

SOLDIER



MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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NOVEMBER 2013

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Remembrance in all its forms

THE way in which our country pays its respects to fallen soldiers is changing.

With the military fully embracing social media, smartphone apps, and everything else 21st century it follows that the forums for remembering our colleagues must also evolve.

Our September issue detailed a new hologram-style memorial being planned in Folkestone.

And no doubt many of you have already turned to Facebook pages, Twitter or perhaps even the Notes with Wings website (www.noteswithwings.com) in order to share your Remembrance Day sentiments.

The latter was set up by former paratrooper James Lugassy, who lost a friend in service.

It allows users to add eulogies and upload photos of loved ones and is yet another sign that commemoration is moving with the times.

With these sorts of online developments, one could be forgiven for questioning whether military resting places have had their day as visitor destinations.

But as Becky Clark discovers this month, nothing could be further from the truth (pages 43-47).

Our cemeteries – like the fallen troops buried within them – will never grow old.

As Operation Herrick 19 continues this month (page 7) and we absorb the feats of a previous tour (page 26-31), our thoughts remain with lost friends.

Mentoring may be the order of the day over firefighting in Helmand but we are still involved in a conflict, and will be until the day our last soldier returns to home soil. ■



Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

S. Goldthorpe.



Army life in award-winning photos
(pages 40-41)

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Like lions

Troops take centre stage for outstanding actions on operations

“I thought my back felt a bit weird but I heard lads screaming so I carried on”

Interview: Ian Clapton

HERBIECK 17 may not have terrified the media with as many tales of dangerous battles as its previous hosts – it was largely focused on the importance of responsibility from the International Security Assistance Force to local troops.

However, the latest operational awards for service to highlight that the British soldiers who deployed to Helmand province between October 2012 and April 2013 were just as courageous as any that have gone before them.

Presenting a total of 117 military personnel for their gallantry and meritorious service, 15 Gen Adrian Bradburn, Commander United Forces, said: “Regularly an operations worldwide our troops have worked longer, done more to their duties and served in Afghanistan.”

4th Mechanised Brigade’s tour was notable for maintaining the remarkable pace of transition to our Afghan partners. “I am humbled by the bravery of our Servicemen and women. They have proved that with good people you can achieve just about anything.”

Range from that of Lt Col Jody Gurney (RMC), who has been awarded the Military Cross for defending his patrol base from an insurgent attack by using a hail of bullets to Lt Col Rachel Hughes (RMC), who showed exceptional courage in the face of Afghan children.

Speaking in recognition of all nominated individuals, Brig Rod-Brace, commander of 4th Force, indicated for the deployment, added: “Our tour of duty was always going to be about change.”

“I am honoured to be able to pay tribute to the men and women who drove that change effectively – they can and do fight this war.”

Read on for a taste of the bold actions that have been recorded...

Back-breaking deed

Injury fails to dampen soldier's resolve

➔ A SERVICEMAN who kept off Afghan insurgents when they stormed his base despite suffering with a broken back and reduced vision has been awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross.

Cpl Josh Griffiths (RMC) was left with a broken back and reduced vision after 25 Taliban members attacked Patrol Base Hubal.

However, the 28-year-old refused to be defeated and took on the enemy after they used a vehicle to breach the 40-metre hole in the camp wall.

“There was a massive explosion and I remember it was dark and I was on my back. I heard one of the lads scream,” explained Cpl Griffiths.

“I got up and helped him, then climbed out of the hole and discovered there were more casualties.”

“The enemy started coming past and I could see insurgents standing there.”

“I picked up a light machine gun and began to push forward.”

“The enemy were firing rocket-propelled grenades into the camp.”

“One of them hit the ground and I got a bit of slag in my eye. I also had a broken back,” the Serviceman recalled.

“I think someone kicked in, I am sure I actually got better than I normally do.”

A broken back is a serious injury that can result in full paralysis if the spinal cord is damaged but Cpl Griffiths explained that at the time he did not even notice he was hurt.

“I thought my back felt a bit weird but I heard lads screaming so I carried on,” he said.

“After the incident I was diagnosed that I broke my fourth vertebrae and I have been having physiotherapy for a few months since.”

“I was meant to get back to work as soon as possible.”

“The captain for the soldier’s home states: “Cpl Griffiths faced down the enemy who were throwing grenades and firing automatic weapons, placing himself and one other soldier between the casualty and the insurgents.”

“His immediate actions halted the assault, allowing the casualty to be extracted.”

“The Serviceman added: “It was the hardest thing I have ever done.”

“I think my mum would be proud to know what I did. I do know the whole story.”

43

Cpl Josh Griffiths (RMC)





"I just thought that if I was alive I might be able to save my colleagues"

Soldier tells how he fought off attacker p28

"Sometimes guys who are ill think they just need to drink a can of 'man up'"

Officer debunks mental health fallacies p32

"The number of 'name and address supplied' letters is disturbing"

Reader peeved by Talkback exchanges p56



CANOE SLALOM

GATECRASHERS

Paddle stars sink their rivals on Welsh waters

Interview: Canoeing
Interviewee: **Michael "Moose" Evans**
Age: 35
Team: Team Wales
Club: Team Wales

After a long and hard day of canoeing, Michael Evans is exhausted. He's sitting on the grass, his legs aching, and he's looking at the camera with a tired but determined expression. He's a professional canoeist, and he's about to compete in the slalom event at the World Championships in Wales. He's been training for months, and he's ready to give it his all.

The slalom event is a test of skill and endurance. It's a race where the canoeists have to navigate a series of gates, each of which is a narrow channel of water. The gates are made of logs, and the canoeists have to pass through them in a specific order. The race is fast and furious, and it's a test of the canoeist's ability to handle the water and the gates.

Michael Evans is a professional canoeist, and he's been training for months. He's ready to give it his all, and he's determined to win. He's a competitive person, and he's always looking for ways to improve himself. He's a hard worker, and he's always pushing himself to the limit.

He's a competitive person, and he's always looking for ways to improve himself. He's a hard worker, and he's always pushing himself to the limit. He's a competitive person, and he's always looking for ways to improve himself. He's a hard worker, and he's always pushing himself to the limit.

Did Evans expect to win?
 "I was hoping to win, but I wasn't sure. I was just trying to do my best."

How did you feel when you won?
 "I felt amazing. I was so happy to win. I was so proud of myself."

What was your favorite part of the race?
 "I loved the gates. They were so challenging. I loved the feeling of going through them."

What was your biggest challenge?
 "The gates were the biggest challenge. They were so narrow, and I had to be precise to get through them."

What was your biggest achievement?
 "Winning the slalom event was my biggest achievement. I was so proud of myself."

What are your future plans?
 "I want to continue to compete. I want to be a professional canoeist."

What advice do you have for other canoeists?
 "Practice, practice, practice. That's the key to success."

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BRITISH TROOPS' NEWS ASSET: THE INFORMER

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Picture: Sgt Dan Bardsley, RLC

Increasingly responsible: Recruits have commenced lessons at the 2,000-acre academy in Kabul

'Sandhurst in the sand' signals province progress

HUNDREDS of recruits have begun studying at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy in the hope of becoming the country's next generation of military leaders.

More than 270 members of the first "kandak" – equivalent to a British Army battalion – are undertaking lessons at the centre in Qargha, Kabul, which has been nicknamed "Sandhurst in the Sand" by the media.

The cadets will be instructed by Afghan platoon commanders and sergeants who have been trained by their UK counterparts.

Brig Maurice Sheen, commandant mentor at the academy, said the development showed Britain's long-term commitment to the country.

"This marks the end of a large phase of training and preparation which has been going on for a long time," the Reservist explained.

"It builds on all the work that troops from the UK have done in the past and will produce the young leaders that the Afghan National Army so thoroughly deserves."

The 2,000-acre facility – which was modelled on the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and has 42 mentors from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark and Norway – will eventually house 1,200 cadets.

It will continue to be run for the next ten years with £75 million of British investment.

Recruits will spend 42 weeks there before graduating next September.

In a further development, a new battle school has also opened in Camp Shorabak, Helmand province.

Members of 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland have taken the lead in training and mentoring members of the Afghan National Army at the 215 Regional Corps Battle School.

The facility, which is located close to Camp Bastion, will provide recruits who have completed basic training with more advanced skills such as firing mortars.

"We have seven infantry courses and ten combat service support courses running – including topics such as food services, combat transport and weapons maintenance," said Wg Cdr James Penelhum, officer in command of the facility.

"Over the next couple of months we're receiving a lot of visits from senior Afghan personnel, who are coming to see how this has been set up and identify lessons."

Brig James Woodham, commander of Task Force Helmand for Op Herrick 19, said the focus for 7th Armoured Brigade during the current tour would be to continue supporting the work of Afghan troops.

● Helmand heroes
– pages 26-31

>> BRITISH troops have transferred control of Patrol Base Ouellette to the Afghan National Civil Order Police.

Located on Route 611, it provides a crucial link between northern Helmand and Lashkar Gah.

Home to UK Armed Forces since July 2011, the base was handed over as part of an ongoing reduction programme.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers were stationed at Ouellette over the summer to assist local police in providing security.

“This builds on all the work that troops from the UK have done”

APP AIDS THE MIND

■ AN iPhone app has been launched to provide soldiers with mental health support.

The Joining Forces programme provides tailored information on issues such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress and depression, as well as highlighting where to access help.

It also features interactive videos outlining the signs of mental health problems to encourage people to seek advice if they feel they are suffering from any of the symptoms.

"There is nothing like this in the app marketplace and it has significant potential to contribute to destigmatising mental health," said Col Martin Deahl, the lead psychiatrist for the Service.

The tool can be downloaded for free through the iTunes store.

An Android version is being developed and is scheduled to be available by the end of the year.

● Timing is everything
– page 32

MOVES PRESS ON

■ THE programme to relocate units under the Army's restructuring plans is on track.

Seven moves have been completed this year and a further 22 are scheduled for 2014.

In Germany, Celle and Muenster Stations and Rhine Garrison have closed, with Hameln Station next in line to shut.

Studies are continuing at a number of defence sites in the UK to assess infrastructure requirements and are due to be completed by the end of December.

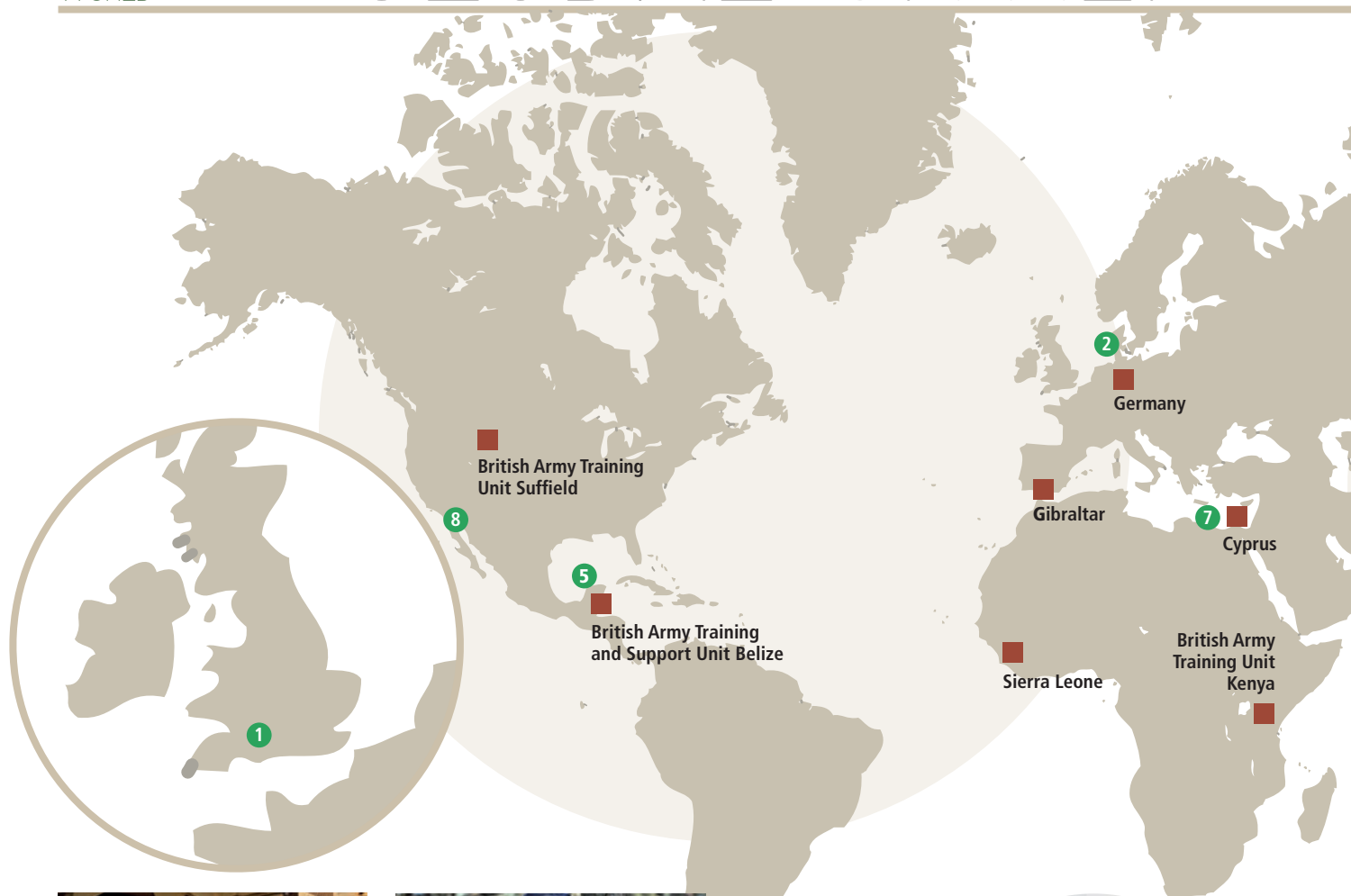
Next year will also see the re-rolling or conversion of nine other formations, including The King's Royal Hussars, 1st Battalion, Scots Guards and 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment.

MONEY OFF ABROAD

■ BRITISH troops who are members of discount service Rewards for Forces can now access money-saving deals overseas thanks to a new partnership between the British scheme and its Canadian and Australian equivalents.

Service personnel travelling in these countries can log on to the websites www.cfappreciation.ca and www.apod.com.au to take advantage of a wide range of concessions on flights, hotels, activities and more.

GLOBAL SITREP



1 UK

BACK TO BASICS

PERSONNEL from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers received hands-on training with operational vehicles and equipment during a training exercise on Salisbury Plain.

The serials allowed Reserve soldiers to update their trade skills in order to mobilise alongside Regulars.

The training included battle damage repair on protected patrol vehicles such as the Mastiff 2.

Cfn Mark Robinson said: "These drills make you consider things you would not usually think of using to fix a problem, like taking a jerry can to make a radiator or using a glove to seal a hole."



2 DENMARK

VIKING STARS

SOLDIERS from 7th Battalion, The Rifles trained alongside Denmark's Home Guard Service during a civil defence exercise.

The package saw the personnel deploy across the Jutland region under the command of Danish NCOs in response to various emergency scenarios.

Named Viking Star, the serial also gave the British troops the opportunity to try their hand on the Danish battlefield training system, Simunition, which uses specially adapted assault rifles that fire ballistic paint pellets.

The Falkland Islands

“These drills make you consider things you would not normally think of”



3 JAPAN

EASTERN PROMISE

THE Band of the Coldstream Guards has spent two weeks touring Japan, playing a range of music from the soundtrack of *Les Misérables* to *James Bond* tunes.

The personnel played concerts across a range of impressive venues and took part in several marching band appearances as part of "Japan 400" – a commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Japanese and British relations.

● Songs for soldiers – pages 76-77

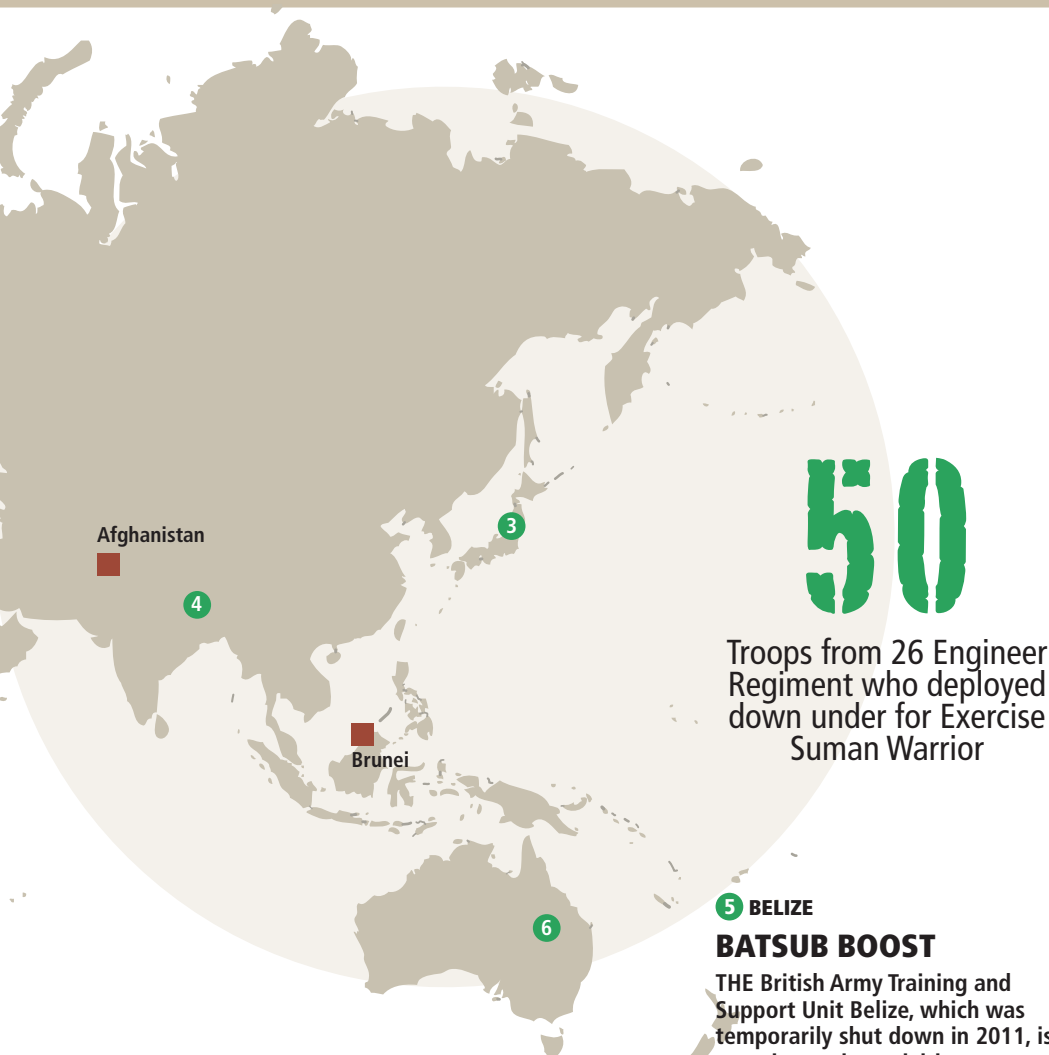
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50

Troops from 26 Engineer Regiment who deployed down under for Exercise Suman Warrior



Tough trek: The team are aiming to tackle some tough altitudes across the country

4 NEPAL

TITANIC TREK

A TEAM of 14 Service personnel have embarked on a three-week expedition to Nepal.

As this issue went to press the mixture of novice and experienced high-altitude trekkers were due to tackle the peaks of Kala Pattar (5,530 metres) and Gokyo Ri (5,375 metres) and a high pass of more than 5,400 metres.

The troops are Reservists from 103 Battalion REME, the Royal Engineers and The Royal Welsh.

5 BELIZE

BATSUB BOOST

THE British Army Training and Support Unit Belize, which was temporarily shut down in 2011, is stepping up its activities.

Dutch and Norwegian troops are due to complete training in the country next month.

Members of 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards are then scheduled to visit from March 2014.

It is hoped there could be as many as eight Armed Forces exercises per year being staged in Belize by 2016.

6 AUSTRALIA

CYCLONE RELIEF

FIFTY members of 26 Engineer Regiment travelled to Queensland, Australia to take part in Exercise Suman Warrior, a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief scenario for a civil emergency caused by a tropical cyclone.

In addition to the British and Australian troops, the serial involved personnel from the remaining Five Power Defence Arrangements nations – Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand.

7 CYPRUS

FARMER'S PRIDE

SAPPERS from 20 Field Squadron, 36 Engineer Regiment have helped to give farmers better access to their land using a special system called "side hill cut".

The soldiers widened some eight kilometres of track that was previously inaccessible to vehicles.



8 USA

AMERICAN EXCHANGE

GUNNERS have travelled to Camp Pendleton near San Diego, California to conduct mock operations alongside US marines.

The package saw members of 148 Battery, 29 Commando Regiment, Royal Artillery work with troops from the Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company.

The British troops undertook fast roping from helicopters and used American weapons.

Last month 19 members of the US unit made the long journey to Poole, Dorset, where they were shown the amphibious skills that 148 Battery specialise in before linking up with the rest of the regiment for Exercise Joint Warrior – a biannual Nato training event (pictured below).



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IN MEMORIAM



LCpl James Brynin (22)
Intelligence Corps
KIA October 15 – Afghanistan

SOLDIERS have spoken of their overwhelming shock and sadness at the death of a colleague during a firefight in Nahr-e Saraj.

LCpl James Brynin (Int Corps) was attached to 14th Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare) when he received a fatal gunshot wound during a Brigade Reconnaissance Force operation.

Born in Shoreham-by-Sea, LCpl Brynin joined the Army in 2011 and completed a tour of Afghanistan in 2012 before volunteering to return this year.

Known as Jay to his friends, the Serviceman had already been selected for promotion to corporal and was planning to attend parachute selection training following his latest tour of

southern Afghanistan.

Lt Col Richard Slack, commanding officer of the 9th/12th Royal Lancers, paid tribute to the "truly special individual".

"LCpl Brynin stood out due to his professionalism, his determination and his razor-sharp intelligence," the senior officer said.

"He touched everyone with his zest for life and sense of humour but above all he will be remembered for his extraordinary courage."

LCpl Luke Garbett, of 14th Signal Regiment, added: "If a man is measured by the opinions of his peers, Jay stood above us all."

The Serviceman leaves behind his dad Efreem, mum Sharon, sister Yasmin and girlfriend Olivia.



NEW CORPS MEMORIAL

■ HUNDREDS of Royal Army Physical Training Corps personnel gathered at the National Memorial Arboretum for the dedication of a new monument to colleagues who died in the line of duty.

Serving and former members of the corps were among those attending the ceremony, along with friends and family, including the relatives of WO2 Dan Shirley, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2008, and Dave Bellamy who lost his life in Northern Ireland in 1979.

The life-sized statue of a vaulting horse is to become a symbolic place of remembrance for all those associated with the RAPTC.

● For the fallen – pages 43-47

TOURNAMENT RETURNS

■ THE British Military Tournament returns to Earls Court next month with a new show packed full of daring stunts and dramatic re-enactments.

Commentated by actor Anthony Andrews, this year's performance is entitled British Legends and includes tributes to Admiral Lord Nelson and Lawrence of Arabia.

The White Helmets motorcycle display team will take to the display ring, which also hosts the famous field gun competition, while the exhibition area will feature an Apache helicopter, a Jackal vehicle and an Enigma code-breaking machine from Bletchley Park.

The show will be staged on December 7 and 8. For details or to book tickets visit www.britishmilitarytournament.com

“

I AM NOW
COMPETING
AGAINST THE
BEST ATHLETES
IN THE WORLD
AND WINNING
MEDALS

DISABLED SKI
TEAM RETURN
TO ACTION –
PAGE 97

”

Demonstrators demand a rethink on Fusiliers' future

HUNDREDS of veterans delivered a petition to Downing Street calling on the government to rethink its decision to disband 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers under restructuring plans.

Supporters of the campaign argue that the unit should not be removed because, unlike some other formations, it meets manning and recruitment targets.

Leading the protest was Ian Brazier, chairman of the Fusiliers Association, who in September interrupted Philip Hammond during his speech to the Conservative Party conference.

Speaking after the demonstration, the retired officer said: "The government has spoken about efficiencies and cost savings but there is no explanation for this unfathomable decision, despite repeated formal requests under the Freedom of

Information Act."

An MoD spokeswoman said the suggestion that defence reform decisions were taken on recruitment performance alone was a "fundamental misunderstanding" of the British Army's process.

