expert Arabic speakers could find themselves better off to the tune of £11,700.

Proficiency is assessed through the multi-level assessment (MLA), an exam that tests reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.



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As part of the drive to produce more qualified linguists the Army has also introduced new brush-up training in order to give troops preparing to sit the test the best chance of achieving a high mark.

Among those to complete the package at Shrivenham's Defence Centre for Languages and Culture was LBdr William Carter (RA).

The 26-year-old (pictured below) was born and raised in France but explained he wanted to consolidate his skills before sitting the MLA.

"Skill fade is a huge thing with languages," he commented during the intensive weeklong course.

"I would have classed myself as a native speaker having spent my whole education in France but after nine years in the UK with no contact with French people I was struggling to remember relatively simple words.

"This training is perfect for brushing off the cobwebs. It covers grammar, writing and listening – for example summarising French news and translating it into English to show we understand – as well as speaking exercises based on different scenarios."

After five years in the Artillery, LBdr Carter is hoping that his linguistic qualification will open doors to other things.

"I feel like it's time for my next step and languages are a big thing for me," he added.

"Ideally I'd like to get posted to the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit or maybe become an Intelligence Corps linguist."

LBdr Carter may be aiming high but even those who don't want to become linguists by trade are likely to find their skills are in demand.

Personnel who pass the MLA at any level are entered onto a register so that they can be called upon in the future to support overseas missions or even multinational exercises on home soil.

There's no doubt that mastering another language requires a lot of time and effort but it is also clear the commitment is rewarded both in terms of troops' future career prospects and the potential impact on their wallets.

With the support currently on offer to would-be linguists, now might be the perfect time to start.

● Final word – page 90



'WE LIVE IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY'



IN NUMBERS

From Dutch to Dari, there are more than

45

languages on offer at Shrivenham

The Army aims to put up to

2,500

troops through its low-level language programme every year

Expert speakers of Arabic could receive a cash reward of

£11,700



SOLDIER GETS THE LOW-DOWN ON LIFE AS A MILITARY LINGUIST

TWO options for talented linguists are the Intelligence Corps and the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit (DCSU), a Tri-Service organisation that provides translators and regional subject matter experts for military commitments around the world.

Here, members of both formations reveal what their roles entail...

● Capt Chrissy Curle (RE) was selected to learn French after scoring highly in language aptitude testing. The 31-year-old is a Sub-Saharan Africa specialist at DCSU and is currently serving aboard HMS *Lancaster* on a ten-week voyage along the west coast of the continent:

I was looking for a role that was a little bit different and that would allow me to travel.

I had never learnt a language before so straight after joining DCSU I went to Shrivenham for eight months to study French.

My first deployment after qualifying was with 4th Battalion, The Rifles, who needed a number of linguists to support them on a month-long exercise in France, where they were testing a French armoured vehicle.

It was quite daunting. There's a big difference between speaking and understanding in a classroom and the hardest task – simultaneous interpretation – especially when you

throw in French and English military and technical vocab.

At DCSU we're cultural advisers first and foremost, linguists second. So part of the role is also advising on national differences.

For Africa we need to make sure we understand the colonial and tribal histories, as well as current issues such as key leaders and possible matters of concern.

On HMS *Lancaster* I'm acting as a translator during visits to French-speaking nations but I'm also briefing the ship's company on regional issues and delivering more bespoke presentations

to anyone going ashore to make sure we avoid any faux pas and do business as best we can.

It will be exciting to see so many countries on one trip. It makes all the difference to speak a language, even at just a low level. It breaks down so many barriers.



'LEARNING A LANGUAGE CERTAINLY KEEPS YOUR GREY MATTER WORKING'

● Cpl Ryan O'Kane originally joined the RAF as a linguist but transferred to the Intelligence Corps in 2013. The Farsi speaker is a signals intelligence analyst based in Lincolnshire.

Farsi is a prominent Middle Eastern language and is spoken in places like Iran, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

My role is about intercepting signals and deriving intelligence from that. I work on live missions, listening for indicators or warnings that are passed to coalition assets, so you have to be at the top of your game all day – you can't afford to switch off.

It's rewarding because you get a lot of positive feedback on your work – you're not left wondering where it all fits in.

Learning a language certainly keeps your grey matter working and you have to be prepared to put your own time into maintaining your skills but it's also fun because it enables you to communicate with people of a different nationality.

When you qualify as an Intelligence Corps linguist you're given the rank of lance corporal with the potential to get to corporal within about two years, so the career progression is good.

Plus, the corps is restructuring away from military intelligence towards technical

intelligence in the near future, which will mean more opportunities for proficient linguists to move into the specialist bracket and become subject matter experts.



Picture: Sgt Wes Calder, RLC

● Ex-Regular Capt Dan Linehan (Lancs) learnt Arabic through a 15-month Army language scholarship before turning his hand to Pashto and serving as a cultural adviser in Afghanistan in 2011. Having left the Service in 2012 the 34-year-old re-enlisted the following year and is now on a full-time Reserve service contract at the DCSU:

I'm a cultural specialist for Middle East and North Africa. We're assigned a general area of interest – at the moment my specialism is Qatar and Libya.

Part of the role is to put together briefs on conducting business with Arabs and even specific Arab countries, because each one is different, as well as keeping myself up to date with what's going on in the region.

I've also been involved in training foreign troops in Oman, Jordan and the UK.

I really enjoy this kind of work. Meeting people from varied backgrounds was one of the main reasons I joined the Army and being a cultural adviser you get to meet interesting people from all over the world.

The Army's efforts to encourage people to learn languages will be very beneficial.

I think it's hard to truly understand a culture unless you speak the language. When you don't have to use an interpreter it goes a long way.

Having an aptitude for languages helps but I believe a lot of it comes down to hard work. Anyone can learn another tongue if they're prepared to apply themselves and commit the time to it.

We live in a global community and seeing people's reactions even if I just make the effort to speak schoolboy French or German is very rewarding.



CALLING ALL LINGUISTS

● If you are interested in learning a language speak to your local Army Education Centre staff, who will be able to advise on the best route for you to take





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TITANS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**EXPERTS IN
CONNECTING
TROOPS EMBRACE
THE DIGITAL
BATTLEFIELD**

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

THE classified nature of much of the Royal Signals' work means their efforts are often left unmentioned and in the shadow of troops at the sharp end of the battlefield.

Given that secure communications rule any operation there is obvious reason for remaining "dark" and *Soldier* is not about to reveal the secrets that make the Army's information technology experts so effective.

However, the close insight we gained as we followed 11th Signal and West Midlands Brigade on Exercise Flying Falcon highlighted quite how important telecommunications, digital information and thus a signaller's work is to the arena of modern conflict. //>



//> The temporary camp we faced looked like any other, with green vehicles parked alongside camouflaged tents – but a peek under the canvas told a different story.

It was the brigade headquarters. Set up by 215 Signal Squadron in less than three hours and home to high-end data servers and desks adorned with computers, it was more akin to a city office than a Service location.

"We are working on the ability to move and rebuild the HQ quickly," explained Lt Huw Jones (215 Sig Sqn).

"It can be transported in a truck and trailer and then set up in the field just about anywhere in the world."

On an operation a mobile brigade has to be constructed and taken down in order to keep up with the battle and so the tempo and frequency of movement can vary greatly.

Within the temporary wall of the clandestine headquarters subject matter experts from all areas of the Army feed information into the system to be dispersed using the Bowman radio and a secure intranet.

Lt Jones went on to say: "The current ops room is where the battle space is run from – it connects to various radio networks that we provide to troops on the ground."

The role of the Royal Signals has always been to supply communications networks for the Army, facilitating everything from command and control to the ordering of bullets and food as well as providing intelligence to soldiers under fire, but the way the task is done has changed dramatically.

Now the battle space is well and truly digital and requires a flexible, mobile force to operate it.

Above and below:
Signallers
marshall
the battle
space from
their mobile
brigade
headquarters

Under tactical combat conditions on Salisbury Plain soldiers from the 12 specialist signal regiments of 11 Signal and West Midlands Brigade were challenged to prove they could shoulder the responsibility.

Maj Jon Hooker, officer commanding 215 Sig Sqn, added: "Communications are a vital part of any battle and without them no operation would happen."

"The mobile brigade headquarters and the communications and information systems that come with it are very much redefining how we operate."

"People just assume that comms happen but a huge amount of thought and effort goes into setting everything up and maintaining it."

"What we do is like a telecommunications company having to set up a new location to cater for many users every single day."

The tough task for the Army's broadcasting experts is to ensure that however complex the technology becomes and regardless of the environment it needs to be used in, it works.

"We have to be able to take our systems to where they are needed, in all temperatures and be able to face the likes of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats and being shot at," said Cpl Damien Farrar (21 Sig Regt).

"The kit has to stand up to everything".

Walking alongside one of the nondescript Bulldog 436 vehicles that transport the state-of-the-art computers, Cpl Farrar added: "Soldiers on the ground would not be able to pass information to other elements of the Army about what is happening without the comms systems we provide."

"We are vital in enabling the infantry units to

//>



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take the fight to the enemy."

One piece of kit that stands out in the signallers' electronic armoury is the Falcon system for delivering secure voice and data using internet protocol technology.

The "tactical trunk" system provides a method for high capacity secure communications that is set to transform how the Army does its operational business.

Putting the capabilities of Falcon into layman's terms, Maj Matt Johns (HQ 11 Sig and WM Bde) said: "It means wherever we are around the globe, we have the ability to use phones and send emails.

"With this technology you can send everything from information messages to intelligence data to real-time videos.

"In the past the Army's communications could only be passed very slowly over basic radio, cabled networks or couriered on bike or by foot – Falcon is keeping pace with the digital age."

A single Falcon system, housed in the back of a 4x4 tactical truck, facilitates different information for 300-400 people sitting at desks with phones and laptops using email, images and videos.

Its capacity remains the same irrespective of the terrain, environment or level of infrastructure British troops find themselves in.

"This is cutting edge technology and due to the mast height that we use we can have a similar communications set-up wherever we are," emphasised Lt David Baxter (21 Sig Reg).

With contingency operations the main focus for the Army, Exercise Flying Falcon was one of the biggest military serials of its kind for ten years, with more than 1,000 soldiers testing themselves through various scenarios.

The nature of conflict is always evolving, just as the methods for delivering information alter in line with technological advances.

It seems that the Royal Signals have worked hard to embrace the changes and remain one step ahead of the curve.

Perhaps they received the memo before everyone else. ■

Right: A signaller listens to the squadron radio network atop a Bulldog FV436. **Below:** Soldiers operate the various Falcon and Bowman systems in the communications centre





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SHOT OF THE CENTURY

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures: Graeme Main

SNIPERS FIRE 100 YEARS INTO BRITISH ARMY'S PAST WITH LESSONS ON LEE ENFIELD RIFLE

FIRING antiquated weapons from the First World War might be entertaining for today's troops but can anything useful be gained from it? Yes, is the resounding answer, according to Army personnel who took part in a shooting exercise to provide a practical understanding of the iconic Lee Enfield .303 rifle.

The hands-on history lesson was part of Op Reflect, the Service-wide campaign to draw valuable insight from the Great War.

WO2 Paul Quilliam (RE), part of HQ Support Command's organising team, said: "The troops on the shoot realised that in firing a Lee Enfield they could achieve accuracy on a par with what they use these days.

"It really surprised the lads – all that has changed in a century is the means of delivery – it's still a case of putting a bullet onto a target."

The idea of the scenario at Pirbright was to enable personnel to learn through experience and to enhance their own skills.

"Sampling how the old rifle feels allows today's soldiers to understand what the troops of 100 years ago achieved," added WO2 Quilliam, who is also secretary of the Lee Enfield Rifle Association.

While lessons in operating 100-year-old firearms do not normally feature on the curriculum of today's sniper courses, it is hoped that by comparing this particular piece of kit with their L115A3 weapons these troops will get a better idea of the skill-at-arms challenges their predecessors faced between 1914 and 1918.

"It's not that different to what we use today," a sniper told *Soldier* during a break in firing. ▶



“We found it very interesting. We looked at their shooting manuals and the sort of techniques they employed as marksmen back then.

“The way they estimated distances between themselves and their target is exactly the same as today – that’s surprising really.”

On closer examination of the Lee Enfield, however, its link to the Accuracy International firearm operated by the sharpshooters of 2015 shouldn’t be too shocking.

The Lee family of rifles was in British service from 1885 through to the early 1990s – most recently in the form of the L42A1.

And while at first it was regarded as inferior to European equivalents like the Mauser 98, particularly in terms of power and accuracy, it quickly evolved to become the overall best bolt-action infantry rifle of the 20th century.

A major redesign one decade before the start of the First World War created the Short Magazine Lee Enfield Mk 1 that would prove its worth in the trenches.

It incorporated a charger clip loading system that greatly increased the speed of reloads, a shorter barrel and open battle sights that allowed quick target acquisition.

This made for a lighter, handier, rapid-fire weapon better suited to modern combat – something today’s L115A3 users could relate to when they put it into action.

“You think that a century ago they couldn’t have known that much [about marksmanship skills] but looking back they clearly did,” the sniper continued.

“Weapons might have changed in

the sense of how they are balanced and their recoil, but what we have learnt is that the shooting principles are exactly the same.

“We had to try and fire 15 rounds on the Lee Enfield within the space of just 60 seconds.

“That was very stressful and only three of us in a group of 16 managed to fire the full amount in that time.”

