

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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infanteers



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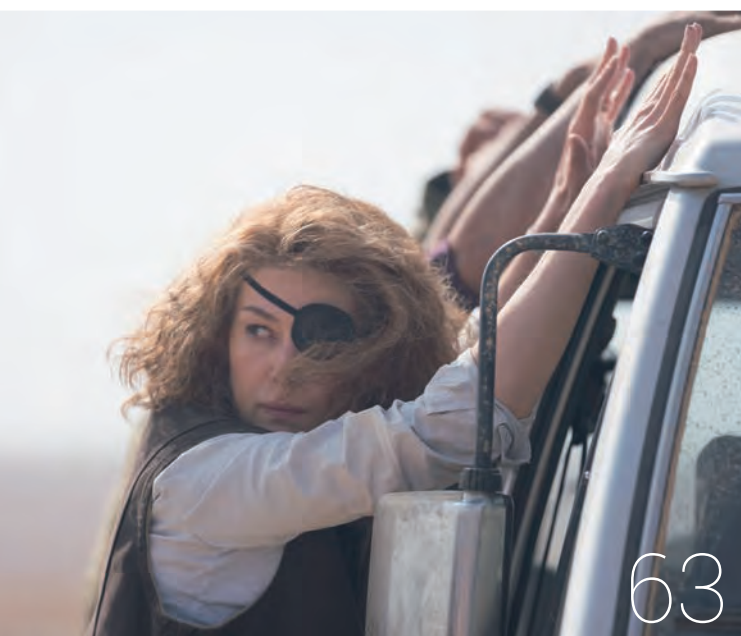
“People talk about the adrenalin that comes with parachuting but you get that riding half a ton of horse at 30mph”

Saddle success – page 72





40



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Steering clear of the B word



IF LIKE me your brain has been pulverized by talk of all-things Brexit, why not delve inside our second

issue of 2019 and the somewhat less mindnumbing buzzwords that are occupying soldiers' worlds.

One of those words is "infanteer" – a big focus for the Army this year as it prepares to welcome female recruits to the Infantry Training Centre Catterick.

On page 30 we discover how trials of the all-new combat infantry course are going, complete with better kit and improved technology to prepare personnel for the realities of ops.

The establishment is ready to accept women transferring from across the Army (page 12) ahead of opening its doors to the civvies later in the year.

And finally, if you're feeling the after-effects of a particularly robust New Year health kick, check out *Need to Know* (page 22) which offers some handy fitness advice, including tips on relieving those tight muscles.

Enjoy the issue. And if anything is pulverizing your brain, don't forget to drop *Talkback* a line (page 51).

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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Left to right: Brenda Hale, John Tyson, Mark Smith





On course: Troops are tested during the latest cadre in and around Aldershot



Pictures: Peter Davies

'The operation has made a good start'

Specialised Infantry Group stages first 2019 selection cadre for troops to transfer

SOME of the first soldiers to set their sights on transferring to the Specialised Infantry Group have been put through their paces at a demanding assessment cadre.

Commanders confirmed that the first two-week selection event of 2019 has been held, where troops were put through their paces in a shakedown of mental and physical prowess.

The process saw the first two operational Specialised Infantry outfits – 4th Battalion, The Rifles and 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland – looking at selecting new blood from elsewhere in the Service.

The other pair – 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment – are still choosing successful soldiers from within their own ranks as part of the downsizing process accompanying their units' change of role.

Lt Col Peter Baines, commanding officer of 4 Rifles, said representatives of all battalions were in Aldershot for the cadre – the first of a handful scheduled for this year.

The CO continued: "Our battalion has completed the process of selecting the troops from within and we are now looking at transferees from



elsewhere in the Army.

"We've been particularly looking at the personality and character of the candidates as the successful troops will be required to fulfil demanding roles on overseas deployments.

"Having reached the two-year point, we are now established in our role and are looking for mature and experienced volunteers to keep the battalion fully topped up."

Lt Col Baines said personnel from 4 Rifles and 1 Scots recently deployed to Iraq on Op Shader, where they have been training some of the Middle Eastern country's best troops.

He concluded: "Our soldiers are in the process of building long-term relationships and are gaining experience in enduring operations – the deployment has made a good start and is going well."

“We’ve been looking at personality and character”



SOLDIER

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GLOBAL SITREP



1. LOUISIANA SOUTHERN COMFORT

A DIVERSE group of British troops are heading stateside to train alongside American counterparts.

Members of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Support Battalion will be joining colleagues from the US 101st Airborne 3rd Brigade Combat Team in Exercise Rattlesnake at Fort Polk, Leesville.

Nearly 100 personnel from the Gloucestershire-based Nato unit are taking part – with a mix of soldiers from the Royal Gurkha Rifles plus sappers and Royal Logistic Corps drivers.

Although UK Forces have featured in the training before, it has been restricted to the light role infantry – 2019 is also the first time the Nepalese troops will be involved.

“The exercise will provide an excellent opportunity to conduct some challenging training in an exciting overseas location,” said commanding officer Lt Col Nicholas Thomas (QDG).



2. ANTARCTICA CONTINENT CONQUERED

A HARDENED polar explorer has recalled drawing on more than three decades of Army experience to finish the most extreme challenge of his life.

Capt Lou Rudd (Para) battled punishing conditions – including plunging temperatures and howling winds – as he approached

the closing phase of his 1,500km solo trek across Antarctica.

But with his family in mind, he dug deep for a final push through the festive period – completing a 56-day test of endurance well



ahead of schedule.

Capt Rudd, who embarked on the expedition in memory of friend Lt Col Henry Worsley (Rifles) who died in 2016 attempting the same feat, finished the trek 20 days earlier than anticipated, and only 48 hours behind American professional athlete Colin O’Brady.

The officer said: “We’ve both done it incredibly fast.

“What matters is that I’ve completed my expedition.

“I’m quite pleased to have finished within a couple of days of a professional who I haven’t really been trying to race – I thought he would be much further ahead of me.”

1. LOUISIANA



IN NUMBERS

7

members of the Adjutant General's Corps Alpine ski team who qualified for the Army Championships during Exercise Spartan Hike in Serre Chevalier, France



“
I’m still in
the clouds
”

Ex-NCO recalls Sydney experience ahead of Invictus trials – page 79

3. NORWAY NORTHERN EXPOSURE

APACHE crews from 656 Squadron, 4 Regiment, Army Air Corps are braving some of the world’s harshest weather to fly over the Arctic Circle for the first time.

Aviators face temperatures of minus 30 degrees Celsius as they fly sorties alongside Wildcat during Exercise Clockwork in Norway’s Bardufoss region.

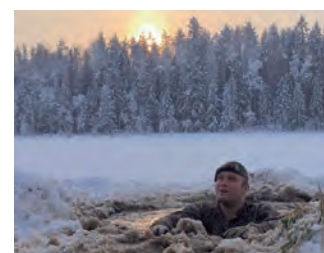


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6. ESTONIA

TAKING THE PLUNGE

A SUB-ZERO quiz formed part of a cold weather package for Estonia-based personnel from 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment.

The Royal Marine-led training saw troops plunge into an icy lake before answering a series of questions to secure their release.

The formation is currently heading up Nato's enhanced forward presence in the region.

5. NEPAL

4. BRUNEI

“
 There's more
 to life than
 social media
 ”

Youth expeds promote
 Army life – page 40

4. BRUNEI

COURSE KICKS OFF

AN INTERNATIONAL, multi-cap badge contingent of soldiers has converged on Brunei for the first jungle warfare instructors' package of the year.

As well as British personnel from the Infantry, Royal Engineers and Royal Marines, the 60-strong cohort comprises French, Dutch and Bruneian troops.

Over 57 days the students will spend almost a month in the field learning how to plan and deliver training to their own units on tropical environment operations.

Survival techniques, navigation, live firing and river drills are among the skills that the would-be instructors must master to pass.



5. NEPAL

RECRUITMENT BOOST

MORE than 400 new Nepalese soldiers are preparing to join the Army this month – around double the number of previous intakes.

After an attestation ceremony in Pokhara on February 8 the recruits will start phase one training in Catterick, where extra resources such as additional Gurkha instructors have been put in place to accommodate them.

The move comes amid a recruitment shortfall in the wider Service and is also part

of efforts to increase the size of the Brigade of Gurkhas twofold to 4,200 troops.

Maj Shane Burton (RGR), the formation's chief of staff, said the notoriously high selection standards had not been lowered despite the extra slots.

“We had 9,500 people apply this year and those we bring forward to Pokhara have already been through two previous phases so we take only the very best,” he added.

Prior to flying to the UK the successful candidates will also take part in a trial to see how the new physical employment standards can be incorporated into future training.



Pictures: Steve Dock

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Negotiating life's obstacles: The new arrangements are designed to help troops balance work and home

Picture: Graeme Main

Flexible service now a reality

REGULAR soldiers can now apply to work part-time or limit how often they are separated from a duty station.

The new arrangement, known as flexible service, comes into force this month having been trialled by the Army over the past two years.

It means that troops needing extra flexibility – for example, carers or those wanting to study – can change their work schedule for a set period of time to do this, with a subsequent drop in pay.

As a result, defence chiefs hope to keep hold of talent that might have been lost to the civilian world.

"This initiative will continue to modernise the employment opportunities in the Service and broaden the way we support our soldiers and their families," said Director Personnel Maj Gen Ivan Jones.

The move follows feedback from the Armed Forces 2018 continuous attitude survey, which found just a third of other ranks personnel felt able to balance personal lives and work.

Maj Gen Jones said the initiative showed the importance the Service places on supporting people.

"I believe it will strengthen us as an institution," he added.

All applications will be assessed by the Army Personnel Centre, with the proviso that soldiers can be returned to normal duties in times of national emergency or operational need.

The policy does not affect the various other flexible working options that exist for some troops, including compressed hours, working from home and variable start and finish times.

From April the Army will embark on an a project called flexible service two, which will examine the roles of Regulars and Reservists and how they work together.

It will involve looking at the full range of commitment – for example, a Reservist might want to be able to dial their service up and down as circumstances change.

However, the project will be ambitious because there are different acts of parliament governing part- and full-time soldiers.

Interested in flexible service?

Talk to your chain of command and read JSP 750 and AGAI 44

“It will strengthen the Army”

/ NEWS IN NUMBERS / Flexible service comes with various ground rules, including...

Private soldiers must have served for **24 months** at their initial posting before being eligible

3 months - 3 years The period of time personnel can make use of part-time working



Q&A

Assistant Head of Personnel Strategy Col Nick Doyle talks flexible service...

What do COs think about this new policy?

We spoke to several before and during the pilot. They have been positive and see it as quite a pragmatic move. It's better to lose somebody for a day a week in the short-term than on a permanent basis if a soldier's personal circumstances mean a job becomes impossible.

There are benefits all round, then?

Absolutely. All the surveys we have seen show that troops want to feel valued and this will help. If our people are satisfied in their work, they will naturally be more loyal to the organisation.

Is flexible service more suitable for certain groups?

No – everybody has the right to apply, and it's not aimed at any one area of the Army. Depending on their stage in the operational planning cycle, those at some units will be able to work more flexibly than others.

Do you expect a big uptake?

We're not so sure... our research showed lots of people were interested but we will have to wait and see. There were between 50 and 100 troops involved during the pilot – but I would expect the final uptake to be in the hundreds rather than the thousands.

Could short-notice ops be disrupted?

This is a fair question. But no, our assessment is that operational activity will not be affected. An application has to be approved, and somebody who is in a critical trade and set for deployment is, for example, unlikely to be signed off for flexible service. But each case is dealt with individually.

MUSIC FOR EVERY MISSION

■ VETERAN broadcaster John Simpson has revealed how music helped him cope with the pressures of war reporting.

A BBC stalwart for more than 50 years, he has covered some 30 conflicts, including both Gulf wars and Afghanistan.

Talking to *Soldier* ahead of his slot on Radio Four's *Our Classical Century* programme this month, the 74-year-old said his Walkman, and later his iPod, were a way of maintaining "mental balance" on ops.

"When you're on the road for a long time on these big stories, being able to withdraw from the complicated and sometimes hostile conditions is very important," he explained.

"Music of all types is really helpful – it creates the sort of atmosphere you need to look at problems in a rational and calm way."

The production is part of a wider series of events about classical music over the last 100 years. Listen to it on catch-up via the BBC Sounds app or iPlayer.



SIMPSON'S TOP TUNES

Oxygene, Jean-Michel Jarre

"I used to listen to this when I was flying to somewhere dodgy that I was nervous about. I always associate it with being on a Royal Air Force plane or something. It's just really good electronic music."



Runnin' Wild, Duke Ellington

"I bought this in a bazar in Baghdad three days before the first Gulf War. We definitely thought we'd be killed and this summed up the lunacy of staying there when everyone else had left."



Norfolk Rhapsody, Vaughan Williams

"This was written about the coastline where I grew up and I play it to be relaxed and calm, especially if things are going wrong."



Le Tombeau de Couperin, Maurice Ravel

"This sounds gloomy but it's the last thing I'd like to hear on Earth. Each of the six pieces is written about the friends that were killed fighting alongside Ravel during the First World War. He survived and wrote this immediately afterwards. It's very thoughtful."



WHAT ARE YOURS?

Email your ops playlist to news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Pictures: Chris Williamson, FreePik

Top of the photos

■ A LONG-SERVING *Soldier* photographer has spoken of his delight at royal recognition in the New Year Honours list.

Graeme Main admitted being humbled by his MBE after more than a quarter of a century of capturing military life through the lens.

"In a word I am gobsmacked," the civilian (shown right) added.

He was among a cohort of Army employees receiving the award for extraordinary achievements.

They included Royal Army Medical Corps officers Maj Nics Weatherill – who led the all-female Ice Maidens expedition across the Antarctic – and powerboat racer Maj Mandy Islam (shown right).

Away from her sporting achievements Maj Islam, who has a rare form of cancer, is being rewarded for supporting Service personnel with life-changing conditions. She has also written a new Army policy guide in the process.

More than 60 other soldiers received awards in the 2019 list.



Main picture: Maddie Marchment

Catterick: bring on the women

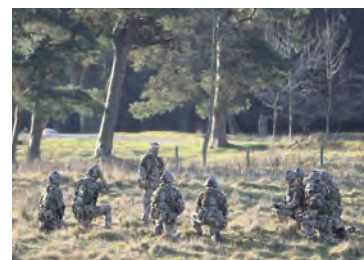
THE first generation of female infantry soldiers will be "fully integrated" into their units – living alongside male colleagues as they master the art of ground close combat.

Staff at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick confirmed that the Yorkshire base was prepared for the arrival of the first women – although none have yet transferred from the wider Army in the six weeks since applications opened.

Instructor Maj Richard Jeffrey (Rifles, pictured below), OC Rifles Company, confirmed that females had their own areas allocated within the same accommodation blocks as men.

They would also be fully integrated into their platoons during the 26-week combat infantry course, which has recently been updated in a top-down overhaul. The pilot initiative was well into its advanced phase as this issue went to press.