She added: "We have been clear that the Regular Army is becoming smaller and over a year ago we also announced changes to its structure so it reflects the complex global situation."

"These changes were led by the Army, who took account of a number of criteria to determine which infantry battalions would be withdrawn, to ensure the Service is more adaptable to future challenges."

Days later at a House of Commons debate on Army reform MPs from all three major parties voted in favour of a motion that unit changes should be delayed.

AIRMAN'S SCRIBBLES FETCH A FORTUNE

■ EVER wondered what a note to a colleague could be worth? Possibly far more than you thought if it was sent after a high-profile battle.

This rare handwritten letter from Dambuster Guy Gibson is expected to fetch up to £3,000 when it goes up for auction this month.

Penned just weeks after the famous aerial raid on the Ruhr valley in May 1943, it was sent to fellow pilot Flt Cecil "Ginger" Parkins, who had written to congratulate Gibson on the operation and his subsequent Victoria Cross.

Andrew Currie, of Bonhams auctioneers, explained why the item is considered to be so valuable.

"Anything to do with well-known figures always attracts lots of interest and the Dambusters raid is one of those feats of valour which is firmly embedded in the national memory," he said.

After the mission Gibson took up a staff role but was later shot down and killed during his first tasking on returning to active service.





**“AFTERWARDS YOU CAN’T BELIEVE
WHAT YOU HAVE JUST DONE”**
– TOUR’S TOUGHEST TALK, PAGES 26-31

Cyber plans step up

HUNDREDS of specialist Reservists are to be recruited to develop the UK’s cyber capability, it has been announced.

The Joint Cyber Reserve Unit will see the personnel working alongside Regular troops to protect critical computer networks, safeguard data and even carry out virtual strikes.

Announcing the plans, Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said: “Increasingly, our budget is being invested in high-end capabilities such as cyber, intelligence and surveillance assets to ensure we can keep the UK safe.

“This is an exciting opportunity for internet experts in industry to put their skills to good use for the good of the nation, protecting our vital systems.”

Recruiting for the tri-Service formation began last month and covers three categories – Regular personnel leaving the military, current and former Reservists with relevant skills and those with no previous military experience but sought-after technical knowledge.

The latter group will not be required to meet the stringent physical criteria expected of others enlisting in the Reserves and a pilot scheme is being carried out to evaluate how best to recruit and retain such applicants.

Commenting in the *Mail on*

Sunday about how the programme would be funded, Mr Hammond admitted further cuts to other assets were likely.

“We only have one pot of money and if we are going to invest hundreds of millions of pounds in cyber capabilities, we have to stop doing something else,” the politician told the newspaper.

“That is the tough message. As our cyber capability builds, we will look at how the military would be likely to use it and where that allows us to reduce other areas.

“Where we can tackle a target with virtual weapons, we may need fewer conventional arms in that area but I can’t say yet where those regions will be.”

However, highlighting the importance of cyber warfare in future conflicts he added: “Years ago you would go into a target area and attack with freefall bombs.

“Western public opinion increasingly demands precision attacks – no civilian casualties, no collateral damage.

“Cyber weapons provide the tantalising possibility of being able to cripple the enemy without inflicting lasting damage on them.”

For more information on the new formation visit www.gov.uk and search for “Joint Cyber Reserve”.

● Reserves round-up – page 23

“This is an exciting chance for internet experts to put their skills to good use”

17

Number of international teams that took part in this year’s Ex Cambrian Patrol – pages 24-25

CIVVY STREET SORTED

■ A NEW portal has been set up to help troops find advice on the civilian employment market.

Website www.sorted.org.uk was jointly created by seven Service charities and features a simple questionnaire to ensure individuals are referred to the most appropriate organisation.

LINLEY’S DEDICATION

■ A HOME for disabled ex-Servicemen and women has renamed part of its building in honour of SSgt Brett Linley (RLC), a bomb disposal officer killed in Afghanistan in July 2010 as he attempted to disarm his sixth device of the day.

The Royal Star and Garter Home in Solihull has called its ground floor the Linley Wing after members of the community put the soldier’s name forward.

SSgt Linley was posthumously awarded the George Medal.

PARAS JOIN FORCES

■ PARATROOPERS have practised a combat-style parachute jump as part of joint training between the British and French air forces.

In gusty conditions at the Wilex Sike drop zone in Cumbria members of B Company, 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment jumped from a Royal Air Force Hercules in overhead assault mode.

A key skill for their role as the Air Assault Task Force, the method requires personnel to parachute wearing body armour and webbing with weapons and daysacks strapped to their legs.

Maj Adam Wilson, officer commanding the unit, explained: “The speed of the descent and the equipment we carry means we would be ready to start fighting as we hit the ground.”

The adrenalin-charged serial was held during Exercise Capable Eagle.



Picture: Sgt Tony Durrant, RAF

**"IT WAS NOT THE RESULT
WE WERE HOPING FOR"**
- HOCKEY HEADACHE, PAGE 92



BBC goes back to Afghanistan

A TELEVISION series highlighting daring front-line stories will be screened on BBC One for the fourth year running this month.

Remembrance Week will be aired daily at 0915 from November 4 to 8.

As well as tracing the heroic tales of men and women from past conflicts, the programme sees presenter Gethin Jones visit Afghanistan to meet UK Servicemen and women.

Speaking to *Soldier* about the trip back in July, the celebrity said he had been humbled by those he met.

"It was wonderful to be able to recognise and thank in person the guys who give up so much for their country," he commented.

Earlier this year Jones revealed he was considering becoming a Reservist.

"I love working with the military on TV," he added.

"Soldiers speak in honest soundbites and they don't mess around. They are my type of people."

Q&A

Has he got what it takes to be a Reservist? *Soldier* tested Gethin Jones on his military knowledge...

» What's the Army's main assault weapon?

» The SA80?

» What is a JSP?

» Umm... joint support plan?

» What's your favourite ration pack?

» Easy – chilli con carne. I had it in Helmand province during a logistics patrol. It was delicious.

» What country is Batus in?

» I'm going to say... Canada.

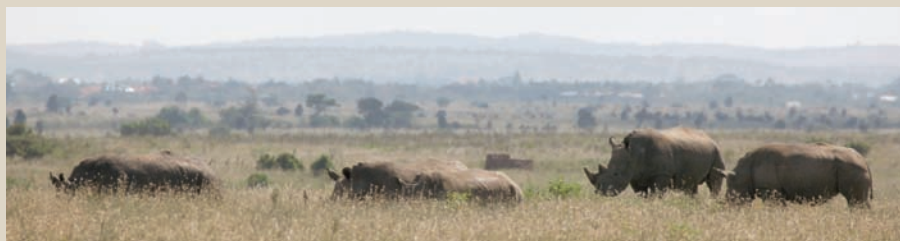
» What does "ally" mean?

» I don't know.

Verdict: Don't give up the day job, Gethin. Not that you need to in the Army Reserve...



HOME TRUTHS



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

The cost of going abroad

AS a result of my visit to Kenya earlier this year, the Army Families Federation (AFF) is forming an overseas branch to ensure those posted outside of the UK can access our services.

It will also give us clearer insight into issues such as employment, education, allowances and housing that affect families across the world.

Due to the volume of enquiries we have encountered in Kenya and Canada, we hope to employ local coordinators in these locations.

Kenya has various issues of concern including safety and the cost of travel to and from the UK.

The situation in Canada is very different but families have expressed concerns about isolation and lack of employment.

Our organisation will continue its presence in Germany and Cyprus, while our new volunteer programme will eventually allow personnel across the world to be represented.

This is crucial because if the new employment model is able to deliver the stability it promises – that is, providing families with better access to local schools and partner employment in the United Kingdom – those facing an overseas posting could potentially encounter considerable disadvantages.

Reduced local overseas allowances, the loss of partner earnings and private pension contributions, plus the creation of gaps in employment, are just some of the financial and career penalties that those posted abroad now face.

Therefore, many could become increasingly reluctant to opt for

overseas adventures unless the package they are offered truly meets their needs.

One step in the right direction is that children of families posted abroad who are in full-time education and aged between 18 and 23 have had their entitlement to an annual flight restored.

This came about after significant campaigning by the AFF.

University and college students often occupy accommodation that is unavailable to them during the holidays and the cost of travelling between the UK and home was proving to be prohibitively expensive for many families.

More good news is that the MoD is looking at ways to aid partner employment overseas.

This is vital to families posted abroad as they could miss out on the crucial second income needed to buy a property.

Speaking of which, the introduction of the housing purchase incentive scheme, aimed specifically at Forces personnel, will be welcomed by many families keen to own their own home as well as single troops and unmarried couples not entitled to Service dwellings.

The AFF welcomes the move but we will also continue to try and ensure that Army housing remains available and affordable.

However, a review of the entitlement to Service family accommodation is currently being carried out.

Watch this space.

www.aff.org.uk

“THE MOD IS LOOKING AT WAYS TO AID PARTNER EMPLOYMENT OVERSEAS”



Debt Solutions made simple and to suit you! Get your life back on track...

Do you feel that your overdraft never seems to recover each month? Especially with the soaring costs of running a household, increased charges for credit and changes in personal circumstance. It seems never-ending!

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"THIS IS BY FAR THE BEST PLACE WE'VE VISITED FOR TRAINING"

– FRENCH FACILITY IMPRESSES, PAGE 98



SITE FOR SOLDIERS

■ SERVING soldier Pte Albert Ogudipe (RLC) has launched a new website that allows military personnel and their dependants to buy and sell items within the Forces community.

The online portal also provides an avenue to advertise relevant businesses such as child minding, hairdressing and gardening and landscaping.

Pte Ogudipe said the site is free to use and has a number of checks in place to ensure a safe experience for its customers.

To view it visit www.squaddiebuy.com

TRAINING UNITS STAY

■ THE University Officer Training Corps will retain all of its 19 units following a major review of its structure and resources.

The study also approved the permanent set-up of two officer training regiments, which had been successfully piloted.

Last year the organisation took on the responsibility for initial training for all potential Reserve officers.

In recognition of this increased role, the study also recommended the creation of 18 additional full-time Reserve service (home contract) posts.

For further details read **ABN 103-13**.

A PLAY TO REMEMBER

■ LONDON'S Palace Theatre will take a one-night break from blockbuster show *The Commitments* to stage a special performance of *Dreams from the Pit* on Armistice Day.

The play tells the story of three soldiers – Razor, Jacko and Sully – during their tour of Afghanistan and is based on extensive interviews with veterans, serving personnel and their families.

It focuses on the challenges faced by soldiers when they return home and carries a serious message about the often-unrecognised mental injuries they suffer.

The play will be performed and staged by volunteers and proceeds from the November 11 production will go to the mental health charity Combat Stress.

For tickets visit www.nimaxtheatres.com or call the box office on 0844 4125656.

COOKING CONQUEST

■ THE oven gloves were off as British Army chefs beat their Armed Forces rivals to triumph at the annual military culinary competition, Exercise Joint Caterer.

After 15 hotly contested rounds, which included the ration pack challenge and an ethnic buffet event, the Service had amassed nine points to the Royal Air Force's seven and the Royal Navy's three.

Among those on the expert judging panel was Cyrus Todiwala of BBC Two's *The Incredible Spice Men*.

THIS MONTH'S WALL OF SOUND...



Motorhead come back with a bang

★★★★★

“Louder and heavier than ever”

MUSIC REVIEWS

PAGES 76-77



Picture: Graeme Main

Bringing home the baking

TV star turns her focus to wider Army family

GREAT *British Bake Off* star and Army wife, Beca Lyne-Pirkis, has been using her culinary creativity to support the work of military charity SSAFA.

As the nation recovered from the drama of the television show's climax, the semi-finalist attended a cake sale in aid of the organisation's Big Brew Up campaign.

Staged by her husband's colleagues at 4th Medical Regiment in Aldershot, the event saw the 32-year-old face a considerably smaller audience than the eight million who tuned in to BBC Two.

Instead of her efforts being put under the microscope by eagle-eyed judges Paul Hollywood and Mary Berry (pictured below), it was Beca's turn to critique the food cooked up by soldiers and their families.

Explaining why she took part, the mum-of-one commented: "I sing with the Military Wives Choir and SSAFA have always shown their support for us so I was happy to get behind the fund-raising."

During her time on the *Great British Bake Off* series, which ended last month, Beca created a special recipe for the charity campaign to inspire people to get baking.

"I really enjoy coming up with new ideas so I made a seasonal cake for the Big Brew Up," she added.

"It's got blackberry, apples and mascarpone in so it's very autumnal." Reflecting on her TV fame, she said that a competitive streak had helped her cope with the pressure.

"It's daunting when you walk into that huge tent and you have to cook in front of all the cameras and crew," Beca told *Soldier*.

"Of course I was gutted not to get through to the final but I'm so proud that I made it to the semis."

Medic husband, Cpl Matt Lyne-Pirkis (pictured above with Beca and their daughter Mari), said he never doubted his wife's talent.

"She would bake for my old squadron and people would call them 'Beca cakes' and come from all over camp to have some," he explained.

"It takes a lot to put yourself out there on a TV show and I'm massively proud of what she achieved."

Visit www.ssafa.org.uk/news to view Beca's autumn cake recipe.



Picture: BBC/Love Productions



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Source: Mr & Mrs Broadit (22 Fd Hosp) whose claim was previously declined by their bank.

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"IT'S A REMINDER THAT EXCELLENCE ISN'T ONLY ABOUT THE FRONT LINE" - SERVICE SNAPS IMPRESS, PAGES 40-41



ALLOWANCE REVERSAL

■ ALLOWANCE changes introduced last year to help the MoD save money have had more impact on troops than was first intended, the department has said.

Further amendments will now be made to the package to ensure that it remains affordable and fair.

From next month three allowances will be increased: the disturbance allowance, the Service children's visit entitlement and the local overseas allowance for dependants in post-secondary education.

To compensate for these changes two other payments will be reduced. Read **2013DIN01-199** for details.

In a bid to make the allowances and expenses system simpler for troops to understand, the department will also amalgamate or delete 17 payments that are rarely used or cannot be justified.

A revision of JSP 752, the regulations for tri-Service allowances, is also being planned for the New Year to make the document more user-friendly.

For more read **2013DIN01-200**.



Picture: SSgt Mark Nesbit, RLC

LEARNING IN GERMANY

■ BRITISH and German soldiers have been assessing how they could work together on contingency operations.

A platoon from 5th Battalion, The Rifles and the 2nd and 3rd Companies of the Panzergrenadierbataillon 401 got an insight into each others' tactics, operating procedures and equipment during Exercise Saxon Charger held on the Munster Lager training area.

Platforms used included British Warriors, the German Marder infantry fighting vehicle and Leopard 2 main battle tank.

Lt Col von Block, who commanded the German troops, commented: "I am positively surprised at how well it has gone – as long as the guys are smiling then everything is alright."

CRIMBO CARD SALE

■ CHRISTMAS cards from Forces charity SSAFA are available to buy now.

The organisation is hoping that this year's sales will exceed the £95,000 raised in 2012.

To order visit www.ssafastore.org.uk or call 01227811615.

The cards will also be sold by Cards for Good Causes, whose volunteers set up temporary shops at sites across the country including churches, libraries and community centres.



Picture: Steve Dock

London calling: Covenants have helped the city's councils and GPs to improve their service to soldiers

City sets the standard

LONDON-based soldiers and their families are to benefit from increasingly close links between the military and civilian communities in the city.

All but one of the capital's 32 boroughs have signed up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant. The remaining region, plus the City of London, is due to do so by the end of this month.

HQ London District has highlighted some of the different ways that local authorities have put the words of the agreement into practice.

For example, Wandsworth now sends out a welcome letter to every Service leaver coming to

settle in the borough, while GPs in Hounslow Council routinely ask all their patients if they have a Forces background to ensure any potential military-specific conditions are detected.

Some 18,000 cadets, Regulars and Reservists live in London, as well as 200,000 Forces veterans.

Brig Richard Smith, deputy commander of the Army in London, said that sharing best practice among organisations would help improve relations.

"We're very proud to be part of our communities and we want to be net contributors to the society in which we live and work," the senior officer added.

UP CLOSE: THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

372

authorities across the UK have now signed a community covenant



the agreements are designed to improve life for serving soldiers and their families in their home towns

the scheme was first introduced in

JUNE 2011



residents may be encouraged to get involved in more fundraising for Service charities



after their region signs up, local services often make changes to health care, education and housing to better support military personnel



**“ONCE THEY START TO COMPETE
THEY WILL HAVE A GOOD TIME”
- THE LURE OF STRONGMAN, PAGE 89**

Picture: Cpl Obi Igbo, RLC



Troops swoop on Norfolk

THE Army's Air Assault Task Force has been put through its paces during an adrenalin-fuelled training package in Norfolk.

Exercise Active Eagle saw members of the 2 Para Battlegroup extract citizens from a fictional country and deal with a simulated terrorist threat.

The troops also had to protect an embassy against a rioting crowd, who bombarded them with missiles, and assault a village to free police.

"I've only been in 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment for eight months and this exercise has taken

me a step up from what I learnt in training," commented Pte Daniel Lee (Para). "The adrenalin of facing rioters means it's important to work together and keep your discipline."

Cpl Dan Bradley, a member of the formation's Patrols Platoon, added: "I've been on two tours of southern Afghanistan and this exercise was a very different style of working – we moved on foot, carrying all of our kit and supplies.

"However, the experience of operations has put us in a good place to adapt."

Fast-paced:
The training saw
paratroopers deal
with a simulated
terrorist attack

Amount that Phoenix House cost to build. The centre will provide care to injured troops across the north and east of the UK

£10.7m

RECOVERY HUB OPENS

■ A FACILITY offering care to individuals with life-changing illnesses and injuries has opened at Catterick Garrison.

Phoenix House will provide support for wounded and sick Servicemen and women, veterans and their families and will cater for those based in Scotland, the North West, the East of England and the north Midlands.

The centre forms part of the defence recovery capability, a MoD initiative that is run in partnership with Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion.

With guidance from military and civilian specialists, residents develop their own rehabilitation plans through educational programmes, work placements and sport.

Veterans from two very different eras opened the centre – Gareth Golightly, 31, whose family were the first to use the facility and 88-year-old John Painter, a retired brigadier who was injured in the Second World War.

The former's career in the Royal Logistic Corps was cut short less than a year after it had begun when he lost a leg following a motorbike accident.

After leaving the Service he didn't know where to get help and, as a result, became increasingly withdrawn.

"It's amazing how much our home life has improved with Gaz coming to Phoenix House," said the ex-soldier's wife Denise. "He's now talking to people and will take the children out on his own. Thanks to the provision of family rooms we can all visit the centre and get away."

DISPUTE OVER MALARIA TREATMENT

A ROW has broken out over the Ministry of Defence's use of the antimalarial drug mefloquine. Branded as Lariam, the tablets can sometimes cause psychiatric problems.

Veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq have called on the department to follow America's example and ban the medication.

However, the MoD Surgeon General, Air Mshl Paul Evans, said it was one of a number of effective treatments used by the Services to treat the deadly disease, which is spread by mosquitos.



WIN

...A £450 Elliot Brown watch

LAST month's spine lines competition was inspired by our interview with comedienne, Army brat and former *Loose Woman* Jenny Eclair.

(Andrea) McLean, (Denise) Welch, (Jane) McDonald and (Lisa) Maxwell have all featured as panelists on the tedious, ahem, popular ITV show.

This month we have teamed up with state-of-the-art watchmaker Elliot Brown (www.elliottbrownwatches.com) to offer a stylish timepiece – the Canford 202-007 – to one lucky reader. Designed to survive in the harshest of conditions, this luxury piece of kit is ideal for the active lifestyles of Service personnel.

To be in with a chance of winning the watch, tell us what links the words on the spine of this issue. Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address or via email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by November 29.





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"WE MAY LACK SOME EXPERIENCE BUT WE MAKE UP FOR IT IN MOTIVATION"

- RESERVES TAKE TO TANKS, PAGES 38-39



CAREER FAIRS KICK OFF

■ TRANSITION fairs are being held across the Midlands region during November and December.

The events will bring together company bosses and experts in employment, education, health, housing and welfare.

They take place on November 5 at the International Centre, Telford from 1100 to 1500; November 7 at the McMurdo Theatre, Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham from 1000 to 1500 and December 5 at the TA Centre, Worcester from 1100 to 1500.

For more details on the Telford and Worcester shows contact Maj Nigel Hill on 01743 262687.

For information on the Grantham event call 0115 957 2513.

RADIO AWARD

■ FORCES broadcaster BFBS has received worldwide acclaim.

A documentary on the Military Wives Choir won gold in the radio category at the International Visual Communications Association Clarion Awards. The same piece also scooped the top spot at the 2013 New York Festivals International Radio Programs and Promos Competition in June.

SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

■ A PROGRAMME has been set up to improve education provision for British Army offspring who are being moved as a result of new basing arrangements.

Mike Cooper, the MoD's director for children and young people, said his team would be working closely with local authorities over the coming months as school places are arranged.

"During the next five to six years there will be around 5,000 Service children moving from Germany to the UK but I am confident that my directorate is ready to take on this important work," he said.

HELP TO BUY A HOME

■ A NEW scheme will help soldiers to get on the property ladder.

From April 2014 the Forces Help to Buy initiative will offer Regular troops loans of up to 50 per cent of their salary to purchase their first home.

The payments will be capped at £25,000, interest-free and must be repaid over a ten-year period.

Chief of Defence Personnel, Lt Gen Andrew Gregory, said: "The sum available through the long service

advance of pay no longer reflects the modern-day costs of becoming a home owner. This will offer troops more realistic financial support."



Highly accurate: Paratroopers have become the first to put the Javelin weapon to the test on the Stanford Training Area

Picture: Cpl Obi Igbo, RLC

Javelin first for troops

SOLDIERS from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment have become the first personnel to fire the Javelin missile on the Stanford Training Area in Norfolk.

Troops from the Colchester-based formation launched four of the highly accurate and potent weapons at the end of a course focused on the anti-tank platoon.

"I've learnt a lot about Javelin in training but this is the first time I've

seen it used for real, let alone fired one myself," said Pte Ashley Bowers.

"The package really helps you understand its capabilities and I'm massively impressed. With the rest of the platoon watching there's a lot of pressure to hit the target but the missile didn't let me down."

3 Para was the first unit to fire the weapon in Afghanistan in 2006 and is now part of the Army's high readiness force for contingency operations.

LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

SWAG

£60,000

TESTING TREK

Soldiers were among 89 walkers to complete the gruelling 100-kilometre Blind Veterans UK London to Brighton trek.



QUIDS IN

Blind Veterans UK

£2,060

MARIO MAGIC

Partners Ann Lewis and Sgt Tom Blakey (Para) completed two obstacle courses and a skydiving demo in memory of LCpl Paul Burns, who died in June. The duo tackled the ten-mile Nuts Challenge before Blakey did a skydive. They then took part in the Tough Mudder event dressed as the Mario Brothers.



British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association

£140

DAD'S DESERT COMBATS

Ciaran Cavanagh (pictured), 15, donned his dad's desert combats to run 20 laps of a 400-metre track. He chose the military cause because of his family's Service connections.



Help for Heroes and Light in Africa



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CIVVY BOSSES TREATED

■ EMPLOYERS of Reservist troops have been entertained at a key landmark courtesy of The London Regiment.

The drinks reception was held at the Tower of London to thank civilian bosses for their commitment to employing members of the British Army and give them a chance to meet members of the unit.

Among the organisations to attend included London Underground and Millwall Football Club.

OFF TO A FLYING START

■ INFANTRY soldiers have been introduced to the helicopters they could be working with if they choose to become part of the Army Air Corps under restructuring plans.

An Apache, Lynx and brand new Wildcat flew to Taunton to give 70 personnel from B Company, 6th Battalion, The Rifles the chance to get hands on with the kit ahead of the unit's cap badge change in April 2014.

Those who decide to change trades will become part of 675 Squadron (Rifles), AAC – one of only a handful of Reserve formations to be part of the Service's new Reaction Force.

The role will see troops working closely with 6 Regt, AAC.

"We don't have to go across to the AAC, we can choose to stay with the Rifles," said Maj Jonathan Webber.

"It's a difficult decision to make and it will be interesting to see how many get stuck in and make it a career."

HAMMOND UPS ANTE

■ THE UK's top 100 employers have been challenged to support at least 100 Reservists each in their workforce.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond called on bosses to back the country's Reserve Forces, which are due to increase in strength to 35,000 by 2018.

Speaking at the launch of the Barclays "After" programme, which provides work opportunities for injured troops, Mr Hammond said he was looking to British industry to take up the challenge.

