

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



SPINE LINE
COMPETITION
LIDA, SLIM,
KAWABE, PERCIVAL

GAME ON - ARMY
SPORT KICKS OFF

STAMPING OUT
MENTAL HEALTH
STIGMA

CAPT SIR TOM
MOORE: 'IT'S
IMPORTANT TO
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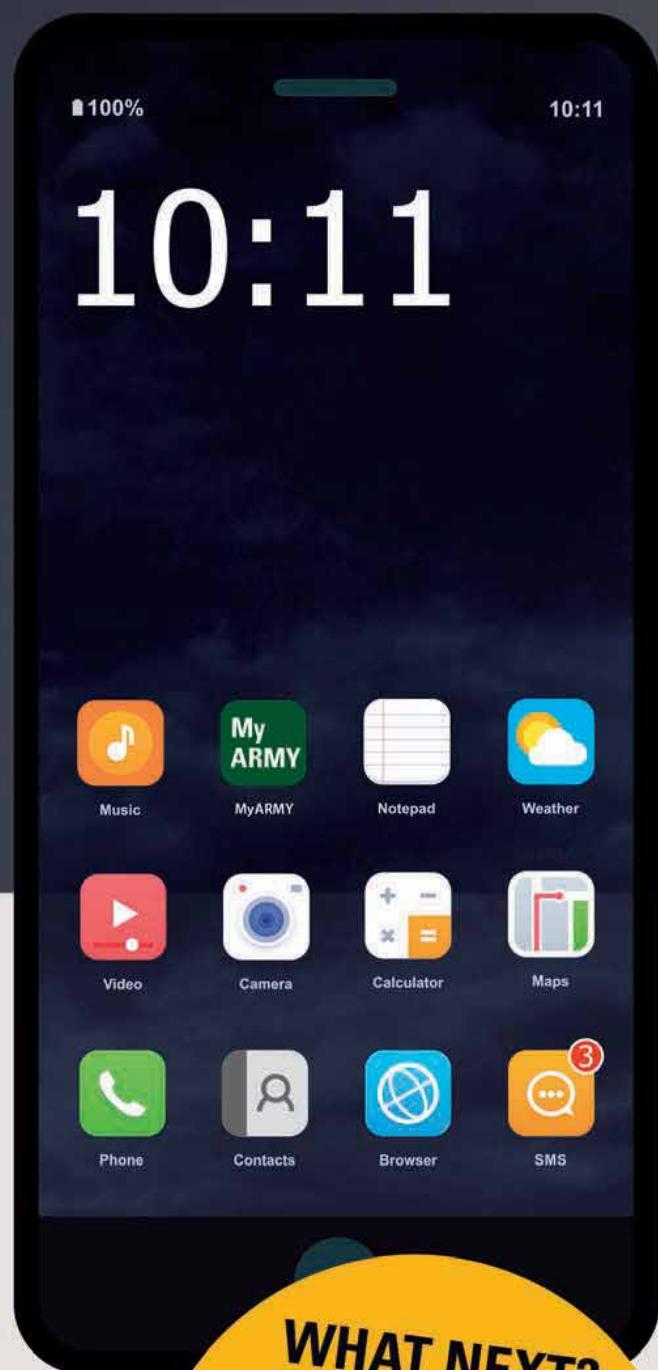
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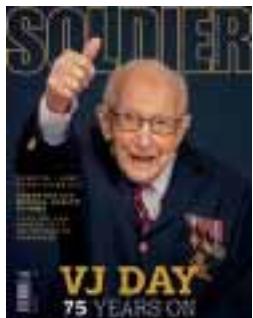
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Cover picture: Cpl Robert Weidman, RLC

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out there; the
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Empire of the sun – p39

The first surrender of the Japanese in the field; Maj Wako Lisanori relinquishes his sword to two Gurkha officers
Picture: Soldier archive



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Pictures: Shigeo Hayashi,
courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial



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“
We are
all about
making sure
there are
opportunities
”

The time for heroes



AS WE compiled the content for this issue, we were humbled to be able to spend some time talking with a national hero in the shape of Capt Sir Tom Moore.

The celebrated centenarian agreed to speak with us about his experiences of fighting with the 14th Army in the Far East for our article (page 33) marking 75 years since victory over Japan and the end of the Second World War.

His sobering insight into that long and gruelling campaign provides a fitting finale to a run of six issues we have published this year marking our own 75th anniversary.

We hope you've enjoyed the excerpts from those first few months of the magazine's life back in 1945, many of which provide a remarkable record of the UK Forces' valiant struggle to defeat the enemy and end the most destructive conflict ever known.

Sir Tom's generation was full of heroes and the British Army has produced plenty since, and will do so in the future as personnel continue to be called upon to deploy to various theatres around the world.

Hopefully, this magazine will be around for another 75 years to see and record it all as it unfolds.

Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

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► Printed copies

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Picture: Cpl Anil Gurung, RLC



Lending NHS a leadership hand

Army mentors integrate with health service staff to provide support during pandemic

SERVICE personnel have been passing on their experience to NHS England counterparts after health service bosses put out a rallying call for military mentors.

Officers at all levels, plus regimental sergeant majors, stepped forward to help medical professionals in command roles as the Covid-19 crisis continued.

Paired with workers of an equivalent rank, they have been holding one-to-one sessions online to talk through any issues, with weekly virtual meetings lasting 90 minutes.

Lt Col Jo Munce (RLC) – who organised the joint programme for the General Staff Centre – said health service chiefs had asked the Army to assist a group of their employees facing unprecedented leadership challenges.

More than 80 troops signed up and are now giving time to the project.

"We have ranks represented from warrant officers to lieutenant generals," said Lt Col Munce.

"All have recent operational experience or managed teams in high stress situations.

"Those being mentored range from clinicians to care home managers, logisticians and people distributing personal protective equipment."

All NHS England staff on the initiative were required to demonstrate they had been adversely affected by the Covid-19 crisis, the officer pointed out.

As well as benefiting the health service employees, the project proved an invaluable experience for the Army personnel, she continued.

Half of those involved had not mentored anyone before – and taking on the new role was a significant personal development opportunity.

They had access to resources on the Defence Learning Environment to help them and were backed up with online support sessions.

The mentors had given "overwhelmingly positive" feedback, said Lt Col Munce, adding that the troops who had not been pressed into action to help on the front line of Op Rescript had thrived in the role.

"They have seen they can make a difference with mentoring and have found it extremely rewarding to impart knowledge to NHS colleagues," the officer said.

"Leadership skills such as mission analysis are something we learn and make use of all the time, including on deployment to operations."

Lt Col Munce also said that the initiative would be reviewed shortly.

"Clearly a great deal depends on what happens with the Covid-19 situation," she concluded.

"However, a lot of work is ongoing with contingency plans – such as for second spikes in the virus – so we remain flexible."

SOLDIER

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Picture: Bdr Murray Kerr, RA

1. CAYMAN ISLANDS

PIONEERING PERSONNEL PASS OUT

OFFICER cadets from the newly formed Cayman Islands Regiment have graduated from the short commissioning course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

The five Service personnel were set to complete the gruelling eight-week package as this issue went to press, becoming the first to commission into the home defence force of the British Overseas Territory.