Maj Jeffrey – who has three decades of Army experience – told *Soldier*: "We have been well prepared for any female transferees



Picture: Graeme Main

from other branches of the Service but have not had any come across yet.

"We are now waiting for women from outside the military, who will soon be able to apply for the Infantry."

The new training package, which will replace the old combat infantryman's course in the summer, is also geared up for men and women to work alongside each other, he said.

Shown above, it includes the latest PT techniques designed to mimic military activities as well as larger-scale exercises and includes more weapons on the syllabus.



Rise of the foot soldier, page 30



On a mission:
Rifles troops
put their drills
to the test
on Longmoor
Training Area

Picture: Graeme Main

Rifles ramp up for Kabul

AFGHANISTAN-bound soldiers from 160th Infantry Brigade have been accelerating their pre-deployment training in preparation for their mentoring role in Kabul.

Personnel have been in the combined arms tactical trainer in Warminster going through drills while sharp end soldiers are busy preparing for a mission rehearsal exercise later this month.

Troops from Gloucestershire-based 1st Battalion, The Rifles and 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment from Shropshire are providing the backbone of the Operation Tora! outing, deploying to theatre between March and May.

They will be responsible for training their Afghan counterparts during their time in theatre.

Capt Simon Reed, adjutant of 1 Rifles, said troops were looking forward to the six-month tour and had taken a highly positive approach to their pre-deployment training.

The package has so far included instruction on Foxhound protected patrol vehicles, working on mentoring skills with Afghan cultural specialists and live-firing packages.

Capt Reed added: "We have pretty much the whole battalion involved – around 400 soldiers – and we're now looking ahead to our role at a number of locations around Kabul."

Personnel will be working alongside some 300 troops from 1 R Irish during the tour, he added.

The outfit will replace colleagues from 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles and 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment.

“We're now looking ahead”

■ THE Joint Service Mountain Training Centre is in the midst of its winter programme of mountaineering and skiing courses. With centres in Snowdonia, North Yorkshire, the Scottish Highlands, Northern Ireland and the Alps, the organisation offers the ideal platform for Service personnel who are looking to test themselves through adventurous training. For more details on what is on offer in 2019 visit the JSMTTC Facebook page.



IN NUMBERS:

7

activities on offer with the JSMTTC including skiing, caving and rock climbing

PREGNANCY PROBLEM

■ EXPECTANT mums face a greater risk of mental illness if their partners are deployed, a study has found.

Military wives reported worrying symptoms at all stages of pregnancy – with isolation triggering anxiety and stress.

Researchers also discovered the issue could be made worse for women who already look after children.

"Spouses not only have to deal with pregnancy and the additional demands on their mental health, but they may also be very worried about the welfare of their partner," said Lauren Godier-McBard, lead author of the report by Anglia Ruskin University Veterans' and Families Institute for Military Social Research.

The study focused on US research, but is likely to be of interest in the UK.

SHOES TO SPARE

■ ARMY Air Corps personnel have donated more than 500 pairs of shoes to children in Labi, Brunei.



The community support project was started 18 months ago by members of 7 Flight, who are colocated in the country with 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

The soldiers have also given food and sports equipment, and arranged for garrison families to help with English lessons at a local school.

"To have the privilege of helping some wonderful and humble people has been amazing," said SSgt Lee Smith (AAC)."

TERROR ATTACK HELP

■ AN app set up voluntarily by Service personnel to help civilians cope in the aftermath of a terrorist attack is going from strength to strength.

Citizen Aid was launched by a group of medical experts, including Senior Health Adviser Brig Tim Hodgetts, back in 2017.

It gives simple instructions on how to stay safe after a shooting, explosion, vehicle attack or acid attack.

And it's latest version has been the number one trending medical app in iTunes.

Find out more at www.citizenaid.org



Pictures: Lukasz Warzecha

SOLDIERING ON

■ SERVING troops are among the finalists in the 2019 Soldiering On Awards.

Maj Sally Orange and Lt Col Carl Meyer (both RAMC) and the Army LGBT team have been nominated in the sporting, healthcare and rehabilitation and defence inclusivity categories respectively.

Winners will be announced at a ceremony on April 5, with two awards decided by public ballot.

Visit www.soldieringon.org from February 13 to cast your vote.

A PROPERTY PUSH

■ HOUSE-HUNTING troops are being reminded that the Forces Help to Buy scheme has been extended until the end of the year.

NUMBER CRUNCHING:

Veterans and mental health support

FOUR

Years it takes, on average, for veterans seeking help to come forward



EX-SERVICE personnel with mental health issues are continuing to put off coming forward for assistance, a study by Help for Heroes has found.

The charity says veterans are waiting up to four years before seeking assistance – with some continuing to keep their silence.

The figures were highlighted as the organisation launched a new awareness campaign with a “stigma clock” projected onto the Tower of London.

WHAT COVENANT?

■ CONCERN is growing over awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Research commissioned by the Forces in Mind Trust charity found that less than a quarter of firms had heard about the initiative – and just eight per cent had signed up to it.

The *Benefit Not Burden* report concluded that the Armed Forces community could help encourage local authorities, public bodies and larger businesses to spread the word about the scheme.



Army wives step up

■ THIS month a team of 12 Army wives will climb the world's highest volcano, Ojos del Salado in Chile, which stands at 6,893 metres.

The expedition members are from Forces Wives Challenge, an organisation set up by Heather Sharp last year to combat loneliness.

“This isn’t about 12 women climbing a volcano but rather the start of a movement that will inspire many more to follow,” commented Sharp, who is married to a lieutenant colonel.

To date around 200 individuals have shown an interest in experiencing the same kind of adventure and teamwork that their partners enjoy in the Forces.

Other challenges the group has taken on include the National Three Peaks Challenge, with thousands of pounds also raised for good causes.

Visit www.forceswiveschallenge.org for more details.



Course helps troops to keep pace with new threats

THE Army has taken steps to enhance its IT capabilities with the successful trial of a so-called network academy.

Initiated by 1st (UK) Signal Brigade, the programme has armed junior personnel with the skills needed to keep pace with advancing technologies and provide the strong, secure computer networks demanded by the Service.

A total of 40 soldiers completed the Bramcote-based course in 2018 and the next intake is due to start work later this month.

Delivered in partnership with industry leaders Cisco, the syllabus is divided into two four-week blocks and starts by teaching students how to configure a network and gives them knowledge of routing, switching and

other applications.

Their level of understanding then progresses to a more advanced stage and culminates with them earning an associate qualification in routing and switching, which is widely recognised in the civilian sector.

“If we are going to deliver IT solutions this will give our soldiers the base to build their experience from,” project manager Capt Scott Mapplebeck (R Signals) told *Soldier*.

“It is something our guys need as they are now working with very complicated networks and we are hoping to see the benefits on exercises this year.”

Following the success at Bramcote plans are now in place to establish further academies in both Stafford and Bulford.

“It is something our guys need”



A strong hand

■ PLAYING cards designed to boost discussion on all things leadership are being distributed to units this month. The three packs are aimed at junior and senior NCOs, as well as young officers, with each suit covering a different topic – including decision-making, problem-solving and ethics. Those behind the initiative by the Centre for Army Leadership and the Communication and Applied Behavioural Science department at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst hope it will encourage diverse thinking among teams.

Picture: Bdr Murray Kerr, RA



FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Cycling smashed

AIRBORNE medics have pedalled their way to a healthy sum. The troops, from 16 Medical Regiment, cycled the distance between the French D-Day beaches and Arnhem's John Frost bridge to mark the 75th anniversary of Operation Market Garden. They were aiming to cover 420 miles between them during a punishing 24-hour session at Merville Barracks in Colchester but managed nearly 100 more.

Money raised:
£741
For: ABF The Soldiers' Charity



Robot roll-out

Cutting-edge kit will replace Wheelbarrow

THE first production models of a new cutting-edge bomb disposal robot have been delivered to the MoD.

The T7 unmanned ground vehicle, manufactured by Harris Corporation in the US, offers superior dexterity over existing platforms, allowing operators to feel their way through the intricate process of disarming a bomb thanks to an advanced remote-controlled hand grip.

The robot is also equipped with high-definition cameras, lightning-fast data links and tough all-terrain treads.

Four of the assets are currently with the remote controlled vehicles section of Defence Equipment and Support and will be used to develop train-the-trainer packages.

The devices are set to be issued to the Service's explosive ordnance disposal units in 2020, when 56 of them are due to be delivered as part of a £55 million through-life contract.

They will replace the Army's fleet of Wheelbarrow Mk 8B remote-controlled EOD robots, which have been in service since 1972.

“My neighbours receive it while I don’t”

Allowance anger

TALKBACK
PAGE 51




No half measures

ACHES, pains, cramp and dehydration were just some of the side effects experienced by endurance runner Capt Ali Guzowski (Scots) as he finished 50 half-marathons in 50 days. The officer completed the gruelling challenge in the searing heat of Somalia, covering a total of 652 miles. “The highlight

was the people around me, who were willing to support me and get me through,” he told *Soldier* afterwards.

Amount raised:
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Branch out: Salisbury Plain isn't the only place for units to rehearse their drills



Picture: Graeme Main

Visit new training areas, units told

EVERY day about 9,000 troops are cutting about on the MoD's UK training estate.

But some areas and ranges are being overlooked because personnel do not know they exist.

In a bid to change all that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, which manages the sites, is spreading the word about the lesser-known facilities that can be used for everything from live firing, dry training and urban drills to engineering tasks and adventurous training.

"The Army tends to focus on the bigger training areas such as Salisbury Plain because that is what they've always known," Col Phil Cook, deputy head of the UK defence training estate,

told *Soldier*. "But this causes issues with availability.

"Other areas also provide opportunity for variety."

Col Cook said that following the recent introduction of the battle craft syllabus – designed to improve troops' skills in the field – 2019 would be a great time for personnel to branch out.

"The opportunity to take your soldiers away to a different location that has a variety of facilities available should be every sub-unit commanders' dream," the officer continued.

"The defence training estate has excellent and diverse facilities."

To find out more about UK training areas available read [JSP 907](#).

DID YOU KNOW?
The MoD owns about **1%** of the UK's land
WITH MORE THAN **3/4** OF THIS HELD SOLELY FOR TRAINING THE ARMED FORCES
The estate includes **103** different sites

“The training estate has diverse facilities”

A PUNCH AT POVERTY

THOUSANDS of unused military ration packs are to be donated to community groups and homeless shelters across the UK to help combat poverty.

They will be supplied to FareShare, an organisation that distributes food to other organisations.

Each pack provides around 4,000

calories and is designed to sustain an active soldier for 24 hours. They include items such as porridge, rice, baked beans, pasta and sausages as well as snacks and hot drinks.

Less than one per cent of the two million used each year has to be disposed of.



RESERVES SURVEY

■ PART-TIME personnel who have received the 2019 Army Reserve continuous attitude survey are being urged to give their views on Service life.

The questionnaire has been distributed to 11,000 officers and soldiers and recipients have until March 18 to complete either the paper or online versions.

Responses will be used to develop policies that directly impact troops' lives and careers.

VALUES FOR EVERYONE

■ THE separate red and black books issued to commanders and soldiers to explain the Army's values and standards have been merged into a single guide to acknowledge the fact that good conduct is relevant to personnel of all ranks.

Troops can find it on the British Army website.



D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

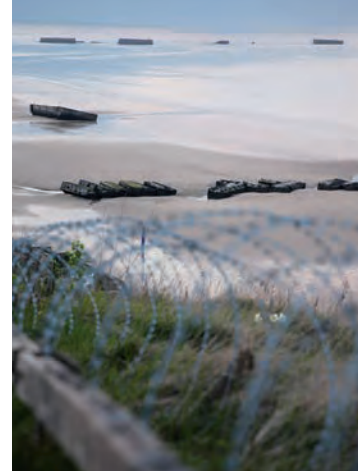
■ VETERANS who served during the momentous events of D-Day are being invited to a series of activities marking the 75th anniversary of the invasion this June.

The centrepiece of the occasion will see a specially chartered ship transport former personnel to a series of commemorations in both Portsmouth and Normandy.

Services will also be held at Bayeux Cathedral and cemetery and an evening of entertainment will be held alongside the beaches at Arromanche (shown).

Portsmouth – from where many of the invasion forces sailed in 1944 – will host five days of events as well as a national commemoration on June 5.

Veterans and carers will have the costs of attendance met by government and The Royal British Legion – register online at www.britishlegion.org.uk



Picture: Graeme Main



FANS of winter sport may have guessed the clues to last month's spine lines competition.

(Paula) Walker, (Corie) Mapp, (LSgt Lamin) Deen and (Sean) Olsson have all represented Team GB in bobsleigh, which took centre stage in our first issue of 2019.

This month, *Soldier* has teamed up with water purifying experts LifeSaver (www.iconlifesaver.com) to offer two readers a Liberty water bottle pack worth £120.

This portable piece of kit gives troops on the move everything they need to produce clean drinking water in demanding environments.

It includes a bottle and advanced filter that can transform dodgy tap, or even river, water into drinkable H₂O by removing bacteria, viruses and other contaminants.

To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us what links the words on the side of this magazine. Answers – including a daytime telephone number – to the usual postal address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by February 28. Good luck!



LIFESAVER
ESSENTIAL FOR SURVIVAL

FEMALE SOLDIERS UNITE

■ THE annual conference of the Army Servicewoman's network – aimed at inspiring and developing female personnel – will take place on March 7 at the Churchill Lecture Theatre, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Held from 0900 to 1600, the event will feature guest speakers and presentations, and is open to both Regulars and Reserves as well as civil servants.

For more details search for the conference at www.eventbrite.co.uk

WIN
a £120 water purifying system



Picture: Shutterstock

Could soldiers help put an end to jet lag?

“War fighters are almost like casualties”

B RITISH troops have been taking part in a transatlantic study to help reduce the crippling effects of jet lag on personnel travelling to deployments around the world.

The Institute of Naval Medicine (INM) and US health teams have been working with soldiers at the Brunei-based Jungle Warfare Division, Infantry Battle School, in the research.

The initiative is examining whether breathing in the type of oxygen found at 10,000ft for two hours can alleviate symptoms of the condition – such as sleep difficulties, irritability and stomach pain.

Previous studies suggest it can reset the body clock and help individuals adjust to new time zones.

A group of 12 soldiers flying into Brunei after a day of travelling received the oxygen treatment, and another 12 a placebo. Medics are assessing the results.

Dr Simon Delves, who led the

study for the INM, said the work was an opportunity to mitigate the incapacitating effects of jet lag.

Further research, looking at whether reduced oxygen is more effective than other treatments, could follow

Delves added: “This project has been an excellent example of collaboration with our US partners.

“We have also had really good support from the staff at the Jungle Warfare Division.”

The US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, which has been working with the INM in Gosport, emphasised the importance of the study.

Research physiologist Beth Biedleman said: “War fighters with jet lag are almost like casualties because they are incapacitated, compromising mission readiness.