"We've seen what large employers like Barclays are doing and to configure the Forces of the future we need this enlightened approach to become the rule not the exception," he explained.

"I want firms to do this not simply because having a recruit in your organisation should be a badge of honour but because the business benefits clearly outweigh the costs."



Taking off: The package was the first unit-sized deployment for troops in six years
Pictures: Sgt Russ Nolan, RLC

High in the sky stateside

MORE than 100 Reservists from 104 Regiment, Royal Artillery visited California to get airtime on the Desert Hawk 3.

A two-week training package at Camp Roberts allowed the soldiers to practise launching and piloting the unmanned aerial system (UAS).

Known as Exercise Flying Dragon, the serial was the first unit-sized deployment for the regiment since it became the only Reserve formation to operate the surveillance device in 2007.

Commanding officer Lt Col Francis Whiting said the package had ensured his troops were competent enough to deploy on future operations.

"We have accomplished more DH-3 flying in this fortnight than in the previous three years," he explained. "We

completed more than 250 flights and will have increased the number of soldiers with a UAS qualification from 50 to more than 100."

LBdr Lewis Taylor (RA) said he valued the experience.

"Desert Hawk is an asset that aids combat troops and allows us to make sure areas are safe," he added.

"It does give you a warm, fuzzy feeling to know that it saves lives."

Exercise Flying Dragon also involved Regular personnel from 32 Regt RA, 47 Regt RA, the Royal School of Artillery and Army Aviation Standards.



Londoners look ahead in Cyprus

TROOPS from London's Honourable Artillery Company have been honing their surveillance and target acquisition skills in Cyprus.

Exercise Lion Star saw patrols of up to five soldiers deploying via helicopter into observation posts to produce live reports for a squadron headquarters.

Night-time reconnaissance in Zodiac boats and a testing medical scenario added complexity to the serial, which culminated in a joint company attack

with 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Commanding officer Lt Col Howard Wilkinson said the ambitious training was vital to prepare Reservists for future tasks.

"The exercise met the criteria of the modern, contingent battlespace – it was cluttered, congested, complex and required very considerable effort to bring everything together," the senior soldier commented.

“IT WOULD APPEAR THIS CAFE HAS A NEAT LITTLE LINE IN RIPPING TROOPS OFF WITH OUTRAGEOUS PRICES

– TALKBACK
AIRS YOUR
GRIPES,
PAGES 51-59

”



THE BIG
PICTURE



>> BRECON BEACONS, MID-WALES UP TO THEIR NECKS

Exercise Cambrian Patrol was held last month and, as usual, took its toll on the participants. The serial included Regular, Reserve and University Officer Training Corps personnel plus teams from 17 foreign armies. Almost a fifth failed to complete their 48-hour missions covering various scenarios on some of the world's most challenging terrain. Nine patrols achieved the top award with 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment being the only international outfit to scoop gold.

Pictures: Cpl Barry Lloyd, RLC



Like lions

Troops take centre stage for outstanding actions on operations



Interviews: Joe Clapson

HERRICK 17 may not have furnished the media with as many tales of dangerous battles as on previous tours – it was largely focused on the handover of responsibility from the International Security Assistance Force to local troops.

However, the latest operational awards list serves to highlight that the British soldiers who deployed to Helmand province between October 2012 and April 2013 were just as courageous as any who have gone before them.

Honouring a total of 117 military personnel for their gallantry and meritorious service, Lt Gen Adrian Bradshaw, Commander Land Forces, said: "Regularly on operations worldwide our troops face mortal danger, none more so than those who served in Afghanistan.

"4th Mechanized Brigade's tour was

notable for maintaining the remarkable pace of transition to our Afghan partners.

"I am humbled by the bravery of our Servicemen and women. They have proved that with good people you can achieve just about anything."

The latest round of astounding stories range from that of A/LCpl Tuljung Gurung (RGR), who has been awarded the Military Cross for defending his patrol base from an insurgent attack using a kukri knife, to LCpl Rachel Hughes (RAMC), who worked tirelessly to save the lives of Afghan children.

Speaking in recognition of all nominated individuals, Brig Bob Bruce, commander of Task Force Helmand for the deployment, added: "Our tour of duty was always going to be about change.

"I am honoured to be able to pay tribute to the men and women who drove that change effectively – they can and do fight like lions."

Read on for a taste of the bold actions that have been rewarded...

Back-breaking deed

Injury fails to dampen soldier's resolve

→ A SERVICEMAN who fought off Afghan insurgents when they stormed his base despite suffering with a broken back and reduced vision has been awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross.

Cpl Josh Griffiths (Mercian) was left with a broken fourth vertebra and grenade fragments lodged in his eye after 30 Taliban members attacked Patrol Base Folad.

However, the 24-year-old refused to be defeated and took on the enemy after they used a vehicle-borne IED to blow a 40-metre hole in the camp wall.

"There was a massive explosion and I remember it was dark and I was on my back. I heard one of the lads scream," explained Cpl Griffiths.

"I approached and helped him, then climbed out of the tent and discovered there were more casualties.

"Then rounds started coming past and I could see insurgents standing there.

"I picked up a light machine gun and began to push forward."

The attackers were firing rocket-propelled grenades into the camp.

"One of them hit the ground and I got a bit of frag in my eye. I also had a broken back," the Serviceman recalled casually.

"I think adrenaline kicked in; I am sure I actually ran faster than I normally do."

A broken back is a serious injury that can result in full paralysis if the spinal chord is damaged but Cpl Griffiths explained that at the time he did not even notice he was hurt.

"I thought my back felt a bit weird but I heard lads screaming so I carried on," he said.

"After the incident it was diagnosed that I'd broken my fourth vertebra and I have been

having physiotherapy for a few months since.

"I now want to get back to work as soon as possible."

The citation for the soldier's honour states: "Cpl Griffiths faced down the enemy who were throwing grenades and firing automatic weapons, placing himself and one other soldier between the casualty and the insurgents.

"His immediate actions halted the attackers, allowing the casualties from the initial explosion to be extracted."

The Serviceman added: "It was the fiercest camp attack I have ever seen.

"I think my mum would be proud to know what I did if she knew the whole story." ■



Cpl Josh Griffiths (Mercian)

“I thought my back felt a bit weird but I heard lads screaming so I carried on”

Inspired leadership

Soldier's courage in face of IED attack



→ A VEHICLE commander who survived four separate explosions in southern Afghanistan has been awarded the Military Cross for showing "personal courage, selfless commitment and inspired leadership".

Cpl Oliver Bainbridge (RDG) was in charge of an armoured Jackal when its movement triggered an improvised explosive device, injuring the driver and launching the gunner from his turret.

"We had been providing over-watch for dismounted troops and it was our turn to go back to camp," recalled the 25-year-old.

"We drove over a bomb and it wrote off the vehicle.

"I got the driver onto a stretcher but then we came under accurate machine-gun fire.

"I dragged him into the crater and laid on top of him as I tried to return fire. I just wanted to protect him."

Cpl Oliver Bainbridge (RDG)

The Serviceman exposed himself to incoming fire for several minutes before taking up a rifle to suppress the enemy.

He then coordinated the safe extraction of the driver.

"At times like that you don't really think, you just react and do what you're trained to do," Cpl Bainbridge added.

"I had my mind set on one thing and that was preventing any more casualties."

With his crew safe the soldier decided to return to his exploded vehicle.

"I went back to our Jackal on my own to strip it of any mission-essential items. I decided to go alone to reduce the size of the target to the enemy.

"The following morning I returned with a three-man team to clear up.

"People have asked why I went back but it's simple: it was my vehicle, my responsibility.

"We couldn't have left the equipment there as it could have been exploited and used against us."

The incident was not the first time the bold Serviceman had faced off an IED, nor the last.

He had come under attack twice before on Op Herrick 12 and was struck yet again on Op Herrick 17, one month after the above incident, when an enemy grenade shattered his arm. ■

Bold with a blade

Gurkha takes on Taliban using a kukri

→ A RIFLEMAN who fought off an enemy fighter with his kukri knife after being shot in the helmet and surviving a grenade attack has been honoured with the Military Cross.

A/LCpl Tuljung Gurung (RGR) was on sangar duty when two determined insurgents attempted to invade Patrol Base Sparta in Nahr-e Saraj.

"I realised there were people running towards my camp and I verbally warned them to stop but once they heard my voice they started to shoot at me," the 28-year-old recalled.

"It felt like someone had hit my helmet with a big hammer and I was put on the floor.

"I managed to stand up on my feet and noticed that a grenade had landed

about an arm's length from my body. I pushed it away and it exploded.

"I fell down on the floor and there was dust everywhere, like a sand storm."

The bold Serviceman then took further decisive action.

"I realised that one of the insurgents was trying to climb into my sangar," he told *Soldier*. "I saw him face-to-face, he was very close, and I didn't get the chance to grab my rifle.

"He was half way up the Hesco wall trying to get inside.

"I knew I had my kukri and started to attack him. I managed to hit him on the hand and body and he was quite badly injured. The other man then ran away."

Asked what was going through his head at the time he was repelling the attacker, the soldier replied: "I just thought that I don't want to die – and that if I was alive I might be able to save my colleagues."

A/LCpl Gurung's citation states: "[The Serviceman's] actions showed the highest levels of gallantry and courage."

Commenting on the award, the modest soldier added: "I didn't expect to be presented with something like this honour.

"I was surprised but I am also obviously very happy." ■



A/LCpl Tuljung Gurung (RGR)





Picture: Sgt Mike O'Neill, RLC

Helicopter hero

Officer shows ultimate pluck

→ AN OFFICER who rescued a colleague while under constant and heavy attack has been awarded the Military Cross.

Lt William Boreham, of 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, was on the second patrol of his first tour of Helmand province when the soldier in front of him stood on an improvised explosive device and was severely injured.

Stunned by the force of the blast, the 33-year-old quickly recovered and sent a radio report back to his headquarters while reassuring his wounded colleague.

Despite the risk of further explosions, Lt Boreham moved forward to help.

"The problem with an IED blast is you never know whether there will be a secondary device," the Serviceman said.

"We believed there might be one but we thought it was on the other side of him."

Assisted by another soldier and in the face of incoming bullets, the officer carried the casualty 30 metres to relative safety at the rear of the patrol.

"We felt a lot less urgency over the small arms fire than we did for the IED," added Lt Boreham.

As the evacuation helicopter arrived enemy insurgents renewed their attack, firing a rocket-propelled grenade into the landing site along with rounds of heavy machine-gun fire.

Realising this would hamper the airframe's ability to touch down, the officer moved out of cover, exposing himself to extreme personal danger,

to provide the pilot with vital target information to allow a safe landing.

His citation states: "It is without doubt that Lt Boreham's brave, quick-thinking and calm actions, while under intense pressure, contributed to the saving of his comrade's life."

Lt Boreham, who helped to run his family's pub prior to enlisting in the British Army, said: "I joined the military quite late in life: I used to have asthma but grew out of that probably because I trained as a boxer.

"There have been so many moments where I have asked myself how I ended up here.

"However, working in a pub does prepare you quite well." ■

“Boreham's brave, quick-thinking and calm actions, while under intense pressure, contributed to the saving of his comrade's life”



Lt William Boreham (Lancs)

Saved by Private Ryan

Serviceman praised for decisive action when faced with rogue Afghan gunman



→ A 22-YEAR-OLD Serviceman who bravely took on a rogue Afghan soldier firing at British troops has been awarded a Mention in Despatches.

Pte Ryan Houston, of 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, was on duty at Forward Operating Base Shawqat in Nad-e Ali when the gunman attacked local and UK personnel competing in a football match, killing Capt Walter Barrie (1 Scots).

"I was the 'guardian angel' on the day while my fellow soldiers were playing football to build relations," Pte Houston explained.

"I was doing a routine patrol when I heard rounds fired. I took cover to assess the situation and that's when I looked up and saw a rogue soldier running forwards, firing shots.

"I engaged him with a couple of

rounds and ran in the same direction as him.

"I was then involved in a firefight from about 25 metres away – bullets were coming within inches of me.

"It seemed like a lifetime but it probably only lasted about five minutes."

When the firing ceased Pte Houston and a colleague moved forward to find the attacker.

The young soldier then provided cover while his comrades gave medical treatment to the injured aggressor.

The citation for his award states: "Despite the horror and chaos that surrounded him, Pte Houston exhibited extraordinary humanity and control by continuing to protect his fellow soldiers who were giving first aid to the rogue Afghan, who had only moments earlier been trying to kill him."

Pte Houston said: "It was difficult to watch the casualty being treated but it was definitely the right thing to do.

"I think the whole incident has made me a better soldier because it reminds you that anything can occur at any moment.

"It doesn't feel real that it happened but it obviously did and I will never forget it." ■

Pte Ryan Houston (Scots)

Rescuing young lives

Medic's professionalism exceeded rank

→ A COMBAT medic who performed lifesaving first aid on Afghan children and a fellow soldier has been awarded a Mention in Despatches.

In the early weeks of Op Herrick 17, LCpl Rachel Hughes (RAMC) saved the lives of four youngsters in need of emergency treatment.

Some of the children were unconscious after being trapped underwater when the tractor they had been travelling in overturned into a canal system.

The Servicewoman, who was attached to The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, helped resuscitate them.

"It was a bit of a shock when the children were brought in to our base," said LCpl Hughes.

"But you just click into your training – afterwards you can't believe what you've just done.

"It does take you by surprise that you are able to do it."

Four days later,

another child, who had lost a leg in an explosion, was brought to the medic's temporary base.

The 26-year-old stemmed the blood flow and stabilised the boy so he could be moved to Camp Bastion for surgery.

"You think about the age of the casualty for a split second then at the blink of an eye you treat them as you would any other," explained the former bar worker.

A third incident came later on in what was LCpl Hughes' first tour of duty.

One of her colleagues suffered a serious gunshot wound during an insurgent attack on their checkpoint.

Under enemy fire, she moved to the injured Serviceman's position where rounds were hitting the ground.

After she stopped the bleeding, the soldier was evacuated to Camp Bastion and operated on before being flown back to the UK. Sadly, though, he lost his fight for life in hospital.

Surgeons later said that without the medic's work on the battlefield, the Serviceman would have died at the scene.

"I had no idea that I was being fired at – you don't see anything, you don't hear anything – I was just in the zone," she said.

The citation for her award states: "Throughout the tour LCpl Hughes displayed a level of medical professionalism which exceeded that expected of someone of her rank and experience." ■

LCpl Rachel Hughes (RAMC)



“
I think
the whole
incident
has made
me a better
soldier
”



Picture: Sgt Mike O'Neill, RLC

Operational Awards and Honours

AFGHANISTAN

Commander of the Order of the British Empire

Maj Gen Richard John CRIPWELL, late RE.

Officer of the Order of the British Empire

Lt Col Nigel Jonathan BEST, QRL; Lt Col Philip William Carmichael KIMBER, Mercian; Lt Col Paul Bruce NICHOLSON, RE; Lt Col Francis Alexander James PIGGOTT, RDG; Lt Col Richard David WALLWORK, RA; A/Col Charles James Macintosh WILLIAMS, late KRH; Lt Col Nicholas Ian WOOD, Lancs; Col Gareth George WRIGHT, late RLC.

Member of the Order of the British Empire

Capt Lisa Victoria BROWN, RLC; Maj Darren James COOK, Mercian; Maj Rupert Spark EVETTS, RHG/D; Maj Mark George MCLELLAN, Yorks; Sgt Curtis William Douglass MORTON, Para; Maj David Thomas PACK, RGR; A/Lt Col Benjamin Mark WILDE, Mercian.

Distinguished Service Order

Brig Robert Bernard BRUCE, late Scots; Maj Adam Nicholas Baron FODEN, QRL.

Conspicuous Gallantry Cross

Cpl Josh Edward Hayden GRIFFITHS, Mercian; Pte Gareth David STEEL, Para, Army Reserve.

Military Cross

Cpl Oliver David BAINBRIDGE, RDG; SSgt Russell Craig BYRNE, Para; Lt William Jordan Campbell BOREHAM, Lancs; A/LCpl Tuljung GURUNG, RGR.

Associate Royal Red Cross Medal

Lt Col Judith Caroline Florence MADILL, QARANC, Army Reserve; Capt Graham John MCPHEE, QARANC.

George Medal

WO1 Andreas Oliver PEAT, RLC.

Queen's Gallantry Medal

Cpl Edward Samuel Charles DAVIS, RAVC; Maj Matthew Cameron LONG, RLC; Rfn Benjamin John TAYLOR, Mercian, Army Reserve.

Mention in Despatches

A/Sgt Michael Wayne CATARALL, Mercian; Cpl Richard COOK, Scots; LCpl Alex John CURTIS, Para; Capt Thomas William Wilfred DAVIES, Lancs; LCpl Andrew David FARNDON, RE; Pte Augustine FORKUO, Yorks; Rfn Bikash GURUNG, RGR; A/Sgt Govinda

GURUNG, RGR; Pte Ryan HOUSTON, Scots; LCpl Rachel Marie HUGHES, RAMC; Cpl James Stirling HURST, RDG; LBdr Stephen Thomas KENNY, RA; Cpl Darren LIGHTFOOT, Mercian; Capt Stephen Andrew POPE, Mercian; Cpl Dennis Robert SKINNER, Scots; Sgt Simon SMITH, R Welsh; A/Sgt Mark William John STEVENS, Lancs; LCpl Ricky Thomas STEWART, REME; A/Sgt Paul Anthony STIRLAND, Lancs; Cpl James Clifford Gordon VICKERS, Lancs; LCpl Nathan Trevor VITTLES, QRL.

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

LCpl Danny Craig FLEMING, RE.

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

Maj Peter William Stanhope BAINES, Rifles; Capt Leanne Marie BARRY, RLC; CSgt Darren James BATES, Mercian; A/Maj Alexander David George BOWIE, QRL; Col Charles Simon CALDER, late RRF; Capt Paul CEASER, R Signals; Maj Robert John CONNOLLY, Scots; Capt Dean John EAMER, REME; LCpl Lucius Junior EDWARD, RLC; Brig Felix Geoffrey GEDNEY, late Scots DG; LCpl Michael Aaron GILLESPIE, RAMC; Maj Steven KIRKMAN, RDG; Lt Thomas Patrick Theodore LAVINGTON, SG; WO2 Gary Scott LIDDLE, RE; Maj Andrew David LUMLEY, Scots; LCpl Nicholas James MAXWELL, Int Corps, Army Reserve; Brig Ewen MCLAY, late REME; Capt Norman Geoffrey MCMULLAN, AGC (MPS); Brig Gerald Ian MITCHELL, late REME; Lt Andrew Donald MONCRIEFF, RDG; Maj Nigel Joseph OVERTON, Coldm Gds; LCpl Colm David PHILLIPS, Int Corps; Maj Gen Timothy Buchan RADFORD, late LI; Maj Gen Stuart Richard SKEATES, late RA; Cpl Simon Patrick SPRIGGS, Int Corps; Lt Col Colin Michael VAUDIN, R Signals; Capt Lloyd Wynne WALTON-REES, RDG.

REST OF THE WORLD

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

Col Andrew DENNIS, late Lancs; Sgt Keith Brian GALLAGHER, Para; Cpl James Steven PATTISON, Para; WO2 David William John WEBB, Para; A/Major James Timothy WOOLDRIDGE, REME.

MISCELLANEOUS

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

WO2 Michael John MOUGHTON, RLC; Capt Stephen Anthony TICKNER, AGC (RMP).

TIMING IS EVERYTHING



Thinking of telling your colleagues that something isn't right upstairs? Finding the right moment is important, according to this Serviceman who has battled depression...

Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe
Picture: Graeme Main

NOTHING is likely to make that first chat about mental illness easy. Whether the discussion is with a mate, the CO or a doctor, troops who have experienced the heat of war can understandably find it difficult to admit they are suffering with an invisible condition such as post-traumatic stress disorder or depression.

But according to Maj Rob Shenton (REME), who was treated for severe depression in 2008, troops should never give up trying to tell someone that they are feeling unwell – for the sake of their comrades if not themselves.

"Sometimes guys who are ill think they just need to drink a can of 'man up'," Maj Shenton explained to *Soldier*.

"There definitely have been times when I had to do that but when it is an appropriate time it's important to talk to someone you trust.

"Yes, it is hard and sometimes guys are worried it will affect their careers but I personally think that the consequences of bottling it up are far worse.

"We are all part of a team in the Army so it's critical to say something

if you are not fully functioning, for the benefit of your colleagues."

Like many others, the officer found the courage to speak out and has never regretted it.

Defence Medical Services swiftly referred him for cognitive behavioural therapy, which helped him to get fighting fit again.

"My medical officer got me help within a very short amount of time," Maj Shenton recalled.

"Soldiers always feel out of sorts when they come back from operations – you learn that on decompression – so it can be difficult to know when that turns into more.

"It can be a very dark journey and very lonely but in tackling it you discover a lot about yourself.

"They say when you break a bone it grows back stronger and I think it's the

same with mental health.

"You get to know what your limits are and what you need to do in future to stay healthy."

Fast-paced developments in the world of mental health mean there are already a variety of treatments and medications available for the many different types of illness.

In addition, Army medical officers, combat medical assistants and nurses are trained to recognise the signs and can direct personnel to help.

The Service's "Don't bottle it up" campaign continues this month in the hope of encouraging more troops to make the most of this support and to speak to those around them if they don't feel right.

According to Maj Shenton, choosing a quiet moment can make the process far easier.

"Yes, there are certain situations where you just have to crack on," he continued. "But I believe there's a time and a place for everything.

"When it's appropriate, during the quieter and reflective moments, say that you have a bit of a problem.

"Mates around you can help but it's also down to individuals to realise they have a problem in the first place." ■

● For information on mental health support visit the welfare and support section of the Army website

**LIVING A
LIFE OF
MENTAL
ILLNESS IS
NOT LIVING
AT ALL.**

HIGH HOPES

LIKE many sufferers of depression, running made Maj Shenton feel far more positive about life again.

Keen to help others with the same problem, the officer will take part in the Everest Marathon this month in aid of Combat Stress – the UK's leading military charity specialising in the care of veterans' mental health.

The journey will see him run a gruelling 26.2 miles through airless high altitudes.

To find out more or to sponsor him visit www.runningrob.com.

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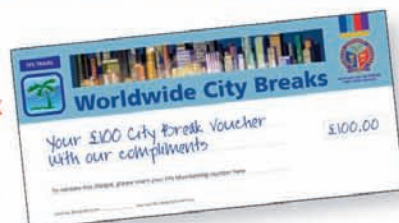
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A close-up, low-angle shot of a soldier in full tactical gear, including a helmet and a vest. The soldier is aiming a rifle, and a bright, intense orange and yellow muzzle flash is visible at the end of the barrel, dominating the right side of the frame. The soldier's face is partially visible through the helmet's visor. The background is dark and out of focus.

FUTURE IN THEIR SIGHTS

BRITISH AND FRENCH TROOPS HELP EACH
OTHER PREPARE FOR MISSIONS TO COME



Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

ACCORDING to military strategists, the battlefields of the future are increasingly likely to be located in densely populated, built-up areas.

With that in mind, more and more British troops are investing time in practising and honing their urban warfare skills.

Among them are personnel from 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment, who recently crossed the Channel to train with their French Army counterparts at Centre d'Entraînement aux Actions en Zone Urbaine (Cenzub), an £85 million development that covers 6,000 hectares.

Exercise Gaulish Eagle was the latest in a number of joint serials to be staged following the signing of the Lancaster House Treaties by France and the UK in 2010 – an agreement that increased cooperation between the two nations on defence and security matters.

During the package, 1 Mercian personnel took full advantage of Cenzub's extensive mock town which includes residential areas, industrial zones, a school, train station and even a full underground network.

As his soldiers assessed a manoeuvre into a trading estate with the aid of smoke grenades, commanding officer Lt Col Mark Ellwood explained how his team were using the facilities to practise engaging with a well-armed guerrilla-style force.

"We are training to fight against a hybrid enemy that is equipped with conventional weapons," he said.

"It's a force of trained individuals with second generation armour and asymmetric tactics [a pattern of conflict where insurgents adopt wildly varying methods to exploit weakness].

"The facilities here are amazing and they have allowed us to gain a wealth of experience in this type of fighting.

"This is routine training for French troops so we're getting the benefits of their direction and ideas."

UK Service personnel were operating as a light role infantry company within the 12e Regiment de Cuirassiers armoured battlegroup, working to French orders through British interpreters.

The "enemy" consisted of 145 Cenzub-based soldiers playing highly skilled fighters, formidably armed and with extensive knowledge of the area.