Despite the leaps made in machine-gun technology and other weapons during the First World War, the rifle remained one of the most crucial assets for British troops on the front line.

In the trenches, snipers would shoot at any moving target behind enemy lines and although the casualties claimed as a result of these opportunistic attacks were relatively minimal, they were important in denting enemy morale.

By introducing today’s soldiers to the kit used to do that, it is hoped they will understand more about their military predecessors and how much they achieved 100 years ago. ■

Fighting flashback: Personnel from the Household Division and Parachute Regiment test their aim with the iconic Lee Enfield rifle and compare it to using the modern L115A3 .338 calibre weapon





WHAT WE
HAVE LEARNT
IS THAT THE
SHOOTING
PRINCIPLES ARE
JUST THE SAME



THE TWO SNIPER RIFLES IN DETAIL

Short Magazine Lee Enfield

Calibre: .303
Operation: Bolt-action
Feed: Ten-round magazine loaded with five-round charger clips
Weight: 4kg
Length: 1.13m
Barrel length: 640mm
Muzzle velocity: 744m/s
Range: 503m +

Accuracy International L115A3

Calibre: .338 Lapua Magnum
Operation: Magazine fed bolt-action, six-lug rotating bolt
Feed: Four-round detachable box magazine
Weight: 6.8kg
Length: 1.23m
Barrel length: 686mm
Muzzle velocity: 914 m/s
Range: 1,000m +



ROLE MODELS REQUIRED

New high-tech centres and staff provide recruitment boost

Report: Steve Muncey
Pictures: Cpl Michael Strachan



Big screen TVs provide a user-friendly role finder



Virtual reality headsets provide a taste of commanding a Challenger tank, parachuting out of a Hercules transport plane, being on exercise as an infantryman and doing adventurous training in Snowdonia



Jerry cans and Powerbags are on hand for potential new recruits to judge their fitness against Army entry standards



FROM the outside you'd be forgiven for thinking this store's shiny, minimalist interior spaces must be filled with glossy electronic

devices and hordes of young sales assistants gushing about pixels, pads and payment plans.

But there are no apple-shaped logos in sight here and the staff don't sport T-shirts and trainers.

That's because it's manned by serving soldiers – we're in one of the Army's latest generation high street recruitment centres, the new front line in the battle to connect with young people and maintain a steady stream of new recruits in the face of some significant challenges.

Slick temples to everything green, like this one in Sheffield, will be up and running in York, Bolton, Salisbury, Taunton and Coventry too by the end of this month.

Plenty of buttons, screens and interactivity will, hopefully, seduce those considering a career into signing on the dotted line.

But the glut of gadgets hasn't replaced the good old human touch and amid all this hi-tech wizardry it is the investment in people that really stands out.

Over the next few months the Army will be beefing up its number of recruiters from 580 or so to well over 700.

"We're always looking for talent who can sell the military to the new generation of people coming through – that's really important," says Col Simon Stockley, Colonel Army Recruiting.

"And what's interesting for personnel who are interested in the role is that we have a network of centres around the country."

"We're not saying we want people on-board who wish to go home early every evening, but because we have a national footprint a recruiting job might provide the chance for a soldier to work closer to home and spend more time with his or her family."

The senior officer is keen to stress that having the right personality is crucial for such a job.

"We need role models who can reach out to our target audience, which is 18 to 29 year-olds for our Regular recruiting," he adds.

"That means they've got to have an engaging personality and a good story to tell."

"Most soldiers have a story but they need to be able to bring the Army to life in a way that's exciting to the public."

With young people more disconnected from the Armed Forces than previous generations, Col Stockley knows his team has a huge challenge on its hands.

"The big difference to when I joined up is that back then you had an environment which understood the military because grandparents had served in the war and parents or uncles had done national service," he explains.

"There was, effectively, a network that understood how the Army worked and what Service life was all about and was able to give good advice to the next generation."

"When you look around now that dynamic has changed fundamentally, and young people's perceptions of us have been shaped by sensationalist media headlines and sometimes disturbing images of the conflicts in Iraq and southern Afghanistan."

As a result, the job of "selling" an Army career is more complex than it has ever been and one priority for recruiters will be to communicate the tremendous range of options to the general public.

"One thing, for example, we need to get across is the fact that the combat bit is a relatively small part of what we do," adds the officer.

"There will always be a core component of the population who are going to join up, come what may, but those that don't often fail to realise that, for example, the Army is the biggest provider of apprenticeships across the country or that we give degrees to our soldiers through our training and development opportunities."

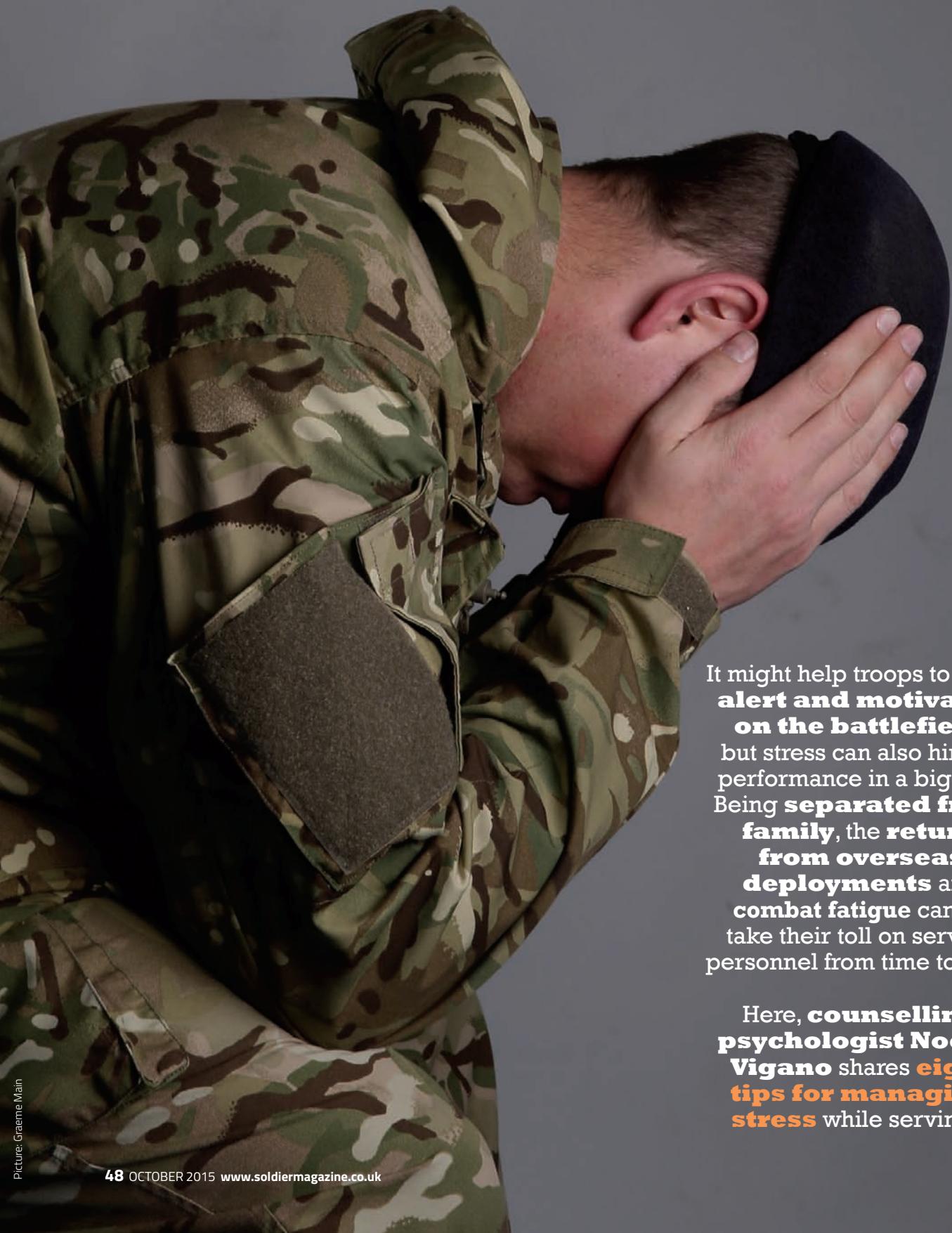
"There's a great message and we need people who can break down prejudices about the Army and change perceptions."

Whether sleek stores and carefully selected sales staff can help achieve these goals remains to be seen but for a Service that is renowned for its professionalism this approach, surely, is the right one to take. □

If you're interested in joining the Army's team of recruiters please contact your Regimental Career Management Officer for more details.

Defeat Stress

Eight ways to stop strain becoming pain...



It might help troops to **stay alert and motivated on the battlefield**, but stress can also hinder performance in a big way. Being **separated from family**, the **return from overseas deployments** and **combat fatigue** can all take their toll on serving personnel from time to time.

Here, **counselling psychologist Noemi Vigano** shares **eight tips for managing stress** while serving...

1

Recognise you're feeling stressed

This can give you the motivation to do something about it.



AM I STRESSED?

Different people experience stress in different ways but common symptoms include irritability, fear, anger, hopelessness, worrying, monitoring your environment excessively, difficulty concentrating, forgetting things, thinking you're worthless or incapable, withdrawing, drinking too much alcohol, conflict with others, agitation, feeling "keyed up", muscle tension, increased heart rate, sleeping difficulties and exhaustion.

5

Have some fun

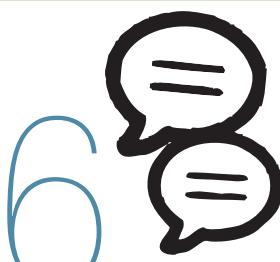
Make sure you find time to keep doing the things you enjoy. This will help combat stress as well as lifting your mood and helping you appreciate the good things in your life.



3

Stay healthy

When we are under pressure, stressed and tired we tend to lose balance in our lives; you may seek out comfort foods or have trouble sleeping. These behaviours can feed your stress so try to eat a balanced diet, get sufficient sleep, avoid excessive caffeine, alcohol and sugar, and exercise regularly.



Talk to someone

Looking for support is not a sign of weakness. On the contrary, it shows that you know how to make sure you are fit to perform well. Try talking to your chaplain or medical officer. www.gov.uk has a section with advice on mental health support for the UK Armed Forces. If you aren't comfortable about starting a face-to-face conversation, try using your phone, Skype or even sending a text.

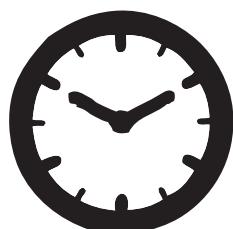
2

Identify what is causing it

Have you experienced any changes in your life recently? Have you had to adjust to a new environment? Been working long hours? Experienced injury?

Find time to relax every day

Your body cannot be stressed and relaxed at the same time. You can help to control your stress by telling your body to relax. This takes time and practice to master. One thing that you can do is focus on your breathing. Slow it down by taking deep breaths into your stomach and slowly letting the air out again.



4



What are your strengths?

Take time to ask yourself what has assisted you with managing stress in the past. Chances are you have been stressed before and have coped with it. Remind yourself of what helps you and make sure you revisit this when you're finding it difficult.

Get skilled

You can learn more about managing stress better. There are a wide range of tools and tactics available to help you bring balance back into your life. Ask a medical or mental health professional for more information.



ONLINE ADVANCE

Noemi Vigano works for SilverCloud Health, a provider of online mental health support that is currently trialling an anonymous, 24/7 support portal with the MoD. For more information visit www.silvercloudhealth.com/launch/military/index.html

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All information is correct at time of print and is subject to change without notice. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offers end 30th September 2015. Images shown for illustration purposes only. Military customers only and proof of employment will be required. All other sales categories are excluded. Test drive subject to applicant status and availability. For full details on this offer, please visit Evans Halshaw Ford St Albans. Retail customers only. Some far reaching exclusions may apply. Stripestar Limited, Loxley House, 2 Oakwood Court, Little Oak Drive, Annesley, Nottingham, NG15 0DR. Company number 3786959. Stripestar Ltd is a credit broker/intermediary that can introduce you to a limited number of lenders to provide funding for your vehicle. They may incentivise us for introducing you to them.

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“

TALKBACK

Saddle sore

I WAS part of a team of personnel who undertook a charity bike ride for a cancer centre.

We volunteered to use up a day of our weekend to participate, not only raising funds but also improving our physical fitness and building team cohesion along the way.

This was the first cycle event I had entered with soldiers from the unit and I submitted an FMT 1000 in order to move the riders and their bikes to the start point and meet us at the finish.

However, it was rejected because it was a charity event. Apparently, military or hire vehicles cannot be used and a new DIN has been issued on the matter.

I may be missing something here, but we had 15 personnel willing to give up a day of their weekend in order to take part in this event yet they were expected to travel at their own expense, cycle 60 miles and then make their own way home.

That's hardly promoting leadership from the top. — **Name and address supplied.**

Lt Col Andy Moss, SO1 Logistic Support, replies: MoD policy does not permit the provision of transport to participate in charity activity.

Both Service and civilian personnel who wish to support this type of event should do so in their own time using their own resources. They are volunteers participating in a private life activity and are off duty, therefore they have no entitlement to MoD transport.

The DIN (2015DIN07-120) you refer to does not introduce new policy but helps to provide commanders with advice on interpreting existing rules.

If an activity is conducted as authorised sport and it meets the criteria for travel as laid down in JSP 752 then transportation may be provided in accordance with 2014DIN01-099.