“Having this data is going to be valuable – it will enhance the capability to operate effectively.”

120

Players in action at the Army Individual Squash Championships – page 76



CHOSEN FILM?



A POWERFUL movie focusing on a group of veterans adjusting to life outside of the Army has been nominated for best documentary in the UK's National Film Awards.

The offering, which received a positive review in last June's *Soldier*, charts the fortunes of the former troops on civvy street as well as the work of Service charities. Winners will be revealed in March.

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THE BIG PICTURE

Episkopi, Cyprus

AIMING HIGH

FIRE-UP troops from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment hone their skills against a mock enemy on a training area within the Western Sovereign Base Area. As the regional standby battalion, their main role is to provide a rapid reaction force, ready to deploy to trouble spots in the Middle East or Africa at 48 hours' notice. Ops fielded by the outfit, nicknamed the Poachers, could range from war fighting to the evacuation of civilians from areas of natural disaster or conflict.

Picture: Graeme Main





Sleep strategies

Stick to a schedule

Sleep is part of a 24-hour cycle. Maintaining a regular routine enables the body to anticipate sleep, for example, by producing the hormone melatonin as a cue for nodding off at the same time each day.

Relaxation

You need to mentally and physically unwind in order to sleep. Relaxation is a skill; try gentle stretching, yoga, reading or progressive muscle relaxation. Stepping out of a warm bath or shower lowers the body temperature and prepares it for sleep.

Bedtime rituals

Follow the same routine to prepare for bed whether you're sleeping at the normal time or not. This will encourage pattern recognition – a light snack, a warm bath, brushing your teeth, soothing music or meditation could be part of your wind-down.

► THE average adult needs around seven to eight hours of shut-eye a night. But people who do a lot of physical activity, like athletes and Service personnel, may need more.

Unfortunately, frequent operations or exercises mean soldiers' sleep patterns can easily become disrupted.

A recent study of US personnel revealed that problems such as trouble sleeping and nightmares are very common on tour.

Insomnia can be characterised by difficulties drifting off, staying asleep through the night or waking early.

This can lead to fatigue, irritability, poor

concentration, anxiety, low mood and memory lapses.

Lack of slumber has also been linked to slower reaction times, increased risk taking and lapses in moral reasoning, all of which are critically important in the Army.

In the longer term, chronic sleep deprivation can raise the chances of developing mental health disorders like depression and physical illnesses such as infections, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as weight gain.

It's serious stuff. So if you often find yourself tossing and turning, these tips could help.

Struggling to catch enough Zs? Dr Sophie Bostock from web developer Big Health has this advice...

Cut down on booze

Although it might feel as though a nightcap helps you drift off, alcohol disrupts your natural sleep patterns. It also acts as a diuretic, so you might get up multiple times during the night to go to the loo.

Keep tech out of the bedroom

Blue light from laptops and mobile devices can interfere with production of melatonin. Charge your phone in another room to resist the temptation to check messages late at night.

HOW TO RESET YOUR BODY CLOCK BETWEEN DEPLOYMENTS



Avoid having a clock where you can see it during your rest time. Looking at the hours tick by can make you anxious.



Keep physically fit, which will make you better at coping with changes to your body clock and help you feel less fatigued overall.



Light is a powerful alerting signal for the body. For undisturbed sleep, use blackout curtains or drapes – a good eye mask can also do the trick. Conversely, light alarm clocks and light boxes that mimic the sun's intensity can help to naturally boost alertness in the morning.



Keep a visible record of your sleep and work schedule somewhere so your partner, family or colleagues can see it and don't inadvertently wake you up.



If you're in a noisy environment, look for ways to block it out. Earplugs could help.

Don't soldier on alone



✚ Insomnia can be treated with cognitive behavioural therapy. Big Health has created an online sleep improvement programme (www.sleepio.com/nhs) which is available free on the NHS across Greater London and the Thames Valley. For more help with sleep you can also speak to your medical officer or log on to [www.nhs.uk live-well/sleep-and-tiredness](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness)

Get seedy

When it comes to nutrition, size isn't everything

► THEY are vitamin and mineral powerhouses, yet seeds are almost completely missing from many of our diets. But considering they contain all the nutrients needed to produce plants hundreds of times their size, they probably deserve more attention. Whether you chuck them over your porridge or sprinkle them into your salad, here is an idea of the boost that just five of these tasty morsels can bring to your health regime...

HOW MUCH?

Seeds are so nutrient-dense that a tablespoon or two a day is plenty to maintain a healthy diet. Mix up the different seeds you eat to cover all bases.

Pumpkin

Full of **protein, iron, magnesium, zinc** and **unsaturated fat**, these little fellas are delicious roasted and added to porridge or stir-fry.

Chia

A decent source of **fibre** as well as the other good stuff, chia seeds are almost tasteless so can be safely sprinkled over pretty much anything.

Sunflower

As well as offering a nervous system boost with **B vitamins**, these seeds are full of **vitamin E**, which is good news for the skin and eyes. Tasty by themselves or over fruit and yoghurt.

Linseed (flaxseeds)

An excellent source of **fibre** as well as **omega-3** and **omega-6** essential fatty acids, which are needed for many bodily functions.

Sesame

Delicious roasted, in hummus or in vegetable sauces, these little guys are packed with **calcium** which is especially useful for any troops trying to protect their bone health.

► IT HAS been the most natural of transitions for Lauren Land – moving seamlessly from the front line of Army operations to the sharp end of law enforcement.

Having enjoyed a productive tenure in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, the ex-soldier has found her second calling with the Metropolitan Police Service.

And the 31-year-old highlights that the skills forged in soldiering are continuing to serve her well in the heat of the beat – with self-discipline at the heart of her service.

“When I was going through my 12 weeks of police training at Bethnal Green, I found the Army had given me a sound basis from the outset,” she says.

“Things such as punctuality and looking smart, for example, came naturally, as well as the ability to stay calm and professional under pressure.



Beat street

Military skills stood ex-NCO in good stead for a policing career

“These things matter in law enforcement as much as the military – people notice.”

Joining the police might have been a new outing for her career, but public service had always been at the centre of Land’s life.

Raised in a military family, she had no hesitation in following her father into uniform along with her two brothers.

Having qualified as an electrician after joining the REME in 2005, she completed nine years – including an Op Herrick tour – before considering her civvy street options.

“I loved Army life but I’d reached a point where I wanted to settle down a bit,” she recalls.

“When I started looking at the Met it really appealed. As much as anything it seemed very natural to leave one professional service and join another.

“Strangely enough, my dad had also joined the police after he left the Army and our careers crossed by a week. He left on the Friday of the week I arrived.”

After passing the selection process, Land’s initial training was followed by a two-year probationary period – with coaching from experienced officers coupled with regular assessments.

“During this time you have to undertake a number of tasks and ensure you are competent in certain areas,” she continues. “You are right at the forefront of policing.

“The environment is really diverse, and you are always out meeting the public – this is quite different to the Army, which by its nature tends to be a bit more insular.”

Now a fully qualified PC – and based in Barking and Dagenham – Land says she remains impressed with the variety of the work on offer as well as the training available.

She is able to deal with public order situations, including football matches, and passed the demanding course to use the Taser.

“I’m in my third year and although I am still finding my feet I’d like to start looking at the exam for promotion to sergeant over the next couple of years – I feel it is in reach.

“I left the Army as a corporal, so I had already gained some experience of being a leader.”

She adds: “I’m still keeping my options open as to where I go next in the Met but I would advise any Service leavers looking for a second career to consider policing – I wouldn’t have left the military for any other job.”



How to join up

The UK is divided up into police force areas largely following county structures – although there are separate arrangements for Scotland and Northern Ireland. You’ll need to visit the website of the outfit you want to join.

After applying you can expect an assessment stage, with an interview as well as health and fitness checks. Candidates are also security cleared and must provide references.

● For further details on joining the Metropolitan Police Service see www.met.police.uk/careers



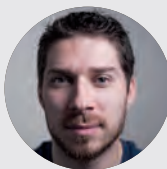
Sweet release

5 foam roller exercises to help you loosen up

► THE humble foam roller is a handy, affordable piece of kit that can relieve tight muscles, boost mobility and assist with post-workout recovery – and all for a fraction of the price of a regular sports massage.

Little wonder, then, that the fitness community has embraced these nifty neoprene tubes.

Here, Ashley Kalym (pictured), co-author of *Bulletproof Bodies*, offers a step-by-step guide to five easy roller exercises you can do from the comfort of your own home.



Lower spine

This is one area that can definitely be helped by regular foam-rolling – especially if you do strength training or perform exercises like the deadlift:

- 1 Sit down on the ground with the roller behind you. Lie back so it's positioned across your lower back. Plant your feet with bent knees.
- 2 Place your arms on the ground behind you, supporting your weight. Roll backwards and forwards slowly, concentrating on the bottom of your back.
- 3 After you have rolled for around 20 seconds, pause at the bottom of your spine and allow your back to curl over the foam roller. Hold this position for 10-30 seconds.



Shoulder blades

Also known as the scapulae, these are important in movements such as the pull-up. Help them function at their best with this move:

- 1 Lie down with your upper back on the foam roller. Plant your feet and raise your hips into the air.
- 2 Hug yourself by wrapping your arms around yourself to stretch your back muscles. This makes them more accessible and easier to target.
- 3 Roll backwards and forwards slowly on the roller over the muscles of the scapulae for 20 seconds, and then rest.



Backside

If you're squatting a lot, or doing a lot with your lower body, then you may want to foam-roll your piriformis muscles, which are located deep within the buttocks:

- 1 Sit down and place your left foot on the right knee, as if you were going to cross your legs.
- 2 Now sit directly on the foam roller with the piriformis. You will know if you are on the right spot, as it should feel tender. It may even feel knotted deep down.
- 3 Roll over the tight spot slowly for 20-30 seconds, then change legs and repeat.



IT bands

It's likely most runners will have suffered with sore or tight iliotibial bands at some point. Foam-rolling this area – on the outer part of the thigh and knee – can help to alleviate some of the symptoms:

- 1 Lie down on one side with the foam roller underneath your lower outer-thigh at 90 degrees to your body.
- 2 Keep your legs together, support your body weight with your hands, and then start to roll up and down the foam roller.
- 3 Roll for 30 seconds, then change legs and repeat.



Adductor

These muscles, on the insides of the thighs, are worked when doing lunges, squats and other lower body movements. Rolling them can help maintain mobility when doing such exercises:

- 1 Position your foam roller parallel to your torso and crouch down on top of it.
- 2 Keep one leg straight and bend the other at the knee, placing the inside of your thigh on top of the foam roller.
- 3 Support yourself on your hands, and start to roll backwards and forwards over the roller. Keep going for 20 seconds, and then change legs and repeat.

Choosing your kit

Foam rollers come in many different types but shouldn't set you back more than about £20. Picking the right one is simple...

● Size

Foam rollers are all of a similar diameter, but they do differ in length. Go for one that is long enough to get the job done, but short enough to store and carry around for convenience.

● Hardness

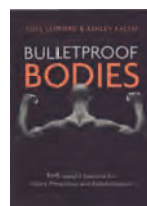
Another factor to consider is the firmness of the surface. Softer options are more suitable for those who haven't used foam rollers before and for areas of the body that are a little tender. Firmer ones are great for those who are more experienced and for really working muscles located deeper in the body.

● Surface pattern

Most foam rollers have lumps, bumps or raised shapes that are useful for digging into the muscle and connective tissue. Make sure you pick a pattern you're comfortable with.

REMEMBER

- Expect foam roller exercises to hurt a bit, especially if you have problems with a particular muscle group. However, the pain level shouldn't be excruciating so ease up on the intensity if you need to.
- You can hit the foam roller daily or after every PT session – the key is to use it often enough to maintain or improve your mobility.



Competition time

Soldier has teamed up with Lotus Publishing to give away two copies of *Bulletproof Bodies*, which explains how to use body-weight exercises for injury prevention and rehabilitation. To be in with a chance of winning tell us where the adductor muscle is located. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by February 28.

“I could have been paralysed”

Junior NCO reveals how she came back from the terrifying accident that nearly ended her military career



► THIS month marks a return to ceremonial duties for LBdr Grace Gostelow of the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery.

Two years ago she risked her life to stop six runaway horses and a gun carriage during routine practice for an admin parade at Charlton Park in Woolwich.

But her immense act of bravery came at great personal cost...

“

We were doing a warm-up ahead of the rehearsal.

We went into a canter and one of the horses in the centre position started bucking and tried to overtake the leaders.

That spooked those at the front and eventually resulted in the other two riders falling off.

Basically, I was the only one left with six horses and a gun. That is when my training kicked in.

The girl in the centre fell off to the left so my immediate thought was to try and move the horses inside to stop her getting run over.

When the lead driver came off I was left wondering which direction they would go next so I tried to use my horses to slow the carriage down.

There was an element of fear but my main focus was on preventing a serious accident – I wasn't really thinking about myself.

My job is to stabilise the gun, keep it on its wheels and act as the brakes – that's what I tried to do.

Jumping off would have been a crazy thing to do – I had to slow it down.

The gun crashed into a tree, the impact catapulted me off and I landed on my back.

I was unconscious for five minutes so I can't remember falling or hitting the tree.

One of the lads rushed over and as I came round he told me not to move. I was disorientated and just wanted to get up and tend to my horses.

Fortunately, he'd recently had first aid training and after realising I had landed on my back he made sure I stayed still.

I had been due to ride in the Royal Artillery Gold Cup that week and the fact I was fit and didn't move really helped – if I had stood up I could have been paralysed.

It was only when I was transported to hospital that I started to feel the pain.

I broke two bones in my neck and another in my back.

To be honest the prognosis was not great and I was told there was every chance I would not return to military service.

However, that was a prospect I was not prepared to consider and after a year of rehabilitation I made it back to work.

I was at Headley Court from April to November in 2017 and the team there was fantastic, but it was the other patients – with injuries far worse than mine – who really helped me get through it.

Throughout that whole process I was still mad keen on horses and was determined to ride again.

From an early age I was taught that if you have a fall you should get back on as fast as you can – it's all about confidence.

The further you are away the less likely



you are to do that but I was fortunate to have two horses of my own so I had the opportunity to get straight back.

I'm now returning to the gun team for Accession Day on February 6. There's a bit of apprehension but it will be nice to be involved again.

The accident was not my fault. If it had been due to an error on my part I may have felt differently about going back but it was something out of my control, so I'm not worried.

I've raced in the Royal Artillery and Grand Military Gold Cups in the past and

am hoping to take part again this year but if that doesn't happen I'll definitely be there in 2020.

Being out on a racecourse is a great feeling. It's the adrenalin of riding at speed over big fences – I love it. ■

”

Army jockeys gear up for prestigious race – page 72

Pictures: Sgt Paul Randall, RLC and Peter Davies

RISE OF THE FOOT SOLDIER

A new generation of infanteers is being prepared for combat

THE grass is rustling as an icy wind blasts across the North Yorkshire countryside – an intermittent, milky sun casts strange shadows as the morning gloom lifts.