Pte Damian Pulley (Mercian) said: "We've been working with French tactics, learning how they withdraw and attack.

"There are a few differences, such as the way we send people into a building, but it's good to adopt new ideas. »

Under fire: Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment hone their urban warfare skills during Gaulish Eagle, a joint Anglo-French exercise at Cenzub

» "Having interpreters is very useful too because there's no doubt that we'll be cooperating with various forces using different languages in the future."

With military orders being translated as the UK troops stormed through high-rise buildings under fire, it was clear the government's 2010 study, *Future Character of Conflict* (see below), has already been taken on-board.

"We don't know where in the world we'll be operating next so this is good training," said Cpl Christopher Wightman (Mercian).

"Exercising with the French has gone really well and I'd be happy to fight alongside them. Both nations can take the best out of each other's practices and improve as a force."

LCpl James Findlow (Mercian) added: "This is about training us to understand the complexities of the environment and to be prepared for all eventualities."

Although the British are taking advantage of French facilities, Lt Col Philippe Gennequin, chief of operations for 12e Regiment de Cuirassiers, explained that the relationship is not a one-sided affair.

"At the lower level I think British troops are more drilled than the French, while I would say our soldiers are trained to show more initiative, so we can both learn from each other," he said.

"I hope we can join with the UK on future operations, especially in the planning process, as I think we are very interoperable."

"It would be good to find more opportunities to work together as we could learn a lot from the British Army's experience."

Certainly no one involved with Exercise Gaulish Eagle appeared to doubt that international military cooperation of this quality will improve the chances of success on future operations. ■



'We could learn a lot from the British Army's experience'

Lt Col Philippe Gennequin, chief of operations, 12e Regiment de Cuirassiers

The fights to come

Why the emphasis on training is changing in the British Army

Extract from the 2010 Ministry of Defence study, *Future Character of Conflict...*

HISTORICALLY, in a conventional context, the UK Armed Forces have usually sought to avoid congested battlespace. They try to achieve freedom to manoeuvre.

While we will continue to seek to dictate the terms of battle to our adversaries, our choice in this regard will not be absolute.

We will need to bring military effect to bear where it will achieve our strategic goals, not just

where it suits us. In the future, we will be unable to avoid being drawn into operations in the urban and littoral regions where the majority of the world's population live and where political and economic activity is concentrated.

The ground will often be densely populated, possibly with dissatisfied and disadvantaged people, many of whom will be armed.

[Adversaries] will employ a wide range of war-fighting techniques, sometimes simultaneously in time, space and domain. The UK will act with others where shared interests and values coincide.



Remembrance Day

11 NOVEMBER

When you go home
Tell them of us and say
For your tomorrow
We gave our today



lest we forget

Unlike some of our competitors
We realise that once a year
it's about more than just selling cars.

Report: Becky Clark
Pictures: Graeme Main

AS WORK to integrate Reservists into the Army's new structure progresses these personnel are continuing to reap the benefits of increased funding and resources.

For 120 members of The Royal Wessex Yeomanry the most recent proof of this was the opportunity to get their hands on the Challenger 2 during a two-week serial on Salisbury Plain.

Exercise Wessex Dragon was the latest phase in the regiment's preparations to become the only armoured reinforcement unit in the new Reaction Force next year.

Following a week of simulated drills in Warminster's combined arms tactical trainer, the troops took to the field to learn how to operate the equipment for real and rehearse low-level manoeuvres

"This is pretty much basic training," said Capt Damien Thursby, an ex-Regular in The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.

"While the guys are good at gunnery and hitting targets, they haven't actually lived off a tank before so it's all about the maintenance side of things and making sure everything works because there's no point being able to fire if you can't get the vehicle to where you need to fire from.

"Before the Future Reserves project we didn't get as much time on the hardware but now we do a lot more, we've had extra time on the ranges and people are pretty optimistic about starting in the new role."

Reserves training major Charlie O'Neil Roe described the significant impact of increased investment.

"Last year we received £250,000-worth of Challenger 2 ammunition," he explained.

"This year it's nearer to £900,000, which is fantastic news and means the training is a lot more relevant.

"The guys are doing more and being tested extensively, which is vital because the Chally is a big and dangerous beast and you need to know how to

operate it correctly."

Alongside 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, members of The Royal Wessex Yeomanry will be the only combat Reserve troops within the Reaction Force and will bolster the three armoured regiments – The Queen's Royal Hussars, The King's Royal Hussars and the Royal Tank Regiment.

Sgt Simon Singleton, a Reservist of 15 years, said he had noticed a dramatic shift in the pace and nature of preparations for the tasking.

"The key word now is integration and we're already seeing more invitations to work with the Regulars on exercise or even on adventurous training, which is good because

the more time we spend with them the better it will be," commented the 47-year-old.

"They'll see that we can do the job.

"We may lack some experience but that will improve in time and we make up for it in motivation – we're all here

because we really want to be, not because we've been told to be."

For Tpr Charles Ellen the timing of the Wessex Dragon package was ideal.

The 29-year-old had, along with a number of colleagues, finished driver training for the Challenger 2 just two weeks before the serial, allowing him to put his new-found skills into practice straightaway.

With a civilian career in recruitment at defence partner Capita, Tpr Ellen has a clear insight into the drive to improve both capability and numbers within the new-look Army Reserve.

"My job is to recruit Regular and Reserve officers," he explained. "And I think the new role is something that really appeals to people.

"Historically we've been called 'weekend warriors' but there are a lot of dedicated people in the Force and for us to be endorsed and relied on by the government in this manner is fantastic.

"The guys and girls really appreciate it and with more opportunities like this to get hands on with the kit things can only get better." ■

'THE CHALLY IS A BIG AND DANGEROUS BEAST AND YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO OPERATE IT CORRECTLY'



Integration on the Plain:
Members of The Royal Wessex Yeomanry learn to live in the field and operate the Challenger 2



TOE-TO-TOE WITH CHALLENGER 2

RESERVE TANK CREWS GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH THE ARMY'S MAIN BATTLE TANK



WHAT THE CREW HAS TO MASTER

- A COMPUTERISED fire control system that can hone in on and destroy as many as eight targets per minute.
- STABILISED optical/thermal vision equipment as well as an advanced sighting system for gunner and commander.
- MAIN high pressure 120mm gun stabilised across both axes.
- STORAGE and loading of 50 x 120mm armour-piercing fin-stabilised discarding sabot and high explosive squash head shells.
- TWO 7.62mm machine guns – one for anti-aircraft fire and a second for attacking enemy troops.
- TEN electrically-operated smoke grenade dischargers.
- SYSTEMS for resisting nuclear, chemical and biological attack.
- PERKINS 26.1-litre turbocharged V12 diesel engine developing 1,200 horsepower, with six forward and two reverse gears.

● IN the past Reservists trained mostly in their individual roles but Wessex Dragon brought them together to operate as a tank crew both in the virtual environment and on an actual vehicle in the field.

"Such work is essential because the true capability of the platform is realised through teamwork, not as an individual," explained Lt Col Chris MacGregor, (pictured right), commanding officer of The Royal Wessex Yeomanry.

"This exercise will set the foundation for our role as the armoured reinforcement regiment and comes just before we do Challenger 2 live-firing on the ranges.

"It's a demonstration of success because it highlights the integration with the Regular force.

"We're using eight tanks from The King's Royal Hussars and we have a troop of soldiers from the Royal Tank Regiment, plus our Regular instructors."



TEAMWORK IS KEY >>

THINK DRIVING A TANK LOOKS FUN?

The Royal Wessex Yeomanry is keen to recruit ex-Regulars and new personnel. The regiment has bases in Bovington, Salisbury, Cirencester, Barnstaple and Paignton. To find out more visit www.armoured-reserve.com



CAMERA CRUSADE

Photo contest showcases Army's creative firepower



Report: Steven Muncey

IMAGES revealing how much has changed in Afghanistan dominated the awards at this year's Army Photographic Competition at the National Army Museum in Chelsea, London.

The collection submitted by Cpl Jamie Peters (RLC), who claimed the prize for best professional portfolio, captured friendly sporting fixtures with Afghan personnel and relaxed interactions with local civilians as well as striking operational scenes.

His series of stirring images included one called *Sunset Soldiers*, a haunting silhouette of sappers from 21 Engineer Regiment taking down a Hesco Bastion building at

Patrol Base Nahidullah.

Cpl Peters, a member of the Army's combat camera team, also claimed the best overall image prize for his evocative *Celtic Warrior* showing a weary tattooed soldier of 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland cleaning his weapon after an early morning patrol (main image above).

As well as startling scenes from theatre, the winning photographs included portraits, training sorties, ceremonial and sporting scenarios – including one by *Soldier's* staff photographer Graeme Main.


His incredible shot, *Paddle Power*, shows Maj Chris Elesmore using all his skills to battle against heavy seas while practising for the World Surf

Kayak Association Championships.

It deservedly won the title of best professional sporting image against some strong opposition.

Dan Snow, broadcaster and honorary colonel of the Service's Media Operations Group, opened a temporary display of winning and runner-up shots at the National Army Museum.

He said: "These professional and amateur pictures capture elements of military life that the public just doesn't see otherwise."

"It's a reminder that excellence on operations is not only about the front line, but the individual, the bond between soldiers, the training and hard work, and also the lighter side of life." 

ARMY PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2013 WINNERS

MULTIMEDIA

Winner: Sgt Russ Nolan (RLC)

Runner-up: Cpl Si Longworth (RLC)

VIDEO

Winner: Sgt Barry Lloyd (RLC)

Runner-up: Sgt Barry Lloyd (RLC)

AMATEUR PORTRAIT

Winner: Sgt Jonathan Van Zyl (PWRR)

Runner-up: Capt Dave Scammell (RA)

AMATEUR SPORT/ADVENTURE TRAINING

Winner: LCoH Danny Short (HCMR)

Runner-up: Sgt Jonathan Van Zyl (PWRR)

AMATEUR OPERATIONAL IMAGE

Winner: Tpr Chris Wade (HAC)

Runner-up: Sgt Jonathan Van Zyl (PWRR)

AMATEUR PORTFOLIO

Winner: Capt Dave Scammell (RA)

Runner-up: LCpl Ian Chapman (RE)

PROFESSIONAL PORTRAIT

Winner: Cpl Wes Calder (RLC)

Runner-up: Sgt Rupert Frere (RLC)

PROFESSIONAL SPORT/ADVENTURE TRAINING

Winner: Graeme Main (Soldier)

Runner-up: SSgt Dan Harmer (RLC)

PROFESSIONAL OPERATIONAL IMAGE

Winner: Cpl Jamie Peters (RLC)

Runner-up: Sgt Mike O'Neill (RLC)

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

Winner: Cpl Jamie Peters (RLC)

Runner-up: Sgt Adrian Harlen (RLC)

Commended: Sgt Rupert Frere (RLC)

BEST OVERALL IMAGE

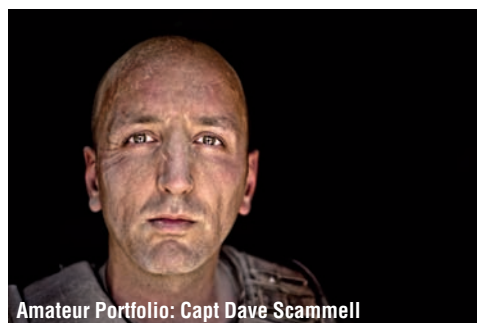
Cpl Jamie Peters (RLC)

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM CHRISTMAS CARD

SSgt Mark Nesbit (RLC)



Amateur Sport / Adventure Training: LCoH Danny Short



Amateur Portfolio: Capt Dave Scammell



Professional Operational image: Cpl Jamie Peters



Professional Portrait: Cpl Wes Calder



Professional Sport/Adventure Training: Graeme Main



National Army Museum Christmas Card: SSgt Mark Nesbit



Amateur Operational Image: Tpr Chris Wade

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For the fallen



How one man's vision changed the way the nation remembers its soldiers forever...

**Report: Becky Clark
Picture: Graeme Main**

OF THE thousands of visitors to military cemeteries every year, few can remain unmoved by the sheer scale of the sacrifice they commemorate.

Immaculate rows of white headstones and imposing memorials seem an entirely fitting tribute to the fallen so it is hard to imagine

that they could easily have not existed.

In the aftermath of the First World War a bitter debate raged about how best to honour the dead and it is largely down to one man that the cemeteries are here today.

Fabian Ware was a Red Cross volunteer who became the founder of the Imperial War Graves Commission, later the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

But despite what he achieved, his name is perhaps not as widely recognised as it should be. >>

Cultivating memories

>> "Ware is one of those figures about whom most people know nothing at all," said David Crane, author of a new book on Ware's work.

"But he is of great significance in terms of how we remember the past and how we memorialise the Armed Forces.

"It's almost as if what he did is so massive that it has obscured its origins."

A journalist by trade, Ware was too old to join the Army when hostilities broke out and so became the commander of a mobile Red Cross unit in France.

Horrified at the chaotic way in which the mounting numbers of dead were being buried, he quickly identified the need to properly register the dates and locations of graves.

With some 16,200 troops killed by the end of 1914, and a similar number missing or captured, doing so was already an epic undertaking but slaughter would continue on an unprecedented scale for four more years.

Rudyard Kipling later called the task of recording more than a million fatalities as a "work greater than that of the pharaohs".

Ware and his team pressed on throughout the war and the Imperial War Graves Commission was formally established in 1917.

However, when the fighting finally stopped the organisation faced another battle; this time against public opinion.

Bereaved families were fiercely critical of the fact that the bodies of the deceased would not be repatriated and that their gravestones were all the same design.

"In the archive of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission there is a petition from those who were against the cemeteries," said Crane.

"It's five inches deep with thousands upon thousands of signatures from across the country and next to each name it says simply 'one brother', 'a fiancée', 'a pal', and you realise, firstly, that this was a war in which no one escaped the tragedy of loss.

"Secondly, you're struck by the extent of opposition to the commission's plans.

"There was a huge backlash and a feeling that these rows of graves like paving stones were similar in character to the Prussian militarism they had fought so hard against.

"But Ware wasn't going to allow anyone to deflect him from his vision."

Eventually the commission prevailed and the design and building work continued in earnest over the next two decades.

Ware himself became a passionate advocate of peace so it was a tragic irony that the First World War cemeteries were completed not long before the second major global conflict of the century began.

However, thanks to his efforts the template was in place for remembering the many more who would fall in the years to come.

"Now it's unthinkable for war graves to be any other way," remarked Crane. "But it's worth remembering that it wasn't always so.

"There was an enormous and painful debate behind them and what looks like a gesture of unanimity, solidarity and classlessness was a very hard won fight indeed." ■

● ***Empires of the Dead* by David Crane is out this month, priced £16.99. For details of how to win a signed copy turn to our book review section on pages 78-79**

Behind the scenes at the UK's largest military cemetery

Report: Becky Clark

Pictures: Graeme Main

TODAY the task facing the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is no less mind-boggling than that faced by Fabian Ware in 1914.

The organisation oversees the care of graves and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries worldwide.

Soldier visited Brookwood Military Cemetery to find out how the commission's staff approach their work.

"It's more than just a gardening job," said Rebecca Dowling, one of six gardener-caretakers at the site.

"There are few other organisations where you're combining world history with gardening.

"You soon develop an admiration for what the commission does and promoting its work is part of our role, as well as the horticultural side.

"Talking to the public about the background and answering their questions is as important as weeding the borders and mowing the grass."

Bernie Doran, head of the mobile team that looks after 40 smaller cemeteries in



Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire, agreed.

"To me it's a vocation," he explained.

"I've worked for the commission for 11 years, including in Belgium, Holland and France and it's the only job in my working life where it's not a chore to get up in the morning."

Brookwood alone contains the graves of some 8,500 fallen troops, from the First World War up to Operation Herrick.

Caring for them involves an annual cycle of mowing and maintenance, with turf and borders kept pristine and each headstone cleaned once a year.

But despite the routine, Dowling and Doran agree it is impossible not to be touched by the individual stories behind each plot.

"Sometimes you see that someone's put a card by a grave with information about who that person was and I do stop and read them and think about it," said Dowling.

"A couple of months ago a soldier in uniform sat down and ate his lunch next to his friend's headstone.

"You have to be sensitive to that kind of thing, so if you're using the mower you switch it off and go and do something else for a while."

Recalling an incident while working in Holland, Doran added: "A man came up to me and was looking for a particular grave and he showed me a photograph of this guy, where they were fooling around pushing him in a baby's pram.

"The following day his companion had been cut down by a German machine gun while getting out of his tank.

"That was the first time the man had been to his friend's grave and when you see a face of a casualty like that it really brings it home."

Another aim of the commission is to identify and bury newly discovered remains.

In 2010 the bodies of 250 Australian and British troops placed in a mass grave by the Germans in 1916 were reinterred in Fromelles, France.

"A couple of months ago a soldier in uniform sat down and ate his lunch next to his friend's headstone"

"Two of them had been buried with their arms linked and they found out they were brothers," said Doran.

"DNA is kept of every set of remains so that they can be identified if any living relatives come forward or are traced.

"I think it's very important – it gives the family closure because they then have a grave they can visit and know where their loved one is."

Dowling commented: "It's obviously

getting harder to find children of the First World War casualties but it's the ethos of the commission to continue to try and name unknown soldiers wherever possible.

"Especially as the 100th anniversary of the conflict approaches, we have to keep it fresh in peoples' minds."

With next year's centenary promising an increase in visitors, the organisation is also busy making sure its cemeteries are ready.

In Arras, northern France, the workshop producing the headstones now operates round the clock.

"There's been a concerted effort over the last two years to make sure that as many headstones as possible have been repaired, replaced or refreshed," explained Dowling.

"We're trying to get everywhere looking as good as we can.

"We have to make the most of more people coming to visit."

Reflecting on the opportunity to bring past conflicts to life for more youngsters, the 43-year-old added:

"Brookwood is the largest site in the UK so I think it's very important for children to come here so that the knowledge of the First and Second World Wars continues."

Fabian Ware died in 1949 but thanks to the dedication of Dowling, Doran and thousands of their colleagues around the world, his vision of the cemeteries as places of peace and contemplation is secure for future generations. ■





QR codes aid commemoration

● IN a drive to provide more public information during the centenary of the First World War, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is installing new panels at 500 sites.

Each one carries a QR code which, when scanned with a smartphone, reveals personal stories of some 80 casualties.

The commission's Jeroen Roskam explained that embracing new technology would ensure a broader audience for its work.

"During these four years we are focused on ensuring that our preparations not only honour the fallen but actively engage a generation for whom the war is not even a distant memory," he added.

Labour of love: Caring for the cemeteries is a vocation for many of the commission's staff



1.7 million
number of graves and memorials cared
for by the commission worldwide

150
the number of countries
in which there are
Commonwealth
war graves

15
the age of the
youngest soldier
buried at Brookwood
Military Cemetery

Remembrance in numbers



AT THE
ELEVENTH
HOUR
ON THE
ELEVENTH
DAY
OF THE
ELEVENTH
MONTH

“It gets rid of rank”

Bereaved sister commends 'solidarity' of new memorial

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

THE sister of a soldier killed in Afghanistan says a new monument will allow the memory of all British troops to be honoured, regardless of achievement or rank.

One hundred years after Fabian Ware's dedicated fight to create classless military cemeteries, The Royal British Legion has unveiled the Never Forget memorial, which will serve as a year-round focal point for remembrance.

At the centre of the installation at the National Memorial Arboretum (pictured below) is a striking wreath surrounded by everlasting poppies inscribed with the names of various fallen Service personnel.

In exchange for a small donation to the charity, anybody can name a polypropylene flower and place it in one of 12 segments, each representing a different month.

Joanna Brodie, sister of Capt Mark Hale (2 Rifles), has

already planted a poppy.


Her brother died in Afghanistan in 2009 along with two other Servicemen following an explosion while on patrol near Sangin.

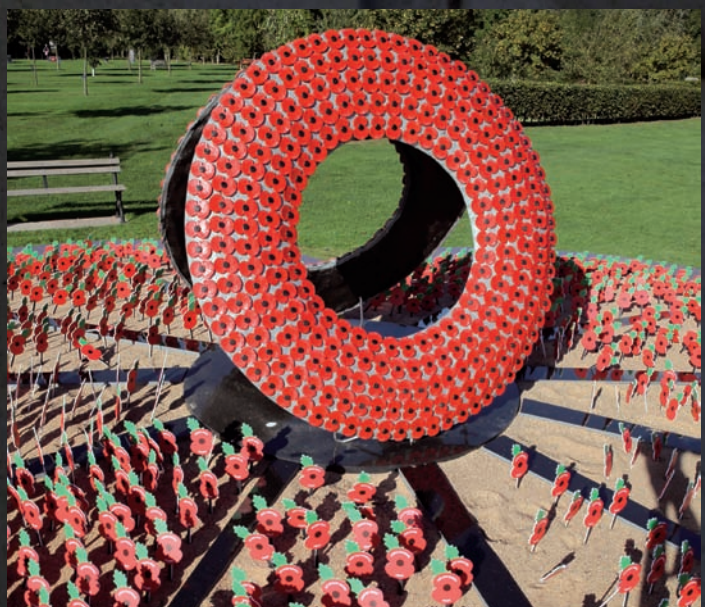
“The memorial is a place that commemorates everybody, it's not singling out a particular person, which is important to me,” she told *Soldier*.

“The poppy is about remembering all those individuals who have given their lives in conflict – it gets rid of the rank and treats everyone as equals.

“The arboretum is a very uplifting place and that might be because we can see all of our Armed Forces being honoured – it doesn't feel sad, it feels positive.”

Sarah Montgomery, managing director of the National Memorial Arboretum, explained the rationale behind the new site.

“This gives members of the public an opportunity to personally remember someone in a special way,” she said. “I hope it continues to be a success as it offers a slightly different way to reflect on loved ones.” 



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£4,99



Ford Focus Titanium,
2009/09, 21,748 miles



Audi A5 2.0 TDI 143PS SE
Auto, 2010/10, 20,000



Fiat 500 Matt Black 1.0,



VW Golf 2.0 TDI 140 GT
5dr, 2010/10, 42,246 miles



Citroen DS3 DStyle Plus
2011/61, 14,660 miles



Alfa Romeo MiTo Lusso 1.4
2011/61, 18,864 miles

£9,495



Ford S-Max 2.0 TDCI
Titanium 2009/59, 3
miles



Audi A3 2.0 TDI DPF 170 PS
Sport S-Tronic, 2009/09,
25,460 miles

£11,995



BMW 1 Series 116i ES,
2008/08, 33,000 miles

£8,499

Rover Freelander 2.2
SE 2011/61, 18,864

£21,495

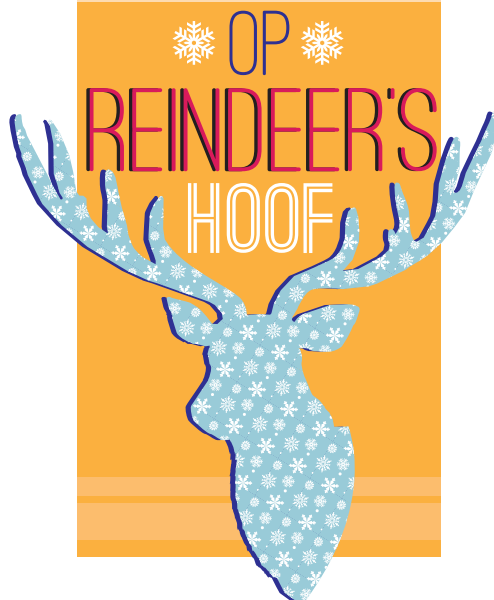
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CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Soldier's festive giveaway gets going again...

LOVE it or loathe it, the build-up to Christmas has well and truly begun. With television adverts, shop windows and junk emails all doing their very best to part us from our hard-earned cash, the *Soldier* team thought it high time to put something back into troops' coffers.

Now in its fifth year, Operation Reindeer's Hoof will once again see us give away as many great prizes as possible over the festive period.

Thanks to kind donations from companies across the country, the competition will once again include...

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HOW TO ENTER

- ❄️ Click the "like" button on our Facebook page and wait for updates at the start of December explaining how to take part.
- ❄️ Different prizes will be up for grabs every day between December 1 and 12, and you'll need to have a copy of our Christmas magazine to hand in order to answer the simple question that we set.
- ❄️ Each correct entry (one per person) will go into a draw for that day's prizes.

More details on how to enter will be available in next month's magazine.



HAVE YOU GOT A PRIZE YOU CAN DONATE - OR KNOW ANYONE WHO DOES?