Commanded by former British officer Simon Watson (ex-RDG), the Reserve formation's primary role is to provide security, humanitarian aid and disaster relief to Cayman and the wider Caribbean, and is due to become operational this year following delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite describing the training as

physically and mentally demanding, policeman Gabe Rabess (pictured above, right) told the *Cayman Compass*: "When an opportunity came up, I obviously took it with open arms, and I am very proud and honoured to be part of it."

Other members of the cohort included brother and sister Theodore Jr and Shanice Kelly – who both served in the island's Cadet Corps – aeronautical engineer Jonassi Swaby and teacher Halston Farley.

They completed three weeks of initial training with the Royal Bermuda Regiment before attending RMAS and will serve full-time for a year at their new unit, before reverting back to their previous careers and part-time military roles.

2. KENYA

PACKAGES STILL ON PAUSE



Picture: Graeme Main, Soldier

STAFF at British Army Training Unit Kenya (Batuk) remain optimistic that battlegroup exercises can resume in early 2021 – with unit and small group activity starting even sooner, should the Covid-19 pandemic allow.

The move would represent a return to some kind of normality for personnel based in the country, whose lives have been severely impacted by the crisis. With initial predictions of the virus' spread proving severe, the Batuk team set about reducing its footprint and mothballing activities and equipment.

Staff numbers were significantly decreased and dependants were evacuated back to the UK and temporary accommodation at Larkhill. But families could only travel with two suitcases, so were reliant on welcoming teams sourcing items such as basic cooking materials, while WiFi access was required for home schooling.

Back in Kenya, the large vehicle fleet has been overhauled in preparation for the next battlegroup and the training team have been refining exercise templates to offer greater variety in future programmes. Community engagement initiatives have also continued, with the provision of 5,000-litre water tanks to remote locations.



“
We knew
we were the
Forgotten
Army
”

Capt Tom's Burma
memories – page 33

3. FRANCE



4. LATVIA



5. MALI



2. KENYA



3. FRANCE

SADDLE SENSATION

AN EX-SOLDIER has pedalled up a healthy sum for charity after following in the tyre tracks of a relative who cycled 1,100 miles across France to escape life as a PoW.

Giles Nevill marked the 80th anniversary of the extraordinary Second World War feat by great-uncle Brig Ron Macintosh-Walker (pictured) with his own bike trip from Lille to Marseilles.

Brig Macintosh-Walker – who served with the Seaforth Highlanders and was already a triple Military Cross winner from the First World War –



was taken prisoner in 1940 following the fall of France.

But he managed to cross into neutral Spain and rejoined the Allied effort after his epic journey.

Nevill's ride took him to St Valery, where his great-uncle was captured, and Baron-sur-Odon, the location at which he was tragically killed in fighting following D-Day.

The veteran – who served with the Queen's Own Highlanders in Bosnia and Northern Ireland – said: "He lived an incredible life and this journey has been a great privilege for me."

Funds raised:
£26,000
for Veterans with Dogs



4. LATVIA

'READINESS MAINTAINED'

THE British-led Nato enhanced forward presence battlegroup in Estonia deployed to neighbouring Latvia to rehearse complex live firing.

Troops from The Queen's Royal Hussars and 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, together with their Danish counterparts – some 600 personnel in total – took to Adazi Ranges to hone their interoperability.

Col Paul Clayton, who heads up the UK contingents in both Estonia and Poland, said it was vital to show that the alliance would not be "thrown off balance" by the coronavirus pandemic.

"We're on the front foot and able to fight with our allies and partners here in the Baltic states," he went on.

"I don't think Covid has made any difference to our posture here. We've maintained our state of alertness and our readiness throughout."

He added that "pragmatic" safety measures at the battlegroup's headquarters in Tapa had ensured the camp had remained free of the virus, with minimal disruption to core business.



Brief the team now:



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5. MALI

CAR SHARE FOR ALLIES

ESTONIAN forces are to receive a welcome boost with the loan of a potent British armoured vehicle on operations in Africa.

The Baltic state's troops are taking delivery of four Jackals from the MoD for their deployment to Mali – giving them a speedy and agile asset in the fight against Islamic extremist in the region.

Estonian drivers also completed a three-week package at Robertson Barracks in Norfolk.

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FUS SAM BROWNRIDGE

1ST BATTALION,
THE ROYAL REGIMENT
OF FUSILIERS
DIED JULY 5 – ESTONIA

THE life of a "fiercely loyal" young soldier has been warmly remembered by friends and colleagues following his death during his deployment on Operation Cabrit.

The MoD confirmed that Fus Sam Brownridge of 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers died of a non-battle injury while serving in the Baltics.

Described as a selfless, hardworking and determined individual, the father-of-one had made a huge contribution to the mortar platoon in which he had served with distinction.

Fus Brownridge, from Cannock in Staffordshire, enlisted in the British Army in January 2017 and joined his regiment after passing out of the Infantry Training Centre Catterick.

Finding a natural home on mortars, he was remembered for his dry sense of humour and ability to keep spirits high during the most testing conditions.

Having proved himself on exercise in Canada and later completing the Bulldog armoured fighting vehicle driver's course, he had been resolutely preparing to compete for the Army enduro motorcycle racing team in his spare time.

Commanding officer of the 1st Fusiliers Battlegroup, Lt Col Christopher Head, said: "He was everything you would want in a young infantry soldier."

APACHES ARE STAYING PUT

THE Army executive committee has confirmed there will be no change to the current basing of Apache attack helicopters, ending years of uncertainty for personnel and their families.

As a result, 7 Regiment, Army Air Corps will stay at Middle Wallop while 3 and 4 Regiments, Army Air Corps and 7 (Aviation Support) Battalion, REME will remain at Wattisham Flying Station.



Picture: Graeme Main

“This reflects the work of our troops”

Overdue pay rise arrives

ARD working soldiers will soon have extra cash in their wallets after the government announced an inflation-busting salary boost for all troops up to the rank of brigadier.

The MoD confirmed that personnel would receive a two per cent pay increase – which will be backdated to April 1 and in wage packets at the end of September.

It means an infantry lance corporal with four years of service will be £537 better off per year.

Although the X-factor will remain the same, compensatory allowances are also being bolstered by two per cent.

And new longer separation payments – specifically for those at high readiness – are being considered.

While costs in all three bands of family and single living accommodation are rising, the increase is below one per cent.

Scoff prices are also remaining unchanged for the time being – £5.45 covers the daily food charge although this will be reviewed in September.

Maj Ian Thomas (AGC (RMP)), from the Army remuneration policy team,

confirmed that the package – which follows recommendations by the Armed Forces pay review body – had originally been due in April this year but was delayed.

He added: "The increase is good news – a pay rise above inflation.

"At a time when there has been quite a strain on public finances, this reflects the work and responsibilities of our troops over the last 12 months."

Maj Thomas pointed out that Reservist pay would increase proportionally – they would also see a two per cent hike in training bounties.

And recruitment and retention payments – with the exception of diving and parachute instructors – will go up in line with the basic pay rise.

Both exemptions are to be fully re-examined over the next 12 months.

Meanwhile, extra cash has been put aside for specialists. Military GPs and dentists will see their trainer pay uplifted by two-and-a-half per cent.

The package will also boost the salary spines of nursing, veterinary and Military Provost Guard Service staff by two per cent.