Pockets of soldiers are fleetingly visible against the desolation as the struggling winter light attempts to warm the spirits, cam cream and MTP doing their job in concealing them. The distant buildings of a town beyond this weathered wilderness offer an inviting glimpse of civilisation.







● **INTERACTIVE** whiteboards and digital material from the Defence Learning Environment online portal make lessons on the new course more lively for the latest generation of troops.

Classrooms in Catterick now feature kit similar to sixth form colleges – meaning soldiers benefit from the likes of multimedia presentations to bring battlefield theory to life.

Troops get the heads-up on upcoming activities thanks to downloadable aids on their mobile phones, while instructors can make use of similar resources to help them organise their activities in good time.

“The key thing here is that everyone on the course no longer has to log-in to a secure PC – they can access all they need via a password-protected website,” says Capt Loxton.

“Students are better prepared for the days ahead while instructors can organise their time and plan lessons when it suits them.”



Full-spectrum warriors:

Troops rehearse section attacks as they cross over into the advanced part of the course. The syllabus equips infantry for a sophisticated battlefield



“Our aim has been to create a course where we train smarter”



➔ But out here is infantry territory: a stage where the realities of soldiering's core muscles are flexed, a place to rehearse decisions that can mean life or death in reality. The rapid crackle of rifle fire and distant figures running to a mock section attack is testament to the brutal business.

Despite advances in technology, ground troops have remained the battle-winning constant for decades. But now the way they are prepared for fighting is changing, with an all-new combat infantry course featuring enhanced kit and the latest tech to evaluate performance. The next generation of men – and women – entering ground close combat will be well equipped for the fight.

“Assessing the troops can be pretty ruthless,” remarks Capt Nick Loxton (Rifles, pictured below), one of the officers involved in the pilot of the new course at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick. “We’re using tactical engagement simulation (Tes) kit for the first time, which allows us to have in-depth analysis at the conclusion of each exercise.

“We can see who is firing accurately or if somebody hasn’t identified a target correctly: you can break down individual situations and this helps troops learn from their mistakes.

“Our aim has been to create a course where we train smarter – the soldiers are not being thrashed for the sake of it and are adequately rested to recuperate.”

Despite the changes from the combat infantryman's course it replaces, the new 26-week package is not for the faint-hearted. Students trialling it are well aware of the demands – facing a packed agenda of theory and full-on fieldcraft.

Moves have been made to expose soldiers to different experiences. In a departure from the old syllabus, the weapons suite taught has been widened, with troops now getting hands-on with the Glock 9mm pistol and next-generation light anti-tank weapon. ➔

AT A GLANCE: THE COMBAT INFANTRY COURSE

Larger-scale
exercise serials now held



Hosted at the ITC over **26** weeks

7
modules



**Glock 9mm
pistol and NLAW**
included on syllabus



Available to female
infanteers

“
Our role is
shaping the
Army’s next
generation
”





➔ Elsewhere, the Army's latest physical employment standards are also interwoven. Now mimicking actions required for the battlefield, PT is embedded in tactical serials – meaning troops can find themselves tabbing in a simulated advance to contact or on a bespoke gym programme for specific tasks.

"We have made changes to the scenarios we rehearse too," points out Maj Richard Jeffrey (Rifles, pictured below), who led the creation of the latest syllabus. "Reflecting the current threats, we have now, for example, extended the urban warfare element of the training.

"There are two parts to the course – basic and advanced – and the whole package is divided into seven modules. We've been regularly reviewing and developing the offering so we're now into the implementation phase. It will fully replace the old version in the summer."

Soldiers with 2 Platoon, Rifles Company, 1st Infantry Training Battalion undergoing the new programme are unanimously positive about it – but warn aspiring infanteers not to underestimate the challenge.

"You need to stay focused if you want to get through this," says Pte Alex Sweet (RRF) during a meal break between serials close to Newfound England Farm. "The instructors will help you but you need to listen to them – you're going to be busy all the time."

Fus Jake Plumb (R Welsh) is relishing the chance to join his Tidworth-based battalion having now moved into the advanced phase of the course. But he admits that meeting the demanding physical fitness standards has proved particularly testing.

"I found life pretty tough during the early stages of the training," the soldier points out. "But you work through it, and I'm really enjoying things now – we're spending far less time in the classroom at the moment and doing more hands-on stuff in the field."

And Pte Lewis Savage (R Anglian) is impressed with the course's fast-paced delivery. "You're certainly not sitting around all the time," he says with a smile. "One moment you can be doing a lesson, the next you're out in Tes kit following it through.

"My advice to anyone going through the ITC is that you need to avoid taking things personally – the staff here are not aiming to offend, they are here to make you into a soldier."

This is a sentiment shared by 2 Platoon commander Lt Will Lancashire (Rifles), who is responsible for overseeing the pilot on the ground. With experienced NCOs around him – many with tours of Iraq and Afghanistan under their belts – he is proud of all that is being achieved.

"Our role is about shaping the Army's next generation, seeing them change from civilian to soldier and on to infanteer," he concludes. "It's fantastic to help them make that transition." ■



HEADY EFFECT

Words: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures: Peter Davies



“
It's what we call
retrospective fun
”

How these high wires help Army recruits find their cool heads...

A FRAID of heights? One in five of us are. And for phase one recruits at Army Training Regiment Winchester the challenge to conquer this common fear is served up just one week into their course with a memorable climbing test. “They love it,” says Maj Frank Culverwell (RLC), one of the company commanders who oversees the training. “It’s what we call ‘retrospective fun’ – one of those things you’re glad you have done, but only at the end.” The confidence course, as the outing is known, sees participants hooked up to a safety mechanism before negotiating their way around obstacles. And for instructors, the task is a vital way of moving the youngsters out of their comfort zones. “The more people are placed in that ‘stretch space’, the more they become comfortable when facing an element of uncertainty,” Maj Culverwell continues. “And we want confident young soldiers in our Army. ➔

“It’s about doing the right thing on a hard day”



→ “It’s not easy to get to the very top of the course and put yourself over the edge.

“But it’s one of those arduous encounters that brings people together.

“It can be unpleasant if someone is scared of heights. So it’s all about working as a team and starting to share those difficult experiences that get the adrenaline going.”

With a 13-metre platform at the end that troops must launch themselves from, the high wires certainly do that.

But according to instructors at ATR Winchester, everyone who attempts it gets there in the end.

“Lots of people get ‘disco legs’ at the top but when they are talked to they make the jump,” adds Maj Culverwell.

“Instructors have an arsenal of coping strategies that they give to the recruits to control their fears.

“And once people have done the jump, they are always keen to do it again as it genuinely breeds confidence.”

By taking the leap, recruits are learning first-hand about one of the Army’s central values – moral and physical courage.

“It’s about doing the right thing on a hard





day,” the officer explains.

“When you’re at the top of that platform you probably don’t want to jump, but moral courage makes you do it.”

And if you can follow orders outside your comfort zone with a cool head, it will stand you in good stead for operations.

“Obviously at Winchester it is all in a controlled, safe environment,” Maj Culverwell says. “But the experience develops them, and brings people together.

“When you compare the young lads and ladies who walk through our doors on the first day to the ones who leave 14 weeks later it’s a complete transformation.

“And the confidence course is a small part of developing that rounded soldier.

“It’s something that continues through your military career – the longer you’re in, the more assured you will become.

“It’s a phenomenal transition.” ■



THE NOSEBLEED SECTION:

It’s natural to feel nervous when looking down from a height, but for some the fear is so extreme that panic can set in. Here are some signs you could be struggling with height-related anxiety:

- ✓ trembling
- ✓ gasping for breath
- ✓ nausea
- ✓ dizziness and a spinning sensation (vertigo)
- ✓ a general and irrational sense of panic
- ✓ numbness
- ✓ racing heartbeat

What causes an irrational fear of heights?

- ✓ Fear that follows a traumatic incident involving a fall from a height or witnessing someone else get hurt this way
- ✓ Genetic. All of us are born with an innate fear of heights – it’s an evolutionary necessity to keep us away from danger and protect our species

Therapy can be effective for various phobias, including a fear of heights (acrophobia). If you are struggling, make sure you speak to your chain of command, medical officer or visit www.anxietyuk.org.uk



LIFE CHANG

How wilderness adventure
is getting teenagers excited
about a life in uniform



ING



RECRUITMENT: it's the word on everyone's lips when it comes to the future of the Service.

But away from the lively debate about high-profile Army ads, the next generation are getting their eyes opened to the excitement of military life by journeying into some of the wildest places on Earth.

Maj Andy Blackmore, officer commanding of C Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, was one of those youngsters not so far back.

Enticed into the Army after a trek to the Arctic island of Svalbard with the British Exploring Society (BES) at the age of 17, he believes youth development organisations are helping the iPhone generation to see for themselves what a career in the Armed Forces can give them.

A charity, the BES takes 16- to 30-year-olds on jungle, desert and mountain expeditions across the world.

And it often does so with serving personnel at the helm of the outings.

According to Maj Blackmore, directly working with young people in this way allows Servicemen and women to showcase their jobs in a setting that on-screen advertising can't.

"I can still remember the skills I learnt on that first trip, from alpine knots to navigation and cooking," the 42-year-old tells *Soldier*.

"I wasn't hugely confident but my leaders had a great impact on me and it became a life-changing experience that really showed me how fun adventure and leadership can be – so much so that I was motivated to join."

The Brunei-based officer has now twice given his services to the BES as an expedition leader, believing that a big part of today's recruitment task is about showing – as well as telling – young people the value in living differently to their peers.

"It's important to open their eyes to



➔ new experiences that don't require them to be fixed to a device and social media," he explains.

"This is about making them understand that they can trek 160km across Egypt's Sinai Peninsula in the middle of summer.

"When leading on an exped to Namibia I sat down with a few of the guys and chatted with them about the Army.

"And what a great recruiting tool, to spend hours sheltering under a rock in that environment and talking to them about life.

"That way they really understood what it's about.

"But overall it's about building their confidence and self-belief.

"We have lost the art of self-reliance."

To this end the officer is keen on encouraging others to give their services to youth organisations such as the BES, to show young people how the Army works as well as telling them.

"There is a generation coming through now that, because of YouTube and things like that, believe they are the next big thing and that all they need to do is sit about and wait to be discovered, or design new tech and they will make millions," he says.

"Whereas actually what you need to do is be at the coalface and start work.

"Kids need to understand there's more to life beyond their bedroom and social media. There is so much to be explored.

"And who wouldn't want to do these sorts of things as a 17-year-old?

"Does the Service still hold appeal to today's generation? I think it 100 per cent does.

"But it's just about explaining that and helping to advance individuals at the lowest level from as early as possible.

"In the Army you are financially secure, you get educated, you're developed – and I don't think enough people understand that.

"It gives you the whole package."

A military career is about far more than getting through your travel destination bucket list.

But with prominent Army characters such as Expedition Ice Maiden's Lt Zanna Baker (RA) having been inspired into service by a BES trip she took to South Georgia and the Falklands at the age of 18, the merits of these sorts of opportunities are easy to see.

By leading expeditions, serving soldiers are helping young people to realise their full potential while also demonstrating the values and standards of the British Army.

"Don't get too comfortable, we're about to change your life," the BES website says to anyone who logs on to find out more about its trips.

If the experiences of Maj Blackmore and others are anything to go by, it might just be right. ■



Want to get involved? From the Canadian Yukon to the Indian Himalayas – to find out more about any of the expeditions organised by the British Exploring Society visit www.britishexploring.org



“ Kids need to understand there's more to life beyond their bedroom and social media ”



Military links

● Maj Blackmore follows in a line of military figures who have reached out to youngsters through the British Exploring Society. In fact, the BES itself was founded by Surgeon Commander George Levick (pictured above), who was a member of Capt Robert Scott's Antarctic expedition of 1910-13. His experiences on that mission inspired the naval surgeon to create the organisation in 1932. And since then it has taken 11,000 youngsters from different backgrounds on unforgettable trips across the world.



WARRIOR

LOCKHEED MARTIN

Report: Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main and Lockheed Martin

WHEN the upgraded version of the Warrior infantry fighting vehicle is delivered in around four years' time it won't look radically different from its forebear, which has been in service since 1988.

You might notice the bigger turret and gun, but this second-generation model offers a lot more than a more robust punch from its main weapon.

Underneath the armoured skin is a raft of 21st century modifications that the soldiers testing the prototypes say are nothing short of "game changing".

Defence contractor Lockheed Martin has supplied 11 demo vehicles for a joint project with the Army called the Warrior capability sustainment programme. The platforms are being pushed to their limits by a team of 58 personnel at the Armoured Trials and Development Unit (ATDU) at Bovington, and live-firing trials have begun.

Maj Charles Brunskill (Mercian, pictured right), the officer commanding infantry fighting vehicle projects within the outfit,

REBORN

Revamped platform shows major leap in capability

“The accuracy levels and the rate of fire are simply astonishing”

says: “This thing is light years ahead of the current Warrior in terms of capability.

“The digitisation of the turret and the stabilised gun, which can fire on the move, are phenomenal and a step ahead of even the Challenger’s technology. The lethality, the accuracy levels and the rate of fire are simply astonishing.

“The current Warrior has to be brought to a halt before its gun is fired, and while a good gunner will hit an impressive percentage of targets it takes a lot of skill aiming off for wind, direction of travel and so forth.

“In this version, however, he or she has

a computerised system which automatically takes into account the Warrior and target speed, terrain, elevation and meteorological conditions.

“You can make a hole in a target with the first round and put the next one right through it – it’s that good.”

The revamped vehicle will have significant benefits for dismounted troops, too.

Its advanced airburst round, for example, can hit targets on the ground over an area of 125 square metres, and will be lethal even for enemy troops who are dug in to trenches.

It also offers the soldiers it carries a degree of situational awareness that the →





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➔ current platform can't compete with. This is thanks to six cameras dotted around the turret that feed images to laptop-sized screens inside the vehicle.

"In the Warrior we have now, when the troops burst out the back to fight the enemy that's usually the first time they've actually seen the situation on the ground," explains ADTU's WO2 Stephen Hull (Scots), who has been involved with the project over the last four years.

"They get a verbal brief over the comms system before dismounting and then have to try and visualise what they're heading into.

"In this version the screen in the troops' compartment displays camera images from 360 degrees around the vehicle.

"The section commander can use it as a briefing tool before the soldiers dismount, telling them where to go and pinpointing enemy positions.

"The troops can see for themselves what the area is like, so they know exactly what they're facing. That will be a huge and very welcome modification."

That refinement process is ongoing, with weapons and reliability trials hitting top gear over the next year or so.