Tell them about our competition or call our team today on **01252 787096** for further details. Alternatively email news@soldiermagazine.co.uk with "Reindeer's Hoof" in the subject line. Thank you!

Thank you to the following companies who have already pledged prizes to Op Reindeer's Hoof: Aston Villa Football Club, Optical Express, The Bluebeard's Revenge, Rivington Grill Restaurant, Champions UK, Wingman, Everton Football Club, Classic Lodges, Snuggak, Mustard, Newquay Activity Centre, Norton Cowan Communications Ltd, Homedics, TRX, Mikey Digital, RHA, The Seafood Restaurant.



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Paderborn:	27 Jan - 07 Feb 14	Didcot:	03 Feb - 14 Feb 14
Tidworth:	10 - 21 Feb 14	Hohne:	03 - 14 Mar 14
Kinloss:	17 - 28 Mar 14	Aldershot:	24 Mar - 04 Apr 14
Tidworth:	05 - 16 May 14	Paderborn:	05 - 16 May 14
Larkhill:	26 May - 06 Jun 14	Colchester:	09 - 20 Jun 14
Bovington:	14 - 25 Jul 14	Tidworth:	14 - 25 Jul 14

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Paderborn:	11 - 15 Nov 13	Didcot:	13 - 17 Jan 14
Tidworth:	13 - 17 Jan 14	Colchester:	20 - 24 Jan 14
Hohne:	03 - 07 Mar 14	Paderborn:	31 Mar - 04 Apr 14
Bovington:	07 - 11 Apr 14	Aldershot:	28 Apr - 02 May 14
Colchester:	19 - 23 May 14	Kinloss:	23 - 27 Jun 14
Tidworth:	07 - 11 Jul 14	Hohne:	04 - 08 Aug 14
Catterick:	04 - 08 Aug 14	Colchester:	08 - 12 Sept 14

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Bovington:	18 - 22 Nov 13	Aldershot:	05 - 09 May 14
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Tidworth:	09 - 20 Jun 14	Aldershot:	11 - 22 Aug 14

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Pictures: Graeme Main

'Orienteering needs new direction'

HAVING attended many British Army orienteering events over the past 17 years as a Reservist, I was very disappointed when I read the selection criteria for the Inter-Services Orienteering Championships, which are due to take place in Cornwall on November 10.

It states that the selection for the Army team is open to Regulars serving on the date of the competition but that Reservists are not eligible.

I am sure that you have heard the cynical cry of "one Army – huh?" but I'm afraid that you are hearing it again, from me.

I would be very interested to know why this event (which takes place on a weekend, when Reservists expect to train) is no longer open to volunteers, particularly when such soldiers have participated in years gone by. – Name and address supplied.

Lt Col Chris Sanderson, Army Orienteering Team Manager, responds: At the time of issuing the selection letter the policy



agreed with the Army Reserve, and in place for at least 25 years, was that Reservists were not eligible to take part in the Inter-Services Orienteering Championships.

This mirrors the fact that Regulars are not eligible to take part in the equivalent Reserve Championships.

However, the Combined Services Sports Board (CSSB) and Army Orienteering Association have recognised that this should change.

While eligibility for the team may be altered, the premise of excellence and of only the very best representing the Service will not.

The competition takes place on world-class terrain over courses specially designed for elite runners.

Those selected for the Army side are blessed with the requisite skills and have the fitness to be competitive.

In line with new CSSB policy issued after the selection letter, one member of the Reserve Forces with the required level of ability has been approached to represent the Army but, regrettably,

is not available for selection.

Annex A of **2013DIN01-197**, published in October 2013, details some categories of Reserve Forces who are eligible to represent their Service but also imposes conditions – most notably to have a liability for deployment, to be phase one and two trained and to have qualified for their bounty/certificate of efficiency in the previous year.

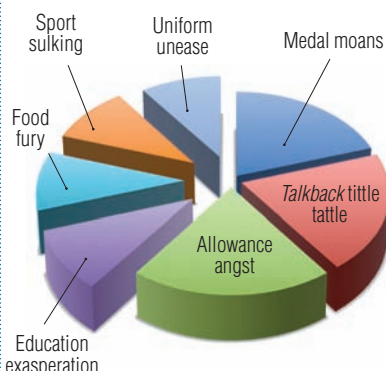
Once I have agreement that the three Service teams will be selected on an equitable basis I will issue an update.

I encourage anyone who is eligible to contact me and prove their suitability by regular competition at the right level.

● *SoldierSport* – pages 83-97

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



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The trouble with Trimble



I AM writing regarding the Trimble tracking devices that are currently fitted in many military vehicles.

Although these are a good idea because they help monitor the asset's location, they can also cause numerous problems.

A safe driver should always be alert to the road conditions but when this device is fitted you find yourself constantly checking your speedometer.

If you're on a motorway, trying to keep to the speed limit can also cause problems.

I do understand that here the motorway speed limit is 70mph but in the current climate most traffic travels at 80mph.

This fact was brought up last year when there were ministerial discussions on raising the speed limit.

The difference isn't much but when you're travelling at 70mph and a car approaches from behind at 80mph it's upon you in a matter of seconds.

When you're overtaking heavy vehicles and you can only travel at the maximum speed limit it can take a long time, potentially causing problems for other drivers.

There are occasions on multi-lane roads where circumstances dictate that you need to break the speed limit to avoid an unsafe situation but Trimble does not recognise this. I acknowledge that speed is a major factor in many collisions but it is equally dangerous to drive too slowly.

You are almost forced to drive 10mph under the speed limit to ensure that you don't constantly have to watch the speedometer. This turns you into a slow moving hazard.

Trimble is a good idea in some respects but in my opinion it can cause unsafe driving too. – SSgt C Hollis, RLC.

WO1 Andy Butterworth, Army Command

Master Driver, replies: The requirement for drivers to constantly monitor their speed is not solely associated with vehicles fitted with Trimble; this is demanded of drivers of all vehicles, both civilian and military, to ensure they are abiding by the law.

Vehicles that do travel at 80mph are breaking the law.

It's a well-known fact in the road safety community that travelling as little as 5mph over the speed limit greatly increases the risk of serious injury or death. This applies to motorway traffic in particular because of the greater speeds connected with these roads.

Heavy goods vehicles are only permitted to travel at 60mph on the motorways.

As you point out, this 10mph difference to the maximum speed limit is not great but sufficient to pass a truck in a timely manner. I would also point out that the Highway Code does not, at any point,

highlight times when drivers need to exceed the speed limit.

With Trimble the speed violation is recorded on the main database and passed to the unit in question.

It does not restrict you to driving at slow speeds, just legal ones.



'Why no memorial day for 9/11?'

I JUST want to publish my disgust, which I have found out is shared with more people than I realised.

As we all know (or should know), this year was the twelfth anniversary of 9/11.

I remember it vividly as if it was yesterday. I came home from school and saw the second impact live on television followed by the collapse of the Twin Towers.

Nearly 3,000 lives were lost and a further 6,000 people were injured.

If that's not bad enough, the events of that day changed the world and eventually took us into a 12-year conflict in Afghanistan which has resulted in a further 3,274 lives being lost within the international force – 445 of which are British Servicemen and women.

Since that time I have grown up, signed up, served and deployed, watched, lost, carried, buried and cried over friends and colleagues that have fallen. All were due, fundamentally, to the events of that day.

I am on a career course in Bordon and nothing has been done to mark this anniversary, not a two-minute silence, parade, or even a mention about it. When it has been brought up the common response has been, "well, it's an American thing".

If we can't show respect and support for our own victims then how can we expect

the public to do the same? I know we have Remembrance Day but surely this still deserves a day of its own. – Name and address supplied



A fitting tribute: The Sphere memorial in New York during this year's 9/11 anniversary events

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops,

responds: In the UK the Armed Forces use

Remembrance Sunday as their national act of commemoration.

Additionally, the military community may pay their respects to particular events or anniversaries. Some are national, such as D-Day, while others, like battle honours, relate to discrete elements.

The decision to formally mark an event such as 9/11 is the responsibility of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

A memorial garden to those who lost their lives was constructed by the government in Grosvenor Square Garden, which is bordered on its west side by the US Embassy.

The 10th anniversary of the Twin Towers attack was marked there in addition to many other locations.

Memorials have also been built to the victims of the Bali attack, the 2004 tsunami disaster and the 7/7 bombings, all of which are commemorated each year.

The Armed Forces will recreate the Bastion memorial wall at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to pay tribute to those who have fallen on operations in Afghanistan.

Because our involvement in Afghanistan stems from the events of 9/11 it will, indirectly, commemorate those who died there as well.

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Gunning for proper rules



'Why are we denied single living waiver?'

CAN anyone answer my query on the over 37 provision?

This package assists with the costs of settling families into their selected residence and enables soldiers older than 37 to serve voluntarily unaccompanied at their places of duty without penalty.

I'm serving unaccompanied at Kinloss Barracks in Scotland while my wife resides in our family home on Anglesey.

I believe I meet all the criteria to be eligible but because I'm serving with the Military Provost Guard Service I am not.

I pay the full cost of residing in single living accommodation but my eligible contemporaries have this charge waived for the duration of their postings. I find it difficult to understand this.

I have looked at JSP 752 and it does indeed state "excluding MPGS".

Can someone explain why? – Cpl R Baird, MPGS.

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), replies:

Members of the Military Provost Guard Service differ from the Regular Army in that they are employed on military local service engagement.

The benefit of this is that it restricts their location to within a 30-mile radius of the unit joined.

Troops are required to serve outside this area for no more than 30 days per year but this can be waived for personal or career reasons.

You can volunteer to serve for more than 30 days outside of this area if you wish but your engagement and terms of service are essentially local in nature.

MPGS soldiers are excluded from the over 37 package because they have the right to stability that Regulars are denied.

LAST year I attended a 14-week course at Lulworth that required me to work the majority of every weekend.

I tried to claim longer separation allowance (LSA) and, on providing evidence in a letter from the course warrant officer stating that I was working on the weekend, it was approved by my squadron clerk at 2nd Royal Tank Regiment – my parent unit.

However, the claim was then rejected by someone in 1st Mechanized Brigade on the grounds that it was possible for me to be able to drive back to my home duty station at Tidworth and then return to Lulworth within 24 hours.

They started paying me a get you home allowance to enable me to do this.

However, I was under the impression that you need to spend at least 24 hours at your duty station on a weekend to become ineligible for longer separation allowance.

I've been treated unfairly as other students on my course were receiving these funds but, on paper, they could also drive to and from their own duty stations within a 24-hour period – in fact, you can get to anywhere in mainland Britain and back again in that time!

I'm now working at Lulworth and have discovered that the same course was repeated this year, and that students from Tidworth under a different brigade had claimed and received LSA for the duration of their tuition.

Does this mean I've missed out on a substantial amount of money because of one person's interpretation of the rules?

– Sgt Trev Hopkins, Armoured Fighting Vehicle Gunnery School.

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds:

JSP 752 states that Service personnel are eligible to receive LSA if "on temporary duty for a period of seven consecutive days or more and are unable to spend a minimum period of 24 hours at their duty station, family home or permanent residence within a weekend (or a period of time off in lieu) due to the nature or location of the temporary duty".

We have spoken to the Gunnery School course warrant officer who said he provided you with a letter of evidence stating that you were expected to work for significant proportions of weekends throughout the 14-week course.

He has confirmed that this was the case during your course and that you were not able to spend a minimum of 24 hours with your family each weekend.

You are therefore entitled to LSA for the period of the course in accordance with the dates in the warrant officer's letter, although the get you home element will need to be recovered.

My staff have sent both you and your regimental administrative officer a letter authorising this claim.

Mixed message over Reserves kit

AS a Reservist I read your letter back in January 2013 about medals being worn on the Combat 95 Personal Clothing System ("Camouflage medal muddle") with great interest.

My colleagues and I continue to have the same debate every year – why are we wearing medals on this uniform instead of the No 2 dress like Regulars?

After reading Brig Matthew Lowe's assurance that the latter will be issued to all Reserves, we raised the subject with the Regular staff at our local TA centre.

We were told unequivocally that this will never happen because there is not enough money.

As such, I wonder where Brig Lowe has obtained this information as we are

being assured the opposite is true. – SSgt Morgan, RLC.

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, responds: Everyone in the Regular Army and all officers and senior NCOs in the Army Reserve will be receiving the new No 2 dress if they have not already received it.

As stated previously, Reserve units either have or will shortly receive a 50 per cent holding of uniforms for junior ranks.

This scale will allow troops of any rank to take part in a Remembrance Day parade or service in this kit and to wear his or her medals.

The issue of the new No 2 dress

will be complete by April 2014 and, as a senior NCO, if you haven't already received one then contact your quartermaster who will make arrangements for you to be measured.

Reserves who do not yet have this kit or access to a loan pool outfit may wear the Personal Clothing System for Remembrance Day events with medals.



TALKBACK

DIGITAL DOSSIER

THIS MONTH'S ELITE TWEETS

#HERRICK 19 (P 7)

@Caspasian

@BritishArmy @7thRats Good luck. Look to your fieldcraft and trust no one.

@ChasBlackUK

@7thRats Head down and powder dry troops.

#BAKING BANTER (P 15)

@recruit4spouses

Poor Beca in #GBBO practising your filo pastry in a military quarter can't be that easy. Wasn't she great though!

@MarrsioFootball

#GBBO - "we don't judge on previous weeks". Unless it is Ruby obviously, who could serve up a turd on a plate and Hollywood would grin away

@CharleneGuy

Oh pants... genuinely down now that Beca's out. Boooooo :(#GBBO

@soldiermagazine

RESERVES OVERLOAD

■ HAVING read a recent edition of your esteemed publication a number of points prompted me to write.

You feature the antics of the newly renamed Army Reserve. So much so, in fact, that many are suggesting a change of name from *Soldier* to *Reservist Magazine*.

Whilst on the subject of *Talkback*, the number of "Name and address supplied" letters is disturbing and indicates a lack of moral fibre from correspondents.

If there is a complaint, readers should have the courage to bring it up in person.

September's five pages on the Royal Air Force is at odds with the attitude of most soldiers towards that organisation – but that detail was never going to make it into your overwhelmingly upbeat spin on the Armed Forces continuous attitude survey.

It does, however, match the cloying positivity of the magazine. – WO1 David Burgess, EOD&S, Op Herrick.

The editor replies: Reservists will soon make up one third of the Service, and therefore our readership, so you can expect further articles in future.

If you feel we are doing this at the expense of other news, however, just tell us what – we rely on feedback.

I make no apology for the fact *Soldier* celebrates military life. It is our job and pleasure to communicate the colourful activities of the British Army.

Of course, there are problems in the Service world too. That is the very reason *Talkback* exists – to share them.

Thank you for contributing.



'Stop treating our medals like swimming badges'

Is it me or have times changed?

I feel very proud to have served my country and wear my medals with pride. However, my last three decorations – the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, Afghanistan and the Accumulated Service Medal – had to be chased and were basically passed across a table by a clerk.

Now after 30 years' service I again find myself chasing up my Long Service and Good Conduct bar.

I rang the medal office in March and they informed me that I did qualify for it but that it must be requested by the regiment – something they had clearly not done.

I still don't have it, albeit that a new posting has delayed things somewhat.

Should this be how the British Army recognises achievements? After all, we aren't talking about a 100-metre swimming badge here.

I think it's a sad day when you have to follow up medals for yourself; it gives the impression nobody gives a rat's proverbial.

When I ask how others feel about this I get mixed reactions.

Most have similar stories, some are outraged while others just accept it.

Is this right? – WO2 John Wesson, AAC.

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, responds: Medals are designed to recognise valuable service.

It is for the CO to ensure that the means of presentation reflects the esteem in which the unit holds recipients.

That is why formations returning from operational tours routinely hold medal parades, with senior officers, guests and VIPs being involved.

Commemorative, campaign and efficiency decorations are generally issued automatically by the medal office when triggered by the JPA service record.

The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal is issued automatically to those who have a clean slate over 15 years.

Troops with a disciplinary entry must apply and receive a recommendation from their CO before being considered by the Army medal board.

The name procedure is required for the award of the clasp. This maintains the integrity of this prestigious decoration.

The Accumulated Campaign Service Medal 11 requires 24 months' campaign service. Calculating this cumulative amount is too complex to design a trigger on JPA so the individual must claim.

Plea over Service's cycling rules



CAN the Army join the government's bike to work scheme?

Many Servicemen and women would benefit from a tax-free bicycle. They promote fitness and are good for the environment. – Cpl Stuart Peebles, RLC.

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), replies: If run by the MoD, this salary sacrifice scheme would effectively mean buying and managing a fleet of bicycles to hire

to employees. Also, as you are "sacrificing" part of your wages to rent the bicycle, you are effectively being paid less and this may have implications for pensions, maternity pay and working tax credits.

The MoD already encourages personnel to use this mode of transport through the home to duty (HTD) pedal cycle rate of motor mileage allowance – one of the very few employers to contribute towards travel to work.

Currently set at 15 pence per mile, with the claimant covering the first three miles, this builds into a significant amount.

As cycle to work is a non-taxable benefit (like HTD) you cannot have both.

On balance, therefore, the department considers the pedal cycle allowance to be a far superior provision.



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HARD-CORPS CLAIM

■ I THOUGHT I would inform your readers of my own cap badge achievement ("Readers reject cap badge claim", October).

Whilst I cannot compete with wearing the most during my career, I am wondering if anybody can match wearing six different cap badges during service with the same corps?

I joined the Royal Engineers in 1975 as a junior leader wearing the sapper cap badge.

During 1990 I was posted to Hong Kong as the British quartermaster sergeant instructor with The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and wore their other ranks emblem.

I was then commissioned in 1998 where I wore the officers' "bomb" before being posted back to The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, where I wore their officers' insignia.

I retired to become a permanent staff administration officer with the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia) and have just started my last tour with the Jersey Field Squadron, where they wear their own cap badge while still being part of the corps.

Are there any I have missed which are still in service? – **Capt Steve Gadd, RE.**

CRINGE OVER CONTEST

■ I CAN'T believe that in your October edition there are two officers arguing over who has served with more regiments and who has earned more cap badges.

I do hope they wrote these letters in their own time, not while getting paid by the Army, sat at their desks eating prawn sandwiches – especially during such difficult times of redundancies.

Surely these officers should concentrate more on their soldiers rather than having a urinating contest for all to read. How embarrassing. – **Pte Liam Rowsell, RLC.**



Chips down at Crowfoot Cafe

SADLY, this is another rant about prices at the British Army Training Unit Suffield (Batus). I know I'm not the first person to mention this but if we don't discuss the issue we can't hope to solve it.

I recently served on Exercise Prairie Storm and was appalled at the service provided by the Crowfoot Cafe.

With very limited scope for transport to the nearby city of Medicine Hat to stock up on daily essentials, it would appear this cafe has a neat little line in ripping off troops with outrageous prices compared to what can be found in Walmart.

For example, Axe shower gel was priced at \$9.99, while a bottle containing 33 per cent extra at the local supermarket was only \$4.76.

This is just one example and I encourage an independent assessor to see the reality of what this "service" is providing.

I propose a revised system whereby more than one contractor operates from camp to promote healthy competition. – **Capt S Wilkinson, RA.**

Lt Col Stephen Nevin, HQ Batus, replies: You're correct that there are limited retail outlets for troops exercising at Batus.

The Canex store is two kilometres from the accommodation and reasonably priced

in comparison to the Canadian market.

The General Fund Store next to your accommodation provides very reasonably priced shower gel (\$3.75) but its stock and opening hours are limited.

The Crowfoot Cafe is a private concession let by Canex (the Canadian Forces' equivalent to the Naafi). It is primarily there to provide food.

This year it has stocked a number of additional goods, including toiletries, at the request of customers.

Many of its prices are high but the staff and products need to be shipped in from Medicine Hat and the store is not open all year round so overheads are considerable.

The cost of goods at the cafe were taken into account during last year's local overseas allowance review. The daily rate for captains is \$22.

HQ Batus has challenged the Crowfoot Cafe over the cost of toiletries and they have decided to stop stocking the lines in question as they no longer see it as financially viable.

This will further reduce options for exercising troops.

We are now hoping to extend the range of goods in the General Fund Store and work with units to broaden what is made available in regimental tuck shops.

Take away unit rehab? No, no, no

AT the end of September the rehab instructor for my camp left and I believe this change is Army-wide.

I understand that civvy equivalents were being financed using the Op Herrick budget, which is obviously soon to end.

What I can't understand, though, is why this can't be funded from elsewhere.

Our rehab instructor is fantastic and we get a far better session than if we were working alone.

I can't help but think that those in charge of these decisions have no idea what it's like to be injured or in pain every day.

Surely proper medical care should be a priority as an injury means your career is effectively paused or ended.

Soldiers won't stop getting injured just because ops are winding down. – **Name and address supplied.**

Col John Etherington, Director of Defence Rehabilitation, responds: We recognise the role that unit-level rehabilitation has played in supporting operations.

I am working with Army and Defence Primary Health Care to ensure that rehabilitation supports Army 2020.

This will require a review of support to the new Adaptive and Reaction brigades.

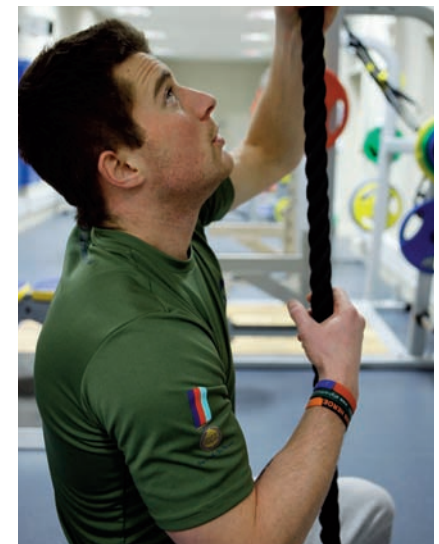
We would like to recruit more military exercise rehabilitation instructors at unit level as we know they are effective and highly regarded by their patients and also

the chain of command.

However, this must be done in a properly managed way.

The Royal Army Physical Training Corps is starting to focus more on rehabilitation and reconditioning after injury or illness, in which their instructors will take the lead in future.

With this restructuring and collaborative work, we aim to improve unit-level support for injured and ill personnel.