SOLDIERS IN SCOTLAND ‘NOT OUT OF POCKET’

■ TROOPS paying higher rates of income tax set by the Scottish government will continue to receive cash from Westminster to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

The MoD confirmed that financial compensation payments introduced two years ago and reviewed annually will now be permanent for eligible troops. Payments of between £12 and £2,200 will this year be made to those earning £28,443 or more. The cap will be re-examined every 12 months.

Regular Armed Forces personnel who pay Scottish income tax are eligible for the money regardless of where in the world they are serving.



Ground view

Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Gav Paton, offers his take on Service life...

AS I write this column the world is beginning to look slightly more normal again.

It has been an unprecedented few months and while some soldiers have been out in support of the NHS, others have been working remotely. Some have had the taxing home schooling issue to contend with too.

Having spent more than a quarter of this year adjusting to a new way of life, returning troops have the upheaval of changing their lifestyle all over again.

It has been an emotional journey so it is important to understand there will be individuals who are nervous about coming back to the workplace.

There are a couple of points for commanders here – the first is that people might not be as physically robust, having not had access to full PT

during the lockdown. Also, the situation has been psychologically challenging – and looking after mental health is crucial.

There is an array of support available – you can go through the chain of command or find resources to assist you on the likes of Defence Connect.

It is worth remembering that we have performed very capably in some very testing circumstances during the coronavirus outbreak.

There have been some great innovations. We've enlisted online tools to help us keep business going. We've also found new ways for troops to continue their training.

Soldiers cracking on both remotely and in the workplace have done a tremendous job in keeping military life on track while making sure cases of Covid-19 stay low in the Service.

Let's keep it that way as we move to the next phase.

Why senior officers needs to know...

■ I AM getting out and about quite a bit more now, so if you see me wandering around your camp please introduce yourself – it's always good to chat.

My job is to understand what is going on so I can put it to the Army's most senior officers. I cannot do this unless you tell me what is good and bad about serving.

There is also a new committee I'm sitting in on made up of several brigadiers responsible for everything from housing to welfare. Telling them about these issues will get the ball rolling more quickly, so keep me informed. Senior officers want to help – but we must keep them in the know.



Family fortunes

WHEN it came to having children, my wife and I deliberately waited until we were slightly older and more established in life.

But I was stunned by how expensive having a young family was when our son arrived.

Both of us went back to work and our boy went into nursery – the childcare costs were around £1,600 per month, which was crippling at the time.

I've been asking for soldiers to be given a helping hand in this area for a little while now – so I'm pleased that the free

wraparound childcare initiative is soon to be piloted in the military.

This scheme will provide kids aged between four and 11 with free provision at breakfast and after-school clubs for up to 20 hours a week.

Regular troops and those on full time Reserve service, full commitment, are eligible.

While it is being trialled with the Royal Air Force at High Wycombe and Halton first, soldiers in Catterick will be able to try out the initiative next January.

Please let me know your thoughts.

“
It was
crippling
at the time
”

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



Q What's the first thing you did after lockdown eased?

A I had a pint and a haircut. It was like being back from ops!



Picture: Graeme Main

Leaders course gets lockdown lift

RAPID changes have been made to an Army leadership programme to ensure mission critical posts can be taken up amid coronavirus restrictions.

The nine-day commanding officers' designate course, held three times a year, has been overhauled to ensure those heading for senior posts remain well equipped for the role.

Now the first four days of the next outing in September will be conducted virtually with cohort meetings and lectures held online. Face-to-face contact will then resume in the second week.

Lt Col Erica Bridge (RA) – who oversees the package for the General Staff Centre at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst – said a rethink of training had been needed.

She added: "Given how quickly the coronavirus restrictions were upon us we had to be flexible and act quickly to ensure that future courses could still be delivered.

"There are normally 50 officers

taking part – we are increasing to 60 for the next few courses, managing the numbers within the social distancing guidelines.

"We're aiming to have them meeting in groups online at the beginning and end of each day in the first week.

"This will provide the opportunity to have discussion alongside the lectures – the course then convenes physically in the second week."

Lt Col Bridge said that needing to act differently in light of the pandemic may result in long-term alternations to course delivery.

"This has really given us the opportunity to make it more interactive and varied and to take forward what we have learnt from the Covid-19 remote working practices," she added.

"The fresh new format will allow plenty of time for both discussion and reflection."

Read more about the CO training programme in an upcoming issue.

“We've learnt from remote working”

NEW 24-HOUR BULLYING HELPLINE LAUNCHED

A HELPLINE is to be set up so Armed Forces personnel can anonymously report unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, sexual harassment or racial discrimination.

The 24-hour service, to be launched in September, will be staffed by trained advisers and qualified counsellors.

Individuals of all ranks will also be eligible for training in how to intervene, report or address unacceptable comments or actions. Updated guidance on sexual harassment will also be circulated to all defence staff. A review led by Air Chief Marshal Michael Wigston last year concluded that the UK's Armed Forces were still suffering unacceptable levels of bullying, sexism and racist behaviour.

The Army's own Speak Out helpline (0306 7704656) will be continuing as normal.

PENSION REVIEW CALL

THE public service pensions consultation has been launched and will be open until October 11, 2020.

It provides Service personnel and veterans with the opportunity to comment on how to remove the discrimination caused by the transitional rules that meant older Service Personnel remained in their legacy schemes when other, younger troops were transferred to the new scheme in 2015.

The consultation is seeking the views of those who are in scope for the remedy proposals.

They are those who were in service on or before March 31, 2012 and on or after April 1, 2015. This includes any pre-March 31, 2012 rejoinders with a qualifying break in service of less than five years, those currently serving and qualifying personnel who have left the Army since April 1, 2015.

Personnel who were originally covered by the transitional protection are also in scope.

Service personnel, veterans and their families are urged to read government communications on the subject on the gov.uk website.



Picture: Shutterstock

ACCIDENT APP ROLL OUT

THE method for reporting damage to MoD vehicles has changed.

An electronic reporting system called e-impact has gone live and replaces most of the old paperwork.

The software will be available on Modnet and can be downloaded as an app onto smartphones. This means that, if safe to do so, the report can be completed at the roadside, straight after an incident or crash.

Claim handlers, the motor transport section, chain of command and the Defence Safety Authority will have visibility of the accident and incident data for analysis and records, but it will be inadmissible in any disciplinary proceedings.

There will be a period of transition from paper reporting until September but the system is expected to be fully electronic by October. For more information search for "e-impact" on Defence Connect.



OUR ever-popular spine clues competition is back! This month, we have teamed up with Healthspan (www.healthspan.co.uk)

to offer one reader a goody bag of various supplements worth around £180.

Healthspan Elite is formulated by experts with athletes in mind and independently tested by Informed Sport to show the products are safe to use. The brand partners with sport nutritionists, who have experience working with the most successful athletes – drawing upon their knowledge to develop supplements that will positively impact the performance of professionals and amateurs alike. To be in with a chance of winning, just tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Answers – including daytime phone number – to the usual postal address or email comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by August 31.

SPINE LINE COMPETITION

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MILITARY IN THE CENSUS

THE 2021 Census will include a question on military service for the first time.