Around 380 Warriors – approximately half the British Army's fleet – are expected to receive the upgrades, with the first batch of 20 slated to be ready by 2023. ■

IN NUMBERS

58

ATDU troops involved in the Warrior project

4000

kilometres driven so far during testing of the 11 prototypes

75

max speed in kilometres per hour



660

range, in kilometres, when driven at 60kph



FIVE

variants planned for the new Warrior – including repair, recovery, observation post, command and the seven-man troop carrier



CANNON LOWDOWN

How the new Warrior's improved cannon compares to the existing model

New 40mm cannon

Effective range: 2,500m

Armour-piercing

Velocity: 1,500m/sec

Penetration: 140mm of armour (at 1,500m)

General-purpose, point detonating

Velocity: 1,000m/sec

Penetration: 210mm of reinforced concrete at 1,000m

Self-detonates: 3,700m

General-purpose, airburst

(point detonate, air, ground)

Velocity: 1,000m/sec

Penetration: 210mm of reinforced concrete at 1,000m

Existing 30mm cannon

Effective range: 2,000m

Armour-piercing

Velocity: 1,175m/sec

Penetration: 40mm of armour (at 1,500m)

High explosive

Velocity: 1,070m/sec

Penetration: Not applicable

Self-detonates: 3,800-4,500m

No equivalent



Six turret-mounted digital cameras feeding three screens inside crew compartments. Thermal imagery for night operations remains an option



Driver's forward and rearward camera

Stabilised CT40mm cannon with digital fire control system can engage targets on the move and automatic system to switch shell types. Can be elevated to 45 degrees (up from 32 degrees of 30mm Rarden weapon) for urban operations



Ability to carry three crew and up to seven troops (depending on version)

Mine blast resistant seating

Enhanced modular armour system



Stabilised L94 A1 chain gun



"I now have **front and rear views and 360-degree awareness** from the other cameras so I can use these images to advance or to see what's going on around us. In the current Warrior I rely on the commander to brief me on what I can't see so that's a big difference when I'm out there doing the job."

Driver - Pte Aaron Whitelock, PWRR

"I've operated Warrior for eight years and I'm finding the performance of this new platform amazing. The **40mm cannon has more range**, is **very efficient** and enables us to **fire on the move**. This means we are not a static target for the enemy. You can also **switch the type of round in an instant** with just a press of a switch. Either the gunner or I can select the round as the new control panel sits between the two of us.

The situational awareness provided by the **digital cameras** makes a huge difference too. I can obtain an accurate picture without sticking my head out of the hatch.

The **night vision thermal imagery system** is also better.

Out on the battlefield this new kit has decreased our workload so we can focus more on the fight itself."

Vehicle commander – Cpl Aled Roberts, R Welsh

"The **stabilised gun and digital fire system are so good** that rather than hanging back and waiting for the Challengers to clear the positions we can assist them, push up and even protect the tanks. **The cannon is very accurate** and I'd have no problem taking out a two-man anti-tank team with the airburst round, for example. **The 40mm gun is superb** to operate. With the existing system you load six shells at a time manually in two three-shell batches but with this one you have **70 rounds** in place that are **loaded automatically**. The difference that makes on the battlefield is huge.

With the current 30mm gun we can probably get off around ten to 12 rounds in a minute. With this system we're looking at three times that, and we can fire off multiple three-round bursts that can be selected at the touch of a button rather than doing a constant manual reload.

The new **digital fire system is also much more accurate**. With the existing Warrior we have to physically hold the controls to keep the gun in place when we let off a two- or three-round burst."

Gunner – Rfn Jack Oliver, Rifles



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Capital expense:
Allowances vary
across London
– but why?

Not compensated for city living

I AM a Regular permanent staff instructor at a Reserve unit in Ilford, east London.

I recently came across the recruitment and retention allowance and fail to understand how I don't qualify for it.

The prices around here are the same as they are in central London, Hounslow and Woolwich, where personnel do receive this boost to their pay packets.

I also have to take a daily three-hour round trip from my Service family accommodation in central London.

I was in substitute Service single accommodation receiving food and incidentals allowance (FIA) before I moved my wife down to the capital.

At that point I lost the FIA, moved further away from my workplace and my accommodation charges increased, as did my contribution in lieu of council tax, gas and electric.

Actually, all of this is fine except for the fact that my neighbours receive the allowance to assist with the high cost of living while I don't – and they can walk to work and eat in a subsidised cookhouse.

How can this be? – **Cpl Nathan Allfree, RE**

Col Phil Bassingham-Searle, Army Pay Colonel, responds: I totally understand your frustration with this apparent inconsistency.

The aim of this recruitment and retention allowance is to counter the reluctance of individuals on permanent assignment to serve in designated locations and it relates to

much more than the cost of living.

It was created back in 1997, when its eligibility was defined as being for those personnel working within five miles of Charing Cross.

Units at Hounslow and Woolwich were included because evidence showed that recruitment and retention were adversely affected by many of the factors relevant to those serving in central London.

Local community hostility, the impact of public and official ceremonial duties, the Heathrow flight path (Hounslow specific) and high crime figures were also included as reasons to justify the inclusion of these additional locations.

Your situation is unusual in that you live closer to central London than your place of work.

Unfortunately, eligibility is based on the latter and not where you live. Ilford, as you highlight, is not one of the areas that qualify for this particular payment.

However, the rules are reviewed by the Armed Forces' pay review body on a regular basis.

They consider the eligibility criteria and the rate payable, underpinned by evidence they gather from unit visits.

Their last recommendation was to continue with the current format.

The overall requirement for regional UK allowances is also something the MoD examines routinely so your feedback is helpful and I will ensure it is considered.

“How do I not qualify for it?”

Talkback

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

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Reserve route to boost pay

IT HAS occurred to me there is one employer that could provide ideal candidates for Reserve service but is currently not allowed to contribute – the Regular Army.

Every weekend – especially the further away from payday you get – soldiers up and down the country sit in their blocks because they cannot afford to go home after spending all their wages.

This wasted manpower could be integrated into the Reserve, allowing these personnel to earn extra pay.

As long as they enter into this agreement in exactly the same way as any other Reservist and the two career streams are kept entirely separate, I see nothing but benefits, especially in terms of cross-pollination of ideas and integration between Regulars and Reservists. Has this ever been trialled?

The only obvious negative is a Reserve manning shortfall when these soldiers are called away for active duty. – **SSgt Dave Hampson, REME**

Col Steve Davies, Assistant Head, Workforce Policy, Army Headquarters, replies: Your proposal is interesting but it's not a viable option for a number of legislative and practical reasons.

A Regular soldier is governed by the Armed Forces Act and Reservists by the Reserve Forces Act, and troops cannot serve under both.

Under these acts, parliament authorises a maximum number of personnel for each Force.

A soldier cannot be accounted for in both as this would distort the numbers within the Service.

JSP 516 describes Reservists as civilians who accept an annual training commitment and a liability to be mobilised.

Members of the Regular Army are not civilians and as such they cannot join the Reserve.

The Service is also bound (outside of operations) by the European working time regulations.

If Regulars are routinely employed as Reservists during weekends, training nights and annual camps the MoD would breach the rules unless the individuals were given time off in lieu, but this would impede operational effectiveness.

Lastly, **JSP 754** stipulates that Service personnel “should not be paid twice for their working time”.

While I agree with your point about the cross-pollination of ideas, the Reserve already benefits from the experience of Regular soldiers through permanent staff assigned to them as well as many combined training opportunities.

The last reason we would not want to do this (which you allude to in your letter), is that if a soldier is a Regular and a Reservist at the time of a large-scale deployment, one of the units concerned would be without the required manpower.

This would obviously affect its readiness and deployability.

“They could not have done their jobs”

Recognise us

● IS THE Op Shader medal going to be awarded to civilians who worked for the UK government in Iraq?

In 2014, when the UK Armed Forces were first redeployed to that country, they were housed in the British Embassy in Baghdad for months.

Without the support provided by the civilians, these soldiers could not possibly have done their jobs.

Those civilians guarded the embassy, fed the troops and provided various cleaning services.

They also took them out on road moves within the green and red zones and provided close protection as well as taking part in planning meetings.

I do not understand why their contribution has not been recognised.

– **Tony Durston, British Embassy, Baghdad**



Picture: PFC Anthony Zendejas

Lt Col (retd) Kestrel Simson, Ceremonial and Operational and Service Awards, replies: Personnel eligible for the Operational Service Medal (OSM) Iraq/Syria with clasp are listed in **DIN 2017DIN09-015**.

In short, they are soldiers and MoD civilians working under the UK force commander within Iraq and/or Syria for at least 30 days continuous or 45 days aggregated.

This award reflects the kinetic risk and rigour associated with a military campaign medal.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has produced its own medals to recognise and reward the services of civilian public servants, contractors and consultants who were appointed, deployed or employed abroad under its operational control.

Recent examples are the Iraq Reconstruction Services Medal, which ceased to be issued in line with the normalisation of Iraq in 2013, and the Civilian Service Medal (Afghanistan).

As you are ineligible for the OSM with clasp, you should direct any request for medallic recognition to the FCO.

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COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Jennifer Blackburn, Leeds

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DIARY

March 16: Military charity ball in support of SSAFA and Walking with the Wounded at Mercure Elcot Park, Newbury. Tickets £50 per head and evening includes three-course meal, DJ, auction and raffle. To book email enquiries@newburyweddingservices.co.uk

The Whacky Specs Ball in aid of Help for Heroes at Farnham Castle, Surrey. Fun will include fizz, canapes, three-course meal, 80s disco, auction and raffle. Tickets £75 per person via 01252 720402



DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity:
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www.soldierscharity.org

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

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

Armed Forces Muslim Association:
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www.afma.org.uk

Armed Services Advice Project:
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www.adviceasap.org.uk

Army Families Federation:
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www.aff.org.uk

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

Army Libraries:
01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

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

Care After Combat:
www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service:
01980 618244;
dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk

Combat Stress:
01372 841600;
www.combatstress.org.uk

Defence Humanists:
www.defencehumanists.org.uk

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www.erskin.org.uk

Family Escort Service:
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Felix Fund – the bomb disposal charity:
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www.felixfund.org.uk

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Forces Pension Society:
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Help for Heroes:
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Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
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Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group):
www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office:
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www.ngvfa.org.uk

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

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

Remount: 01451 850 341;
www.remount.net

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

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

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre:
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Scottish Veterans' Residences:
0131 556 0091;
www.svronline.org

Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services:
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The Not Forgotten Association:
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The Poppy Factory:
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The Royal Star and Garter Homes:
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The Veterans Charity:
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info@veteranscharity.org.uk

Troop Aid:

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www.uk4u.org

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



INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 002/19: Flexible service – policy published and applications open from February 1

ABN 001/19: 2019 Army Reserve continuous attitude survey

ABN 111/18: All arms and Services late entry commissioning applications

ABN 110/18: Values and standards

ABN 109/18: Your Army Needs You – internal message

ABN 108/18: Establishment of Army Safety Centre

ABN 107/18: Appropriate political and media activity

ABN 106/18: Stability tactics handbook

ABN 105/18: Army audit and inspection feedback form

ABN 104/18: Continuous improvement in the general staff

ABN 103/18: Release of Army command standing order 2011 – security risk management

ABN 102/18: Re-engagement of Army Reserve personnel

ABN 14/18: Definition for Army Regular and Reserve trained strength

ABN 13/18: The Army higher education pathway update 2 – registration of interest

DIN 2019DIN01-008: Regular flexible service – pay policy

Continued on page 57

ON 1 APRIL 2019 THE COST OF AN ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY TICKET IS INCREASING FROM 0.75P TO £1.00 PER TICKET

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Intelligence continued

DIN 2019DIN01-007: 61st International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes

DIN 2019DIN01-006: 2019 Pilgrimages by the Armed Forces region of Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust

DIN 2019DIN01-005: Flexible service

DIN 2019DIN01-004: Men's ministry within the Armed Forces Christian Union

DIN 2019DIN01-003: Amendments to the Armed Forces pension scheme and early departure scheme for the introduction of flexible service

DIN 2019DIN01-002: MoD NHS Agenda for Change grades – submission of AFC form 1720A – performance management report for 2018 reporting year

DIN 2019DIN01-001: MoD civilian dental practitioners (CDP) and civilian medical practitioners (CMP) – submission of CDP and CMP report form 1720A – performance management report for 2018 reporting year

DIN 2019DIN02-001: Personnel security (vetting) (Army)

DIN 2019DIN04-001: Thermal camouflage sheets fire retardancy

DIN 2019DIN05-001: Change of organisation title – Defence Fire and Risk Management Organisation has become Defence Fire and Rescue

DIN 2019DIN07-016: Helicopter handling training

DIN 2019DIN07-015: Troop insertion and extraction systems instructor training

DIN 2019DIN07-014: Core recovery events for wounded, injured and sick service

DIN 2019DIN07-013: US Air Force advanced course in engineering cyber internship

DIN 2019DIN07-010: Adventurous training offshore sailing – planning expeditions to Cyprus in 2019/20

DIN 2019DIN07-009: Army Rifle Association target shooting courses, January to December 2019

DIN 2019DIN07-007: The Ulysses Trust

DIN 2019DIN07-006: Joint Intelligence Training Group training courses for training year 2019/20

DIN 2019DIN07-005: Defence foreign language training courses for

training year 2019/20

DIN 2019DIN10-004: British Army Motorsports Association – navigation events 2019

DIN 2019DIN10-003: Army golf skills training weeks

DIN 2019DIN10-002: British Army Motorsports Association event – Saxon Express 2019



REUNIONS

13 (Martinique) Battery reunion on April 13, 2019 at the Copthorne Hotel, The Waterfront, Brierly Hill, Dudley, DY5 1UR. For further details of the event contact Kevin Brooks-Usher on 07834 287426.



ROADSHOWS

The Army Engagement Group wants to hear from members of the public who would like an invitation to one of its roadshows. For more information call 01276 412880 or visit www.army.mod.uk/engagement

February: 26, Sheffield; 28, Leeds.

March: 13, Swindon; 14, Wrexham; 27, Bradford; 28, Hull.



SEARCHLINE

Deepcut – Royal Logistic Corps Headquarters and Central Sergeants' Mess closure. Anyone wishing to reclaim presentation items should contact brian.hinton373@mod.gov.uk before March 1, 2019.

Former Reservist Scott Irvine – who joined 243 Provost Company, Royal Military Police in July 1989 after completing basic training at Browndown, Gosport – has lost his passing out photo and is trying to track down a new copy. Anyone who can help is asked to call him on 07593 576463.

ITV1 renovation series *Love Your Garden* with Alan Titchmarsh is looking for people who need help with their outdoor space for reasons beyond their control. Perhaps they are one of Britain's unsung heroes or have been hit by tragedy. Do you know someone suitable? Apply before February 15 via teamhort@spungoldtv.com

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TEN details have been changed in this image of Army jockeys training at the British Racing School using simulators.

Circle all the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 927, Soldier**, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot,

Hampshire GU11 2DU with your full contact details, including email address, no later than February 28.

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

The first correct entry drawn after the closing

date wins a Jetboil MicroMo Stove for outdoor cooking. The winner's name will be published in the April issue. Usual rules apply.