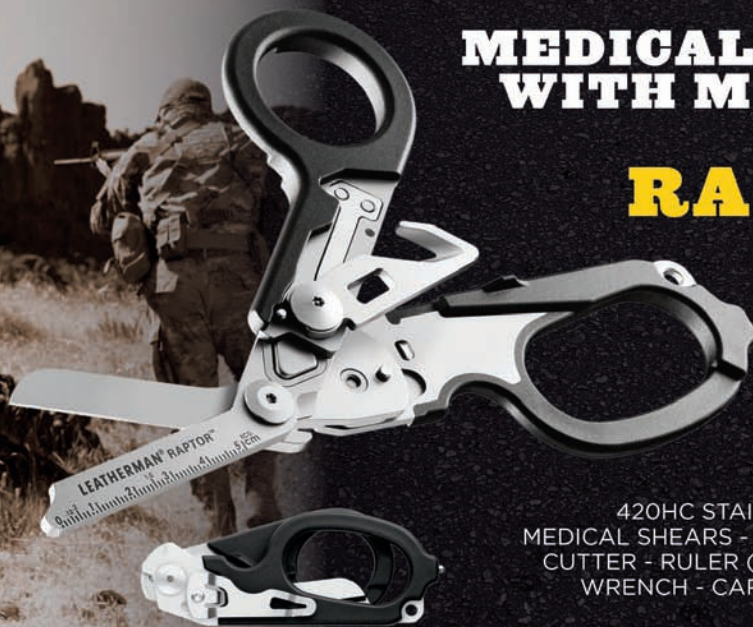
Strong support: Physical training instructors will be key to continuing unit-level rehabilitation

Picture: Steve Dock



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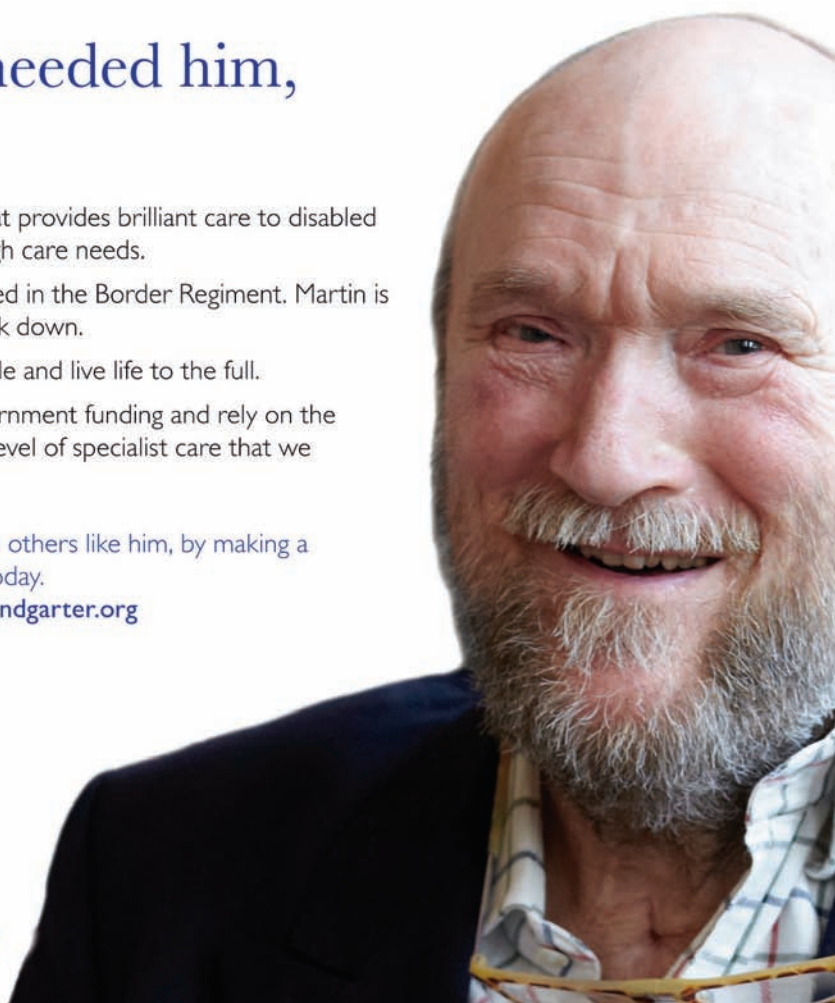
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COMPETITIONS

Spine line winners: WO2 G Cron, Bielefeld, BFPO 39; WO1 Paul Buckley, MoD Abbey Wood; Capt Mike James, Lisburn; WO2 Paul Riley, Oxford UOTC; Maj S Cassells, 2 R Irish, Northern Ireland; Maj E Mathieson, Marlborough Lines, Andover; Capt Stephen Gibbons, HQ JSSO, Ashby de la Launde; SSgt Colin Holcombe, HQ Sp Comd, Aldershot.

Multi-tool: Jayne Hawkes, HQ Hereford Garrison; CPO Iain McCallum, DE&S, Yeovil.

The Combat series: C Duckworth, Chicksands, Bedfordshire.

Rebellion DVD: Peter Rendall, 39 Sig Regt, Bristol; LCpl S Wood, Hameln, BFPO 31; Cpl L Dodgson, Skipton, North Yorkshire; Maj W Evers, HQ 43 (Wx) Bde, Tidworth; SSgt Dean Jones, RAF Digby Lincolnshire

DIARY

November 2: Military charity Afghan Heroes is holding a public firework display at their Somerset retreat in Ashcott. Entrance is free, beverages and food will be available and a competition for the best dressed Guy will begin at 1800, with fireworks starting at 1930. Every rocket fired during the display will commemorate a Serviceman or woman lost during the campaign in Afghanistan.

November 2: Rock Aid Catterick 2013. A concert to raise funds for Soldiers off the Street at Bar 28, Shute Road, Catterick Garrison. The event will feature **Beyond the Gate, So What, Paul Snow** and other local bands. Tickets cost £8 (pre-order) or £10 on the door, with all funds going to the charity. For details contact catterickbands@yahoo.co.uk or robert.mclauchlan975@mod.uk

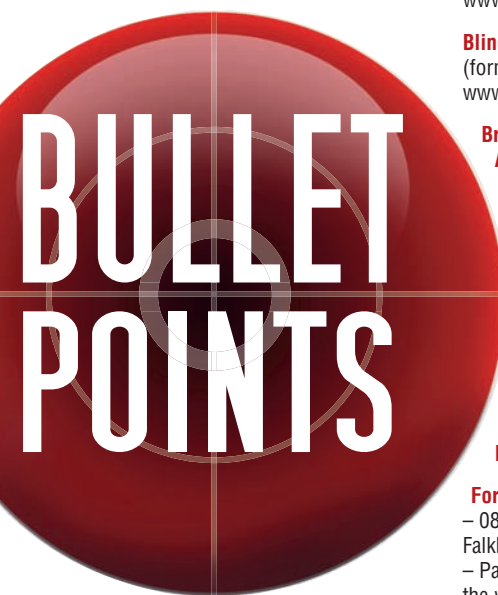
November 4: The Manner of Men (9 Para's heroic D-Day mission). A talk by author Stuart Tootal at Canary Wharf from 1830. Tickets cost £10 and are available from info@taxicharity.org or Dick Goodwin via 07941 772264. All proceeds will be divided between The Afghanistan Trust and The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled.

November 9: Boys to Heroes. A First World War workshop at The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, Custom House, Gloucester. Sponsored by the Heritage Lottery

Fund, this free workshop gives families the opportunity to get a hands-on experience of life as a local soldier during the First World War. Suitable for children aged 8-12. Places are limited and booking is essential. Call the museum on 01452 522682, email elizabeth.ropar@sogm.co.uk or visit www.glosters.org.uk for more details.

November 10-11: Ceremony of remembrance. On the front steps of the Imperial War Museum, London at 1100. Visitors are welcome.

November 16-17: History in your hands. Held at HMS Belfast from 1100 to 1230 and 1400 to 1600. Discover hidden stories about the vessel and explore the fascinating lives of the men who lived and worked on-board.



November 30-December 1: The Birmingham International Tattoo. Military bands, displays and a spectacular grand finale on Saturday, November 30 at 1800 and Sunday, December 1 at 1400 at the NIA, Birmingham. Contact the box office on 0844 338 8000 or visit www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk

December 20-23 and 27-31: A Wartime Christmas. Visit the "A Family in Wartime" exhibition at London's Imperial War Museum and find out what London was like during the Second World War. Open between 1100 and 1600.

Until further notice: Chelsea Pensioners' wartime stories are being captured in a new online collaboration between the National Army Museum and the Royal Hospital Chelsea. **The Old and the Bold** is an audiovisual history project and videos are available to view by visiting www.nam.ac.uk

DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

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

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

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

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society: www.armybirding.org.uk

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

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

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

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

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

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

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Heroes Welcome: www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

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

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

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

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

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

Royal British Legion: www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

Continued on page 62

Scottish Veterans' Residences:

0131 556 0091; www.svrnline.org

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency:

0800 169 2277 (from the UK);
0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

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

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

The Not Forgotten Association:

020 7730 2400; www.nfassociation.org

The Poppy Factory:

020 8940 3305

www.poppyfactory.org

uk4u Thanks!:

01798 812081;

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INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 102/13: Annual tax allowance notification

ABN 101/13: Allowance enhancements

ABN 100/13: JSP 752 national employment model amendments

ABN 99/13: Type 2 adventurous training course

ABN 98/13: MoD Your Say survey 2013

ABN 97/13: Remembrance Day services and parades 2013

ABN 96/13: Unit adventurous training officer course

ABN 95/13: Free travel London clarification

ABN 94/13: Army Reserve officer course titles

ABN 93/13: Delivery of physical training related activities to non-MoD organisations

ABN 92/13: Army Dependants Trust

ABN 91/13: Army Reserve recruiting campaign

ABN 90/13: Increasing awareness of the Army Reserve brand

ABN 89/13: National housing prime contract

DIN 2013DIN01-204: Accommodation booking in the Portsmouth area

DIN 2013DIN01-203: Pensions tax – annual allowance notification tax year 2012/13

DIN 2013DIN01-202: Notification of casualties and compassionate cases via the high grade messaging interface

DIN 2013DIN01-201: JSP 830 – *Manual of Service Law* update – investigation of certain sexual offences

DIN 2013DIN01-200: New employment model – simplification and harmonisation of allowances

DIN 2013DIN01-199: Armed Forces allowances

DIN 2013DIN01-198: Non-industrial civilian personnel policy meeting, February 6, 2013

DIN 2013DIN01-197: Reserve Forces participation in representative sport

DIN 2013DIN01-196: MoD civilian consultants pay award 2013

DIN 2013DIN01-195: Revised arrangements for the MoD provision of passports for Service personnel and their dependants serving overseas following the closure of regional passport processing centres

DIN 2013DIN01-193: British Computer Society corporate membership scheme

DIN 2013DIN01-192: MoD civilian medical practitioners pay award 2013

DIN 2013DIN01-191: Overseas service – civilian staff specially recruited for overseas service

DIN 2013DIN01-190: Permanent transfer overseas – schooling allowances

DIN 2013DIN01-189: Free travel on the Transport for London network for Service personnel in uniform

DIN 2013DIN01-188: Charges for damage and deficiencies for Service family accommodation (SFA) and substitute SFA – recovery from pay

DIN 2013DIN01-186: Service and veteran access to prosthetics and the NHS funded enhanced disablement service centres

DIN 2013DIN01-185: Remembrance Day 2013 and The Royal British Legion poppy appeal

DIN 2013DIN02-007: Volunteers for specialist human intelligence duties – Op Samson

DIN 2013DIN03-021: Dissemination of operational products from the Air Warfare Centre and the Defence Electronic Warfare Centre over network and standalone versions of the Athene portal

DIN 2013DIN03-020: Introduction of the Joint Forces Cyber Group

DIN 2013DIN03-019: Scottish independence referendum – guidance

DIN 2013DIN03-018: Visits to hospital exercises at the Army Medical Services Training Centre in Strensall, York

DIN 2013DIN03-017: Increasing awareness of the Army Reserve

DIN 2013DIN03-016: Security Policy and Operations organisational changes, September 2013

DIN 2013DIN04-164: Removal from service of grenade buoyant smoke orange No 1 Mk 2

DIN 2013DIN04-163: Intended out-of-service date, 0.22-inch No 8, Mk 1 Cadet rifle

DIN 2013DIN04-162: Joint asset management and engineering solutions to replace management of equipment resources, liabilities and information network as the asset register for registered numbered equipment

DIN 2013DIN04-161: Declaration of obsolescence of truck tanker demineralised water production

DIN 2013DIN04-160: Declaration of obsolescence – handheld water purifiers SWP and MWP

DIN 2013DIN04-159: Declaration of obsolete – tactical fuel handling equipment – pumping equipment

DIN 2013DIN04-158: Bubble wrap

DIN 2013DIN04-157: Declaration of BID/1,000 (also known as Autocracy) as being obsolete by Crypto Services for Defence

DIN 2013DIN04-156: Declaration of BID/880 (also known as Franton) as being obsolete by Crypto Services for Defence

DIN 2013DIN04-155: Process and procedures for the distribution of digital versions of maritime technical publications

DIN 2013DIN04-154: Removal from service of Speedline 250

DIN 2013DIN04-153: Declaration of ALC obsolescence equipment – PFA in annex A

DIN 2013DIN04-152: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2013DIN04-151: Variable tactical electrical generator availability

DIN 2013DIN04-150: Removal from service of firing device kit demolition grip L41A4

DIN 2013DIN04-149: Declaration of obsolescence – BCIP urgent operational requirement equipment

DIN 2013DIN05-044: Formation of defence primary health care overseas region

DIN 2013DIN05-043: Working practices for the production of media work

DIN 2013DIN05-042: Recruiting and equipping graphics, photographic and digital print staff

DIN 2013DIN05-041: Media LAN governance

DIN 2013DIN05-039: Relocation of the Joint Information Operations Training and Advisory Team

DIN 2013DIN05-038: Disinvestment of Bowman at 90 Signals Unit

DIN 2013DIN05-036: New Defence Centre for Languages and Culture

DIN 2013DIN05-035: Guidance on undertaking medical or health care research, audit and Service evaluations

DIN 2013DIN07-130: Astute Class Training Service

DIN 2013DIN07-129: Volunteering for operational linguist and cultural specialist duties

DIN 2013DIN07-128: New pamphlet No 21 training regulations AC:71855 – a summary of changes and mandatory requirements

DIN 2013DIN07-127: Incremental staff required for Adventurous Training Group (Army)

DIN 2013DIN07-124: Army workplace induction procedures

DIN 2013DIN07-123: Full-time Reserve Service for TA unit command

DIN 2013DIN07-121: Authority for Army orienteering 2013/14

DIN 2013DIN07-120: Access to learn blood transfusion

DIN 2013DIN07-119: Joint information operations training courses – 2014

DIN 2013DIN08-012: Provision of clothing to non-uniformed staff

DIN 2013DIN08-011: FI 2013 08-011 Accounting arrangements for financial year 2013/14

DIN 2013DIN10-042: Tri-Services bouldering league 2013/14

DIB50/13: Rebranding the Armed Forces allowances package

DIB49/13: 2013 MoD Your Say survey now open

DIB48/13: New home loan scheme for Service personnel

DIB47/13: Launch of the performance management user's guide

DIB46/13: Letter from the secretary of state for defence, CDS and PUS on defence communications governance

DIB45/13: Public support for our deployed personnel and sending gifts at Christmas



P (Parachute) Troop, 7 Para RHA reunion at the Elephant and Castle, North Camp, Farnborough on Airborne Forces Weekend, Saturday, July 5, 2014, to mark 30 years since the formation of P Troop. All ex-members and friends welcome. For further information contact Mark Flannigan via mark.flannigan@yahoo.co.uk

RAMC Reunited 2014 will take place at The Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool on February 7-10, 2014. For further information contact Mick McCran by sending a SAE (C5 size) to 132 Nightingale Crescent, Lincoln LN6 0JZ. Alternatively telephone 01522 879307 or send an email to michael.mccran@ntlworld.com

Singapore Dawnwatchers' Society for members of the Intelligence Corps or those attached to it in Singapore during the 1960s and 1970s. The next reunion will be at The Maids Head Hotel, Norwich on April 4-6, 2014. Please contact Nik Collett, secretary, by emailing sdws-sec@hotmail.co.uk



Former members of the warrant officers' and sergeants' mess at the RAEC Centre Beaconsfield/DSL Beaconsfield. Due to the school's forthcoming move, the mess is looking to return presentation items to donating members. If you would like your item back please contact the residing property member via email at david.wythe561@mod.uk by the November 30 deadline.

The combined officers' and warrant officers' and sergeants' mess of 73 Engineer Regiment is due to close by July 2014 as part of Army Reserve restructuring. Anyone who has donated an item of property is asked to contact the regimental quartermaster or sergeant major. Anything that is not claimed will be offered to the corps museum or put forward for a charity auction after Easter 2014. For more details contact Maj M Everett on 0115 9008652 or via 73engr-rqm@mod.uk

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TEN details have been changed on this picture of celebrity chef Cyrus Todiwala judging the open ethnic buffet entry at the tri-Service Exercise Joint Caterer, held at the Defence Academy Shrivenham.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 864, Soldier**,

Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by November 29.

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

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

third will receive £25 gift vouchers. The results will be announced in the January issue. Usual rules apply.

September's winner: First correct entry drawn at random was P Sutton, Hailsham, East Sussex. **Runners up:** Mrs L Wells, Isleworth and Mrs M Clift, Cradley Heath.



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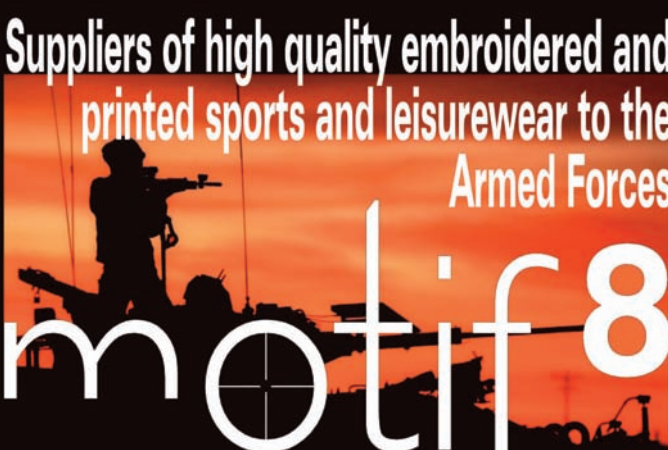
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MOVIES

PICK OF THE MONTH:
MONSTERS UNIVERSITY

STUDENT SCARERS

DISNEY-PIXAR'S PREQUEL PACKS AN
AMUSING BUT EMOTIONAL PUNCH



Report: Joe Clapson

THE hero creatures from Disney-Pixar's much-vaunted *Monsters, Inc* have returned in a prequel that serves up hilarity while highlighting how higher education can be an emotional rollercoaster – even for scary beasts.

In what is the studio's fourteenth feature-length movie *Monsters University* sees Mike Wazowski (Billy Crystal), a green one-eyed orb, and Sulley (John Goodman), a giant polka-dotted fluff-ball, attending college to learn how to become scarers.

The pair want to graduate as fiends who extract precious "scream power" by petrifying children across the world.

The story, directed by Dan Scanlon, hinges on the friendship between the two monsters as they live in a student fraternity under the gaze of the centipede-esque Dean Hardscrabble (Helen Mirren).

The film's producer, Kori Rae, who has helped build Disney-Pixar into the behemoth studio it is today, explained the importance of securing the right actors to voice the monsters.

"Billy Crystal and John Goodman, like all of us, love these characters," she said.

"They also really thrive when recording together so we did that as much as possible."

She added: "Helen Mirren was, of course, phenomenal to work with – she blew our minds."

"Dan Scanlon usually paces during recording sessions while directing the talent, but in our first recording session with Helen he was completely still with his headphones on."

The studio's idea for the prequel – released on Blu-ray and DVD on November 11 – was to create a story that didn't follow obvious paths while developing complex, loveable characters.

"It is insanely difficult to create a story that isn't predictable – that has twists and turns that are not expected and surprising character arcs – because you already know how the tale ends," said Rae.

"The team dug deep and developed details about these characters and created a fun yet emotional plot that audiences will never see coming."

Following in the blockbusting footsteps of the *Toy Story* franchise and *The Incredibles*, this movie engages viewers on an emotional level, despite the fact that its protagonists are essentially quirky scribbles from a design office.

"The film has great depth – Mike's journey, his relationship with Sulley and the lessons he learns about life," added Rae.

"It's fun, the humour is fantastic, but what I think people will be surprised by is the heart and emotion at the core of the story."

Part of Disney-Pixar's success is down to an unashamed policy of sticking with a successful formula. The continued collaboration with composer Randy Newman is a perfect example of that ethos and his musical score for this offering once again complements the on-screen action impeccably.

"The first scoring session was quite emotional," admitted Rae.

"It was an intense feeling seeing the pictures from a film we'd been toiling over for years up on the screen with a live orchestra playing a song that we were hearing for the first time."

"After working on the film for three years and getting used to the temporary music, it's quite eye-opening to hear it from Randy's point of view."

Watching colourful monsters attend scare school might sound like a movie just for kids but this one will have adults laughing and even crying as the extraordinary animations come to life. ■



WORLD WAR Z out now

THOSE that have read **Max Brooks'** books may be disappointed by director **Marc Forster's** take on a zombie apocalypse but for the uninitiated there is still plenty on offer here. With a far larger scope than films that have gone before, **Brad Pitt** jets across the globe seeking answers with epic set-piece action scenes. The title paints a vivid picture of nations reacting to a disease that turns infected humans into shambling "zeds".

Cpl Paul Thomas, Int Corps

VERDICT: Highly recommended top-grossing blockbuster ★★★★★



EDEN out now

THIS movie has an intriguing plot based on the chilling real-life story of Chong Kim, also known as Eden, a young girl kidnapped and forced into a human and drug trafficking ring outside Las Vegas. Although the cast were unknown to me, they were all very convincing – especially **Jamie Chung** in the lead role. The storyline is very intense involving sex with strangers and life inside a tiny storage unit.

Julie Jessop, civvy

VERDICT: Captivating from start to finish ★★★★★



THE KICK out now

FOR a low budget Korea-Thailand collaboration this fast-paced feature is pretty good. The director **Prachya Pinkaew** (*Chocolate, Ong Bak*) is famed for his fight choreography and he has excelled himself here. A family of martial artists clash with a gang of criminals resulting in jaw-dropping action sequences. Combining high-kicking talent with genuine comedy this adventure rivals any **Jackie Chan** flick.

Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: First-class comedy, a re-release worth spending money on ★★★★★



SNITCH out now

IN this retelling of true events **Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson** stars in a high octane thrill-ride into the underground world of drugs, guns and brutality. It builds steadily towards an almighty, explosive ending and I do wonder how much of the story is actually true. However, it is a good film with some great performances from the ever-impressive Johnson, **Susan Sarandon** and **Barry Pepper**.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

VERDICT: The must-see action thriller of the last 12 months ★★★★★



21 AND OVER out now

AS a fraternity-based comedy this is what you might expect from *Hangover* writers **Jon Lucas** and **Scott Moore**, with crude and crass humour that won't tick everyone's enjoyment box but will leave others in stitches. Straight-A student **Jeff Chang** (**Justin Chon**) steps off the rails with awkward consequences when he is kidnapped by his high school buddies to celebrate his 21st birthday.

Joe Clapson, Soldier

VERDICT: An amusing and eye-opening tale of riotous debauchery ★★★★★



WIN... WWE SUMMERSLAM 2013

THIS release captures all of the action from SummerSlam 2013. Featuring the double main event of **John Cena** vs **Daniel Bryan** for the WWE Championship and "The Best vs The Beast" in **CM Punk** vs **Brock Lesnar**, it is a real treat for wrestling fans. *Soldier* has teamed up with Fremantle Media to offer a copy of the DVD to five lucky readers. To be in with a chance of winning, just tell us which wrestler is known as "The Beast". Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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GAMES



PICK OF THE MONTH: FIFA 2014

CHAMPIONS ELECT

EA SPORTS TOP THE LEAGUE
WITH LATEST FOOTBALL FEAST

Review: Richard Long

HAVING established itself as the title-winning outfit in football's annual console conversion, the latest instalment in the *Fifa* franchise has been hotly anticipated.

The standard update of squads and players has been accurately made but fans should not expect a dramatic overhaul of what was a winning formula last season.

The biggest signing has been the introduction of the Precision Movement engine, which creates a new way for players to move and means momentum has become a bigger part of the game.

While this sounds promising enough it is not without its pitfalls and a tweaked version may well be required for future releases.

For example, it takes an eternity for players to reach full speed and the use of skills such as a simple turn can easily go awry. The flat-footed stance of the defenders is also easily punished as a simple ball over the top usually results in an effort on goal.

If this device seems more League Two than Premier League, the same cannot be said of the new Pure Shot mechanic.

This platform allows long-range masters to take centre stage as their thunderous strikes benefit from added spin, dip and bend.

However, such innovations give rise to greater unpredictability so don't expect the net to bulge every time you let fly.

The tempo also seems to have dropped slightly, meaning there is now a stronger focus on hold-up play and teamwork instead of using out-and-out pace as a main weapon.

With the new mechanics producing varying results fans can rest easy with the production and presentation, which ticks all the right boxes. Star players from around the world have been painstakingly recreated as the accuracy and authenticity reaches new levels and the plethora of club sides to choose from is unbelievable.

Such choice is not available at international level but club has become far more important than country in the modern game so this is of no great concern.

Hardened supporters will look expectantly at the raft of online options and *Fifa 2014* does not disappoint.

Simple friendly matches are easy to create and the return of web-based leagues and cups offers endless competition.

The Ultimate Team format also makes a welcome reappearance and while there are no major improvements the process of organising games has been streamlined and individual stars can be assigned a signature style to the way they approach the game.

The career mode sticks to the manager and player options of the title's predecessor – both of which allow you to control the entire team – but it still takes an eternity to progress due to the slow-turning calendar.

Minor irritations aside, EA Sports can rightly celebrate another championship contender with *Fifa 2014*. ■

VERDICT: Slick presentation and superb gameplay sees *Fifa 2014* top the league ★★★★★

DIABLO III

for Xbox 360/PS3

AFTER much anticipation *Diablo III* has finally arrived on console. Having starred on PC, this dungeon crawling game has been craftily generated with added intrigue and discovery. Every class, from barbarian to sorcerer, has its own story to tell and attacks start with a simple approach before progressing as you level-up. Yes, there is an abundance of recurring enemies but it gives a tantalizing feel that you are close to something good, which makes this quite hard to put down.