In addition, 2014DIN10-030 describes the process for travel at public expense for representative sport conducted at corps, Army and combined Services levels and for the quarter-final, semi-final and final stages of authorised Army competitions.

Transport can only be provided by the Service where there is an entitlement to travel at public expense and in doing so individuals are expected to be on duty and will be covered by the MoD's insurance arrangements.



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



Picture: Graeme Main

‘HOW AM I MEANT TO EAT HEALTHILY?’

- I WAS under the impression that with pay-as-you-dine we were allowed to cook our meals in the living block if we so chose to.

Am I wrong in thinking this?

At my current unit all open heat sources for cooking are banned from single living accommodation (SLA).

We have a microwave and a kettle provided in our so-called kitchens and that's it.

Anything else found on inspections is removed immediately. Why is this the case?

How am I meant to eat healthily on microwave meals? Surely an iron is an open heat source and we are still expected to use this on a daily basis. — **Name and address supplied.**

Liz Johnston, DIO Service Delivery, Soft Facilities Management, replies: The facilities in SLA blocks are not full kitchens but are supplied with a fridge, kettle, toaster and microwave.

They are intended for the preparation of snacks and light meals, such as sandwiches, toast, cereal and salads.

Personnel have the facility of the cookhouse or mess for full meals.

Open heat sources such as hobs are subject to different regulations and cannot always be accommodated in SLA for safety reasons.

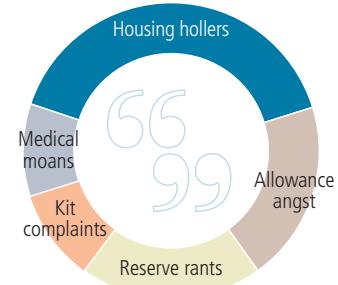
“

WE WERE EXPECTED TO TRAVEL AT OUR OWN EXPENSE. CYCLE 60 MILES AND THEN MAKE OUR OWN WAY HOME

”

SLICE OF SERVICE LIFE

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



DIGITAL DOSSIER

Your views from the web...



Our September issue cover story caused quite a stir...



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

Darren Smith

Why make a big issue of race or gender, what are you trying to prove? There are only two types of soldier, good ones and bad ones, it doesn't matter what colour they are

Chris Kelly

Nothing new here. In the 60s my battalion had Nepalese, West Indians, Fijians, Australians and others serving alongside their Brit counterparts. They were all just loyal soldiers to the crown

Nathan Hunt

I don't give a toss, the only categories I care about are good soldiers and crap soldiers. Race, sexuality and religion is irrelevant. PC crap!

Mike Lacey

The Army should reflect the nation. The UK has an ethnically diverse population; it's good to see it reflected in the make up of this unit... if you have a problem with this, ask yourself "why?"

Kyle House

Talk about propaganda ... cringeworthy actually

Louise Bradie

OMG again! You want race and background to be irrelevant but make an issue of it! Argh!

Nathan Pearce

Much as I understand the idea here, I don't care how diverse a unit is, I only care how effective it is!

Gav O'Neill

It doesn't matter what colour your skin or what your religion is as long as you're willing to stand and serve!

Richard Vernals

Who cares? We must get away from these stigmas! It's about who wears our uniform, shoulder to shoulder under our nation's flag! Race and colour should be resigned to the past. Stand strong British Army, you are all truly awesome

Joshua Richard James Sleeman

You are absolutely right but I think the Army has had enough of far right groups trying to use them as click bait. The Army stands for everything those groups do not and this serves as a reminder they will not involve themselves in the petty xenophobia of groups that seek to use them to further their own causes



@soldiermagazine

@ric_cole

A great cover image on this month's (October) @soldiermagazine #GoodDrills

@Oli_Morgan

Pls RT #AwardWinning @soldiermagazine my favourite cover yet

@ATRWinchester

@soldiermagazine This month's October magazine is excellent, we especially like the article from @7RIFLES and the cover!

GOT A GRIPE?

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My Gulf War family quest

“ I AM APPEALING TO ANYONE WHO CAN PUT ME IN TOUCH WITH THE LAST SEVEN FAMILIES ”

I AM appealing to the military community to find the families of seven fallen troops from the Gulf War of 1990-91.

In total, 47 members of the British Forces never came home.

For the past 25 years those that are able have remembered their families at local services in churches and cenotaphs where some of their names have been added to the fallen of other conflicts from around the globe.

Now, after three years of campaigning and raising more than £75,000, our dream will become a reality when, in February next year, the Gulf War 90-91 Memorial will be unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

As family liaison manager for the organisation, I have the task of trying to locate at least one member of each fallen soldier's family who is willing to act on their behalf.

Over the last 12 months, thanks to Twitter, Facebook, the "old boys' network" and working with schools, churches, pubs and clubs, I have been able to pass on information about the memorial to 40 of the 47 families but I am hoping that is not the final figure.

I am still awaiting contact from the families of:

Cpl Steven Lane, RE
Pte Shaun Taylor, 1 Staffords
Flt Lt Robert Maxwell Collier, 16 Sqn RAF
Flt Lt Keith Collister, 54 Sqn RAF
Flt Lt Norman Dent, 14 Sqn RAF
Flt Lt Stephen Hicks, 15 Sqn RAF
Motorman 1 Peter Harris, RFA

I am appealing to anyone who may be able to help me get in touch with the final seven families to contact me at gwmfa.fl@gmail.com.

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. — **Ray Thaw, ex-REME.**

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‘Our maintenance doesn’t measure up’

AM now in my fifth married quarter and have not previously had any major gripes with maintenance.

However, since CarillionAmey took over this I have had problems.

I wrote this letter after reading similar complaints to mine and the responses given by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

This department has absolved all responsibility for the effective care of Service accommodation in my opinion.

The reply of “our records do not indicate that you have reported any defects or complaints” in answer to WO1 Brown’s letter in the July 2015 issue is not good enough.

The constant reference to calling the helpline and submitting faults is not a satisfactory answer.

I am currently experiencing issues with my shower and during the last six months I have had a new unit and at least two new showerheads fitted. Every four to six weeks I experience the same fault.

I have followed the proper process but have yet to find a solution.

It seems to me the MoD has entered into a contract with a company that’s comfortable with delivering an unsatisfactory service knowing they will not face any penalties.

There seems to be no fault trend analysis – if a household is experiencing the same problem time and again a different fix should be applied.

I would welcome some time with a senior CarillionAmey representative to see if I can resolve my issue. – WO2

Jeff Howard, R Signals.

Jayne Smith, DIO Service Delivery Accommodation, responds: DIO and CarillionAmey are committed to providing the best possible service and we actively monitor performance and quality.

That said, sometimes things do go wrong, which is why we have a clear complaints process.

If you are unhappy with the response to your stage one complaint the correct process is to submit a stage two version to DIO.

We have investigated your issues as you’ve provided details.

We are sorry to hear about the problems you’ve had with your shower. Having checked your case, once this was replaced we understand that guidance was provided about your responsibilities to clean the item as you live in a hard water area.

The CarillionAmey customer care manager wrote to you twice in response to your complaint and tried to contact you by phone several times but was unsuccessful.

As you would like to speak to CarillionAmey, we have forwarded your letter to ensure they are aware of your issues and request to speak with them.

We welcome customer feedback as it helps improve our service.

Anyone who wants to escalate an issue to stage two can write to: Customer Service Team, DIO Service Delivery Accommodation, Ground Floor, Swales Pavilion, RAF Wyton, Cambridgeshire PE28 2EA.



MIND THE GAP

• CURRENT regulations state that individuals who qualify for early departure payments or immediate pension under AFPS 15 will have to wait up to 30 working days from date of discharge to receive their funds.

But housing rules say that personnel are required (unless exceptional circumstances apply, or they are medically or compulsorily discharged) to vacate single living accommodation or Service family accommodation on date of discharge.

Given that many are likely to use immediate pension benefits for accommodation can this regulation be reviewed as there is potential for Service leavers and their families to be homeless for up to a month? – Name and address supplied.

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: As DIN 2015DIN01138 explains, the 30 working days it can take to receive funds is to enable the calculation of AFPS 15 scheme benefits.

As it is based on career-average earnings, the pay run for the month in which the individual leaves must be finalised before the benefits can be calculated.

For those now on AFPS 15 it means that the initial pension or early departure payments (including those from legacy schemes) will be made within a maximum of six weeks from the date of leaving.

We will continue to monitor the time it takes to make payments, and where possible refine the process to keep it to a minimum.

Personnel who are leaving are advised to consider their situation carefully and use their notice period to ensure they have funds to cover their outgoings after departing the Army.

Websites such as moneyforce.org.uk can assist with financial planning. The Joint Service Housing Advice Office also has lots of valuable information. Further details can be found on the gov.uk website.

There is also the option of submitting a hardship case to Defence Business Services.

If hardship is proved DBS will prioritise the case and minimise the time between leaving the Service and payment being made.

“
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POTENTIAL
FOR
SERVICE
LEAVERS
TO BE
HOMELESS
FOR A
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[†]Calls may be recorded and may be monitored.

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UNMARRIED AND OUT OF POCKET

I AM not married but have a partner of five years who I live with in a flat in London that I own.

I am currently posted to Abbey Wood and during the week I reside in substitute Service single accommodation (SSSA).

My local administration office tells me that if I was married I would not be charged for this housing but because I'm not I must pay £166.50 per month.

The price is reasonable for the accommodation but can someone please explain to me how this is not discrimination against unmarried service personnel? –

Name and address supplied.

Maj Rob Porter (RE), Requirements Manager at Defence Equipment and Support, Abbey Wood, replies: Firstly, I am pleased that you view the charges as reasonable for the accommodation you have at Abbey Wood.

However, the explanation you received of the charging policy does need some clarification.

The exemption that your admin office referred to is part of the Army's Over-37 provision.

This aims to support the domestic stability of the family of Army personnel who choose to serve unaccompanied in the later stages of their careers.

Consequently, eligible individuals are either married or have primary parental responsibility for a child (but need not be married).

Eligibility for allowances is based on your personal status category (PStat Cat).

Only PStat Cat 1 or PStat Cat 2 Servicemen and women are eligible for the Over 37 provision.

Since the inception of this package more personnel have sought to become homeowners.

The Army's policy for applying a waiver to single living accommodation charges (and its substitutes) is currently under active review within the context of the New Employment Model.

While this will not deliver an immediate change, I hope it provides reassurance that the Army is seeking to update policy in line with soldiers' needs.



‘Why do we have to purchase stable belts?’

● HOW is it that soldiers are required to buy regimental stable belts – why are they not issued?

Also, why does the same not apply to regimental flashes and insignia as we normally have to purchase these items as well?

We even have to fork out for regimental T-shirts, which our commanding officer wants us to wear during PT sessions.

Can someone explain the logic of this because it doesn't seem right? –

Name and address supplied

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: The Army supplies for free every item of uniform and

associated accoutrements that the Service requires soldiers to wear or carry.

It allows certain regimental and corps items to be worn in uniform but because these are optional items the Army does not supply or authorise them to be tailored at public expense.

These optional items include stable belts, tactical recognition flashes, formation flashes and name tapes, and may also include items of sports clothing.

Individuals who object to paying for these items should raise the issue through their regimental or corps chain of command.



Wonder women clarification

● THE work done at Bletchley Park during the Second World War is very well known and may I thank you for writing so eloquently about “the Bletchley girls” in the August 2015 issue.

Unfortunately, towards the end of the article there is a misunderstanding. The 14th Army was British, defending Burma from invasion by the Japanese and facing conditions so clearly described in your following article.

By reading the words I quoted from the war memorial to the fallen, “For your tomorrow we gave our today” we can also reflect about all those who served and suffered in the war in the Far East, many of whom were held prisoner. – **Lady Marion Body**

BULLET POINTS

BITE-SIZED DATA TO KEEP YOU IN THE KNOW



CAREERS

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

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

The Enterprise Network, Swindon and Wiltshire will be running a series of nine workshops entitled "Be your own Boss" for military spouses and partners, offering advice on running a business. For further information and to book a free place visit [www.theenterprisenetwork.co.uk/civvystreet](http://theenterprisenetwork.co.uk/civvystreet)

High Ground is a charity providing land-based skills to serving and former Army personnel, helping them move into civilian life. For more details visit www.highground-uk.org

Employment website TipTopJob has created www.exmilitaryjob.com to help former Service personnel find work in the civilian sector. Visit the website for more details.

The Officers' Association has opened two new sites in Bristol and Leeds. To book a one-to-one career consultation at either venue call 020 7808 4170 or visit www.officersassociation.org.uk/register



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Capt Matt King, Cullercoats, Tyne and Wear

The Grizzly Maze DVD: Malcolm Hall, Tonbridge, Kent; Mrs M Newport, Oxford; Frank Johnstone, Hallow, Worcester; Sharon Jackson, Army Reserve Centre, Kempston; Richard Nolan, Whittington Barracks, Lichfield.