The move follows a long-running campaign by The Royal British Legion and Poppy Scotland to enable them to improve support for personnel, veterans and their families.

It is estimated that 2.4 million ex-Servicemen and women currently live in Britain but little is known about their numbers, location and needs.

"This is something we have been striving towards for many years – it will have a huge impact on personnel, veterans and their families well into the future," said Charles Byrne, Director General of The RBL.

TERMS MADE SIMPLE

THE major elements of terms of service policy have been put into one publication. *Soldier Terms of Service* has information on engagements, promotion, assignments, transfers and career opportunities. It's available now on Defence Connect.

“It brings together remarkable people”



Virtual festival points the way

OLDIERS are being invited to take centre stage in cyberspace as part of a special online celebration organised in place of the cancelled Edinburgh Festival.

A series of Army@TheVirtualFringe events are being held from August 10-30, with workshops, performances and readings for troops and wider public.

Under normal circumstances the Service would have a presence at the real-world Scottish showcase – but it fell victim to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Army arts boss Lt Col Wendy Faux (RA, pictured left) said there had been huge enthusiasm for a virtual alternative – and a line-up of some 40 events is planned.

The initiative is to be split into three weeks, covering media such as films, photography, theatre, poetry, books

and the visual arts.

As well as performances and readings, there will also be workshops and professionals offering advice to aspiring artists.

Those taking part include James Robert Moore – whose play *Posterboy*, which covers issues of gay identity in the military, had been due to premiere in Scotland.

And Oliver Yellop (above) will be performing *I am Gavrilo Princip*, about the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand – the event that sparked the start of the First World War.

Lt Col Faux said: "The Army@TheVirtualFringe brings together remarkable people from a multitude of backgrounds to share their knowledge and experience." Visit armyatthefringe.org for details.

Deploy your digits

A GIFTED artist and nurse at a medical facility that treated personnel for burns injuries in the Second World War has appealed to troops to help with her latest project.

Kirsty Chapman (right), who produces pictures of poppies with her fingerprints, already has work displayed in high-profile spaces including Westminster Abbey.

But now the health worker from the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead wants soldiers to deploy their own digits for a new, larger work of art.

They will also be invited to pen a



dedication in a book accompanying the project.

"My aim is to complete the painting and display it during remembrance season, where anybody can see it and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice," she said.

Email kirsty010282@gmail.com to get involved.



Duke of Edinburgh steps down

THE transfer of the colonel-in-chief of The Rifles from the Duke of Edinburgh to the Duchess of Cornwall has taken place.

The handover began at Windsor Castle, where four buglers sounded The Rifles Assembly to start the ceremony – the highest profile official engagement the prince has attended since his retirement event in August 2017, when he met Royal Marines at Buckingham Palace.

Assistant Colonel Commandant, Maj Gen Tom Copinger-Symes, offered the salute and thanked Prince Philip for his 67 years of support and service.

The buglers then sounded the regimental call, followed by the *No More Parades* call to mark the transfer. Proceedings then continued at

Highgrove House, where Colonel Commandant, Gen Sir Patrick Sanders, welcomed the Duchess of Cornwall as the new colonel-in-chief.

He commented: "We feel it's a bittersweet day because we're enormously proud of our association with the Duke of Edinburgh, who has been the most amazing colonel-in-chief, and we've really flourished under his tenure.

"But it's also very special to have the Duchess of Cornwall coming in because she has a long association with The Rifles."

The Duchess was appointed royal colonel of 4th Battalion, The Rifles in 2007 – a role she will continue with – and in that time she has carried out regular engagements for the unit.

“
It's a
bittersweet
day
”

CHILD SCHEME LAUNCHED

■ SERVICE families will get free childcare for kids aged between four and 11, the MoD has announced.

The scheme covers so-called "wraparound" care – which takes place before and after school hours – during term time. Royal Air Force personnel will trial the new offer from September, followed by Catterick and Plymouth-based troops in January 2021.

Details of the wider roll-out will also be published next year.



FREE FACE COVERINGS

■ THE Army is buying face coverings for every soldier.

They have arrived with 10 Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, who will be distributing them to units.

Troops about to deploy or at high readiness will be given priority.



MILITARY DOG MEMORIAL

■ A CHARITY is raising £200,000 to build the UK's first public military working dogs memorial.

Theo, a search dog who died within hours of his handler LCpl Liam Tasker (both pictured above) in Afghanistan, has been chosen to represent the Army as one of four bronze statues that will make up the monument, which will be located in North Wales.

To donate go to www.justgiving.com/militaryworkingdogmemorial

UNSOLVED MURDER APPEAL

■ A REWARD of £20,000 is being offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the murderer of Christina Menzies, 16, whose strangled body was found near RAF Gutersloh on June 13, 1993. Her father was a serving soldier. Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Adventurers wanted

THE Adventurous Training Group (Army) is seeking personnel to serve as temporary employed elsewhere staff (previously incremental staff) at various locations on detached duty.

There is a requirement for instructors, stores staff, drivers and other general duties staff. Previous AT qualifications or experience are valuable but not essential. Candidates must be physically fit – medically fully or limited deployable – and opportunities exist across the rank range from private to captain.

Applicants can attend a unit adventurous training leader course at the Joint Services Mountain Training Centre in North Wales, and over a three-month period will gain leader or instructor qualifications in up to five disciplines.

For more information email atga-hq-so2g1-g8@mod.gov.uk or telephone 01980 668899.



FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Pedal power required

MILITARY charity Combat Stress is urging cyclists to take to the saddle and cover 75 miles in a day to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Dubbed Ride to Victory, the sponsored event has no physical start line, meaning how and where participants complete the challenge is up to them. For more details and to register visit www.combatstress.org.uk/support-us/ride-to-victory



Tour test ticked off

VETERANS and staff at the Royal Star and Garter home in High Wycombe completed a 874-mile virtual cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats. The residents tackled the Tour of Britain challenge in 15-minute stints on static bikes in the facility's physiotherapy room, with their progress tracked on a map. Visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hwcycle

Fundraising target:
£874
For Royal Star & Garter



“It almost makes the job easier”

Gunners get back to

A COMPETITION to test map-reading, radio and gunnery skills rounded off a comprehensive back-to-basics exercise for personnel from 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery.

Staged on Stanford Training Area in Norfolk, the day-long contest also saw airborne gun teams practise rigging a vehicle to be carried as an underslung load by helicopter.

The gruelling circuit then ended with a race against the clock to bring their 105mm L118 light guns into action, carry out a simulated fire mission and then limber the weapon up to its Pinzgauer towing vehicle.

The challenge capped off a five-day package aimed at getting members of G Parachute Battery (Mercer's Troop) back into the field after the easing of

recent coronavirus restrictions.

“Running a competition is about building up team cohesion in the gun detachments and putting a bit of pressure on them,” explained unit training officer, Lt Phil Tombs.

“We want our gunners to be on top of their technical skills and able to deliver at speed – because that's what they need to do on operations.

“While working from home we did a lot of remote learning; this is about putting our skills into practice again.”

Exercise Mercer's Thunder and Lightning was also a chance for the battery's new recruits to bed into the role, among them Gnr Harry Dixon, who had only been with the formation for a few days when lockdown started.