Sgt Craig Backhouse, Coldm Gds

VERDICT: A great game that is filled with intrigue and thrill ★★★★★

GRAND THEFT AUTO V

for Xbox 360/PS3

HAVING not played *GTA* for years I wasn't sure about the hype – but this game is as good as they say. Playing as the three main protagonists, Michael, Franklin and Trevor, you conspire in a series of increasingly elaborate heists. Online play can be likened to *Call of Duty* on steroids as you rob and steal from fellow gamers, while the many other options make this far superior to its predecessors. But it is the attention to detail that makes this a must for any console fan's shelf.



Sgt Mike Owens, 26 Engr Regt

VERDICT: Highly addictive – submit a leave pass prior to playing ★★★★★

F1 2013

for Xbox 360/PS3/PC

ALTHOUGH both my teenage sons and I are not Formula One fans we all loved this game. The action holds solid from the outset in all modes and the graphics and attention to detail are stunning. You can race as any of the 2013 drivers and legends such as **Alain Prost** and **Nigel Mansell**. Using the controllers takes some nerve and a steering wheel would make racing easier. The only criticism is the instructions are hard to read, but that's just nit-picking.



Alan Lilly, ex-LD

VERDICT: Superb attention to detail and a great game ★★★★★

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2014

for Xbox 360/PS3/PC

KONAMI return with their latest rival to the *Fifa* crown. Boasting improved player movement, *PES 2014* also offers a reduction in pace so skills and close control shine through. Passes zip nicely off the surface and the ability to shield the ball and execute perfectly timed slide tackles are welcome features. The erratic nature of the goalkeepers is frustrating, as is the title's continuing failure to accurately recreate the sport's top clubs. However, this is still a championship contender.



Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: Slick skills and close control make this a winner ★★★★★

NBA 2K14

for Xbox/PS3/PC

THIS offering is little more than a lacklustre update of *NBA 2K13*. The only difference is that it is easier to drop the ball and more difficult to pick it up. The addition of LeBron mode offers a different spin to the gameplay and the introduction of a host of European teams adds to the mix and creates a welcome break from the North American bias. Overall, this title needs a raft of changes to make it something other than a quick money grab before the next generation of consoles arrive.



W02 Graeme Russell, 39 Engr Regt

VERDICT: If you have *NBA 2K13* do not buy this game ★★★★★

FARMING SIMULATOR

for Xbox 360/PS3

BOASTING such a novel concept, this title has more than its fair share of intrigue. The early signs are encouraging as you plough fields, sow seeds and take your crops to market. However, the charm soon wears off as the lack of detail becomes evident. There are no clear aims and the need to plan your strategy around the seasons of the year is unnecessary, as they simply don't exist. The lack of significant challenges seals this offering's downfall.



Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: A great idea that unfortunately fails to deliver ★★★★★

MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH: VENGEANCE FALLS

METAL MASTERCLASS

ROCKERS REACH ELEVATED
STATUS WITH DEFINING ALBUM

Review: Capt Matt Walpole, PWRR

WITH some bands you fall in love, sometimes at first sight (or sound), sometimes over time, but once betrothed it's in your blood.

You then spend the rest of your life hoping that they will keep delivering and not self-destruct amidst childish tantrums and substance abuse.

Orlando-based melodic metal outfit Trivium are an example of a band taking the right path.

Vengeance Falls is their sixth studio album and the culmination of two years spent touring their previous release, *In Waves*, which was hailed as their finest work.

The collection attracted tremendous recognition from the metal community and in particular Disturbed frontman-turned-producer David Draiman, who offered himself and his California studio for production of the new record even before its conception.

Draiman helped Trivium break every song down to its basic, component parts and then gradually rebuilt them with fastidious attention to detail.

The result is an album that marks the band as a true giant and a worthy contender to share elevation with the likes of Slipknot, Slayer and Korn.

The punch is felt right away through *Brave This Storm*, which wades in with a textbook metallic chug intro and progresses with tempo and time changes aplenty, along with some shredding mastery from lead guitarist Corey Beaulieu.

Headbanging is inevitable – don't try and fight it.

Draiman's influence is most clearly audible in the clean parts of Matt Heafy's vocals where melodies are stronger, catchier and more ambitious than we've been privy to before, particularly on the title track.

However, there is still plenty of his trademark roar that should only be enjoyed while wearing a hard hat to prevent injury in the event of the ceiling caving in due to his demolishing power.

Strife is as anthemic a single as you could wish for with duelling guitars and a chorus so catchy it should be considered viral.

That said, any of the first five tracks are capable of holding the torch as singles.

All bear the Trivium hallmarks of guitar virtuosity, aggressive yet poignant vocals and are underpinned by the relentless pounding of the double-kick drum.

At the End of This War allows a short break in the momentum with a sensitive acoustic introduction but this is merely a scene setter for the emotive theme of the song, that being the destructive inevitability of conflict.

This breaks into fast verses interspersed with guttural growls, clean melody and needling guitar leads.

This album is a world away from the band's debut a decade ago. There is not one track that isn't capable of a crushing live delivery and with UK dates confirmed throughout

VERDICT: Musical maturity from a band showing a growth in songwriting prowess ★★★★★

Keteven by Katie Melua

THE distinctive voice of **Katie Melua** is unlike any other in the current market and her latest album has a strong focus on love and life. To understand the story behind the lyrics you need to listen to the songs several times, and the more you listen the more you like. *Never Felt Less Like Dancing* captures the feeling when you're forced to be happy even though it's the last thing that you want to be, while *Idiot School* takes a humorous approach with a backing track reminiscent of a wartime tea dance.



Julie Jessup, civvy

VERDICT: A perfect album to kick back and relax to ★★★★★

The Paradigm Shift by Korn

HAVING enjoyed **Korn** when they first emerged, reacquainting myself with their music via *The Paradigm Shift* was a pleasure. The record sees the return of the original line-up and, like bumping into an old school friend years later, felt instantly and reassuringly familiar with its thick, heavy, rhythmic and partially melodic sound. It is evident the band have matured and tracks such as *Prey For Me* and *Love and Meth* are proof of this. To their credit, Korn have retained their unique sound and still have a lot to offer.



Maj Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)

VERDICT: A return to form from the Korn of yesteryear ★★★★★

Alive by Jessie J

AFTER establishing herself as one of pop's biggest personalities with hits such as *Do It Like a Dude* and *Price Tag*, as well as being a judge on *The Voice*, **Jessie J** releases second album *Alive* with the spotlight well and truly on herself. *It's My Party*, *Sexy Lady* and *Excuse My Rude* aim to follow the global smashes by **Rihanna** and **Katy Perry**, but the whole album lacks spark. The songs are so similar you struggle to tell where one ends and the next begins and it did nothing for me whatsoever.



Cpl Adam Jackson, 3 Para

VERDICT: I'm afraid my chair remains unturned ★★★★★

Overkill by Motorhead

MOTORHEAD are back with a bang. Their 21st studio album is louder and heavier than anything they have done in recent years and is a throwback to the band that exploded into the public eye with their self-titled debut. Song's like *Heartbreaker* and *Going To Mexico* will have old-school bluesy rock 'n' roll fans excited that one of England's finest acts are back to their best. For anyone who is new to this group, pick up a copy of *Aftershock* and then catch them on their forthcoming European tour.



Gdsm Steve McManus, Coldm Gds

VERDICT: Lemmy and co return with their finest work in 30 years ★★★★★

Between Dog and Wolf

THIS is the hotly anticipated 12th studio album from legendary underground band **New Model Army**. It is a record that marks a major evolution in their sound while sacrificing none of the group's famous passion and songwriting skills. As expected, it is filled with multi-layered drums and atmospheric musical textures from start to finish, making it one of their best efforts to date. An absolute gem of an album and one you could happily stick on loop with the volume cranked up.

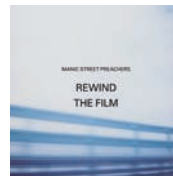


Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

VERDICT: Something different and superb from start to finish ★★★★★

Rewind The Film

THE **Manic Street Preachers** claim to surprise us, yet again. Whether it's a new style or just middle age, their latest album *Rewind The Film* features blunt lyrics and lacks emotional tone. However, I may contradict myself by saying the band have pulled off another new sound and have reinvented themselves while reaching out to more mature times. The musicianship is flawless and I'm glad they have moved on, rather than rehashing their past or trying to be the young punks they were back in 1991.



Cpl Nick Reader, Rifles

VERDICT: Evidence of a band evolving and growing with age ★★★★★

BOOKS



PICK OF THE MONTH: CATASTROPHE

EUROPE GOES TO WAR

HISTORIAN TURNS CLOCK BACK
TO WHEN DISASTER STRUCK



Interview: Becky Clark

ONE hundred years ago Europe was enjoying the final months of peace before its imperial masters plunged headlong into the First World War.

As the centenary of the conflict approaches, a predictable glut of new books about the era has materialised, among them the latest offering by Sir Max Hastings.

Catastrophe: Europe Goes to War 1914 examines the opening months of hostilities in customary forensic detail, debunking some popular misconceptions in the process.

"Most people, when they imagine the war, think of trenches, wire and tin hats but the battles of 1914 weren't remotely like that," Hastings told *Soldier*.

"Those were the days when these vast armies were surging hither and thither across Europe.

"In August the French launched their attacks like the armies of the Napoleonic wars – vast masses of men in red trousers and blue overcoats with bands playing and colours flying.

"And we all think of the Somme as the bloodiest day of the whole war but of course it wasn't – on August 22, 1914 the French lost 27,000 dead. It's quite extraordinary."

Through vivid first-hand accounts from soldiers and civilians alike, the book brings the chaos of the various fronts to life.

Describing the devastating cultural shock of 1914, the historian continued: "Most of Europe had been relatively peaceful for the last 100 years and people were totally unprepared.

"Throughout history a battle was something that was usually over in a day or two and this idea of war as a continuous process was completely unprecedented.

"Most of the people who wrote letters back in the early days couldn't imagine that it could go on for many more weeks, let alone years."

Despite the protracted horror, Hastings gives little credence to those who argue that the conflict could have been avoided altogether or brought to a close more quickly.

"People have this *Blackadder* view that it was all for nothing – it wasn't," he said.

"Britain couldn't have credibly stayed out of it because a victorious Germany wouldn't have been willing to leave Britain there as a neutral, ruling the waves and running the world's financial system.

"Sooner or later we would almost certainly have ended up having to fight the Germans.

"Most military scholars who I respect also accept that there just wasn't a clever, quick way to win.

"When you have these huge industrial powers going head to head, an enormous amount of killing and dying has to be done before one side or the other prevails."

Hastings' conclusion is that the only way to have stopped the slaughter sooner would have been to accept defeat.

"I would personally argue that doing so wasn't worth the price," he commented.

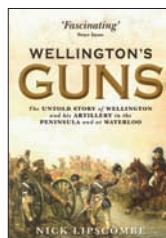
"Europe under the Kaiser would have been a pretty nasty place.

"Today everyone is rightly very proud of the country for having resisted Hitler, but especially in 2014 I think we ought also to recognise that the struggle against the Kaiser's Germany was equally as just." ■

Wellington's Guns

by Nick Lipscombe

MUCH has been written about the British cavalry during the Napoleonic Wars. In contrast, disappointingly little has been published about their less glamorous peers in the Royal Artillery. This new offering by accomplished author and battlefield guide **Nick Lipscombe**, goes a long way towards redressing the balance and improving our understanding of the Duke's gunners. His book is well-written and packed with data, good maps and colour illustrations.



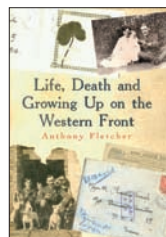
Maj Mike Peters, AAC

VERDICT: Set to be the definitive work on the subject. Superb! ★★★★★

Life, Death and Growing up on the Western Front

by Anthony Fletcher

OFFERING a series of personal accounts of the First World War, this title draws on a collection of letters and a diary from 17 Servicemen and their families, including the author's own grandfathers. Hard-going at times, the book gives a gruelling insight into their struggles – the combat, the boredom, the rare home leave, their loves and their fears. Seeing the conflict through the eyes of those who experienced it results in a very different take on the war.



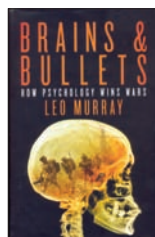
Cpl Nick Reader, Rifles

VERDICT: A difficult book to read but a rewarding one ★★★★★

Brains & Bullets

by Leo Murray

THIS book examines how psychology affects every soldier in the battle space, from 17th century Europe, through two world wars to latter day Iraq and Afghanistan. Complex science is explained in straightforward language using contrasting historical and contemporary examples. Even if you just want to know why sometimes you can't remember what you were talking about, or why *Gangnam Style* keeps popping into your head, there's something here for everyone.



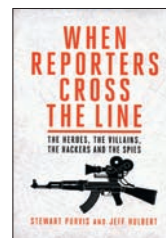
Maj Jim Vincent, RLC

VERDICT: Great insight into how the mind affects military outcomes ★★★★★

When Reporters Cross the Line

by Purvis and Hulbert

THIS is a study of 15 prominent journalists, including **John Simpson**, **Frederick Forsyth** and **Guy Burgess**, who at various stages of their careers, pushed accepted conventions. The book sheds light on where each perceived "the line" to be when pursuing a story and how they justified crossing it. Written as a series of easily digestible case studies, this text provides a useful tool for discussing wider issues such as the moral component of fighting power.



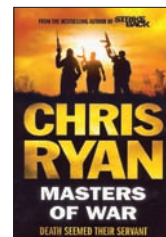
Maj Matt Sheldrick, Scots

VERDICT: Fuels the debate about the ethical remit of reporters ★★★★★

Masters of War

by Chris Ryan

NO stranger to the genre of Special Forces operations from both a personal as well as a literary perspective, **Chris Ryan** has written an engaging and eminently readable action novel set in modern day Syria. *Masters of War* moves along at a good clip and has enough twists and turns to keep the reader interested and guessing. The book's production value is high and it is a good fit for those looking for some escapism.



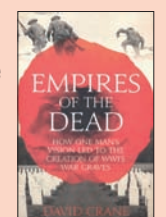
Maj Chris Buckham, RCAF

VERDICT: Read on the plane or on holiday with a cold beer in hand ★★★★★

Win... Empires of the Dead

by David Crane

DESPITE founding the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, **Fabian Ware** is today scarcely better known than any of the thousands of soldiers whose headstones bear the inscription "Known unto God". However, **David Crane's** moving portrait of the man and his work will go some way to righting this. *Soldier* has five signed copies to give away. To be in with a chance of winning one tell us which is the largest military cemetery in the UK. Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: November 29

COMPUTER CONTRAPTIONS

STUFF TO SUPPLEMENT YOUR SCREENS...

STRONG STORAGE

THIS dust resistant and waterproof flash drive, the datAshur, is apparently the world's most secure, robust and encrypted USB. Its makers, iStorage, claim that it even survived getting run over by a car during testing. The gadget features military grade encryption and aluminium casing and it automatically locks on loss of power. Prices range from £39 for a 4GB stick to £99 for 32GB. Visit www.istorage-uk.com for details.



CASES WITH CLOUT

SMALLER screens need looking after too. And for a reasonable £30 price tag, this D3O case brings bright orange impact protection to your iPad mini. Dropping it needn't be a worry with this technology – the harder the blow, the greater the resistance. D3O is already being used in sport, motorcycle and military protective kit across the world. For details log on to www.d3o.com or to purchase this Tech 21 Impact Mesh cover visit the Apple Store.

MEMORABLE MICROPHONE

WE like this handy plug-and-play from Blue Microphones, which clicks into your iPhone or iPad and can be used with any audio or video app. Whether recording a particularly bad attempt at karaoke or a message to a loved one, the Mikey Digital's built-in sensitivity control creates professional-sounding clips. Not cheap at £100, but it could make a great Christmas gift. Buy at PC World, Dixons or Currys.



ALL-WEATHER PROTECTION

DRY bag maker Over Board (www.over-board.co.uk) sell a range of waterproof cases suitable for Kindles, iPhones and laptops. A double zip-lock seal ensures the bags are completely watertight and they are reasonably priced too. Models for iPads start from around £30, for example. A clear front on many of the products also allows the full touch-screen function and if you drop your kit into water while inside this case, it floats.

BATTERY BOOST

THERE is not much this handy Pebble Pro portable battery charger won't boost (other than Apple Macbooks). For £70 it can breathe new life into an iPhone more than ten times over and it has a range of 15 different tips for notebooks, laptops and smartphones. In addition, it comes with a multi-region mains adapter that is perfect for globe-trotting troops. For more information visit www.heinnie.com



HARD DRIVE HELP

LACIE's rugged USB 3.0 hard drive is compatible with any computer, Mac or PC. It protects data from accidents with a shock resistant case and scratch-proof aluminium shell and comes in a range of size limits. User-friendly software includes military-grade encryption and 10GB of secure cloud storage for one year. Prices start from around £100. For more information visit www.lacie.com/uk

Review: LCpl Adam Blackburn (R Signals)

WHEN it comes to deciding which gadget to spend your hard-earned cash on, wireless keyboards might not necessarily be at the top of the pile.

But for anyone who finds themselves typing on a daily basis – whether it be for work, play or just to stay in touch with loved ones – it's surprising what a difference a well-made piece of kit can make.

The Indi-Key was not manufactured with individual consumers in mind – makers Bytec (www.bytec.co.uk) have instead aimed it at the industrial market – but this rugged equipment's claims to withstand the harshest of outdoor environments means it can certainly turn heads.

The manufacturers state this keyboard is ideal for military settings.

Notably, the board features backlit key illumination to aid night-time use and soft rubber keys to prevent dirt traps.

This facilitates easy cleaning, with no annoying grooves or gaps.

The Indi-Key also comes with an antimicrobial additive, which is incorporated into the rubber and plastic parts of the device to provide extra protection against bacterial contamination.

While wired keyboards can often cause clutter with their cables, the downside to wireless models is that they can take longer to connect and need recharging regularly – hardly ideal for the unpredictable demands of soldiers.

When fully charged the Indi-Key provides a typical operation time of around six hours. Not bad – but battery life can be further preserved with a 15-minute sleep mode.

It is also water-, shock- and drop-proof – so in other words, squaddie-proof.

Overall, this product proved to be highly robust as promised. And its large keys certainly made it easy to operate.

I can imagine this being integrated into British medical assets such as battlefield ambulances and possibly even the Medical Emergency Response Team.

But the Indi-Key is not likely to find its way onto the consumer market. Not as long as compact iPads prevail, anyway. ■



VERDICT: Robust kit fit to impress but unlikely to excite today's tablet users ★★★★★

TOP GEAR

PICK OF THE MONTH:

HANDS ON

WIRELESS KEYBOARD PRESSES
SOME OF THE RIGHT BUTTONS

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS SIGNS & MYTHS

What is Mental Health?

People who are mentally well are able to carry on their usual daily activities, cope with their emotions and overcome problems in a positive manner, have self-respect and have confidence in their ability to deal with life's challenges. People who are experiencing mental health problems can experience a significant impairment of thought, mood, memory or the way they view the world that affects their judgement, behaviour, capacity to recognise reality and/or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life. They may also be experiencing difficulties at work or home as a result.

What are Common Signs?

People who experience mental health problems exhibit certain signs; these can be physical, mental or changes in behaviour. Below is a list of signs common in most people who have mental health problems. A person may exhibit one or several of these signs.

- Withdrawal from their normal activities.
- Excessive tiredness or fatigue.
- Confused or distorted thinking, difficulty concentrating.
- Inappropriate expression of emotions (excessive anger, guilt, tearful, shame or fear).
- Loss of touch with reality.
- Inability to maintain their normal positive personal relationships.
- Inability to cope with daily life problems.
- Inability to take care of one's personal needs.
- Negative self-image and outlook.
- Feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- Violence towards self or others (including self-harming).

What is Stigma?

The biggest obstacle facing those with a mental illness is stigma. Stigma is a mind-set that disadvantages an individual and justifies their exclusion from normal life. A mental health problem can be made worse when it is accompanied by misunderstanding, rejection and ridicule. Stigma contributes to a worsening of the symptoms of mental illness. It will prevent many people from seeking help until it is too late.

Mental Health Myths.

Myth 1. 'Only weak people have mental health problems/ my bosses will blame me'.

Fact: Anyone can be affected by mental health problems at any time in their lives.

Myth 2. 'If someone has a problem, they will get help'.

Fact: Most people do not get help because they are concerned about the consequences at work or their relationships or are worried about confidentiality.

Myth 3. 'My mate's/colleague's mental health problems are none of my business'.

Fact: Mates/colleagues are best placed to notice problems and provide both support and encouragement to seek help.

Myth 4. 'The military doesn't support personnel who have mental health problems/I don't know where to get help'.

Fact: The Army fully supports personnel with mental health problems as with any other illness or injury. The Army provides multiple ways to get help such as a TriM practitioners, Chaplains, your Unit Welfare Officer, your Medical Officer or Nurse...if they can't help they will know who can.

Myth 5. 'No-one can help me if I have a mental health problem/ I don't trust mental health professionals'.

Fact: You can be helped. Good evidence shows that professional treatment helps, the earlier the better.

Seeking help early may help you get back on track at home and at work...Don't Bottle It Up.

Welsh warriors: The Army gave a canoe slalom masterclass on the River Teifi as they claimed another Inter-Services title. Read more about their victory charge on pages 86-87...

SOLDIER SPORT

EDITED BY RICHARD LONG PICTURES BY GRAEME MAIN



Simpson Cup leaderboard

Team GB 13.5 beat Team USA 4.5

Four Balls

Ian Bishop/David Ward (GB) beat Joseph Murphy/Joe Caley (USA) 5&4

Jack Smith/Jason Evans (GB) lost to John Bircher/Casey O'Brien (USA) by one hole

David Onions/Paul Swain (GB) halved with Chris Bowers/Charlie Linville (USA)

Mahendra Phagami/Paul Skivington (GB) beat Denis Oliverio/Ramon Padilla 3&1

Steve Morris/Matthew Turnbull (GB) halved with Joshua Peyton/Steve Ogletree (USA)

Gregg Stevenson/Sam Stoddart (GB) lost to Jason Leap/Kenneth Mitchell (USA) 2&1

Singles

Mahendra Phagami (GB) beat Jason Leap (USA) 2&1

David Ward (GB) beat John McAfee (USA) 6&5

Ian Bishop (GB) beat Casey O'Brien (USA) 3&2

Steve Morris (GB) beat Joseph Murphy (USA) by two holes

Jack Smith (GB) halved with John Bircher (USA)

Sam Stoddart (GB) beat Kenneth Mitchell (USA) 3&2

Greig Phillips (GB) lost to Denis Oliverio (USA) 5&4

Gregg Stevenson (GB) beat Chris Bowers (USA) 2&1

David Onions (GB) beat Ramon Padilla (USA) by two holes

Paul Swain (GB) beat Joshua Peyton (USA) 5&3

Jason Evans (GB) beat Steve Ogletree (USA) by one hole

Matthew Turnbull (GB) beat Charlie Linville (USA) 4&3

BACK ON COURSE

Golfing showpiece helps wounded personnel find the road to recovery

THE lush surroundings of Royal Lytham and St Annes proved to be a happy hunting ground for the Services' injured golfers as they retained the **Simpson Cup** with an emphatic win over their American rivals.

Having finished the four balls competition all square the hosts hit top form in the singles matches, where they secured an impressive ten-and-a-half points out of 12 to claim the trophy.

Capt Mahendra Phagami (1 RGR) started the victory charge by defeating debutant Jason Leap in the opening game and the success continued in the following three ties.

The visitors looked set to claim their first point of the day courtesy of Vietnam veteran John Bircher but Royal Marine Jack Smith spectacularly fought back from two holes down with just two to play to halve the match.

Denis Oliverio recorded the only American victory of the afternoon as he triumphed over Greig Phillips of the Royal Air Force Regiment.

But the success was short-lived as the bottom five matches all went in the home side's favour. SSgt Paul Swain (9/12 L, pictured left) had the privilege of sinking the winning putt, just as he had done 12 months earlier at TPC Sawgrass.

"Last year I didn't know it was down to my match, but this time I had an inkling because everyone was gathering around the green," the soldier said.

"I had a long putt on the 15th, lagged it up to four feet and managed to keep my cool and hole it. It's a great feeling.

"I got the winning point but that's irrelevant, it was a real team effort."

Swain is a left arm amputee who was injured in a bomb blast while on a patrol in Afghanistan. He played golf as a teenager and is now making the most of his return to the sport.

"I was introduced to the On Course Foundation six months after being injured and I have not looked back," the Serviceman told *SoldierSport*.

"I was a bit of a recluse and I lost some confidence. But with this I am competing again and I'm also back with the lads, the social aspect plays a big part.