DIARY

October 15 – April 24 2016: Lee Miller: A Woman's War exhibition at the Imperial War Museum London. 150 photographs depicting women's experiences of World War Two by acclaimed photographer Lee Miller. For further details visit www.iwm.org.uk

October 17 – December 10: RAF in Concert tour. In support of the RAF Charitable Trust, the 15-venue tour will serve as a musical tribute to those who participated in the Battle of Britain. For ticketing details and further information visit www.rafinconcert.com

November 28-29: The Birmingham International Tattoo, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham. Military bands, exciting displays and a spectacular grand finale. November 28 at 1800 and November 29 at 1400. For further details visit www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk

Until February 2016: Horrible Histories: Blitzed Brits at the Imperial War Museum North. A free exhibition marking the 75th anniversary of the Blitz. Objects, photographs, film and recordings from the centre's collections narrated with the words of *Horrible Histories* author Terry Deary. For details visit www.iwm.org.uk

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.armedforceshumanists.org.uk

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

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society: www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall: www.bigwhitewall.com

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

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association: 020 8590 1124; www.blesma.org

Career Transition Partnership: 020 7469 6661

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

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

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

Family Escort Service: 020 7463 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: 020 7820 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

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

Poppy Scotland: 0131 557 2782; www.poppyScotland.org.uk

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

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

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

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

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

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

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

Veterans Welfare Service: 0808 1914 218 (from the UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas) www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service

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

Stoll (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation): 020 7385 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; www.poppyfactory.org

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

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

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

INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 119/15: Establishment of HQ PSC and regional command

ABN 118/15: The award of the title "Royal" to The Bermuda Regiment

ABN 117/15: Pension tax – annual allowance notification year 2014/15

ABN 116/15: The Army Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum

ABN 115/15: Armed Forces Muslim Association inaugural conference

ABN 114/15: All Arms Tactical Aide Memoire version 7

ABN 113/15: Armed Forces Muslim moral leadership conference

ABN 112/15: Career management boarding manual

ABN 111/15: Career management handbook part 3

CONTINUED ON PAGE 59

Boarding School - Girls & Boys - 5 to 19 years

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Who comes where in the independent schools league tables?

All independent schools want to portray themselves as academically successful. So how do parents make a sensible comparison of the different claims made? The answer is to use the internationally recognised independent school league tables produced by the Sunday Times each year. It contains virtually all UK Independent Schools. Where does the school you might be thinking about come?

We are 7th and 9th.



Alphabetical Ranking All UK Independent Schools with boarding - 2014 Sunday Times % A*/A A-Levels

Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School
21st	66%	Abingdon School	77th	49%	Dean Close School	60th	53%	Merchiston Castle Sch	172nd	31%	St Felix School
155th	34%	Ackworth School	138th	38%	Denstone College	100th	45%	Mill Hill School	107th	44%	St Francis, Letchworth
120th	41%	Adcote School Girls	182nd	29%	Dover College	192nd	25%	Millfield School	161st	33%	St George's, Ascot
94th	47%	Ampleforth College	16th	70%	D'Overbroeck's College	109th	44%	Monmouth School	178th	29%	St James Senior Boys
90th	47%	Ardingly College	15th	73%	Downe House	95th	47%	Moreton Hall	72nd	50%	St John's, Leatherhead
70th	52%	Ashford School	112th	43%	Downside School	108th	44%	Mount Kelly	167th	32%	St John's, Southsea
137th	38%	Ashville College	27th	63%	Dulwich College	58th	53%	Mount School, York	92nd	47%	St Leonards School
23rd	66%	Badminton School	140th	37%	Durham School	88th	47%	New Hall School	31st	61%	St Leonards-Mayfield
171st	31%	Barnard Castle School	76th	49%	Eastbourne College	127th	40%	Oakham School	128th	40%	St Margaret's, Bushey
143rd	36%	Battle Abbey School	36th	58%	Epsom College	49th	55%	Ockbrook School	97th	46%	St Mary's, Cambridge
87th	48%	Bedales School	4th	85%	Eton College	144th	36%	Oratory School, Reading	13th	75%	St Mary's, Ascot
154th	34%	Bede's Senior School	190th	26%	Farlington School	179th	29%	Oswestry School	83rd	48%	St Mary's, Shaftesbury
93rd	47%	Bedford School	163rd	33%	Felsted School	34th	59%	Oundle school	3rd	86%	St Paul's Sch, London
159th	33%	Bedstone College	55th	53%	Fettes College	191st	26%	Padworth College	51st	54%	St Peter's, York
82nd	48%	Bellerbys Coll Brighton	193rd	24%	Framlington College	146th	36%	Plymouth College	14th	75%	St Swithun's School
98th	46%	Bellerbys Coll Cambridge	NR	20%	Giggleswick School	168th	32%	Pocklington School	91st	47%	St Teresa's, Effingham
44th	56%	Bellerbys Coll London	149th	36%	Glenalmond College	177th	29%	Princess Helena College	123rd	41%	Stamford High Sch
28th	62%	Benenden School	89th	47%	Godolphin School	63rd	52%	Prior Park College	135th	39%	Stamford School
71st	50%	Berhamsted School	121st	41%	Gresham's School	162nd	33%	Queen Anne's, Cavsham	174th	30%	Stonyhurst College
187th	27%	Bethany School	53rd	54%	Haberdashers' Mon Girls	7th	82%	Queen Ethelburga's College	116th	42%	Strathearn
37th	58%	Bishop's Stortford Coll	118th	42%	Haileybury	20th	66%	Queen Margaret's, York	150th	35%	Sutton Valance Sch
85th	48%	Blundell's School	158th	34%	Hampshire Collegiate	110th	43%	Queen's College, Taunton	111th	43%	Talbot Heath School
69th	52%	Bootham School	119th	41%	Harrogate Ladies College	46th	56%	Queenswood	157th	34%	Taunton School
156th	34%	Box Hill School	25th	65%	Headington School	26th	64%	Radley College	194th	24%	Tettenhall College
132nd	40%	Bradfield College	183rd	28%	Heathfield, Ascot	147th	36%	Ratcliffe College	74%	50%	The Leys School
103rd	45%	Brentwood School	114th	42%	Ipswich School	99th	45%	Reed's School	170th	31%	The Purcell School
10th	76%	Brighton College	80th	48%	Kent College, Canterbury	195th	24%	Rendcomb College	11th	76%	Tonbridge Schol
52nd	54%	Bromsgrove School	32nd	60%	Kent College, Pembury	42nd	56%	Repton School	141st	37%	Trent College
96th	46%	Bruton School Girls	125th	41%	Kimbolton School	79th	49%	Roedean School	180th	29%	Tring Park Perf Arts
78th	49%	Bryantston School	105th	44%	King William's, Castletown	48th	55%	Royal High Sch, Bath	115th	42%	Truro High School Girls
73rd	50%	Burgess Hill Sch Girls	189th	26%	King's Bruton	26th	48%	Royal Masonic Sch Girls	81st	48%	Truro School
38th	57%	Canford School	164th	33%	King's College, Taunton	147th	41%	Royal Russell School	133rd	40%	Tudor Hall
22nd	66%	Caterham School	113th	43%	King's Ely	99th	57%	Royal School, Haslemere	47th	56%	Uppingham School
181st	29%	CATS College London	35th	59%	King's School, Canterbury	195th	54%	Rugby School	169th	31%	Wardenster School
185th	27%	CCSS Centre 6th Form	129th	40%	King's St Michael's Coll	42nd	69%	Ruthin School	33rd	60%	Warwick School
176th	30%	Chase Grammar School	184th	28%	King's, Rochester	142nd	37%	Rydal Penrhos Senior	19th	67%	Wellington College
86th	48%	Cheltenham College	43rd	56%	Kingswood School, Bath	67th	53%	Ryde School U Chine	134th	40%	Wellington School
12th	76%	Cheltenham Ladies' Coll	126th	41%	Kirkham Grammar School	188th	26%	Rye Atonian School	75th	49%	Wells Cathedral School
117th	42%	Chetham's School Music	61st	52%	Lancing College	186th	27%	Sedbergh School	101st	45%	West Buckland School
50th	55%	Chigwell School	148th	36%	Langley School	6th	82%	Sevenoaks School	5th	85%	Westminster School
66th	53%	Christ College	166th	32%	Leighton Park School	59th	53%	Sherborne Girls	29th	62%	Whitgift School
56th	53%	Christ's Hospital	68th	52%	Leweston School	104th	45%	Sherborne School	2nd	89%	Winchester College
18th	67%	City London Freeman's	131st	40%	Lincoln Minster School	39th	57%	Shrewsbury School	106th	44%	Windermere School
65th	53%	Clifton College	102nd	45%	Lord Wandsworth College	124th	41%	Sidcot	45th	56%	Woldingham School
130th	40%	Cobham Hall	136th	39%	Loretto School	173rd	30%	St Bees School	151st	35%	Woodbridge School
8th	81%	Concord College	40th	57%	Loughborough Grammar	24th	65%	St Catherine's Sch, Bramley	160th	33%	Woodhouse Grove
57th	53%	Cranleigh School	139th	37%	Luckley House School	165th	32%	St Edmund's College	152nd	35%	Workshop College
175th	30%	Culford School	30th	62%	Marlborough College	145th	36%	St Edmund's Canterbury	153rd	35%	Wrekin College
64th	53%	Dauntsey's School				62nd	52%	St Edward's Sch, Oxford	1st	91%	Wycombe Abbey Sch

State Schools not ranked however if Duke of York's Royal Military School were, with 29% A*/A A-Level, it would come around 178th. Welbeck would come around 178th also with 29% A*/A A-Level

DIRECTORY CONTINUED

ABN 110/15: Army employer engagement events guidance

DIN 2015DIN01-179: Medical technician (radiographer) student entry criteria

DIN 2015DIN01-178: Medical technician (operating department practitioner) student entry criteria

DIN 2015DIN01-177: Expansion of the enduring families free mail service

DIN 2015DIN01-176: Reserve Forces foreign service arrangement

DIN 2015DIN01-175: Defence Humanist network launch event

DIN 2015DIN01-174: UK-US memorandum of understanding regarding the foreign residence military reserve exchange programme

DIN 2015DIN01-171: MoD ex-gratia payments in lieu of maternity allowance. Annex B: Application for ex-gratia payment in lieu of maternity allowance

DIN 2015DIN01-170: Joint Personnel Administration protected populations

DIN 2015DIN01-169: Supportability overseas

DIN 2015DIN01-166: Adoption arrangements for personnel within the Reserve Forces. Annex A: Adoption notification form. Annex B: Adoption acknowledgement form

DIN 2015DIN01-165: Armed Forces Hindu Network introduction and calendar of events 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN01-162: Changes to defence operational language award scheme and basic language award scheme

DIN 2015DIN01-161: Stonewall workplace equality index 2016

DIN 2015DIN02-006: Policy for zoning MoD establishments for the use of portable electronic devices

DIN 2015DIN03-020: Guidance to policy officials on presenting the legal risks of Armed Forces activity overseas to ministers

DIN 2015DIN04-177: Declaration of obsolescence of Chinook rotor blade lag shock absorber test bench ground support equipment, type code ADZ

DIN 2015DIN04-175: Declaration of obsolete and deletion of all NSNs in DMC FLK

DIN 2015DIN04-174: Declaration of obsolete – medical, dental, veterinary equipment – Portoclave field steriliser

DIN 2015DIN04-173: Management and use of ground fuel cards

DIN 2015DIN05-027: Mine Warfare Drills and Procedures Committee

DIN 2015DIN05-026: Renaming of the Ministry of Defence hospital units

DIN 2015DIN06-024: Health, safety and environmental protection responsibilities between defence primary healthcare facilities and host units

DIN 2015DIN06-023: Regulation of remotely piloted aircraft and remotely piloted air systems

DIN 2015DIN06-022: JSP403, volume 2: *Range safety notice 3-15: Ballistic protection backsplash materials*

DIN 2015DIN06-021: JSP403, volume 2: *Range safety notice 4-15: Lead in air assessments*

DIN 2015DIN07-134: Issue of *All Arms Tactical Aide Memoire* version 7

DIN 2015DIN07-133: Conversion training to senior non-commissioned officer weapons controllers

DIN 2015DIN07-132: Combat medical technician clinical professional development and continued clinical exposure

DIN 2015DIN07-131: Snow warrior concentration 2016. Annex A: Request form

DIN 2015DIN09-020: The European Security and Defence Policy Service Medal for EUTM Mali

DIN 2015DIN09-019: The Ruth Carter Prize for nurses and the Eliza Mackenzie Prize for student nurses

DIN 2015DIN10-042: Army Rifle Association target shooting courses 2015

DIB24/15: Adoption of career management principles for Service personnel

DIB23/15: Expansion of enduring families free mail service

DIB22/15: PUS and CDS write to staff about attendance at Defence and Security Equipment International exhibition



REUNION

Remembrance Travel, the Royal British Legion tour operator, is arranging free trips to the Normandy beaches in October for Normandy veterans, a carer and a close relative. For more information go to www.remembrancetravel.co.uk or telephone Remembrance Travel's tour operator, Arena Travel, on 01473 660800.

23/144 Parachute Field Ambulance Old Comrades Association dinner, combined with the Midlands Region Parachute Regiment Association gala dinner, at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry on October 10. For more information contact Roy Hatch on 01926 812363.

8 Regiment RASC/RCT/RLC 14th anniversary reunion dinner on October 24. Open to any cap badge who served between October 1964 and July 2012. For further information contact Jimmy Aspinall via jimmyasp@hotmail.com or David Southall via dcsouthall@aol.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 has a reception, presentation, questions and culminates with refreshments. There will be military personnel on hand to answer questions. Call 01276 412880 or email your name and address to armymediacomm-aeg-mailbox@mod.uk

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TEN details have been changed in this archive picture of the Queen inspecting members of the African Rifles in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, taken in 1957. Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 887, Soldier, Ordnance Barracks, Government**

Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by October 30, 2015.