December's winner: James Gilligan, Battle Back Centre, Lilleshall, Newport.



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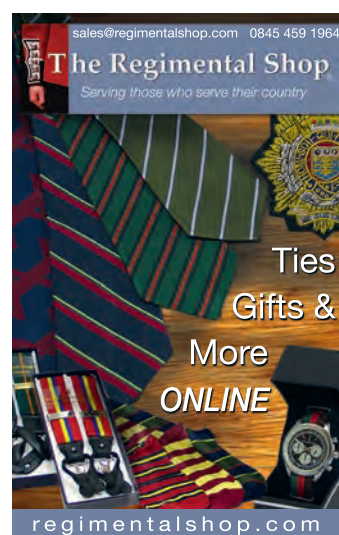
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ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY

REVIEWS

MOVIES

A PRIVATE WAR

Life and death on the front
line of journalism

MARIE Colvin was a globally recognised American war correspondent working for *The Sunday Times*. She was killed just hours after a live interview from Homs in 2012 where she provided evidence that Syrian president Bashar al-Assad was bombing civilians.

This movie starts 11 years before and follows her life up to that moment. A gravelly-voiced **Rosamund Pike** (*Gone Girl*) delivers a truly impressive performance as Colvin, completely inhabiting her physical and mental persona.



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MUSIC

MOVIES



Directed by documentary maker **Matthew Heineman** (*City of Ghosts*) on his first foray into film, it clearly sets out to avoid becoming another standard biopic.

Instead, it is a study in self-destruction presented as a series of vignettes that reveal a life slowly spinning out of control.

Colvin's photographer Tom Conroy (played with admirable understatement by **Jamie Dornan**) calls her pursuit of truth in the most extreme of circumstances an addiction.

Her obsession sees her returning again and again to the most war-torn of countries to tell the stories of forgotten innocents caught in the crossfire.

It is only during these moments when she has focus and purpose.

The film shifts from Sri Lanka to Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and finally Syria. Each time, she butts up against the authorities and those who try to restrict her access.

She bargains, bluffs and bullies her way into those locations that some would rather remain hidden behind the smokescreen.

In between, we watch her private life unravelling: her failed marriage, awards ceremonies, one-night stands, chain-smoking, boozing, panic attacks, symptoms of extreme PTSD and attempts at rehabilitation.

Colvin sees her closest friends moving on with their lives, settling down, having families – conventional milestones that have passed her by.

She seems to understand her choices will eventually kill her but is unable to leave her calling behind, especially

when pressured by her editor (**Tom Hollander**) to do what no one else can: to witness first hand so that others do not have to.

A colleague in my office, who once took Colvin to breakfast in Afghanistan, said she was chatty but her mind was always away, elsewhere, thinking about the work.

There is something of the prophet in her nature, born to suffer and railing at her own destiny, yet unable to change it.

And the movie ensures that the viewers witness what she witnesses. Yet, for all that, the relentless movement between conflicts becomes almost too much of a whirl – a visual and narrative bombardment that verges on being overwhelming.

But through it all Pike manages to carry this film with power, intensity and integrity, and because of that it works very well.

The standout scene? Colvin's chilling interview with Muammar Gaddafi just before he is toppled from power. It is a suspenseful moment underlining her absolute courage and conviction. ■

REVIEW: MAJ ALEX JANAWAY, RAMC

VERDICT:

A candid portrait of a fearless but complex woman

★★★★★

Q&A with director Matthew Heineman

You are known for your documentary work – why did you decide to get involved with this project?

For me it was a deeply personal film – my background is in journalism, my mother was a journalist, so I felt a connection to Marie. But it's not just a homage to her, it's a homage to journalism and the importance of people out there fighting for the truth, and shedding light in dark corners of the world. That's more timely now than ever.

Because of the attacks on the mainstream media?

Right. It's a tragedy that journalists around the world are being demonised in this way. It's the bedrock of a free, democratic society and that's why I felt compelled to make this movie.

The film has a documentary-style quality – was that a conscious decision?

Absolutely. I wanted to make you feel like you were on the ground with Marie, like you were inside her head. For me it's not a biopic, it's a psychological thriller that examines why someone goes to the most dangerous places on Earth to tell stories like this and the effect that has. It was important to me to look at PTSD and the moral injury of war.

How did you cast the extras?

I worked predominantly



with non-actors in all the different war zones – I spent weeks finding refugees from the various countries. So when you see Marie talking to widows in Syria, they were real widows shedding real tears about real trauma. The man who brings the young boy into hospital – his two-year-old nephew was shot by a sniper in front of him at a protest in Homs. The emotion and the drama that created was a significant part of making the film feel authentic.

What feedback have you had from people who knew Marie?

Her friends, family and colleagues were all blown away by Rosamund's performance and her transformation into that role. We screened the film for them before it was in theatres and her sister messaged me a couple of days later to say how emotional and moving it was, for 110 minutes, to have her sister brought back to her – and how sad she was, two days later, knowing that she's gone.

Interview: Becky Clark



● *A Private War* is out in cinemas on February 15

DIGITAL/DVD RELEASES


Mary Poppins Returns
 Out soon

IGNORE any bleating you may have heard about this film and how

it doesn't do justice to the original *Mary Poppins*. It is a fantastically colourful tribute to the 1964 classic, with **Emily Blunt** leading an impressive cast that puts its own stamp on proceedings. A celebration of the PL Travers children's books, it cannot help but lift your mood, with a heart-warming storyline and plenty of interesting new characters. **Angela Lansbury**, **Meryl Streep** and the film's original star **Dick Van Dyke** – minus the dodgy cockney accent – all give memorable performances that will leave your little ones spellbound while allowing you to relive your childhood for a couple of hours.

Sarah Goldthorpe, *Soldier*


Mary Queen of Scots
 Out soon

I LOVE a period drama and this treatment of the rivalry between

Mary Stuart and Elizabeth I ticks all the boxes – lavish costumes, stunning scenery, feuding villains and people galloping around the Highlands on horses. **Saoirse Ronan** and **Margot Robbie** also deliver strong performances as the Scottish monarch and her English counterpart. However, for pedants like me the numerous liberties taken with historical accuracy will come as a distraction. But then, this isn't a documentary and if you can refrain from nit-picking – and keep track of the many scheming courtiers – it's a perfectly entertaining royal romp.

Becky Clark, *Soldier*

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PICK OF THE MONTH:

TURTLE BEACH ATLAS ONE
Gaming gear gets the once-over

➤ HEADSETS come in all shapes and sizes, and from your top tier and often-expensive option to the almost disposable, cheaper variety.

Fortunately, multi-platform issues are no longer the case with the Atlas One.

Previous solutions usually involved multiple adaptors or, in extreme cases, another headset but this kit works on pretty much anything.

I tested it on a mobile, Xbox One, PS4, and PC and the device performed well without any issues.

There is nothing additional to install, no tweaks to be made, no adjustments to consider – this is just a straightforward gaming accessory that does pretty much everything it says on the tin.

More importantly, though, it's a very comfortable, over-ear headset. The build quality is also quite good and they're relatively rugged, with a handy built-in mic that folds away – so you don't need to worry about it being broken off.

Also supplied is the standard audio adaptor, which allows you to plug in for gaming use and gives you control

VERDICT:

Decent sound and a bargain price make this headset a must-have

★★★★★

over key features such as volume, mute and so on.

Now the important stuff: audio. The sound is good but not excellent. The range is pretty decent as well, with it only starting to show its limitations in the treble range.

However, that's really nothing to worry about unless you're an audio engineer at heart and looking to scrutinise the quality.

The Atlas One is not as impressive as the items found in Turtle Beach's premium selection but it's better than most of the current mid-range offerings simply because of its sheer versatility and value for money.

It doesn't feature the Superhuman Hearing found in other headsets but I really didn't miss it.

Even in games like *Player Unknown's Battlegrounds* I could always tell where the enemy was when in range.

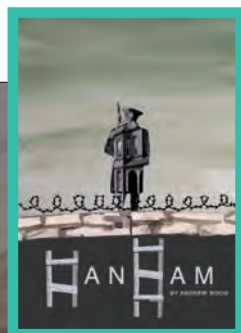
And that brings me on to the price – a mere £39.99. I have older sets like the XO Four and XO One, with the former costing £80 on release a few years ago. I just wish the Atlas One was around back then.

All in all, this is an impressive headset and highly recommended. ■

REVIEW: DAVID MCDUGALL, CIVVY



BOOKS



● *Hanham*, by Andrew Wood, is available now to pre-order from Amazon as an eBook, and in paperback from March 1

PICK OF THE MONTH:

HANHAM

Officer's auction house find inspires Great War novel

THE Centenary of the First World War rekindled public interest in the conflict and underscored the sheer scale of the sacrifice made by those who fought.

Now, a serving Reservist's debut novel is bringing to life the true story of a family irrevocably changed by the "war to end all wars."

Capt Andrew Wood (R Wx Y, pictured right) was inspired to write *Hanham* three years ago when his father – a military historian and former Army officer – purchased a box of memorabilia at auction.

The lot contained letters, photographs, diaries, medals and war records that documented the service of three brothers, Stuart, Eric and Basil Hanham.

Incredibly, the collection also included a tobacco tin – complete with bullet hole – that saved the life of one of the trio when he was shot in the trenches of Flanders.

The treasure trove of artefacts provided Wood with a detailed framework for a fictionalised account of their experience.

"Everything that happened to the boys is absolutely factual, on the days it happened and in the way it happened," he told *Soldier*.

"It's an amazing story. Despite serving alongside each other, each brother had a completely different experience of the First World War."

The siblings were members of the Kensington Battalion, a territorial unit that deployed in November 1914 as part of the British Expeditionary Force. Included in the book are hand drawn maps detailing where the formation fought on the Western front, which are corroborated by official war records.

Surviving newspaper clippings and hospital records verify much of the narrative detail.

It's clear that Wood, a former Regular in the Royal Tank Regiment, has conducted painstaking research to ensure the story corresponds with real events, but inevitably he had to employ a degree of artistic licence to fill in some of the blanks.

Explaining how he drew on some of his own military experience to do so, the 34-year-old continued: "I deployed to Afghanistan and although the manner in which a modern day war is fought is obviously vastly different to that of 1914, troops today still endure intense periods of boredom punctuated by periods of intense violence, just as the Hanham brothers did.

"And certainly for the dialogue – the dark humour and the way officers and soldiers speak to each other – that is as relevant now as it was back then."

Using extracts from the family's diaries and letters to each other, the action switches between the battlefields and London, where mother Eva and sisters Kathleen and Stella struggle with the immense strain of separation.

The love and affection they all had for each other is clearly conveyed, as well as the absolute horrors that soldiers faced in the trenches.

While factual books about

this turbulent period number in their thousands, Wood's fictional treatment reads very much like a first-hand account.

And knowing the real-life histories of its namesakes makes it all the more moving. ■

INTERVIEW: CPL GEORGINA COUPE, RLC

VERDICT:

A fascinating tale with an equally fascinating backstory

★★★★★





One hundred limited first editions of *Hanham* accompanied by original relics from the battlefields and handwritten notes from the author will be on sale at two launch events in Dorchester on February 28 and Hammersmith on March 2. For full details visit www.hanhamstory.com

BOOK RELEASES



Day of the Rangers

by Leigh Neville

THIS book about

the Battle of Mogadishu is a must-read, simple as that. More than just a study of the 1993 clash between American troops and Somali militia, it includes statements from the Delta Force operators, Rangers, and aircrew involved as they recall events and discuss their thoughts on the subsequent movie *Black Hawk Down*. It also reveals the impact the operation had on the US Special Forces and how it shaped their training and operations for the next 25 years. As soon as I finished this title I re-read it. Buy it now.

Sgt Adam Jackson, Para



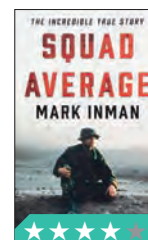
Vietnam Bao Chi

by Marc Phillip Yablonka

THE combat reporters

who covered the Vietnam War for the US Armed Forces have rarely had the exposure of their counterparts in the civilian media – but this collection of biographies redresses the balance. Yablonka presents a vivid snapshot of some 35 military correspondents responsible for telling the soldier's story, often facing a ruthless and determined enemy. The pen portraits bring the Bao Chi – the Vietnamese phrase for journalist – to life, with the author's accessible style making this a decent read. With a section for each personality, it is also very easy to pick up and put down.

Cliff Caswell, Soldier



Squad Average

by Mark Inman

THIS memoir by soldier-turned-

bodyguard Mark Inman takes the reader on an emotional rollercoaster through his time in the Army and subsequent struggles as a civilian. Following numerous close shaves on the close protection circuit in Afghanistan he suffered from severe PTSD and faced homelessness. The book is a bold and honest tale of survival and the author has a talent for story telling. Terse yet insightful, it is skilfully written and shadows the routine and challenges of soldiering and of life after service. I finished the last page feeling very tangled up in this not-so-average account.

LCpl Jake Wood, AAC



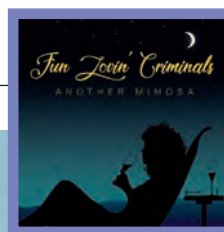
The Angry Sea

by James Deegan

EX-SAS maverick

John Carr is back in action in this follow-up to the author's 2018 debut novel *Once a Pilgrim*. This time some notable VIPs are taken hostage and an exciting and convincing pursuit ensues, with Carr taking along a team of old comrades. After something of a clichéd start the book picks up to become a real page-turner by the second act. Deegan's own background in elite ops shines through and his characters move with ruthless credibility. Although this is not a thinker, there are some surprising twists along the way. Recommended as an easy-going but exciting military thriller.

Capt Matt Ixer, R Welsh



PICK OF THE MONTH:

ANOTHER MIMOSA

Fun Lovin' Criminals end nine-year hiatus with homage to their heroes

▶ IT HAS been 23 years since **Fun Lovin' Criminals** burst onto the scene with the career-defining hit single *Scooby Snacks*.

The track, and the debut record it was spawned from, formed an early high for the New York trio and it seems as though they've been slipping away from the musical mainstream ever since.

So it was a surprise to learn that not only are they still going strong but they've just released a seventh album – *Another Mimosa*.

The group's first new material since 2010, it celebrates the 20th anniversary of the original *Mimosa* – an offering packed with re-imaginings and cover versions, remixes and rarities.

The theme is reprised on this second chapter, which draws on the influences that have steered the Criminals over the past two decades.

"*Another Mimosa* is a continuation of a long tradition of us paying homage to those great songwriters that we stand on the shoulders of," said frontman **Huey Morgan**.

"From our love of hip hop, to soul to jazz and rock, we humbly offer our fans

VERDICT:
Admirable
ambition
but fails to
hit the right
note
★★★★★

another taste of our unique cocktail."

The repertoire is certainly broad and ranges from a rendition of **Tom Petty's** *Mary Jane's Last Dance*, complete with hip hop beats, to a cover of **Ice Cube's** anthem *You Know How We Do It*.