“We did a lot of video lessons and I trained hard to keep my fitness up,

■ MINISTRY of Defence Fire and Rescue Service chiefs have taken delivery of 14 state-of-the-art platforms. They will become operational in the autumn and are the first of 128 new vehicles procured under a 12-year modernisation project run by Capita. The company will also train firefighters to operate and maintain the kit.



NEW APPLIANCES ARRIVE



Pictures: Cpl Jamie Hart, RLC



business

but it's really good to get out on the gun," the Serviceman said.

"Having a competition has helped – working under pressure almost makes the job easier, because you don't have time to think about what you're doing, you just get on with it."



Revised range regulations go live

THE rules and regulations for the management of the MoD's 1,700 live-firing ranges has changed.

Over the next three years responsibility for licensing them will shift from the ten regional brigade commanders to the Defence Ordnance, Munitions and Explosives Safety Regulator.

There are also new requirements for ranges with infrastructure located abroad and revised categories for range safety inspection gradings. JSP 403 guidance on range safety has been replaced by four volumes

within document DSA 03.0ME part three.

In addition, a new database has been launched that holds past range safety inspection reports for every MoD site, including details of any outstanding issues.

It will allow managers to monitor progress on resolving problems and identify risks.

Inspectors are now required to complete safety audits online and the old paper MoD Form 907B will no longer be issued.

For more information search for DSA 03.0ME on Defence Connect.



Scan here for a link to the *Reimagining Defence* podcast

TECHNOLOGY PODCAST TAKES FLIGHT

■ A PODCAST series that looks at exciting new technologies and how they can be used in a military setting has been released.

Automation, artificial intelligence and quantum computing are just some of the complex subjects that the creators of *Reimagining Defence* seek to demystify in a series of short episodes available on Spotify, iTunes and Soundcloud.

Although not an official MoD publication, its creators – Army officer Lt Col Henry Willi (Para) and Flt Lt James Kuht (RAF) – hope the series will help all ranks better understand the importance of technology and digital upskilling, and how they can help shape the future of defence.

Flt Lt Kuht explains: "It not only provokes thought but the podcast gives tangible next steps for innovative and interested Service personnel to follow".

IN NUMBERS



10 - 20

the length, in minutes, of each episode in the podcast series

CASH BOOST FOR SSAFA

■ SERVICE charity SSAFA has received more than £120,000 from two grants to help fund its work.

The City Bridge Trust awarded £71,600 to the organisation's stepping-stone home, Gildea House – a facility that supports women whose relationship with a partner in the military has broken down due to domestic abuse and violence.

And the Army Central Fund donated £50,000 to SSAFA's emergency response fund, which offered help to the vulnerable during the Covid-19 crisis.



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PRETTYS
FOR PEACE OF MIND

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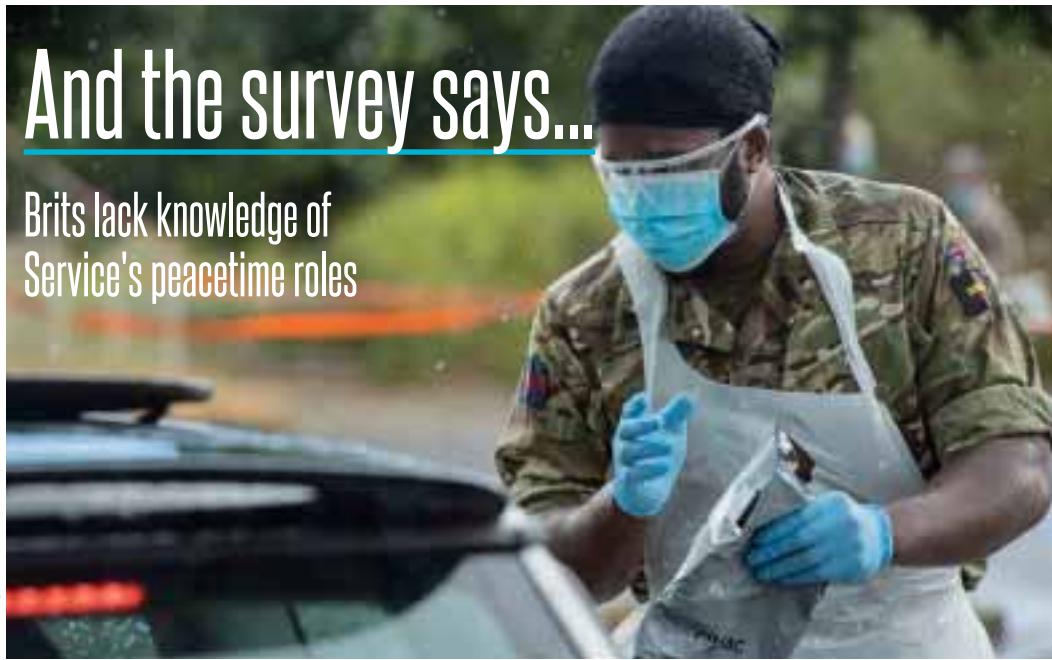
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And the survey says...

Brits lack knowledge of Service's peacetime roles

Pictures: Sgt Donald Todd and Cpl Sam Jenkins, both RLC



MANY British civvies are in the dark about the day-to-day life of soldiers when the Armed Forces are not on operations, results of a new survey suggest.

It discovered that one in three were unaware that troops helped with the aftermath of terrorist attacks. And a third did not know about their role during UK flooding.

Nearly four in ten were clueless about the fact that personnel could back up fire and rescue services in a crisis, while a similar number did not think the military had the ability to assist the police.

Some 15 per cent based their knowledge of the Armed Forces on films and television shows – and one in seven believed soldiers spent time as they pleased when stood down from conflicts.

But the poll of 2,000 people, commissioned by broadcaster BFBS, discovered six in ten people felt it important to know more about the Armed Forces' peacetime roles.

And the vast majority believed troops should be better recognised for their work.

The media outlet's chief executive, Simon Bucks, said: "The military does so much more than defence, as we've



seen during the recent Covid-19 crisis in this country.

"Stories about their peacetime work often go untold – films and television programmes, even ones based on real-life events, can give a sensationalised and distorted view of military life.

"There are many different roles and some of the day-to-day community work might come as a surprise."

■ STAFF at a British firm are limbering up to play a key part in making the new Boxer armoured vehicle – which is set to become a future Army workhorse.

The first official sub-contract has been handed to WFEL to manufacture the drive gear for the infantry carrier, special carrier and ambulance variants of the platform.

With a service life of three decades, Boxer – which is already used by some other Nato member states – will form an integral part of the new Strike brigades.



Pictures: Cpl Ben Beckett, Cpl Cameron Wharmire and Sgt Tom Evans, all RLC

PARATROOPERS IN THE MIX

■ AIRBORNE personnel proved their worth on Salisbury Plain as they jumped from an American aircraft using British parachutes for the first time during Exercise Pegasus Eagle.

Soldiers from 16 Air Assault Brigade were dropped from the US Air Force's 37th Airlift Squadron C-130J Hercules aircraft during a joint training exercise that was devised to enhance the two nation's ability to deploy on rapid response operations together.

Flt Lt Nick Tucker, a Royal Air Force jump instructor attached to 16 Air Assault Brigade, said: "This training is all about being able to do more together. British and US paratroopers have trained to use each other's parachutes for many years, and we've now demonstrated how we can mix aircraft and parachute systems."