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

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results will be announced in the December issue. Usual rules apply.

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Runners up: Amanda Gill, Tooting, London and Elaine Hayhurst, Fulwood Barracks, Preston.





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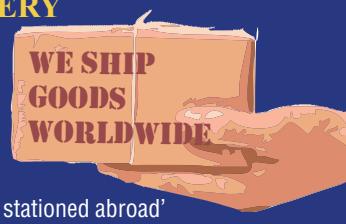
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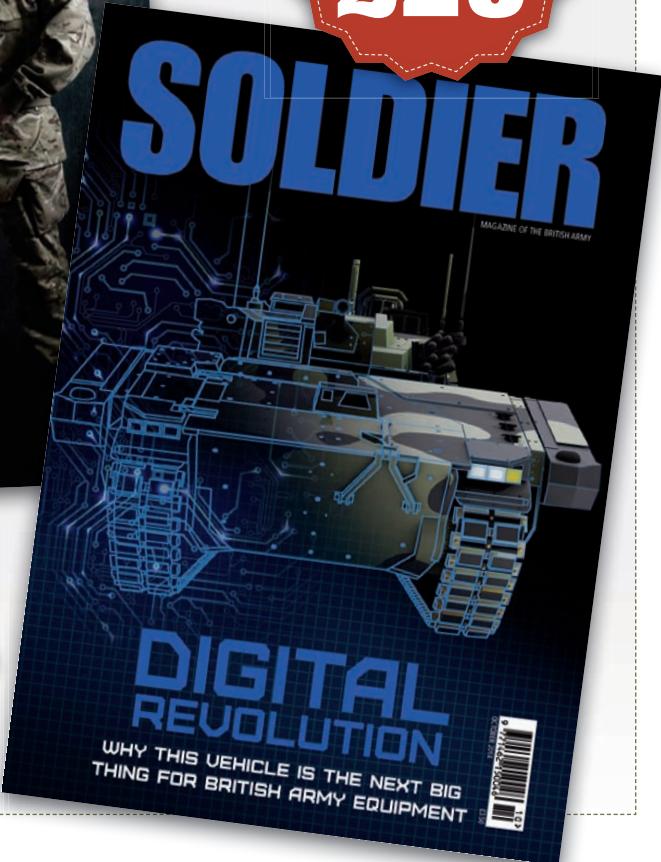
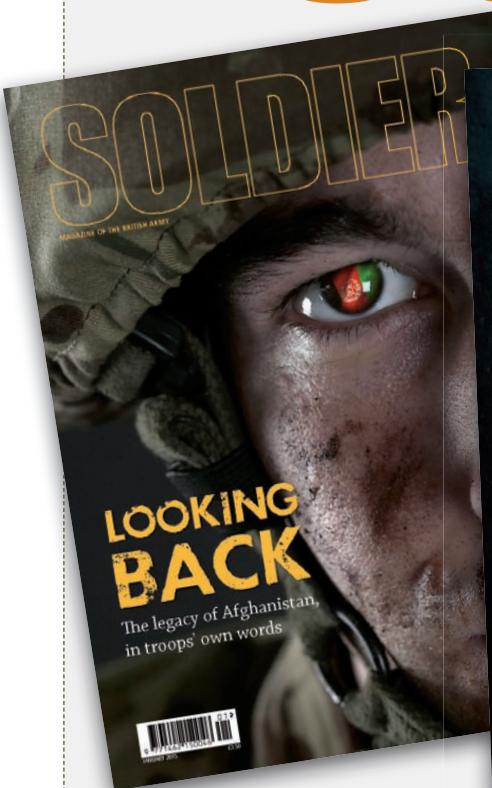
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REVIEWS



OCTOBER ROCKS

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P70 MUSIC SIGNALLER'S MUSICAL MISSION

P72 BOOKS RETURN TO THE FRONT LINE

reviews@soldiermagazine.co.uk

MOVIES

PICK OF THE MONTH:
SAN ANDREAS

EARTHQUAKE ACTION

DWAYNE JOHNSON FLIES INTO
THE DISASTER ZONE

OUT ON
OCT 12



Review: Joe Clapson

IN what was billed as one of the year's most action-packed disaster movies Dwayne Johnson powers onto screen as a never-say-die helicopter pilot.

In *San Andreas* – out on Blu-Ray and DVD on October 12 – the star, as his character Ray, springs into action when a magnitude nine earthquake strikes along the infamous fault line.

As giant buildings crumble and whole areas are swallowed up by cracks in the ground, Ray swings by in his helicopter to single-handedly rescue his ex-wife Emma (Carla Gugino) from the top of a skyscraper, while leaving his chopper in auto-hover.

He then races to San Francisco in a desperate bid to save their only daughter, using all manner of vehicles to achieve the objective.

One instance sees the man mountain fly a biplane into the destruction, parachute out of it and land perfectly in the middle of the San Francisco Giants' home ground. It's all in a day's work.

It also emerges that the super-sized down-to-earth lifesaver is an expert behind the wheel of trucks and powerboats, as well as being a remarkable underwater free-diver.

There is no tongue in cheek though – this is serious business, with no humour intended.

Explaining his reasons for taking on the high-octane natural catastrophe role, the star of *Fast and Furious* and *Hercules*, said: "It was the opportunity to do a movie in this genre, and I loved the script after reading the first 30 pages.

"It was a big disaster spectacle, but told from the point of view of one man trying to take care of his daughter and help his family survive.

"It's the human element that always moves me and I found the script very compelling."

The movie reunites Johnson with director Brad Peyton and producer Beau Flynn, following their collaboration on the global hit *Journey 2: The Mysterious Island* and certainly saw "The Rock" earn his money while shooting in Australia.

"I was involved in a tremendous amount of action, but it was different from other movies I've made in that it was relentless," he explained.

"Also, I have a great stunt double, but I wanted to do everything precisely because so much of it was shot in-camera.

"So I guess I was crazy enough to do that."

The star added: "We used visual effects to augment and extend a shot. When you see me on a boat in the San Francisco Bay, it's because I was really there.

"We even built three stories of a building set to scale and submerged it in a tank."

In order to prepare for the all-action hero occupation Johnson spent time with Los Angeles firefighters and a team of Australian helicopter rescuers on location on the Gold Coast.

And working with the real-life operators assisted with making the big-budget movie as well as giving the actor a sense of perspective.

"Apart from the details of how to operate and fly these machines, more importantly [I took], the mindset of these guys, who are incredible.

"They just have a special DNA, and after meeting them I walked away with an even greater level of respect for what they do. I admire them boundlessly."

Here, Johnson takes on the mantle of an everyman hero with aplomb and while the whole thing is incredibly unrealistic, it does get the pulse racing. ■

VERDICT: An in-your-face action extravaganza with The Rock at the helm



ERIC CLAPTON out now

IF you already love Clapton this iconic *Live at the Albert Hall* film will be a great addition to whatever music, magazines and other illicit material you have stashed away on the guy. It doesn't offer much that's enlightening or new but the 100 minutes of vintage blues and old favourites will repeatedly gratify aficionados. A naughty pleasure.

Kieran Rafter, civvy

VERDICT: First-rate Clapton porn, if you're that way inclined



INSIDIOUS: CHAPTER 3 out Oct 12

As a prequel this is an okay effort but if you're a fan of either of the previous films then you'll be disappointed. It tries hard and fails to bridge the gap between teen shock horror and the more psychological terror films. The plot is fairly predictable and there's certainly not much to keep you up at night, other than to wonder why the movie was made.

Thor Elsson, civvy

VERDICT: As a prequel it fails to live up to its potential



THE KRAY'S: KILL ORDER out now

A CONVINCING first-hand account that exposes the truth about the Kray brothers' lives. Whether your perception of the Krays is good or bad it is certain that their story is a defining part of London's and British history. Told by individuals who knew the twins, the narrative becomes muddled and hard to follow without background knowledge.

Dominic King, ex-RAF

VERDICT: Dull unless you're a Kray fan or remember the headlines



GOOD KILL out now

BASED on actual events, this film shows a US pilot on his third UAV tour, where he operates armed drones in Afghanistan from Las Vegas and the effects it has on him. This is an excellent portrayal of the disillusionment of a pilot at odds with shadowy kill orders and an unfulfilling role. Ethan Hawke gives a strong, thought-provoking performance.

Janet Dornan, ex-R Signals

VERDICT: Shows how tech warfare can negatively affect the mind



THE REFLEKTOR TAPES out now

HERE is a revealing insight into the making of *Arcade Fire's* internationally-acclaimed album *Reflektor*. The film follows the group around the world showing their relationships and general tour activity with never-seen-before interviews. However, as a non-fan I found the film tiresome and repetitive. One for die-hard followers.

Kim Barclay, Army wife

VERDICT: One to miss if Arcade Fire aren't your favourite band



WIN... Lake Placid vs Anaconda

AND experiment to cross-breed crocodiles with anacondas goes wrong and a sheriff is tasked to destroy them. It's the fifth feature in the series for both franchises. *Soldier* has teamed up with Sony Pictures Home Entertainment to give away three copies on DVD. For a chance to win one tell us which *A Nightmare on Elm Street* icon stars in the movie. Answers to the usual postal address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: October 30

MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH:
WATCH THIS SPACE

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

SOLDIER STRIVES FOR
BIG BREAK

Interview: Richard Long

ASPRING artists often find themselves searching for a big break as they look to make a name in the ultra-competitive music industry.

From prime time television shows to open mic events, there is no shortage of avenues to explore when it comes to getting a voice heard.

For budding singer-songwriter Sgt Dan Edmunds (R Signals) it was Negart Records' Brand New Artist competition that ticked all the boxes.

Despite missing out on a lucrative first prize that included £100,000 and a record deal the NCO claimed a top-25 finish that saw one of his tracks included on a compilation CD that was distributed across Europe, America and the UK.

The 27-year-old was quick to build on his breakthrough moment and the release of debut album *Watch This Space* soon followed.

"Being part of the competition was great exposure and that involvement pushed me to get the record done," he told *Soldier*.

"Like anything in life you have to have a main goal. This has come earlier than expected, I only had three practice sessions with my band before we headed into the studio but it felt really good.

"We recorded everything live and I think that makes for a great sound.

"I have an amazing drummer and a fantastic guitarist. The keyboards and bass came together so I decided to let everyone play their instruments and express themselves in their own way."

Edmunds has completed two Herrick tours, as well as a deployment to Iraq in a Service career that spans more than ten years and music has proved to be an important outlet during his time in uniform.

"The Army was something I was always interested in," he explained. "As soon as I left school I knew it was what I wanted to do."

"But I hadn't really considered a trade so I was steered towards the Royal Signals."

"I've recently been promoted to sergeant and have done a few tours so it is going well.

"The music started with me just playing in the block.

"But a couple of years ago it became more than that and things really started to progress.

"I learnt more about the guitar and I began to develop my own songs.

"I wrote half the tracks for the album while in Afghanistan in 2013 and when I came back I started putting things together."

The artist has adopted a personal approach on his debut material and inspiration for Edmunds' tracks stem from both his military career and experiences in the outside world.

Mia's Song was penned while on tour in Afghanistan and captures the emotions he felt while separated from his daughter.

From The Grave delves even deeper by charting the loss of his best friend to cancer and *Change Through Time* focuses on the breakdown of a relationship.

"I used to hold all my feelings in but discovering I could write music was a really good way of releasing that," Edmunds said.

"This offering is almost like a live demo but I've already got some new tracks ready so I can start work on the second album.

"I'm looking forward to getting out there and doing more gigs while getting some new material together. It is an exciting time." ■

● *Watch This Space* is available for download on iTunes, Google Play and Amazon.

The Monsanto Years

by Neil Young and Promise of the Real

THIS album starts off with powerful lyrics of an eco-fighting nature and of wanting to put the world to rights. My initial impression was 'Wow, this is Neil Young singing with the sons of Willie Nelson'. But as much as I tried I really couldn't associate with the music. It sounded quite off key and out of tune, and the hippy beat seems to patronise the record more than aid it. This had potential but unfortunately it sinks rather than swims.



Sgt Craig Backhouse, Coldm Gds

VERDICT: It's a shame I can't score minus points



Truth is a Wolf

by Mollie Marriott

AS far as new artists go Mollie Marriott is blessed with a certain rock heritage. She's the daughter of mod legend Steve Marriott, of Small Faces fame, and stepdaughter to Joe Brown. Her debut album *Truth is a Wolf* is an absolute gem and is packed with highly listenable tracks. There are obvious hints of Fleetwood Mac's Stevie Nicks, as well as Dolly Parton, Pearl Jam and Alison Krauss. All in all, this is a little cracker with music for everyone to enjoy.



Tony David, ex-RE

VERDICT: The family legend is safe with Mollie at the helm



The Book of Souls

by Iron Maiden

TWICE as long as necessary at 92 minutes, *The Book of Souls* is a boastful but ineffective patchwork of avant-garde narratives, scratchy guitars and superfluous drum fills. Like their last album, we're offered a punchy opener by Bruce Dickinson and the token solo-driven ballad from Dave Murray, but the best song is *Tears of a Clown*. However, as with *The Final Frontier*, it lacks the overall support of decent songwriting.