And fans will be pleased to hear the band have revisited their back catalogue to create reworkings of the singles *Love Unlimited* and *Southside*.

However, there is only one original song included and while Morgan and friends are happy to salute their heroes the formula fails to fully deliver and hit top gear.

Their lounge-rock style becomes increasingly dreary as the tracks tick by and the choice of cover material proves questionable at times, a point highlighted on what is a truly awful rendition of **Procol Harum's** *A Whiter Shade of Pale*.

While this album is only a collection of covers it does little to enhance the group's standing or reverse their gradual, downward spiral. ■

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, SOLDIER

MUSIC RELEASES

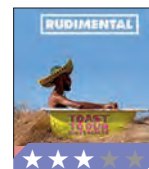


The Teal Album
by Weezer

THIS comes as a surprise offering from cult rockers **Weezer**,

who suddenly released the material on *Spotify* and then spread the word via social media. Featuring ten cover versions, the offering provides an entertaining escape from the winter gloom as the group deliver uplifting renditions of some iconic tunes. Music from the 80s features heavily, with **Tears for Fears'** *Everybody Wants to Rule the World*, **a-ha's** *Take on Me* and the **Michael Jackson** classic *Billie Jean* all making the track list. Other highlights include a reworking of **Black Sabbath's** *Paranoid* and **TLC's** *No Scrubs*. While some selections may raise a few eyebrows at first glance, the simple formula proves highly effective and whets the appetite for the band's next original record, due for release in March.

Richard Long, Soldier



Toast To Our Differences
by Rudimental

DRUM and bass collective

Rudimental build on their impressive career to date with a collaboration-packed third album. Each track boasts a notable guest, with **Jess Glynne** and **Macklemore** leading the charge on the schmaltzy *These Days*. *X Factor* winner **James Arthur** lends his vocal talents to the impressive *Sun Comes Up* and there are also appearances from **Tom Walker**, **Maverick Sabre** and **Ladysmith Black Mambazo**. The lengthy supporting cast of diverse artists means the record is crammed with 16 songs from a wide range of musical styles, making it slightly exhausting at times. But overall this is a pleasing third chapter.

Becky Clark, Soldier

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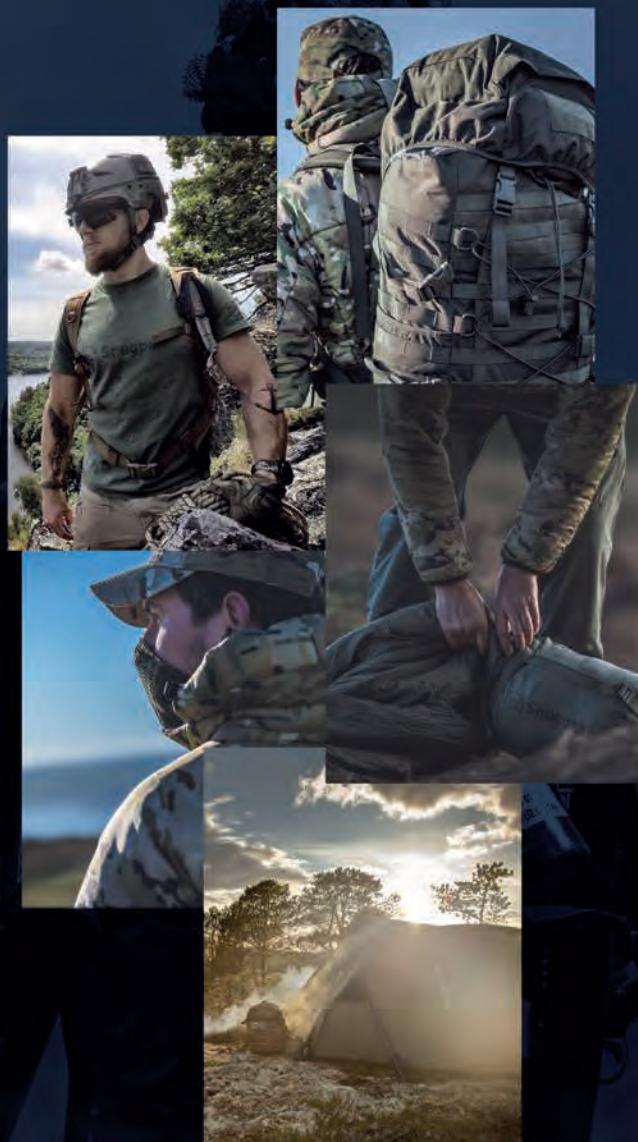
Model shown is a Fiesta ST-3 3-Door 1.5 200PS Manual Petrol with optional Full LED Headlamps.
Fuel economy mpg (l/100km): Combined 40.4 (7.0). *CO₂ emissions 136g/km.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

*There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures. The CO₂ figures shown, however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.



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For prospective Armed Forces parents and their families who may be considering educating their children at boarding school.

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SOLDIER SPORT



GAME CHANGERS >>

NETBALL Superleague outfit the Celtic Dragons have called on Army stars Sgt Ellie Nawele (AGC (SPS)) and LCpl Dee Bolakoro (RE, pictured) to boost their 2019 campaign. Read about the players' hopes for the season on page 80...





SADDLE SCHOOL SUCCESS

SERVICE JOCKEYS BENEFIT FROM EXPERT COACHING AHEAD OF PRESTIGIOUS MILITARY RACE MEETINGS

STEEPED in rich history, the Royal Artillery and Grand Military Gold Cups serve as the pinnacle of horse racing for the Armed Forces' amateur jockeys.

Staged at Sandown Park, the races are the exclusive realm of Service personnel and are set within meetings that feature some of the sport's top riders, trainers and owners.

The events attract a huge following – both at the track and from punters watching from afar – and those involved in the action revel in a spotlight they would not usually enjoy.

Preparations for this year's fixtures have swiftly gathered pace and Army jockeys descended on one of the country's premier training facilities for some expert tuition that could potentially lead to a gallop for victory as the finish line looms.

Hosted by the British Racing School in Newmarket, the personnel were guided by senior jockey coach Richard Perham, who offered technical advice at the site's indoor school before the action switched to the jumps.

"This is the very best in terms of tuition," Lt Col Erica Bridge (RA), the military's lead on jockey development and training, told *SoldierSport*.

"Richard Perham was a professional jockey and it is great to have someone of that standing to look at what we are doing and help us improve.

"Military racing has had its ups and downs but we are now at the stage where we have a strong group of riders who are doing well.

"That is down to the time and effort they have put in.

"There are a lot of professional riding coaches out there and our guys go to them as they want to get better. This mirrors that approach and the British Racing School have been a massive support."

Jockeys hoping to feature in the Forces' flagship races must have a category A licence, which allows them to compete as amateurs.

At present there are around 15 such riders across all three Services and the set-up is keen to attract newcomers to the fold.

"We have people who were involved in racing before joining the Army, while others have competed in point-to-point races and eventing," Bridge said.

"But if someone comes to us with an interest we can fix them up with a jockey coach and get them riding from a yard.

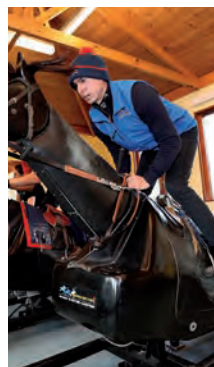
"It is a little niche but we are looking for people who are committed to doing something different with their time and have the motivation to do it."

Competitive rides do not come cheap but the organisation's lengthy contact list ensures personnel have a prime selection of horses available come race day.

"That stems from a lot of hard work and effort," Bridge, winner of the 2016 Grand Military Gold Cup, continued. "We have to find the right horse and an owner who is willing to let their mount be ridden."

"To race at a premier course like Sandown is such a thrill. People talk about the adrenalin that comes with activities like parachuting but you also get that riding half a ton of horse at 30mph over big fences."

Another jockey looking to make an impact in the



**"THE
THRILL
WHEN I
CAME IN
IS LIKE
NOTHING
ELSE"**

upcoming races is Cpl Nathan Rahman (R Welsh, pictured near left).

The 29-year-old turned to the sport after injury ended his rugby career and he is now looking to gain his category B licence, which will see him tested against professionals.

The soldier completed 30 rides last season and was crowned South East point-to-point novice champion.

"Sandown is completely different," he said.

"Emotions run high and it is such a buzz; the thrill when I came in was like nothing else.

"I've ridden from a young age but my life went in a different direction, which meant I never had the time to continue.

"So when I found out I could do this through the military it was such a surprise.

"I now have the opportunity to represent the Army against some of the best young professionals in the country."

Capt Will Kellard (RL) was unseated on his Grand Military Gold Cup debut in 2016 but finished second a year later and is hoping his efforts at the British Racing School will maintain his upward curve.

"Richard Perham is a world-class coach," he explained. "We are lucky to be here.

"Soldiers are completely capable of racing horses – it is a sport that anyone can do. We want to get more junior personnel involved and this is definitely not just for officers.

"My first race at Sandown was over as quick as a flash but nothing compares to going round that course on a horse that jumps well."

For more information email erica.bridge290@mod.gov.uk ■



CUP RUN: THE ARMY RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM WAS IN CHALLENGE CUP ACTION AGAINST BENTLEY AS THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS

Picture: Cpl Rebecca Brown, RLC



BRONCOS FACE NEW BATTLE

SUPER League stars from the London Broncos immersed themselves in military life as they joined personnel from 22 Engineer Regiment for an exercise on Salisbury Plain.

Staged as part of the team's pre-season training, the programme saw the players face weapon handling drills, command and fieldcraft tasks, sentry duties and physical tests, while surviving on 24-hour ration packs.

They also had to endure sub-zero temperatures as they stayed out overnight in two-man shelters.

"We have a good relationship with the Army, so I asked them to make it tough and uncomfortable to take the players out of their comfort zone," said the club's head coach Danny Ward.

"We wanted to put them in a different environment, give them a bit of adversity and see what happens.

"It has been a great opportunity for us and the

regiment to grow an affiliation. We have similar values and are all very disciplined."

SSgt Mike Thompson (RE) was instrumental in organising the exercise, which was designed to give the visitors a condensed look at military life.

"The physical challenges we devised were completely different to what they train for in rugby league," the senior NCO explained.

"As professional sportsmen the Broncos are robust, fit individuals but it was interesting to see if they could carry 90kgs between six people over a set distance up a hill."

Player Rob Butler spoke positively about the experience and believes it will hold the team in good stead for the challenges they will face during the upcoming season.

He said: "This has opened my eyes and given me another perspective on how things are done. The PT was tough and hats off to the soldiers who do this for real." ■

BRONCOS IN NUMBERS

28

SQUAD MEMBERS INVOLVED IN THE TRAINING PACKAGE

3

DAYS SPENT IN THE FIELD WITH TROOPS FROM 22 ENGINEER REGIMENT

2

PENALTIES CONVERTED BY JARROD SAMMUT AS THE CLUB DEFEATED THE TORONTO WOLFPACK TO SECURE PROMOTION TO THE SUPER LEAGUE IN 2018

3

DATE, IN FEBRUARY, OF THE TEAM'S FIRST MATCH IN 2019 - AGAINST WAKEFIELD

SPORT SHORTS



New coaches for UKAF

FORMER Army player SSgt Lee Soper (RHA) has been named as the new head coach of the UK Armed Forces rugby union team.

He replaces WO1 Gareth Evans (RE), who guided the squad to a 42-26 win over Bristol United in the 2017 remembrance fixture (pictured) before losing 30-22 this season.

Elsewhere, Capt Jason Davies (QDG) will take charge of the Under-23 side, who face the Oxbridge Blues at Twickenham on Saturday, May 4.



Picture: Alligin Photography

Reeve set for sevens bow

RUGBY union star Capt Will Reeve (RGR) was set to achieve further international recognition with Kenya as this issue went to press.

The officer was one of five uncapped players named in the country's sevens squad for World Series tournaments in New Zealand and Australia.

Reeve made his debut for Kenya's 15-man team in late 2018 but they eventually missed out on a place at this year's World Cup.

The sevens series forms part of the qualification process for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Picture: Alligin Photography



NATIONS CALL-UPS

FRONT-ROW forward Sgt Sarah Mimmagh (AGC (RMP)) has been named in the Ireland women's squad for this season's Six Nations campaign.

The Reservist (pictured above) returned to the set-up for the autumn internationals late last year and has retained her place ahead of the tournament opener with England on February 1.

Ireland also face Scotland, Italy, France and Wales in the competition, which concludes on Sunday, March 17.

Elsewhere, Lt Nikki O'Donnell (QARANC, pictured below) will celebrate another refereeing milestone after she was named among the panel of officials for the Six Nations.

She took the whistle as Wales faced South Africa in November and also had the honour of officiating at the UK Armed Forces women's annual remembrance fixture in the same month.

O'Donnell will begin her campaign when Scotland lock horns with Italy during the competition's opening weekend.



Pictures: Alligin Photography

REDS FIND FORM IN SCOTTISH TEST



"THOSE WHO CAME IN SHOWED WHAT THEY CAN DO"

ARMY women's head coach Maj Gemma Stonebridge-Smith (AGC (ETS)) is relishing the challenge of an international double-header this month following a successful sortie north of the border.

The Reds provided a stern test for the Scotland Under-20s side in a behind-closed-doors training match, while the newly-formed A team showed encouraging signs in their debut outing – despite slipping to a 37-5 defeat to Edinburgh University.

Both squads return to action on February 9, when England Under-20s and Germany form the opposition, and Stonebridge-Smith believes their recent endeavours will hold them in good stead for the tests to come.

"It was such a worthwhile trip," the officer told *SoldierSport*.

"This was the first official match for our A team and allowed us to establish some structures in our play – they performed well.

"We were missing a few of our senior players but it was a well-contested game with Scotland.

"Some will be available for the

England match, which is great for me as a coach, but those who came in produced some superb individual displays and showed what they can do.

"That gives me a real headache in terms of selection."

The full Army side face England's young roses at Aldershot's Army Rugby Stadium from 1400, while the A team lock horns with the Germans at 1600 on the same day.

"It will be a chance to test the structures we put in place during the last game," Stonebridge-Smith added.

"We will start to look for performances and this is a great match for us."

The clash will also provide a further examination for Welsh international Bdr Beth Dainton (RA), who has switched roles from winger to flanker.

"She wanted a new challenge and is playing the same position for her civilian club, Harlequins," the coach explained.

"She has done really well so far and it is such a good news story for us." ■



PUSH FOR PLAYERS

MORE than 120 players took to the court for the new-look Army Individual Squash Championships in Winchester.

The men's draw was divided into four sections for 2019, with players of similar ability competing against each other in a bid to create more evenly contested matches.

Capt Sam Miller (RA) claimed the overall honours and there were also victories for Lt Col Yvette Ashman (AGC (SPS)) in the women's competition, WO2 Lenny Westover (REME) in the masters category and Cpl James Bayliss (REME) at under-25 level.

"The new format meant every match was competitive and it has been very well received," Miller, who is captain of the Army men's team, said.