“ Stories often go untold ”

4 days of joint drills for troops on Exercise Pegasus Eagle

NEED TO KNOW



Two's company

How a risky joint venture paid off for these soldiers-turned-business partners



Names: Jamie Keen (left) and Jimmy Rose-Shaw

Age: both 32

Military careers: More than 20 years between them as ground crewmen in the Army Air Corps, including multiple tours of Afghanistan and stints on HMS Ocean

Civilian roles: Co-directors of Preston-based Forge Logistics



► FORMER corporals Jamie Keen and Jimmy Rose-Shaw left the Army Air Corps in 2018. Despite having zero experience in the haulage industry, they signed up for an Amazon delivery franchise and set up their own company – Forge Logistics.

Almost two years on, the business has gone from strength to strength, but as they told *Soldier*, it wasn't all plain sailing...

How did you get into this field?

JR-S: We got invited to an Amazon careers fair. They were launching a trial to expand their delivery service. Even they said there were no guarantees we would make any money, but they wanted that military attitude and work ethic. We took that across and learnt the business side afresh.

What training had you done?

JR-S: I did one transport managers' course as my resettlement but had to cancel the rest to focus on starting the company.

JK: We also did two weeks of training with Amazon, but other than that we were pretty much clueless. It was a massive gamble.

How did you fund it?

JK: The initial investment was about £25,000. We had to beg, borrow and steal to get going. My parents lent me some money and Jim got a loan. I moved into a house share and he slept on my floor for a bit. If we'd looked at it properly and considered all the risks we'd have been frightened off, but I think that by being in the Army you are more prepared to take chances.

What was the biggest challenge?

JK: Understanding business. We had to set up insurance, work out profit and loss margins, cashflow, recruiting, having a work force, HR policies. In the military you don't see any of that – it's all done for you.

JR-S: For me it was dealing with people not turning up for work. That was a massive shock to us. To start with we had to deliver parcels ourselves because employees weren't showing up. ▶

► NEXT STEPS

What was your biggest breakthrough?

JK: It was when we got the contract to do the so-called “middle mile” – transporting goods from the fulfilment centre to the delivery centre. Before that we were just doing the last mile to the customer’s door. We started off with one truck and now we have ten, and recently we’ve also gone into another partnership with DPD, too.

What do you miss most about the Army?

JK: I loved the Army and didn’t want to leave but I was medically discharged. I found the uncertainty hard and I miss having a structure. You can’t just work out in the daytime either and you actually have to pay for a gym membership. That kind of stuff is hard to get your head round.

Any top pieces of advice for other Service leavers?

JR-S: Don’t let other people put you off. Every single person we spoke to said, ‘don’t do it’. But we didn’t listen to them. With a military background you’ve got skills you don’t even realise you have. Civilians don’t have the same skill set.

JK: You have to go through the hard bit to get the reward. Look long term, decide where you want to get to and work towards it.

So, what's your five-year plan?

JK: We want to grow the haulage side and get our own warehouse. We’re happy to let it grow organically over the next ten years or so. We started with five vans and now we have 89, plus the ten lorries and 120 people working for us and that’s all in less than two years. They sell you the dream but it’s really hard work. We still work 18-hour days, seven days a week. People look at it and think, ‘what a success,’ but they have no idea about the blood, sweat and tears that have gone into this.

If you want to know more about becoming a service delivery partner with Amazon go to logistics.amazon.co.uk

Feeling the

Overdone it in the sun?
Nursing officer Capt Neil
Gilbert (QARANC) explains
what to do next

► WE all know catching too many rays is bad for us, but every year many soldiers get sunburnt in the name of “Op Bronze”.

And you don’t have to be on holiday or serving abroad to be at risk – even on a cloudy day in the UK, the summer sun can be strong enough to cause harm.

Low-level sunburn leaves skin red, sore and hot. You can treat this yourself and it should get better within seven days.

More severe burns, however, can lead to serious conditions such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke, as well as significantly raising your chances of developing skin cancer.

With that in mind, follow these tips for sun safety...

Did you know?

Sunlight provides our bodies with vitamin D. This helps the body to regulate nutrients, which in turn keeps bones, teeth and muscles healthy. So, it is important to strike a good balance between exposure to the sun and protection

For more information visit
[nhs.uk/conditions/sunburn](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sunburn)

BURN

Prevention is better than a cure

Keep a close eye on your skin and try not to get burnt in the first place

Stick to the shade when the sun is at its strongest – during the UK summertime this is between 1100 and 1500

When buying sunscreen, the NHS recommends adults wear a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 to shield against UVB rays, and at least four-star UVA protection. Look out for the letters "UVA", in a circle, which indicates that it meets the EU standard

Make sure your sunscreen is not past its expiry date. Most have a shelf life of two to three years

However, don't rely on sunscreen alone – cover up with suitable clothing and sunglasses

Too late? Here's what to do (and what not to do) to help your skin heal

DO...

Get out of the sun as soon as possible

Lower the temperature of your skin using a damp towel or cool shower

Apply after-sun. Aloe vera gel is particularly good

Prevent dehydration by drinking water. This will help cool you down, too

Protect burnt skin from direct sunlight until it has fully healed

DON'T...

Use petroleum jelly as it can block pores and lead to infection

Apply ice or ice packs

Pop any blisters

Scratch or try to remove peeling skin

Wear tight-fitting clothes over sunburnt skin

Report to your medical centre or seek urgent advice if...

Your skin is blistered or swollen

Your temperature is very high, or you feel hot and shivery

You feel dizzy and sick or very tired

You have a headache or muscle cramps

'Think of what you'll lose if you put your head in the sand'

Officer's warning to others following cancer journey

► **CAPT John Culling (Scots) was fit and active when a prostate cancer diagnosis knocked him for six.**

After nearly a year of gruelling treatment, including hormone therapy, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, the 61-year-old is now on the road to recovery and wants to raise awareness of the condition by sharing his story...

I was so shocked when I was diagnosed. I had no pains; the only symptom was going to the toilet during the night more often, but I put that down to my age.

When I mentioned that to a medic during an exercise, he said I should get my prostate checked. So my wife booked an appointment and the doctor took some blood.

The very next day he phoned and said, 'you have a problem'.

My question was, 'why me'?

Having been in the Army for 42 years, I

was fit – I ran, I took part in triathlons.

I was lucky, though, in that the cancer was still localised – it wasn't in my bones or lymph nodes.

Because I'm fit they decided to hit me with the highest level of chemotherapy that they could.

The treatment took a lot out of me physically, but it's the mental effects I also want to raise awareness of.

At one point I seriously intended to take my own life.

I even planned how I would do it and make it look like an accident.

I knew I needed help but there was a three- or four-month wait for a therapist on the NHS, so I turned to a charity called Maggie's.

They provide support for people with cancer and, coincidentally, I'd done some fundraising for them before, so that's where I went and I was seen by a counsellor within two or three weeks.

A consultant mentioned that almost

everyone who has had cancer has PTSD – I don't think people are aware of that or that help is out there and freely available.

Now my treatment is finished and my bloodwork is clear – I just have to go back and get it checked every few months.

I'm walking at least 12,000 steps every day to raise money for Maggie's and that's helping my recovery – physically and mentally.