LCpl Lindsay Whyte, Int Corps

VERDICT: Full of soul but lacking backbone



I Cry When I Laugh

by Jess Glynne

HAVING served her pop apprenticeship by collaborating with the likes of Tinie Tempah and Clean Bandit, Jess Glynne has stepped



forward as an artist in her own right with the release of debut album *I Cry When I Laugh*. Unfortunately, this fails to highlight her true potential as the muddled approach and varying tangents do not let her stand out from the crowd. She has the talent – she just needs to find her true identity.

Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: A scattergun approach that fails to pay off



What Went Down

by Foals

HAVING previously reviewed a Foals album my hopes for this were high and fortunately they weren't dashed. *Albatross* sees keyboards, synthesisers and drums merge into an 80s-esque anthem that is followed by the heavier *Snake Oil*. The other highlight is *Night Swimmers*, which has the touch of a festival classic, and I found myself asking 'Why haven't Foals played the Glastonbury main stage? – they'd be perfect'.



LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

VERDICT: Enjoyable and inoffensive nod-along indie rock



Anthems for Doomed Youth

by The Libertines

GIVEN the past misdemeanours of a certain high-profile member and the band's subsequent ten-year split it was hard to know what to expect from The Libertines' new album. A successful summer festival run hinted at a return to form and *Anthems for Doomed Youth* adds to the optimism. There are some flaws but tracks such as *Gunga Din*, *Heart of The Matter* and *Fame and Fortune* offer great variety while reflecting on the past.

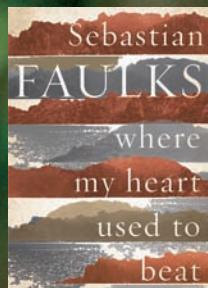


Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: Having feared the worst this is an impressive comeback



BOOKS



*Where My Heart Used
to Beat* is out now,
priced £20

PICK OF THE MONTH:
WHERE MY HEART USED TO BEAT

SHADOWS OF WAR

SEBASTIAN FAULKS GOES BACK TO
THE FRONT LINE FOR LATEST NOVEL

Interview: Becky Clark

NEVER famous for his upbeat books, best-selling author Sebastian Faulks is back with another moving, if somewhat gloomy take on the human psyche.

Where My Heart Used to Beat revisits the familiar subjects of war and psychiatry that characterised previous works such as *Human Traces*, *Charlotte Gray* and 1993 classic *Birdsong*.

The story follows Robert Hendricks, a lonely British doctor who receives a strange invitation to write the biography of Alexander Pereira, an elderly neuroscientist and former comrade of his father during the First World War.

Over the course of numerous visits to Pereira's home on a French island it becomes clear that the old man is more interested in learning of his guest's past than talking about himself and Hendricks is gradually forced to confront long-buried memories of his own experiences in the Second World War.

His vivid flashbacks to the front line are vintage Faulks but as the literary heavyweight told *Soldier*, the focus of the title is not so much war itself as the repercussions of conflict.

"The book really summarises and epitomises what I've been writing about for such a long time," he explained.

"The theme is what went wrong during the 20th century, a lot of which is connected to the two world wars.

"We haven't fully understood or dissected what that time told us about Europe, Britain and above all ourselves as human beings."

Hendricks' recollections reveal that he was awarded the Military Cross in North Africa, before being shot during the assault on Anzio.

While recuperating from his injury he began a passionate love affair with a nurse.

Faulks' father served with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in Dunkirk, Tunisia and Anzio – and was also an MC holder – but the author was quick to dispel the idea that the novel is in some way biographical.

"Emphatically no," he said. "The character of Hendricks is completely different to my father and the pistol wound is pure invention."

"But my father wrote an account of his life and his wartime experiences and I did look at the diary again and took from it what you might call the operational aspects – the clothes, transport, food, cigarettes, alcohol and so on."

While Faulks has visited Anzio, he regrets not having done so when his father was still alive.

Reflecting on the campaign's place in history he commented: "It tends to be overlooked but far from being a sideshow while the D-Day landings were being planned, it was a horrendous, brutal experience for those involved. That's something I would like readers to take from the book."

"I also hope they will be gripped and engaged by one man's struggle to understand his past."

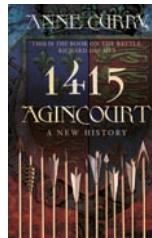
As the plot unfolds the two protagonists explore the relationship between memory and reality together and in due course the fates of Hendricks' father and lost love are revealed.

A happy read this is not but in portraying the slow crumbling of his character's carefully constructed emotional walls Faulks succeeds once again in raising interesting questions about how the mind processes trauma and the long shadow cast by war. ■

1415: Agincourt

by Anne Curry

THIS previously published work has been justifiably reissued for the 600th anniversary of the famous battle, incorporating new research. The book is detailed and eye-opening but requires careful effort in reading. Professor Anne Curry knows her sources and weighs the evidence clear-sightedly. Her analysis of Henry V's plans and motivation is excellent. Maps and illustrations supplement the text.



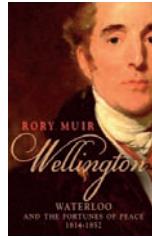
Dr Rodney Atwood, military historian

VERDICT: An insightful challenge to traditional narratives

Wellington

by Rory Muir

FORENSIC in detail, and epic in scale and ambition, this is the second half of Rory Muir's masterly biography of Wellington. The first volume dealt with the Duke's military triumphs in India and the Peninsula. This instalment charts Waterloo and his turbulent parliamentary career. The author's conclusion, that a soldier of legend was out of his depth in the murky world of politics, is hard to counter.



Douglas Jackson, historical novelist

VERDICT: Almost certainly the definitive biography of the Iron Duke

Operation Blunderhead

by David Gordon Kirby

THIS is the tale of a little-known Special Operations Executive agent, whose mission – whilst a failure – was one of the most fascinating stories of the Second World War. It's a case of the truth being stranger than fiction as the operative embellished his own account while in the hands of the Gestapo. As a result I found it hard to take seriously and was left wondering how the SOE and MI5 kept straight faces during debriefings.



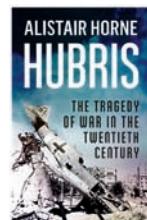
Thor Elsson, civvy

VERDICT: Sorting fact from fiction detracts from the story

Hubris

by Alistair Horne

IN a departure from his normal style the author has examined a miscellany of battles. Some have already been given extensive exposure by fellow historians while others have been retrieved from the more remote nooks and crannies of history and their relative novelty makes for interesting reading. However, I am not persuaded that the use of "hubris" as a cement for these historical bricks is entirely successful.



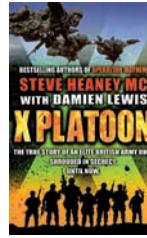
George Robey, ex-GH

VERDICT: Informative and readable, but not the author's best

X Platoon

by Steve Heaney

ANOTHER "young-lad-joins-Paras" story, this account takes us through basic training, to P Company and the author's subsequent bid to become a Pathfinder. His description of the mental and physical demands of the selection process is eye-opening, but while this book does also encompass his later ventures on operations, I felt it was too similar to the many other titles in the genre and that it didn't really offer any fresh insights.



Tony David, ex-RE

VERDICT: Was this a page-turner? Not for me, I'm afraid

The Storms

by Mike Trueman

I FOUND this account of the author's role in rescue efforts during a doomed Everest trek both vivid and engaging. If his intention was to instill an interest in climbing this mountain then I feel he has succeeded. However, the book is let down by a too brief biography and an out-of-context memory of sailing off the Welsh coast. It seemed like these bits had been tacked on at the publisher's request to up the page count.



SSgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps

VERDICT: Skip the beginning and this will keep you engaged

“Give ‘em hell lads”

A D Day veteran remembers



Each year in November, Remembrance Day gives us the chance to honour the bravery shown by the countless men and women who have fought to protect their country. ABF The Soldiers' Charity (formerly the Army Benevolent Fund) is the National Charity of the British Army, and was established in 1944 in the aftermath of World War Two, with the vision that all serving soldiers, veterans and their dependants should have the opportunity to avoid hardship and enjoy independence and dignity.



One such individual is Les Fryatt who, as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery during the D Day landings, was part of a 10 man team that played a critical part in demolishing German positions inland at Normandy. Remembrance Day will give veterans like Les the chance to

reflect on his experience: “I was called up for service in 1942 at the age of 18. It’s funny really; I was a bit bored, as nobody would give me a job, so when I got the call-up papers I was quite pleased. We weren’t really told anything; we just started doing intensive training, waterproofing the vehicles and going out to sea. When we left London we were on the troop lorries and people were shouting ‘give ‘em hell lads’ and we thought ‘something really must be happening’.”

Les recalls being loaded on to a liner and sailing through the night towards France before disembarking at Caen. After taking up their first gun position two miles inland, Les endured months of brutal fighting across France, Belgium and Holland before he entered Germany. Despite the atrocities that he witnessed, he has some fond memories of that time; “Oh the friendships you made; you made so many mates. They weren’t my Mum and Dad, but they were another family.”

On May 8th 1945, Victory in Europe was announced. Les narrowly avoided redeployment to Japan, but stayed in Germany for two more years before leaving the Army and returning home to

a dramatically different London; “All my mates had disappeared; I didn’t know who had survived. It was difficult because you couldn’t go back to the old way of life. I couldn’t get a job at first, as there wasn’t a lot of work about, but in 1953 my brother asked me to come along to a Spring ball to look after a girl [his now wife,

“All my mates had disappeared; I didn’t know who had survived. It was difficult because you couldn’t go back to the old way of life.”

Jeanette] and I’ve been looking after her for 60 years!” It was not until decades later that Les and Jeanette needed the support of ABF The Soldiers' Charity. Following a hip and two knee replacements, he was unable to get in and out of his bath safely, and without the installation of a walk in shower, the couple feared that they would have to leave their home. Local authorities made a contribution to the cost of the renovation and The Soldiers' Charity awarded a grant, which allowed for its completion. Les told us “Believe you me, it’s wonderful, I can now shower safely. I’ve never been so clean in my life!”

To find out more about the work of The Soldiers' Charity, or to make a donation and ensure that we continue to be here for soldiers and veterans like Les, visit soldierscharity.org or call 020 7901 8900.

SOLDIER SPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long

Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Hard toil: Army cyclists hit top gear at the Inter-Services Road Race Championships. Read more about their success on page 78...



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MOUNTAIN BIKING



COUNTRY SCENE TAKES OFF

THE rolling Wiltshire countryside formed the backdrop for the finale to the Service's cross-country mountain bike campaign.

Having started the season at the Olympic venue of Hadleigh Park the riders have been tested in a number of challenging rounds during the Inter-Unit Series and it was personnel from 11 Signal Regiment who secured the competition's top honours.

The race also doubled as the Army Championships and Capt Bruce Spilsbury (RLC, pictured) held off the challenge of SSgt "Taff" Rogerson (RE) to retain his men's crown.

Work commitments have restricted his participation

in recent times but a strong period of training during summer leave ensured he was in peak condition on the day.

"I am really pleased," Spilsbury told *SoldierSport*. "It was a good course with some long climbs; it is probably the best track of the year so far.

"The guys who compete at national level have done really well and we have got some great young riders coming through so this event is getting tougher and tougher."

The success of the series has delighted organiser Capt "Tiny" Simmonds (RE), secretary of cross-country mountain biking, who believes more and more soldiers are turning to the pursuit as

they seek an alternative to traditional sports.

"On average the numbers are up on last year and we've raced at some stunning venues," the officer explained.

"Mountain biking is getting more popular and it is a good chance to do something completely different on a Wednesday afternoon.

"The Army race team is doing really well at national level, with Taff Rogerson and WO1 "Maz" Marriott (Inf) looking particularly strong on the veterans' circuit.

"On the whole it has been a great year."

The Army team was in action at the Inter-Services as this issue went to press. ■

“
We've had more riders than last year and have raced at some stunning venues
”

Capt "Tiny" Simmonds (RE)



SPORT SHORTS



Dream debut

» VICTORY for Maj Angela Laycock (RE) in the women's race at the Army Championships capped a tremendous year of competitive action for the officer.

She has just completed her debut season in the national series and claimed an impressive second-place finish in the joint sport/expert class.

Talking about her achievements on the civilian circuit, Laycock said: "I was definitely thrown in at the deep end.

"It is pretty difficult and the technical elements can be quite tough.

"The plan was to finish in the top ten so to come second was fantastic.

"A lot of riders stem from a road background so they have a good base level of fitness but I have gone from cycling with friends to racing round courses in the fastest time possible.

"I had nothing to lose. I was third in the second race of the series and that really boosted my confidence levels."



→ Team of the month

Army Road Race Cycling Team



THE Army's growing pool of female cyclists continued their upward spiral as they dominated the field at the Inter-Services Road Race Championships.

Having taken to the saddle with a new-look set-up at the start of the season the rising stars claimed the first six places in the Forces showdown as their collective talent came to the fore.

Pacesetters WO2 Chanel Mason (RAPTC) and Pte Alex Farquhar (RAVC) crossed the line in unison to lead the charge and with teammates maintaining a strong presence in the chasing pack the result was never in doubt.

With Farquhar missing large chunks of the season due to work commitments in Germany the plan was to push the newcomer to the front in an attempt to boost her bid for category three race status.

"Alex needed to finish strongly today in order to achieve that," Mason told *SoldierSport*. "I took her

with me straight from the gun and the team were told to give us a gap.

"We averaged 23mph and once we were two minutes clear we could ease off and get through to the finish.