"It's not about whether you are a county player or compete at a certain standard – it is a tournament for anyone who can swing a racket.

"We really want to encourage participation in squash. The Army is up to 80,000 strong yet we only have 120 people here – there must be more players out there. The Service gives back to soldiers through the offer of sport and we want them to take advantage of that."



ACADEMY EYES NEW BLOOD



**"MY
FITNESS
LEVELS
HAVE
REALLY
COME
ON"**

THE Army squash set-up is looking for fresh faces to join its 2019 academy programme as part of the ongoing campaign to attract new talent to the sport.

Run in partnership with England Squash, the initiative was launched at the start of last year and saw ten players take on expert tuition from some of the country's top coaches.

Aimed at developing those with the potential to represent the Service in the future, the scheme includes regular individual coaching sessions and residential training camps featuring detailed player assessments as well as strength and conditioning drills.

One of those to pass through the first intake was SSgt Dean Boys (RLC, pictured above).

The senior NCO has seen his ranking points increase by around 25 per cent during his time on the programme and was named as third seed at the recent Army Individual Championships.

"I've always been a keen player and have trained hard but the structure of the academy and the quality of coaching has

improved my game massively," he told *SoldierSport*.

"I went in with an open mind and was not really sure how it would work out. But my fitness levels have really come on and the technical work has been a great help.

"I won the Army Championships in 2015 and one of my goals is to get back to that level.

"Looking further ahead, I turn 35 in three years time and I want to get on the England masters circuit with the hope of representing my country."

Academy head coach Paul Carter, of England Squash, has been impressed by the quality of the Army players he has worked with over the past year but admitted there were some hurdles along the way.

"With deployments it has been hard for some of them to commit to regular training but we have managed to find a way round it," he explained.

"You have to make allowances and adjust accordingly.

"We have seen some real improvements and their ability to listen and take onboard what we are saying is fantastic." ■

Spotlight on...

Pippingford Park Training Area & Crowborough Training Camp

The training area is situated in the centre of Ashdown Forest, offering a variety of terrain types including woodland, open heathland and lakes. Company level exercises and battalion / regimental training cadres such as promotion, sniper or signals cadres can all be accommodated. It is ideal for section to company level training. Crowborough Training Camp is situated 7 kilometres from Pippingford Park.



Location

East Sussex

Size

337 hectares

Bed spaces

684

Training facilities

A 337-hectare training area suitable for section to company level training.

“

“A hidden gem”

23 Engr Regt

“A barely touched area, we’ll be back”

33 Engr 821 Sqn

”

UNIQUE TRAINING FEATURES

Pippingford Park Dry Training Area:

Watermanship areas for both military and civilian water activities within 337 hectares of rolling, mixed woodland and heathland terrain.



Crowborough Training Camp:

Close to Pippingford Park the camp offers a 25m barrack range, a 22 indoor range, a Type ‘A’ obstacle course, a Respirator Testing Chamber and 30 hectares of training area suitable for low level training.



Ashdown Forest:

Over 2,000 hectares of walkover offers a perfect location for map reading, night navigation and orienteering. It is ideal for Duke of Edinburgh training with camping available on Pippingford Park training area.





SPORT SHORTS

Picture: British Paralympic Association



Dynamic duo's quest

PARALYMPIC champions Menna Fitzpatrick and Maj Jen Kehoe (RE, pictured above left) claimed bronze in their opening event at the World Para Alpine Skiing Championships.

The duo, who won four medals in the visually-impaired skiing at the 2018 Games, secured the honour in the giant slalom and were due to feature in the slalom and downhill races as this issue went to press.

They headed into the competition on the back of a third-place finish in the slalom at the World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup in Croatia.

Picture: Andy Ryan/Team GB



Progress in the cup

BRITISH bobsleigh pair Brad Hall and Pte Nick Gleeson (Para) have posted some impressive early season results on the sport's World Cup circuit.

The duo recorded their first top-ten finish in the two-man discipline in Koenigssee, Germany – where they claimed joint ninth place.

Further success followed a week later in Igls, Austria, when they secured a joint eighth position. The next round was due to be held in St Moritz, Switzerland as this issue went to press.

Brakeman Gleeson was part of the Team GB squad at last year's Winter Olympics (pictured).



Picture: Macauley Smith

DRIFTING IN A NEW DIRECTION

PERSONNEL looking to make their way into the exhilarating world of drifting are being offered a new platform in which to further their motorsport ambitions.

The Forces Drift Academy, launched last month by Cpl Matt Roberts (Para) and Cpl Paul Howell (REME), will provide expert advice in everything from car set-ups to throttle control and braking to help newcomers progress on the track.

"This replaces the Forces Drift Series," Roberts told *SoldierSport*.

"It takes things back to grass roots level and aims to capture individuals who are looking to get into the sport.

"When we were running the series we couldn't really branch out; it was a set format with set regulations for the cars.

"Having the academy means we can broaden what we do.

"Our plan is to have a set number of training days to help people progress from a novice standard."

Drifting differs from other forms of motorsport in that it is not determined by who reaches the finish line first.

Instead, drivers are judged using a points system on their ability to control the sideways movement of their vehicle on the track while demonstrating flair, talent and technique.

Despite the change of name there is still a competitive element as military and emergency services personnel can push for honours within the Retro Drift Challenge.

"That format is still the same," Roberts added. "But not everyone involved in the sport wants to compete.

"Some just want to meet like-minded Forces individuals and drive with them.

"The academy will cover all levels – from those who own a car and want to have a go to those hoping to compete in the British Drift Championships at professional level.

"The interest and target audience is definitely out there, we just need to let them know this is available." ■

● SHOWJUMPER LCpl Laura Charley (R Signals) enjoyed a debut to remember at the Olympia Horse Show as she claimed the top honours in the Services competition.

The 19-year-old was fastest in both rounds riding loaned horse Vice Versa and secured the title ahead of Royal Navy rival PO Sophie Fuller.

Teammate LCpl Holly Hall (RLC) capped a successful day for the Army as she finished third.

For more information on the sport and how to get involved visit www.armyequitation.org.uk



Picture: Kit Houghton

MONTH IN SPORT

February's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services Snow Sports
WHEN: February 1 to 10
WHERE: Meribel, France
NEED TO KNOW: The Forces' winter

sports stars arrive at the French resort for their annual test on the slopes. Alpine skiing, snowboarding and Telemark titles will all be up for grabs



WHAT: Inter-Services Under-23 Football Championships
WHEN: February 13
WHERE: RAF Cosford
NEED TO KNOW: The Army's young guns showed impressive form to win this tournament last season and they start their title defence against the Royal Air Force. The Reds face the Royal Navy on home turf a week later



WHAT: Army v British Police rugby union
WHEN: February 27 (1930 kick-off)
WHERE: Stourbridge
NEED TO KNOW: Preparations for this season's

Inter-Services campaign gather pace in February as the Reds face the French Army before locking horns with their rivals in the police

INVICTUS IN NUMBERS

40

PRE-TRIALS
TRAINING
CAMPS HELD
LAST YEAR -
ATTRACTING
870
ATHLETES

451

APPLICANTS
WHO
ATTENDED
THE ACTUAL
TRIALS IN
BATH

72

MEMBERS
OF TEAM UK
SELECTED
FOR SYDNEY
- 64 PER
CENT OF
WHOM HAD
NEVER BEEN
TO A GAMES
BEFORE

72

MEDALS
WON BY UK
PERSONNEL
IN 2018
- ALONG
WITH 138
PERSONAL
BESTS IN
EVENTS
SUCH AS
CYCLING,
SWIMMING,
ROWING
AND
ARCHERY



Picture: Theo Cohen/Help for Heroes

'I FELT LIKE A SOLDIER AGAIN'

INVICTUS Games veteran Jonny Mitchell has urged aspiring athletes to sign up to this summer's team trials, promising an experience they will never forget.

The former sergeant in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers won powerlifting bronze at last year's showcase and will be among the hopefuls looking to book a place in the UK squad during a week-long test in Sheffield that starts on July 22.

The 32-year-old was medically discharged from the Army after he was diagnosed with leukaemia and faced five years of chemotherapy before finding himself in remission.

During his recovery he was invited to compete at the trials for the 2018 Games in Sydney and said the journey has made him "happy once more" after years of struggle.

"It was phenomenal," he told *SoldierSport*. "I felt like a soldier again."

"I had become a lost soul. Being diagnosed with cancer

was not half as bad as being told I had to leave the Army.

"I had the option of staying and seeing my peers excel while I ground to a halt behind a desk; I didn't want that."

"But the Invictus process has given me such a high and I'm still in the clouds now."

Mitchell, who will compete in the powerlifting, shot putt and discus at the upcoming trials, admitted to facing some dark times during his lengthy recovery but said the Games gave him a sense of focus.

"If anyone is thinking of applying I would say 'you have to do it'," he added. "What has happened in the past doesn't matter and it's not a problem if you haven't tried a particular discipline before."

"It is about psychological, emotional and physical improvement and sport is the channel to achieve that."

To apply for this summer's team trials visit www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support/sports-and-hobbies/join-team-uk ■



Pictures: Marc Morris and Steve Porter

DRAGONS CALL ON ARMY STARS TO AID COURT QUEST

HAVING finished bottom of the standings in each of the past two years, Netball Superleague outfit the Celtic Dragons are targeting a season of progress in 2019.

To help achieve their goal the Cardiff-based club have recruited Army stars Sgt Ellie Nawele (AGC (SPS), pictured above) and LCpl Dee Bolakoro (RE). The duo played a pivotal role as the team recorded a 67-40 win over London Pulse in just their second match of the campaign.

The victory followed an encouraging display in a narrow opening-day loss to Team Bath and the squad remains in positive mood ahead of their first home fixture on February 4.

Nawele's goal shooting exploits have been a key feature of the Army's Inter-Services triumphs in recent seasons and she joined the Dragons following a successful pre-season trial.

"It has been a real step up for

me in terms of fitness," she told *SoldierSport*. "I've had to work really hard as the pace is so fast and I was doing extra phys sessions at 0600 so I could get up to speed.

"The skill levels are also higher so I've had to up my game as I'm now facing players who have six or seven years' experience in the Superleague behind them.

"I still have improvements to make but the coaches and players have been really helpful."

The Fijian international has also faced the challenge of playing in a new position, having been converted to wing attack by coach Tania Hoffman.

"We've got six shooters on the team already so I've been moved to a different role," she said.

"At first I thought I would not cope as it is such a fast area of the court but by playing there I've learnt so much."

Nawele has benefited from playing alongside fellow soldier



**"MY
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Bolakoro, who followed Hoffman to the club from Surrey Storm during the off season.

She made her Superleague debut against Team Bath and is reveling in the opportunity to feature at the sport's elite level.

"The training has been tremendous," Bolakoro (pictured left) said. "It is so intensive but it has been an amazing experience.

"I didn't really play last season but from sitting and watching the games I was able to learn.

"But now I'm out on the court and it is a brilliant feeling.

"I have that experience and I know what is required of me. I've improved so much since I've been here and have managed to make the starting line-up.

"My goal now is to stay in the team and we want to make sure we are not bottom of the league at the end of the season."

The Celtic Dragons were in action against the Severn Stars as this issue went to press. ■



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RALLYING



THOMSON AIMS FOR CENTRE STAGE



"IT WAS SUCH A RELIEF TO GET THE WIN"

DEFENDING champion Sgt Blair Thomson (RE) suffered an early setback in his bid to retain the Army Stage Rally title as mechanical issues forced his retirement in the opening round of 2019.

A burst radiator on the seventh stage of the MSN Circuit Rally event at Brands Hatch saw his Renault Clio 197 grind to a halt but the soldier saw enough in his vehicle's performance to believe he can be competitive.

"I was doing pretty well and was pleased with how everything was going," Thomson told *SoldierSport*.

"I've made some modifications to the gearbox – the car is much quicker and is able to carry more speed through the corners.

"We're heading in the right direction but setbacks like this can happen in rallying."

The Army competition sees soldiers racing in civilian championships across the country, with points gained over the campaign determining their overall standing.

And the MSN series pits Thomson against some of the best drivers in the UK.

"I only attended five or six events last season but I gained enough points to claim the Service title," he added.

"However, it went right down to the wire. My nearest rival needed to finish fourth or better in his last race and he eventually came fifth.

"I was holding my breath and it was such a relief to get the win."

The championship is still in its infancy but ten soldiers from across the cap badges will push for honours in 2019.

"It is growing every year and we have a good mix," the champion explained.

"My aim is to defend that title and I also want to compete in Armed Forces circuit racing.

"That is a different kettle of fish but it is something I'm looking forward to.

"In terms of the MSN series, I'm hoping for a place in the top six. I've already had a non-finish and I'm missing an event in March but hopefully I can achieve that." ■

SPORT SHORTS



Partners in progress

ENGLAND Netball has forged an official partnership with the Army.

As part of the deal civilian players at grass roots and elite levels will receive military leadership and personal development training.

In return, the Service will have the opportunity to use first-class training facilities and coaches at the England Netball Centre, while engaging in outreach programmes in the community.

"As a former international player I am elated by this opportunity to work with England Netball and to engage with the best young players from across the UK," said Army team captain Sgt Nordia Masters (AGC (SPS)).



Coaches learn their trade

THE Army Rugby Union (ARU) has taken further steps to expand the women's game by holding its first female-only coaching development day.

More than 30 soldiers attended the event, which was tailored for those looking to start a career in coaching as well as more experienced individuals.

"This was all about boosting confidence levels so these coaches can go back into a male or female environment and continue their progression," said Louise Dennis, the ARU's rugby development officer.



I'm from a rural area of Norfolk where people tend to stay, so I joined the Army to get out and see new places. As a soldier you can go overseas and get qualifications too. You'd have to pay a lot of money to have these sorts of opportunities on civvy street.

Pte Daniel Fisher, R Anglian



I followed my heart: the Service's adverts didn't make any difference to my decision to join. I did a year of sixth form study but left because it was awful.

Kgn Bret Fairclough, Lancs



It was my family, to be honest. My brother is a piper and already serving in 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland – also, my dad and grandad were both Gordon Highlanders. I was brought up on the British Army and I've wanted to be a soldier for as long as I can remember.

Hldr Aidyn Macbray, Scots



The whole idea of combat was interesting to me. I was qualified to go into a trade and could have joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers but I wanted to be on the front line. Even back in school I wanted to join the Army.

Fus Bradley Wort, RRF



I joined the Army last year – really because I couldn't see myself doing a normal job. I'm very proud to be the first member of my family to serve and I hope others will follow in my footsteps.

Fus Lewis Greenfield, Scots

My dad served and it didn't take much to influence me. This is my dream job and I'd want to do it even if I wasn't being paid.

Pte Lewis Savage, R Anglian



Your Army needs you

With a fresh recruitment campaign under way, we asked new joiners what made them enlist

Honestly, I always wanted to join up and do it properly – so I chose the Infantry.

Fus Alex Sweet, R Welsh



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