But my doctor has told me that my cancer is very aggressive and will probably return at some point.

If my story gets through to just a couple of men to check themselves, it might make a difference.

I want to say to people: 'Think about what you'll lose if you put your head in the sand.' For me, it's my grandson. He's my little happy pill when I need a distraction and I want to see him grow up.

Name: Capt John Culling

Age: 61

Military career: Joined the King's Own Scottish Borderers in 1978; commissioned in 2015 at the age of 57, becoming the oldest currently serving person to complete the Army officer's selection board; now on a full-time Reserve service contract with Tayforth University Officers' Training Corps in Dundee



Capt Culling is raising money for cancer support charity Maggie's, which helped him during his treatment. To donate go to [justgiving.com](https://www.justgiving.com) and search "John Culling"

Worried about seeing the doctor? Capt Culling explains what to expect...

"A rectal exam is not the first thing that happens – you'll get a blood test first, which determines if you need anything further.

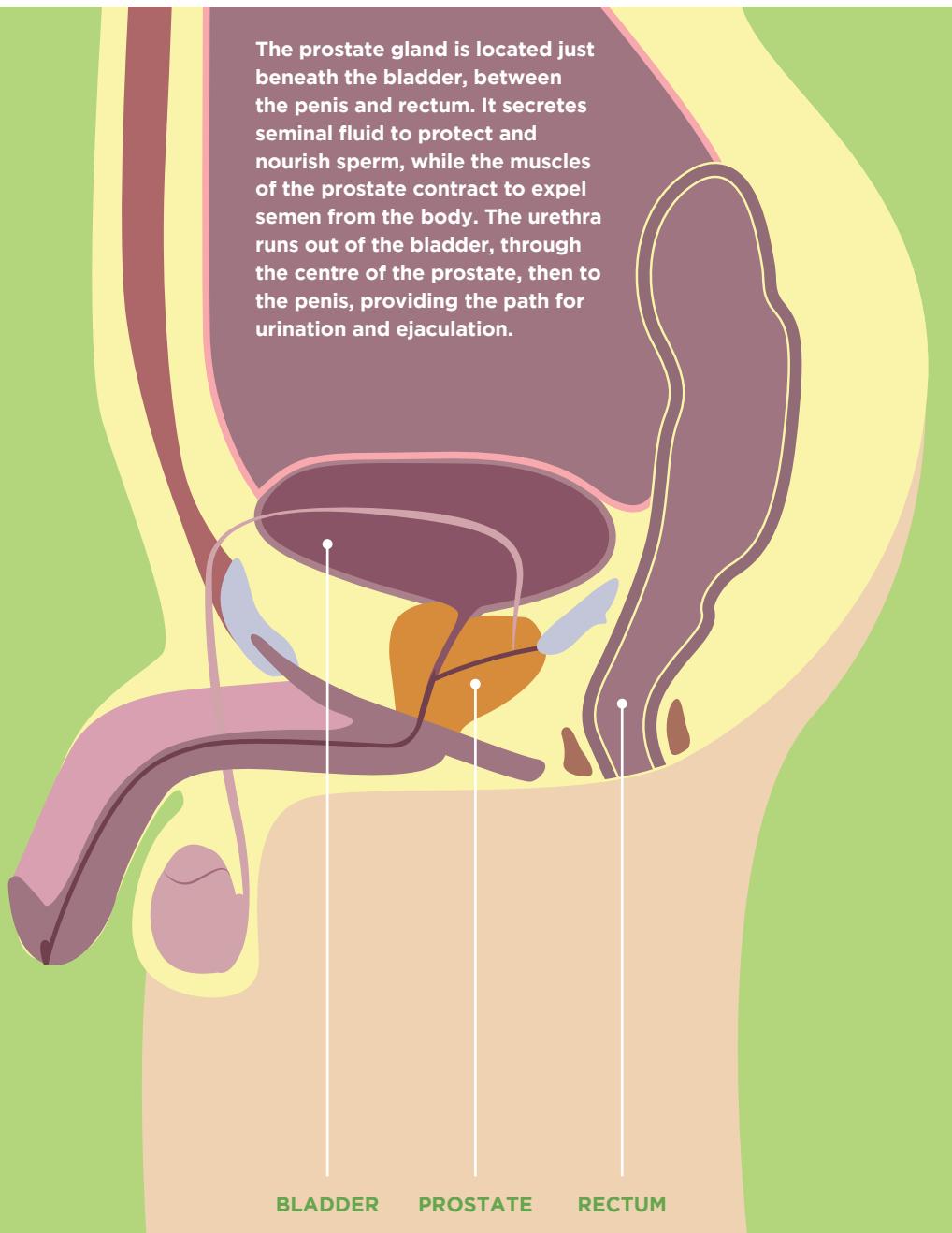
"If you're told you do have an issue the examination is nothing to be frightened of. It's unpleasant, but it only takes seconds and the alternative is so much worse.

"Three or four months can mean the difference between catching the cancer when it's still in your prostate and it spreading throughout your body – it happens very quickly.

"So, as soon as you notice any symptoms, that's the time to go to the doctor. Like women checking their breasts, chaps need to be aware of their bodies.

"Prostate cancer doesn't just affect the over-60s. During my treatment I met men much younger than me."

The prostate gland is located just beneath the bladder, between the penis and rectum. It secretes seminal fluid to protect and nourish sperm, while the muscles of the prostate contract to expel semen from the body. The urethra runs out of the bladder, through the centre of the prostate, then to the penis, providing the path for urination and ejaculation.



Symptoms to look out for

- Difficulty or discomfort while passing urine
- Needing to go more frequently, especially at night
- Pains in your groin, hips, back or upper legs
- Blood in your wee or semen
- Discomfort during ejaculation
- Difficulty getting an erection

Sobering statistics

One in eight men in the UK will get prostate cancer – it is the most common malignancy (other than skin cancer) diagnosed in males. **Approximately 1.1 million** men are diagnosed with the disease, globally, every year and more than **300,000** will die

Veteran's podcast highlights mental health in the workplace

► WHEN former rifleman Tom Fox was diagnosed with chronic complex post-traumatic stress disorder, his world fell apart around him.

With a family to support and a lengthy battle with mental illness ahead, he had no idea what was going to happen next.

Now 48 years old, Fox served in The Royal Green Jackets for 15 years before going on to work for the American government in Iraq and later moving into the IT and financial services sector. He had always considered himself mentally strong and resilient.

But the coping mechanisms he used to deal with high levels of work-related stress only masked his underlying issues and ultimately led to a breakdown, requiring nine weeks of residential care and ongoing psychiatric treatment.

Believing that if he or his colleagues had spotted the signs of his deteriorating mental health earlier he could have sought help before reaching crisis point, Fox set up Thoughtify Ltd – a company that trains employers how to look after the well-being of their staff.

Here, he tells *Soldier* about his experiences and new podcast...

The podcast is called *Mentally Healthy Leaders* and features senior figures in business, sport and science who are willing to talk about their own struggles with breakdown, burnout, bipolar, postnatal depression and anxiety. By leading from the front like this they will hopefully inspire and encourage other people to talk. If one episode helps just one person then it's been worth it.

It's good to

Mental health affects everybody.