"It was a fairly short course and as we have a big squad with different abilities we could push hard. It was a tough test for the girls who have not raced much before.

"The Royal Air Force have a good cyclist who finished on the podium last year but we wanted all three spots this season. We thought a clean sweep of the top-ten might be possible but she is a strong athlete."

Team captain WO2 Donna Short (RLC) was delighted with the performance and said Inter-Services success capped a fine year for the squad.

"Coming into the race we knew we had strength in depth so it was a case of who would be out in front," she said.

"We are working to a three-year plan. We are

currently second in the women's national team series but we also want to get more people involved.

"Girls are still coming to us, even though the season is almost over, but they will be ready for next year."

The Army men replicated their teammates' fine form to claim all three podium places in the final race of the day.

Star man Spr Alex Royle (RE) took top spot, with WO2 Tom Stringer (RLC) second and WO2 Paul Jones (Rifles) third.



Inter-Services Road Race Championships

Men's title – Army
Women's title – Army

SPORT SHORTS



Medals mount up

» **ROWER** Capt Heather Stanning (RA) capped another undefeated season at international level with a storming victory in the World Championship final.

Competing alongside partner Helen Glover in the women's pair the Olympic champions finished two lengths clear of their nearest rivals to extend their winning run to 29 races.

The duo made a blistering start in Aiguebelette, France, and were well clear after just 250 metres. The lead stretched to three seconds at the half-way mark and they eventually finished in 6min 52.99sec – just short of their world-best time.

"We have worked very, very hard and it's exciting because we feel there are more improvements to come," Stanning said.

Glover added: "We wanted to feel the pressure of defending a title because that is what we'll have to do at the Rio Olympics next year."



Pictures: Peter Spurrier/Intersport Images



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ARMED WITH AMBITION

» Personnel target Olympic place in 2020

» Full-time training furthers international ambitions



REPRESENTING your country at the Olympics is the pinnacle for most athletes as they embark on a career at sport's elite level.

For mainstream pursuits the conveyor belt of talent is seemingly endless but in minority events an innovative approach is often needed to attract people to the cause.

Last year the Army launched an elite programme to identify Servicemen and women who could potentially medal at the 2020 Games.

Working closely with bodies such as the English Institute of Sport and UK Sport, the initiative saw soldiers guided towards disciplines that have a shortage of top-level competitors and that match the attributes needed for life in the military.

Shooting became the first event to profit when a formal partnership was agreed between the Army and the national governing body.

More than 50 athletes

have attended selection and development sessions for the pistol, rifle and shotgun and nine have moved forward to a talent confirmation phase.

Since May, this handful of crack shots have been embroiled in full-time training at ranges in Ash and Bisley and with officials from Team GB closely monitoring their progress hopes of international honours could well become a reality.

A full-time coach oversees proceedings and efforts have been made to recreate the conditions and infrastructure seen at world level. Mental preparation is among the other key elements.

Shooter Sgt Ian Jack (Int Corps, pictured above) had a taste of international action in 2011 and is now determined for more.

"It's all about the Tokyo Olympics in 2020," he told *SoldierSport*. "I've been to World Cups and the World Championships but I didn't





“
My scores have gone up over the last three months and I have just set a personal best
”

make any finals. I performed well in training but you need to have a different mindset for the major competitions.

“This is next-level training. We have our own ten-metre range and the Intelligence Corps has helped with the purchase of my pistols.

“It really takes the pressure off. I have all the equipment I need and that means I can focus on the task at hand.

“To have the Army investing in us is a huge benefit. My scores have gone up over the last three months and I have just set a new personal best in the air pistol.”

Royal Air Force Reservist Sqn Ldr Albie Fox, secretary of the Army Rifle Association, has been a driving force behind the project.

As a former Commonwealth Games athlete he knows what is needed to succeed in the upper echelons and he believes Service personnel have a distinct advantage.

“In terms of pistol

shooting, the governing body is desperate for us to get involved,” he explained.

“There are not enough people out there to push for places. Civilians are not allowed to keep a gun at home and they have to use specialist ranges, which makes practice very difficult.

“The Army allows these guys to train full-time and we have the facilities on our doorstep.

“It is open to everyone and soldiers who have never tried this before should come along to one of our basic courses. If the people here do not reach the required standard we will need others to come in.”

SSgt Rebecca Carnell (AGC [RMP]) is another to throw her hat in the ring.

Having excelled in military shooting events – she holds the highest female ranking in the Army 100 – the NCO was keen to test herself in the sporting sphere.

She joined the set-up in June and after rectifying problems

with her sights and grip she is embracing the team ethos.

“It is not easy,” Carnell said. “It is both mentally and physically challenging.

“Psychologically it can be quite draining, especially when you have a bad day, but on the whole I’m enjoying it.

“I’ve always wanted to shoot competitively. I’m hoping to get to the Commonwealth Games in 2018 but the Olympics are my main target.

“We go through test runs and competitions so we can get used to the pressure and international guidelines are followed so we know what to expect. I’m really chuffed to be here. If we continue to train in the same way these goals are totally attainable.”



For more details on upcoming shooting courses and how to get involved visit www.armyshooting.org



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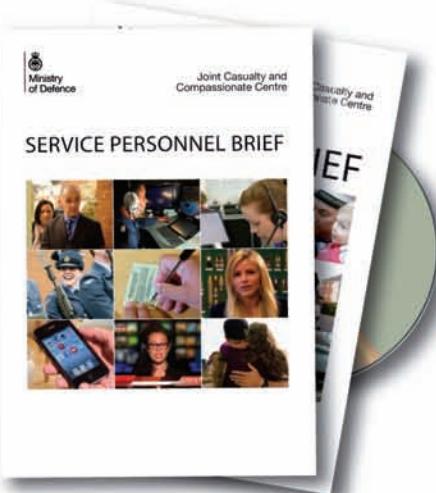
The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) has launched a new app and two awareness films to help you and your families access their services.

The app helps to guide you to the most appropriate organisation in the event of a family emergency.

Download the app now from the Defence Gateway app store.

The two short films explain more about JCCC's services and key actions you should take to update JPA.

To watch the films, scan the codes or visit www.gov.uk and search for "JCCC".



SPORT SHORTS



Funds add up

» TEAM Army has celebrated a significant milestone in its short history after reaching the £3 million mark in terms of money donated to Service sport.

The organisation was launched four years ago to raise funds and attract sponsorship and donations to support a variety of disciplines.

Nearly 80 sports associations have benefited to date.

IN NUMBERS

9

The number of goals scored by the Combined Services shinty team as they won all three matches at the Michael Kosman Memorial Cup in San Francisco



Tour passes by

» APACHE attack helicopters made way for the peloton as the Aviva Tour of Britain sprinted down the runway at Wattisham Flying Station last month.

An enthusiastic crowd of soldiers and families welcomed 120 of the world's top athletes to the facility. British rider Alex Dowsett was first across the line.



Picture: SBS Photography courtesy of RAF News

Bottom of the league

Inter-Services Rugby League

Army 8

Royal Air Force 28

Royal Navy 10

Army 2

THE Army's rugby league stars made the worst possible start to their Inter-Services campaign as they slipped to a crushing defeat at the hands of the Royal Air Force.

Having switched their home fixtures to Salford's AJ Bell Stadium the soldiers had hoped to take inspiration from the grandstand setting but it was their rivals who thrilled the local support with a superb 28-8 win.

The airmen signalled

their intent from the outset and after dominating the early exchanges Cpl Dave Hankinson broke the deadlock as he was given time to crashed over in the corner.

SAC Jordan Andrade heaped further misery on the Reds when he touched down moments later before the hosts finally showed their attacking threat.

Spr Sonoma Veikune (RE) – part of the Combined Services squad that recently toured Australia – produced a jinking run and after carving his way through the opposition defence he was able to touch down under the posts.

Hopes of a comeback were soon scuppered as the RAF added a third try before an Army penalty reduced the arrears to 16-8 at the interval.

But further points were not forthcoming and after the light blues added a fourth score

Cpl Si Wray capped a terrific afternoon for his side when he sprinted to the line following a storming solo run from inside his own half.

The soldiers completed the tournament with a 10-2 defeat against the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

Speaking at full time, head coach Sgt Jack Horner (RLC) told *SoldierSport*: "This performance was a step up from the display against the RAF and I'm really heartened.

"The attitude of the players and their will to fight for one another was very encouraging.

"This is a team in transition – ten of the players from last year's Inter-Services line-up weren't available this year – but the results will come.

"Our short-term target is to reach the Challenge Cup third round in January and then we want to regain the Inter-Services title in September."

ARTISTS CONTINUE TO SHINE

» THE new-look WTF tae kwon do set-up has continued its progress on the mat with some encouraging performances in recent tournaments.

At the Inter-Services Championships the team placed in nearly every division and claimed an impressive 17 gold medals across the board.

The event, combined with a training camp in Aldershot, proved to be a useful warm-up ahead of the GB Nationals, where the soldiers collected one gold, two silver and four bronze medals.



SPORT SHORTS



Catch of the day

» MEMBERS of the Army fishing team tested themselves against world champions and international competitors when they lined up for the Angling Trust Division One National on Gloucester Canal.

A run of mixed results saw the soldiers finish in 31st place, while Cpl Scott Rispin (AGC) won his section of 44 with a weight of 25kg.



Selby steps up

» WORLD champion boxer Lee Selby was given a taste of military training when he spent the day with personnel from 24 Commando Engineer Regiment.

The featherweight enjoyed a morning with troops in the gym before testing his mettle in a series of Army drills – including the Commando conditioning course.

Selby told *SoldierSport*: “It was a chance for me to see the hard work and training they have to go through while improving my fitness.

“It was totally different compared to what I would normally do.”



Picture: Roger Thompson

FASTNET PROVES ANYTHING BUT

CLM waters and a lack of wind hindered the *British Soldier* crew and their rivals at the start of the 2015 Fastnet race.

With some of the finest sailing boats in the world struggling for control on the line penalties were common early on.

After the ten-mile stretch to Hurst Narrows the professional outfits had gained little advantage

over the less-fancied craft, meaning the Solent was crammed with yachts of all shapes and sizes.

After four hours the Service team was released into the open seas and the pace started to quicken.

They eventually finished 30th in a field of 72 vessels in IRC Class Two.

Mate Maj Will Chignell (REME) said: “It was a race of many sections with a

lot of nip and tuck with the other boats.

“Our placing ranged from first in class to 70th, depending on who got the wind first.

“The crew were fantastic, always keeping their cool and driving for the line, and after just an hour of sleep in a day-and-a-half they were pushing hard.

“There was also some great racing at the end.”



Perry sets the pace

CYCLE star Capt Ryan Perry (REME) is looking ahead to the challenges of 2016 after another successful season on two wheels.

The full-time athlete is a main contender on the time-trial scene and having won a national 25-mile title he is riding high.

Perry looked set to add the ten-mile crown to his prize haul before mechanical issues scuppered his chances but the officer believes further success will follow.

“I’ve done the training and I have the talent so it’s just a case of bringing everything together and having that little bit of luck on the day,” he explained.

“I had glandular fever in March so I’ve struggled all season really; I’ve only done half the miles I would have liked but next year could be really good.”

Such fine form has led to inevitable speculation about possible international honours but the cyclist is not getting distracted.

He added: “It is hard to say. My real talent is in the time trial and there is a Commonwealth Games in 2018. If I can dominate for the next two years I could get selected. But at the same time I love to road race so we’ll have to see what happens.”



Quest for glory resumes

WITH the new football season now in full swing thoughts will inevitably turn towards preparing the Army team for another crack at Inter-Services glory.

The Reds looked set to win the title for the first time in eight years last season but a dramatic last-gasp winner for the Royal Navy saw the trophy slip from their grasp.

Coach Capt Joe Collins (R Signals) stepped down at the end of the campaign and his departure sparked an eager debate over who would take the top job in Service football.

That honour was eventually handed to WO1 Simon "Dinger" Bell (RE).

As part of his predecessor's coaching set-up the former Army player gained great insight into the talent available within the squad and believes a psychological approach could be the key to success.

"It is not just about technique," he told *SoldierSport*. "It is also about dealing with the stresses of certain situations and being able to process information to get the right result.

"It is complex and I think the way I communicate with each player will be key. Some are motivated by pleasure and others pain, we have to tune into that very quickly.

"Joe Collins was the best coach we've had for a long time, his man management and motivation was excellent and I learnt a lot from him.

"I know I will be judged on winning the Inter-Services; it has been a long time since we lifted that trophy and it is my turn to carry the baton.

"Army football is in a very good place. If I can get the 17 players I want fit, without the interruptions of work or injuries, we will win."

A large contingent of players

attended a recent trials week in Aldershot and Bell was keen to welcome newcomers to the fold.

Corps and regimental teams were urged to push new talent forward and the coach stressed that there will be no favouritism when it comes to selection.

"Established players should expect exactly the same treatment as the new guys coming in," he added.

"A lot of pressure will be put on them this year. In training we will focus on small-sided games and people will have time on the ball. We can look at their first touch, decision-making and technique.

"We are also trying to get some fixtures against second teams from Championship and League One clubs.

"We've got some good contacts in the game and academy set-ups are always keen to test themselves." ■

ARMY



45 Players present at this season's trials week

IN NUMBERS

8

Years since the Reds last lifted the Inter-Services trophy



FOOTBALL

3

Woolwich Cup titles for WO1 Simon Bell as coach of the Royal Engineers



SPORT SHORTS



Rifles run riot

Major Units Final

4 Rifles 255-8
2 RGR 148 all out

» **SOME** powerful middle-order hitting from Rfn Ronald DeFreitas propelled 4th Battalion, The Rifles to a match-winning score in cricket's major units final.