"I had developed a good swing as a youngster so the muscle memory was there but it took me three to six months to get the control and distance.

"Over the last year I have really improved and I hope to get my handicap down. The aim is to get into single figures."

Another player to revel in the competitive sporting environment was Jason Evans (pictured right), a former sergeant in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

The 53-year-old was injured in a car crash on the way home from his honeymoon and had his right leg amputated after spending seven years in a wheelchair.

"I got a call from the On Course Foundation about a golfing event in Portugal," he recalled.

"I didn't really play the sport

but I went and had a go. The camaraderie was great and I absolutely loved it.

"I came back and joined my local club and over the last three years I've really got involved.

"It has totally changed things. I was in a wheelchair and I put on a lot of weight. But I started walking the course to build my fitness and four weeks ago I covered the full 18 holes for the first time.

"It has been fantastic. We receive great coaching but having that Forces camaraderie again was very important."

Evans downed Steve Ogletree in the singles competition after his opening day four balls match ended in disappointment.

"We were two up with four holes to play but lost it on the 18th so I was really up for the singles," he said.

"The whole team was really focused but the Americans played well.

"I often say this has changed my life. It has given me a focus as I found being at home doing nothing tough.

"I always come back from the course a lot happier than when I went, so things have changed for the better.

"I cannot thank the foundation enough." ■



ON COURSE FOUNDATION

THE On Course Foundation was launched in 2010 to introduce injured current and ex-Servicemen (and women) to the sport of golf.

As well as teaching them the skills needed for success on the greens the organisation offers work experience placements and full-time employment in the industry.

"It has gone very well," said founder John Simpson (pictured). "We have 235 members, with ten newcomers joining each month.

"We have offered work experience to 25 people and eight have got jobs.

"The majority of guys here had not played before joining the foundation.

"They can go on the course and compete with anybody so the confidence



and self-esteem they gain is enormous."

Simpson, who suffered with polio as a child and only has one fully functioning leg, has enjoyed a long career in the sport and got involved with the military community after being invited to give a talk at Headley Court.

The Simpson Cup was launched last year to raise awareness and money for the foundation.

"They can compete on a level playing field," he said. "Those who turned up and tried it for the first time absolutely loved it.

"I smashed my leg up but golf has been very good to me.

I worked with IMG for 20 years managing the likes of Greg Norman and Nick Faldo and I'm still in the business now." For more information visit www.oncoursefoundation.com



● Steve Morris takes to the tee

GATECRASHERS

Paddle stars sink their rivals on Welsh waters

Inter-Services Canoeing

Slalom	White Water
Army 345	RAF 170
RAF 220	Army 164
Navy 180	Navy 120

A RMY paddlers continued their dominance on the water with a comprehensive victory at the **Inter-Services Canoe Slalom Championships**.

Maj Alex Burt (AGC [ETS]) was the leading light as he claimed back-to-back victories in the K1 and C1 categories before teaming with Sgt Ben Osman (AGC [RMP, pictured right]) to take the C2 title.

His achievements on the River Teifi, in south west Wales, helped the team to a commanding total of 345 points that dwarfed the efforts of the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy.

The winning margin reflected the current strength of the sport within the Service, which boasts a core of experienced athletes along with a flourishing development scene.

"The slalom competition was a great success and delivered a comfortable win for the team," said Burt, who is also secretary of the Army Canoe Union.

"We are dominating across the board because of our numbers and strength in depth, while the other Services are struggling a little.

"As Afghanistan slows down guys will have more time to get involved. Canoe slalom takes them out of their comfort zones and is a bridge between adventurous training and sport. It stretches them but there is a competitive element as well."

After claiming the slalom title the soldiers suffered a narrow loss to the RAF in the white water discipline despite the best efforts of Burt and Spr Lewis Bird (RE).

While the Welsh waters in Llandysul formed the backdrop for a strong Inter-Services campaign they were also the setting for a successful training camp for

the Army's emerging talent.

"These guys benefit from being around the more experienced paddlers," Burt explained. "The good thing about this place is the fact it is totally self-contained.

"The water is flowing all the time and that helps the newcomers as they do not have to worry about the time constraints of a man-made facility."

This year's event also saw a return to action for Sgt Andrew Poole (R Signals).

The NCO had been a firm fixture in the squad but walked away from the sport in 2003. "I slipped off the radar," he said. "I was in the wrong place at the wrong time and got sent away a lot through work.

"After a while you get rusty but it is slowly coming back to me. Frustration plays a part as you think about the past and what you used to do, so you have to be in the here and now.

"I'm already looking forward to next year. There is a good range of capabilities within the Army and there is tough competition for places on the team."

As Poole (pictured below) reacquainted himself with the boat Maj Neil Cresswell (Mercian) continued a long association with canoeing that began nearly three decades ago.

The officer first picked up a paddle as a 16-year-old in training and has been hooked ever since.

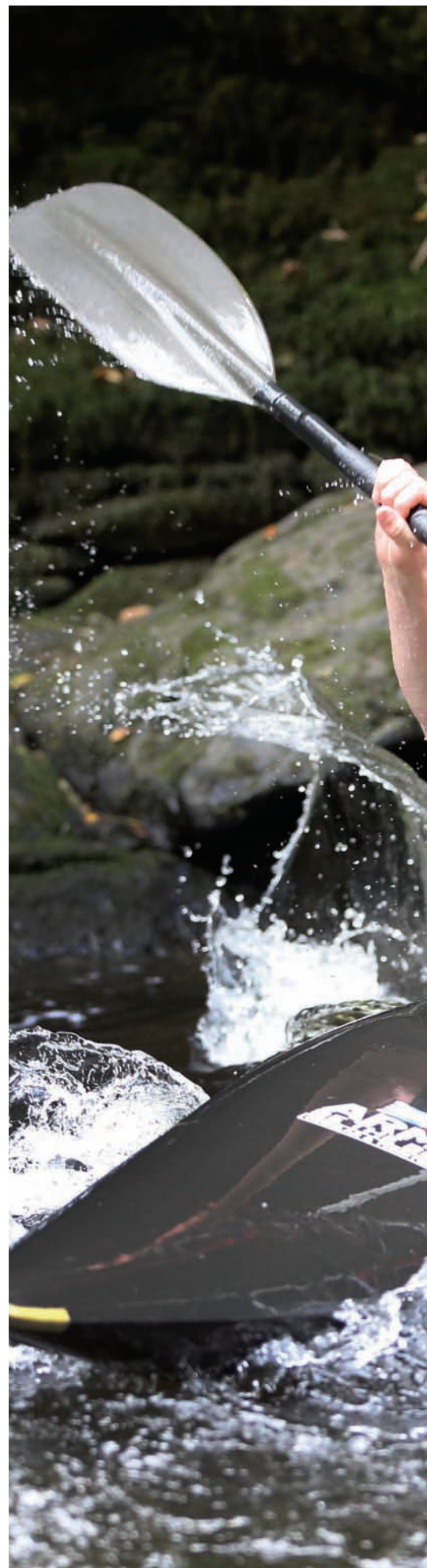
With the campaign in Helmand province drawing to a close he believes more people will be taking to the water and said the discipline offers qualities that will benefit wider Service life.

"This event is about team building and it promotes leadership in ways you cannot normally get outside of a job," he added.

"I really enjoy the competition and there is a good social side to it as well.

"We have a lot of young talent coming through and hopefully we will continue to invest in that. At the Army championships the emphasis is all about getting novice paddlers into different boats."

For details on how to get involved email alexander.burt238@mod.uk ■





THE Army squad can expect a further boost to its numbers thanks to the exploits of personnel from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

Maj Tony Hellier (pictured) introduced troops to the sport on his return from staff college and it has been met with a superb response.

"Our initial focus was on canoe polo," he said. "We had a crash course and went to the Army championships in 2012 and won. We did the same again this year.

"Polo is perfect as it teaches the skills needed for the white water disciplines. It is a great sport and having a background in events like basketball and volleyball really helps."

A number of soldiers enjoyed their first experience of slalom in Llandysul and Hellier hopes the success will continue.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to bring new guys on," he added. "We can introduce them to the C1 and C2 boats and build towards gaining instructor qualifications.

"We need corporals and sergeants to train as mentors and then we can push guys towards the Army team and the Inter-Services."

Newcomer Rfn Sushil Mishra started canoeing on joining the military and after being part of the polo team he was sampling only his second taste of white water action.

"We have just come back from Brunei. We couldn't train on rivers so we practised in the swimming pool," he explained.

"It is very different but I'm enjoying the challenge, it's all about strength and technique. We've had three days of training and I've had a great time."

Fellow novice Rfn Hamanta Rai added: "It has been quite difficult but I have enjoyed it a lot.

"It's about having fun and learning new skills. We want to grow the 2 RGR club, increase our members and bring teams to Army competitions."

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SHOW OF STRENGTH

THE Army's strongmen continued the campaign to boost the profile of their sport with a keenly fought Armed Forces competition at Azimghur Barracks in Colerne.

A host of novice athletes joined an experienced field for a series of punishing disciplines that included the dead lift, duck walk, static hold, atlas stones and an overhead medley.

The contest was one of a number of events organised by SSgt Dan Wall and SSgt Si Cooper (both REME) in recent months and the duo are now hoping strongman will receive full sporting status within the Service.

"It all started a few years ago in Germany, when we staged a couple of competitions," Wall told *SoldierSport*. "But when we left it went quiet.

"So we decided to get it up and running again and a lot of people have been getting involved.

"We are now looking to run four or five contests a year leading into an Armed Forces qualifier for Britain's Natural Strongest Man."

The action at Colerne saw 17 newcomers sample the thrill of competition for the first time, with two female athletes also included.

Sgt Shaun Arling (R Anglian) triumphed in the open category and Sgt Dave Pennington (QRL, pictured) won the novice title.

"There are a lot of guys out there who are lifting big weights in the gym so they should come and try this," Wall added.

"They may be a little apprehensive to begin with but once they start to compete they will have a good time.

"It is all about getting them down in the first instance, those who have done previous events are coming again.

"Soldiers are doing weights in every gym on every base but they have no real end goals. This offers them something to train for."

As well as pushing for full backing from the Army Sports Control Board the organisers are hoping to establish a thriving scene at corps level.

Competitions follow a standard formula with a total of 12 disciplines

to select from.

"We aim to mirror the strongman events on television," Wall explained.

"Some of our more experienced guys have been doing

this for a long time on the civvy circuit. When they heard about a Forces competition they jumped on-board.

"They are here to pass on their knowledge so the young lads coming through know where they need to be."

Maj Giles Powell (QDG), winner of the intermediate class, helped organise some of the early meetings in Germany and is delighted to see the success continuing on home soil.

"This is our fourth competition now and it is really starting to take off," he said. "We are getting more and more people involved and the more novices we see the better.

"The standard is definitely growing and the weights are getting a lot heavier for the bigger guys."

Anyone interested in taking part in future strongman competitions should contact SSgt Wall on 94660 5452 or email daniel.wall109@mod.uk ■

"THE WEIGHTS ARE GETTING A LOT HEAVIER FOR THE BIGGER GUYS"





Winning start: The new-look Army football squad enjoyed a highly successful trials week with back-to-back victories against Sussex and Aldershot

Young guns prove their worth

Army Football Trials Week

Army 3 – Aldershot Town 1

ARAFT of new footballing talent took to the pitch for the Army in a highly successful trials week that culminated in a 3-1 victory over a youthful Aldershot Town side.

A brace from Sig Luke Noble (R Signals) and a header from LCpl Gav Mee (Int Corps) secured the win for the hosts, who were rarely troubled on what proved to be a comfortable afternoon.

The result came on the back of a 2-0 triumph against Sussex in a rearranged fixture from last season, the outcome of which saw the Reds belatedly crowned Southern Counties Cup champions.

Coach Capt Joe Collins (R Signals) was delighted with the performance in both matches and believes his new-look squad

is well equipped for the challenges ahead.

"It was a good game with Sussex and they are a strong team," he told *SoldierSport*. "We had six trialists involved and they did really well.

"Young guys like LCpl Jack Smith and Cfn Matt Evans (both REME) came in and did a great job. It was really positive for us to look at these lads against quality opposition and they fitted in superbly.

"The Aldershot match allowed us to take on a side that likes to keep possession. It was a good display and the players gained a lot from it."

After a quiet opening Mee set the Army on their way as he met a free kick from the right and looped a header beyond the grasp of goalkeeper Ryan Russell.

Aldershot came close to an equaliser when a Joe Rattley strike clipped the crossbar before Noble hit the post from a shot just inside the area.

The Reds doubled their lead in the second half when substitute LCpl Dexter Panzavecchia (RG) played in Noble for a simple tap-in and the striker added a third from the spot after he was hauled down in the area. Bobby Webbe reduced the arrears with a late penalty.

Collins is adopting a "one team" concept this season with younger players lining up alongside the more established performers from recent years.

"We are working on a new system but we also want to play football," he explained. "Some of these lads have not had one-on-one coaching before so they are still learning. It is a good environment and we have the opportunity to educate them and build their knowledge.

"We need to emphasise that playing for the Army is the pinnacle. This is all about developing these guys so we can win the Inter-Services." ■

Prison staff given tough sentence

A BRACE from SSgt Glenn Davidson (AGC (RMP)) was the highlight of the Army's 6-1 drubbing of the Prison Service in Aldershot.

The Reds' skipper scored in each half of a distinctly one-sided encounter as the home side maintained their winning start to the season.

Cpl Kev Cameron (R Signals) began the rout in the fifth minute when he was allowed time and space to fire into the bottom corner.

The Army doubled their lead when Sig Sam Agar (R Signals) picked out Sgt Keith Emmerson (RAPTC), who produced a neat finish at the near post.

A third swiftly followed as Davidson

ran on to a lofted pass and lifted the ball over the keeper before a surging run and cross from Sig Luke Noble (R Signals) forced an own goal.

Agar (pictured) got his reward for another superb display on the stroke of half-time as he raced clear of the defence and walked the ball into the net after his initial shot was saved.

The Prison Service grabbed a consolation at the start of the second period but the fightback failed to gather momentum.

Davidson completed the scoring when he burst through the back line and calmly dinked the ball over the onrushing goalkeeper.





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Driving force: Skipper WO2 Sharon Stones (REME) fires the Army forward during their showdown with the Australian Defence Force in Portsmouth

Tourists test Service stars

Australian Defence Force UK Tour

Army women 2 – Australia 0

Army men 2 – Australia 4

THE Army's hockey players endured an afternoon of mixed fortunes as they locked horns with touring teams from the Australian Defence Force in Portsmouth.

Goals from Capt Lucy Butler (RLC) and Maj Nic George (R Signals) steered the women to a comfortable 2-0 win but the men slipped to a 4-2 defeat, despite taking an early lead through Capt Josh Tester (RLC, pictured below).

Both sides were in action for the first time this season and with Inter-Services glory slipping from their grasp last year the games proved to be a useful test ahead of the challenges to come.

The women dominated their match from the outset and could have easily added to their tally of two goals.

Butler opened the scoring in the 28th minute with a simple tap-in following good play from Cpl Kelly Smith (RAMC) but the Reds had to wait until midway through the second half to double their advantage.

George was allowed time and space inside the area and she found the back of the net – despite the best efforts of the visiting goalkeeper.

Speaking at full-time skipper WO2 Sharon Stones (REME) said the Australians proved to be tough opponents and she was delighted with the result.

"The man of the match award went to their keeper and that shows she kept the score down," the senior NCO said.

"They were a physical and competitive

team but we rose to the challenge.

"Capt Cheryl Valentine (RAMC) and 2nd Lt Gemma Darrington (RLC) secured the midfield area and that eased the tempo of the game.

"We had a couple of goals disallowed and there were a few short corners we didn't make the most of – hopefully we can capitalise on those in the future."

The Army looked the better side in the early exchanges of the men's clash and deservedly took the lead when Tester smashed the ball into the bottom corner following a strong run down the left.

But the tourists hit back just moments later as Phil Dumpelton emphatically converted from a short corner.

Further strikes from Michael Anderson,

Ryan Grocott and Nick Hill followed after the break before Tester reduced the arrears late on.

"It was not the result we were hoping for but this is the first time we have got together this season," said skipper Sgt Dan Cattermole (R Signals).

"We had a couple of guys back from operations and some others stepped up from the under-23s.

"I thought we played well in the first half but in the second period we made a few errors and that let them in. Once they got ahead it was hard to fight our way back into the game.

"The Australians were a strong and powerful side so it was a good test for us so early in the campaign." ■





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ON THE GLORY TRAIL

Amputee eyes medal success after reaching Commonwealth standard



BENCH press star Micky Yule has set his sights on medal glory at next year's Commonwealth Games as his sporting comeback continues to go from strength to strength.

The double amputee completed his discharge from the Army on October 30 and is now in full-time training for the showpiece event in his home country of Scotland.

Yule lost both lower legs when he was caught in a bomb blast on Op Herrick 12 and the devastating setback brought a promising career in powerlifting to a crashing halt.

But the 34-year-old, a former staff sergeant in the Royal Engineers, returned to action at the Army Championships last year and a trial with the Team GB Paralympic set-up followed.

He has since competed at international events in Dubai, Russia and Malaysia and set a new national record at the British Championships in June.

"I am now funded by UK Sport and have support in place up to the Rio Olympics in 2016," Yule told *SoldierSport* during a break in training.

"I hit the qualifying standard for the Commonwealths really early and that has taken the pressure off.

"My form is good, I'm injury free and I'm working with some of the best coaches in the country.

"As long as I keep banging out the numbers I'm hoping the dream of a medal will come true."

The Paralympic disciplines will run alongside the main programme at the Commonwealth Games and Yule already has a target weight in mind for the competition.

"I need to be pushing 190 to 195 kilogrammes, that is where the medals will be decided," he explained.

"My goal for Rio is to lift 200 kilogrammes. It might be a little out there but I have three years to reach it.

"That is the glory weight. It will be three times my bodyweight and if I lift that I will have a sniff of a medal."

The ex-Serviceman has been backed by the military community in his pursuit of sporting excellence, with ABF The Soldiers' Charity offering a grant that covered the cost of the specialist equipment needed to create a home gym.

Help for Heroes have also allowed Yule and his Team GB colleagues to train at their state-of-the-art facilities at Tedworth House, in Wiltshire.

"I've converted my garage into a gym and everything is now set up," he added. "When I was injured I thought it would be impossible to take part again.

"I have dropped my bodyweight but have put 20 kilogrammes on my personal best lift. That is through hard work and having coaches to support me.

"I do a lot of training on my own. It is two hours in the morning and an hour-and-a-half in the afternoon – between then I'm eating and resting. It is a boring life but these are the sacrifices I have to make to get to where I want to go." ■

EX-SOLDIER'S SPORTING CAREER IN NUMBERS

40

THE NUMBER OF OPERATIONS UNDERGONE BY MICKY YULE SINCE HE WAS INJURED IN A BOMB BLAST ON HERRICK 12

183

THE PERSONAL BEST BENCH PRESS, IN KILOGRAMMES, HIT BY THE FORMER SAPPER AT THIS YEAR'S BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

2

THE DATE IN AUGUST 2014 WHEN THE MUSCLEMAN COMPETES FOR SCOTLAND AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

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SPORT SHORTS



■ **SERVICE** motorcyclists descended on the Anglesey Race Circuit for the inaugural British Army track day.

More than 70 current and ex-soldiers attended the sessions, which saw novice, intermediate and advanced riders put through their paces on a challenging course.

"The day was such a success that we now intend to make it an annual event," said organiser WO2 Glyn Hannah (29 EOD & Search Gp).

"It is highly advised that all Forces personnel should look to conduct a track day at the earliest opportunity in their biking lives."

The day also raised £1,000 for BLESMA in a charity auction.

Details of next year's event can be found on the British Army Track Day 2014 page on Facebook. For more information contact WO2 Hannah on military 94659 5534.

■ **THE** second British Army Tae Kwon Do Invitational Competition will be held at the Combat Sports Centre in Aldershot from 0900 on November 30.

For more information on the event email HCR-TKD@mod.uk



■ **THE** Army triathlon squad triumphed against some of the best athletes in the country to win four medals at the National Club Relays.

A bronze in the women's event set the soldiers on their way before the veteran teams secured silver medals in the over 40s and over 50s events.

But the crowning glory came in the men's race, where the Reds secured gold in a highly competitive field.

"No other club took away as many honours as the Service," said Maj Lloyd Keenan (RAMC), secretary of the Army Triathlon Association.



Picture: SAC Dek Traylor

On piste: Fus Andy Barlow (RRF) gets some early practice at the Hemel Hempstead Snow Centre

Back in the fast lane

THE Combined Services Disabled Ski Team has returned to action following a successful programme of summer training.

As well as reselecting a host of long-serving members the squad has welcomed several new faces who will be tested by a gruelling winter of practice and racing.

Camps have already been planned in America, Canada and Austria ahead of the Army events in January, when athletes will take on their able-bodied colleagues. The Inter-Services follow in February prior to a busy calendar of international competition.

One of the team's leading lights is Mick Brennan, a former sergeant in the Royal Signals who is targeting a place in

the British squad for the Paralympics in Russia next year.

He won a bronze medal in the giant slalom at last season's Alpine World Cup but said there is no room for complacency in his quest for selection.

"The package from the team in terms of support, equipment and coaching advice has been fantastic," Brennan added.

"I am now competing against the best athletes in the world and winning medals but I am determined to secure my seat on the plane to Sochi and compete at the next Paralympics."

The Services team is open to any member of the Armed Forces with a permanent disability, as well as veterans who have left the military. For more details visit www.csdst.co.uk ■



ARMY skydivers Cpl Alex Dand (18 Sig Regt) and Maj Anna Hicks (RAMC) had the honour of representing Great Britain at the Parachuting World Cup in Bosnia.

Dand was part of the two-man freestyle team that performed a variety of manoeuvres over the course of seven jumps, all of which were assessed on their artistic merit and technical difficulty.

The 26-year-old, who has amassed 700 jumps and has rapidly risen to world level, finished sixth in a field that included some very experienced competitors.

Hicks was included in the four-way formation team (pictured) that secured a bronze medal behind the full-time French and American squads.

The discipline sees skydivers compete over ten jumps, during which they have to complete a series of pre-determined formations as many times as possible.

Final word

We asked Service personnel training at Cenzub about their experiences operating alongside their French counterparts in an urban environment



Cpl Shaun Cole (Mercian)

As a medic the conventional side of things is totally different to how we've worked in Afghanistan. On Op Herrick I would be forward with the multiple but an environment like this would see me with the sergeant major at the back. This is what we did in basic training so it's returning to old skills and getting us refocused.

Pte Sam Buchanan (Mercian)

This exercise will set us up quite well for conventional warfare because we have been focused on Afghanistan up to now, doing mission-specific training. It has been hard work getting into fighting in a built-up area but it's obviously very valid and watching demonstrations from the French and working with their tactics has been useful.



LCpl James Findlow (Mercian)

I have really enjoyed working with the French and using their brilliant facilities. We haven't long been back from tour so it's a bit difficult to return to the conventional style of warfare but we've got progressively better. No doubt we'll be operating with the French in future so training like this makes sense. It would be good to set up something like this in the UK as they really know what they're doing in an urban environment.



Pte Daniel Hellings (Mercian)

I think it's good to work with other forces and boost the camaraderie between us by swapping kit and socialising. With the reduced number of soldiers in the UK we will need to train with other countries in order to be effective across the world and it's really enjoyable operating with foreign nations.



Pte Pete Bullock (Mercian)

It is a good idea to train with foreign countries as we can learn new skills and they can observe the way we do things. It definitely makes sense to train with people before we fight alongside them, which could easily happen in the future.



LCpl Chris Ashley (Mercian)

The French drills are pretty slick and we can learn from other troops just by watching them, it doesn't matter about any language differences. A lot of money and effort has gone into the Cenzub facility and it's brilliant – we could certainly do with something like this at home. As a result of this type of training the UK and France will become a powerful joint force.

LCpl Raul Costa (Mercian)

Conventional warfare will always be there and this is by far the best place we've visited for training. You can get used to working in the UK and this is something completely different with an amazing set-up. It also gets the lads out together. The French guys are pretty good and it has been a pleasure working with them. I would definitely be happy to fight side by side on operations.



LBdr Andrew Raisbeck (RA)

As a member of the fire support team working on urban operations is a lot different to Afghanistan. Training in France is good in order to see how and when fire is called for. I think our role will be expanded and get stronger as part of Army 2020 because of the way it's been relied on in recent times so it's great that we're exercising like this with the Infantry.



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