The batsman blasted six maximums and three fours in an unbeaten knock of 80 as his side batted first and posted 255-8 against 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

Opener Lt Matt O'Connor gave his team the early impetus with an innings of 67 and LCpl Kenny England added 52. Rfn Avtar Gurung was the pick of the opposition's bowlers as he claimed 4-33.

But the Gurkhas struggled in reply as a lack of partnerships hindered their cause. Rfn Sagar Gurung top scored with 43 but his efforts could not prevent a 107-run defeat.



MONTH in sport

October's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services Kitesurfing Championships

WHEN: October 19-23

WHERE: Hayling Island, Hampshire

COMMENTS: Weather conditions will prove vital but with a week-long window available the Army will be hopeful of beating their rivals



WHAT: Kent v Army women, Southern Counties Cup

WHEN: October 21 (1930)

WHERE: Corinthian Sports Club, Longfield, Kent

COMMENTS: With a new coach at the helm and a successful trials week behind them the players will be looking for a winning start in the cup



WHAT: Inter-Corps Netball Championships

WHEN: October 22-23

WHERE: Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre

COMMENTS: The popularity of the event has seen it expand to two days. Top performers will be invited to attend the Army trials at the end of the week



Reds revel in African test

International hockey fixture

British Army 0
Ghana 3

THE Army women were given a stern test ahead of this year's indoor hockey campaign as they locked horns with the Ghanaian national team at Bisham Abbey.

Despite slipping to a 3-0 defeat the Servicewomen produced a strong display against a side that is hoping to qualify for next year's Olympics.

With the match locked at 0-0 at half-time the visitors edged ahead in the third quarter and then scored two goals in the final period as they made a winning start to their two-week UK tour.

Manager Maj Tracey Prowse (AGC (SPS)) was delighted with her team's efforts and believes the fixture will be ideal preparation for the upcoming Inter-Services campaign and their bid to qualify for division two of the National Indoor League.

"Some individual skill saw them break through our defence in the build-up to the opening goal and in the fourth quarter they showed their international superiority," she told *SoldierSport*.

"A lot of our girls had not played against such opposition so it was valuable experience and a real benchmark as we move forward.

"Ghana were quick, strong and robust in the tackle but we were disciplined and structured. It was only in the third quarter that they started to break us down."

Prowse praised the

performance of goalkeeper Cpl Liana Smith (RAMC) and skipper Maj Nic George (R Signals) and said the contribution of experienced trio Capt Cheryl Valentine (AMS), Lt Col Paula Nicholas (AGC (SPS)) and Sgt Katy White (RLC) proved invaluable.

The Inter-Services indoor tournament will be held in Aldershot from November 9 to 11, with the national qualifier following in December.

"We will be going all-out to maintain our winning record in the Forces competition," Prowse added. "That will be our key focus ahead of the qualifying campaign."

 Visit the Army Hockey Association page on Facebook to keep up to date with the sport's news, results and upcoming competitions

ICE CAMP OPENS FOR BUSINESS

► POTENTIAL bobsleigh, luge or skeleton athletes are being invited to sample the sports at a training camp.

Exercise Racing Ice will feature two week-long packages in Innsbruck, Austria, which run from January 23 to 30 and January 30 to February 6.

Places cost £500 for UK personnel and £450 for those in Germany. Visit www.awsa.org.uk or email Graham.Holmes294@mod.uk for more details.





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Game brief

Date: September 7, 2015

Competition: International Defence Rugby Competition warm-up

Venue: Army Rugby Stadium

Army

Hamilton	Dwyer	McLaren
Whittaker	Llewellyn	
Laqekoro	Jope	Fillier
Chennell	Farrell	
Winstanley	O'Reilly	
Yabia		Sokia
	Leatham	
11	15	14

Subs: Banfield, Budgen, Jones, Evans, Veikune, Naulago, Watkins

Army tries: Jope (4), Leatham (3), Naulago, Laqekoro

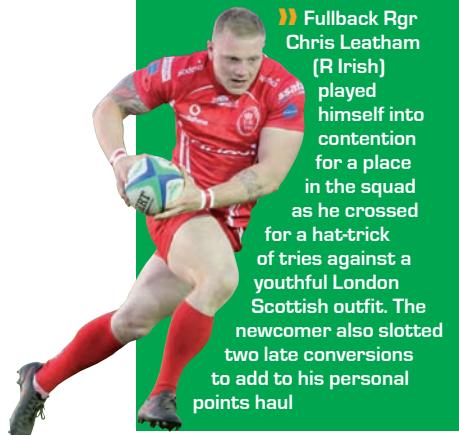
Conversions: Farrell (3), Leatham (2)

Headline makers



With injury ruling LCpl James Dixon (RE) out of action Cpl James Farrell (REME) did his chances no harm with an assured display at fly half

Fullback Rgr Chris Leatham (R Irish) played himself into contention for a place in the squad as he crossed for a hat-trick of tries against a youthful London Scottish outfit. The newcomer also slotted two late conversions to add to his personal points haul



Fighting fit: The Army enjoyed back-to-back wins over London Scottish and Esher during the tournament build-up

Perfect preparation for Reds

Friendly fixture

Army 55
London Scottish 11

A NINE-try blitz of Championship outfit London Scottish gave the Army the perfect warm-up ahead of this month's International Defence Competition.

The match was the first run out for the Reds as the build-up to the tournament gathered pace and a number of fringe players were keen to catch the eye as coach Maj Andy Sanger (RE) pondered the make-up of his final squad.

Rgr Chris Leatham (R Irish) pushed his case for inclusion with a hat-trick while veteran forward Cpl Leda Jope (RE) underlined his class with a powerful display that yielded

four tries.

Despite seeing the positives in a strong attacking show Sanger will have slight concerns about the penalty count conceded by his side.

Whether it was eagerness to impress or a case of players finding their feet in the early throes of the season, such misdemeanours could prove crucial as the Servicemen seek to retain their world crown.

Leatham edged the hosts ahead when he rounded off a flowing cross-field move in the tenth minute and Jope reaffirmed their superiority as he bundled home following a sustained spell of pressure from the pack.

The number eight added further scores either side of half-time as the lead stretched to 26-6 but some slack Army play gifted the visitors an opening as a quick penalty

move broke down and wing Louis Manzon sprinted home.

But the Reds came storming back as the impressive Leatham benefited from a strong attacking scrum to cross before replacement Pte Ratu Naulago (Yorks) found the left corner following a surging run from fly half Cpl James Farrell (REME).

Jope completed his personal haul in the 71st minute as the soldiers kicked to the corner and seized immediate control at the lineout and fellow forward Spr Inosi Laqekoro (RE) then sprinted through the lines to extend the advantage.

Leatham capped a fine evening's work in the dying seconds as some quick phases saw him touch down under the posts.

The Army continued their preparations with a 19-3 win against Esher. ■

Head coach's comments

London Scottish are a professional outfit who finished third in the Championship last year. This wasn't their first team but I'm still really pleased with our performance. Competition for places is tough. We've got around 40 players who are of Inter-Services standard and that is great for us. The team that wins the defence world cup is the one with the strongest squad. We are embracing the pressure and the attitude is good.

EYES ON THE PRIZE

AS skipper of the Army side that lifted the International Defence Rugby Competition trophy four years ago SSgt Darrell Ball (RE) knows what it takes to win on the big stage.

SoldierSport sat down with the Reds' key man on the eve of the tournament to learn more about his side's preparations and the pressures of trying to retain the title...

» How is the Army squad shaping up?

We've got a really good blend. It is completely different preparation to the Inter-Services as this is a three-week tournament. The new guys coming into the group have added value and there is some great quality out there – we have real strength in depth. But any team needs experience and we have six or seven players from the last campaign.

» As winners of the inaugural competition in 2011 is there added pressure on the team this time round?

The other sides will be trying to knock us off our pedestal so we need to be ahead of the game. We have been training at Pirbright, which has perfect facilities, and our preparations are going well. The pressure is on us but it is something we

can deal with. We've been defending champions in the Inter-Services and a lot of guys are used to that.

» Who do you see as your main rivals?

We won't have any access to video footage of the other teams until the tournament starts so it is hard to say. But I think New Zealand will be good and Australia and Fiji should be strong. Georgia are also an unknown quantity.

» Has the squad recovered from the shock defeat to the Royal Air Force in this year's Inter-Services?

The first few weeks after that result were a horrible time and we were licking our wounds. It is something we had not experienced before but going on to beat the Royal Navy helped us. It is still in the back of our minds and it has given us the added focus to knuckle down.

» The Army will be ranked among the favourites for the title. Have you already got one eye on the final?

I don't think we should look too far ahead as there is a danger that we will not focus on the job at hand. We have to take each game as it comes and we need to get the atmosphere, team spirit and cohesiveness that we had last time.

» And finally, how much of a boost is it to have the tournament staged in the shadows of the Rugby World Cup?

Our semi-finals and final will be played at The Stoop, which is a big stage. There is a great rugby atmosphere at the minute and hopefully we can get some bumper crowds. With this event running alongside the World Cup it is a great opportunity for people to come and watch some Services rugby.



SPORT SHORTS



Rowers get set

» INJURED soldier LCpl Cayle Royce (LD) will lead an all-amputee Row 2 Recovery crew in the latest Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge.

Regarded as the world's toughest rowing event, the six-week race starts on December 15 in the Canary Islands and finishes in Antigua.

Royce will be joined by former Irish Guard Paddy Gallagher, ex-Royal Air Force flight sergeant Nigel Rogof and CSgt Lee Spencer (RM).

"As military guys working as a team is second nature and the soldiers' banter and good humour will get us through the tough times," he said.



Track day success

» OULTON Park was the setting for the third annual British Army Track Day.

More than 70 motorbike enthusiasts took to the circuit for the event, which allowed riders to test their machines to the limit. More than £1,100 was also raised for Combat Stress in an auction.

For more details join the British Army Track Day group on Facebook.

Final word

We asked soldiers undergoing brush-up training at the Defence Centre for Language and Culture what they made of the Army's efforts to produce more



2Lt Julien Anani-Isaac (RL)
Skill fade is a huge problem in languages so this brush up training is very useful especially for practising writing and speaking. I'm doing French at the moment but hope to do the same with Spanish, both of which I studied at university. Brits have a reputation for being quite lazy when it comes to foreign languages but it's important for international cooperation. Everyone immediately feels at ease if you've made an effort to learn some key phrases.



2Lt Lucy Wilson (R Signals)
I did French and Spanish at university and commissioned as a Reservist into 37 Signal Regiment on the premise that there would be opportunities to use my languages. There are a lot of benefits to being able to speak another tongue and it's fantastic that there is financial recognition for doing so. The Army is almost ahead of the game – there needs to be a national push for languages.



Capt Nick Dawnay (Rifles)

I did a degree in Arabic and I'm hoping to go on and do jobs within the Army where I can use the language. It's quite tricky in terms of its structure, which is very different to Romance languages so this package has been hugely beneficial in blowing off the cobwebs. It's good to see the Service is investing in the skills they want at this level.

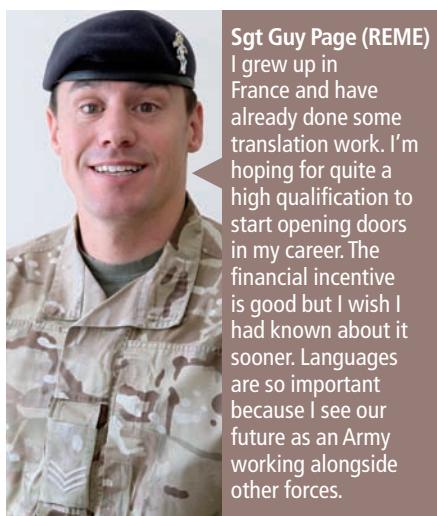


LCpl Alok Machchhar (RA)
I'm a native Hindi speaker and a Reservist with the National Reserve Headquarters, Royal Artillery, which provides specialist personnel, including interpreters, to the wider Army. I believe learning a language stretches an individual's potential and allows the Service to better work alongside local nationals and coalition forces.

Maj Kenny Nixon (RE)
The Army is right in that it's trying to improve things but British culture also needs to change and we need to manage our own expectations about how fast that can happen. We're going in the right direction though by incentivising and encouraging languages. Harnessing the talent of those who are willing to learn is better than forcing it on people who have never studied languages before.



Maj Gary Allen (RLC)
I've previously worked in Zaragoza at the Spanish equivalent of Sandhurst and in Italy with Nato and I'm here to renew my qualification. Our poor standard when it comes to speaking foreign languages in comparison with other nations is quite embarrassing. I think it's crucial that the Army invests in languages because it's a vital skill when it comes to working in coalitions and in defence engagement.



Sgt Guy Page (REME)
I grew up in France and have already done some translation work. I'm hoping for quite a high qualification to start opening doors in my career. The financial incentive is good but I wish I had known about it sooner. Languages are so important because I see our future as an Army working alongside other forces.



LCpl Francis Kimani (RLC)
I'm from Kenya and speak Swahili so I'm doing this training with the intention of becoming a translator, which will hopefully involve going on tours and visiting lots of different places. It will also enhance my career and open up more opportunities for promotion.

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