It's important to know that it doesn't matter how rich or successful someone is, we're all human and we're all fragile, so I wanted to raise awareness of this.

I founded Thoughtify Ltd because, going through my treatment,

I realised that I had been seeing others suffering without understanding what had been going on, so I wanted to turn this negative into a positive and help people spot the signs of stress, anxiety and depression. I set up the company in 2018 with financial help from military charities. My clients include companies such as Facebook and Virgin Atlantic, but I am also an associate of Mental Health First Aid England, so I deliver training to corporate clients on their behalf.

For me, mental illness is a lifelong condition. You need to come to terms with it and understand how it affects you specifically, so that you can learn to manage those symptoms and take steps to help yourself. For some people, getting ill can actually be the best thing to happen because it forces them to change that situation. Looking forward to recovery takes optimism, but you've got to put the effort in. It's unlikely that you will be ill and suffering forever.

I think the Armed Forces have done a lot to break down stigma and talk about mental health over the last couple of years. There's been a real positive change in that serving personnel are more willing to speak out and share their experiences, which gives others the strength and encouragement to do the same.

More needs to be done to spread the message about support for veterans.

There are actually loads of services available through the NHS for ex-Service personnel and their families, but people often aren't aware of the help on offer.



TALK

A lot of my employees are ex-Forces because they bring valuable traits.

It's the whole military ethos – reliability, dependability, discipline and integrity. If they say they'll do something, they do it and make sure it's done to the highest professional standard.

At my lowest ebb, I wish I could have told myself: 'This isn't it. This is just a moment you're going through and there's more out there. It's just a period of time – there's a way through this and you need to try and turn this into an advantage.' I liken it to being a soldier on a battlefield who is pinned down – you don't just give up.'

The *Mentally Healthy Leaders* podcast is available weekly via thoughtify.co.uk and all the usual platforms. Guests for the series include former bomb disposal officer and managing director of Landmarc solutions, Mark Neill; ex-elite soldier and entrepreneur, Dean Stott; and former commando and PwC consultant Paul Spanner.

Follow: @MHPodcast on Twitter and Facebook and @ThoughtifyLtd on LinkedIn



Hitting the gym?



Read this advice from Sgt William Jervis (RAPTC) first

AFTER four months of lockdown the gyms have finally reopened and like coiled springs, soldiers are raring to get back into their pre-pandemic training routines. But as eager as we all are to reap the physical and mental benefits of phys, there are a few points to consider. Here are my top five tips for easing yourself back in...

1 Don't be too quick off the mark

Understand your limitations and make training progressive. After months of limited access to equipment and not being able to maintain our usual conditioning, it is vital to gradually build the intensity as you progress further into your programme

2 Know your real competition

We can all be competitive at times and it is a good quality to have as it can boost performance. However, comparing yourself to others can be unhelpful and could increase the risk of injury. You are your own best competition and you should only worry about improving your own ability within your sessions

3 Train smart

The Army's new physical training system is evidence-based and aims to give all soldiers a better understanding of physical development, whatever their level of fitness. This is more pertinent now than ever and we must all train smarter, with realistic goals. It's unlikely you will be able to pick up where you have left off, so you will need to re-establish a foundation by working on those functional movement patterns

4 Remember, nobody likes a chore

Enjoy it! Phys releases endorphins that increase morale and improve overall mental health. So, instead of making it unpleasant for yourself, find something that you like doing, which will make you want to maintain your training programme and stay motivated

5 Finally – stay safe

Don't drop your guard when it comes to Covid-19. Make sure you familiarise yourself with the force health protection measures in place at your unit gym or civilian leisure centre. Sanitise your hands frequently, wipe equipment after use and maintain social distancing

Victory

In the final part of our 75th anniversary editions, we look at how *Soldier* covered the end of the Second World War and the reasoning behind the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan

WHEN victory over Japan was officially declared on August 15, 1945, not only was it the end of the conflict with imperial Japan in the Far East – and called VJ Day as a result – it also marked the end of the Second World War.

At midnight, Prime Minister Clement Attlee confirmed the news in a BBC broadcast, saying: “The last of our enemies is laid low.”

He expressed gratitude to Britain’s allies in Australia and New Zealand, India, Burma, all countries occupied by Japan and to the USSR. But special thanks went to the United States, “without whose prodigious efforts the war in the East would still have many years to run”.



Words: Mike Peters, ex-AAC Pictures: Soldier archive

The surrender brought huge relief to the hundreds of thousands of Allied personnel who were assembled in Asia and the Pacific, poised to invade the Japanese home islands. There was little enthusiasm for what was assured to be a bloody and bitter fight to occupy the territories.

On April 1, 1945, US personnel had landed on Okinawa. The enemy fought fanatically against the American troops and the fighting went on until June 21.

The Japanese casualty figures, including civilians, totalled more than 117,000. The invasion force sustained a further 82,000.

The Americans were staggered to find that one quarter of the island’s population had died during the fighting, many in organised mass suicides, rather than endure the shame of surrender.

British and Commonwealth troops were deployed from Europe and Asia to take part in Operation Downfall. This component of the invasion of the Japanese homeland was on an unprecedented scale and almost a million personnel were involved.

Nobody was under any illusions as to how ferocious the resistance would be. The prospect of the final push was daunting for the British soldier – many were veterans of the European theatre, others had fought through the gruelling Burma campaign; most had little appetite for what would be a brutal and costly battle when the end of the war was so clearly in reach.

The same sentiments prevailed among their Australian, New Zealand and Indian counterparts who had also fought so hard towards this final chapter.

However, the Allies did have an alternative to a conventional military operation against Japan. Project Manhattan, the secret development of the atomic bomb, had come to fruition.

The US possessed a destructive power beyond the comprehension of most people prior to its use. President Harry Truman was desperate to avoid the loss of more American lives and was equally keen to demonstrate the full force of this new weapon. »

LAST



Below left: Lord Louis Mountbatten draws up terms of surrender for the Japanese, flanked by Gens William Slim and Raymond Wheeler, Adm Arthur Power, Air Mshl Keith Park and Gen Frederick Browning.

JAPAN: Our Forces Mass

IF — uninterrupted by an earlier surrender — the war against Japan is to be fought to a finish, future operations are likely to pass through four main phases : the phases, that is, of bombardment and blockade, of the Anglo-Australian link-up in the South-West Pacific, of the Allied invasion of Japan — possibly by way of China — and finally of the mopping up.

Let us begin by examining the present phase, that of bombardment and blockade. Bombardment at least is no new departure. The Allied air forces, picking up in the Pacific the threads that they had dropped in Western Europe, are now applying the lessons they have already learnt. Their first job — now in hand — is to knock out the Japanese air force, still reckoned to numbers some 9,000 aircraft, of which perhaps 4,500 are combatants; this job they will do not only by destroying the actual aircraft on the ground or in the air but also by completing the destruction of the enemy's industrial economy and especially his aircraft industry.

Their second job, as yet scarcely begun, is to disrupt Japan's communications immediately prior to invasion. The Marianas Islands and Okinawa, converted by prodigies of bulldozer construction into immense airfields, now provide the necessary airstrips for both jobs.

The array of air power which the Allies are mustering in the Pacific is formidable indeed. In order to understand its working we must understand broadly the rather complicated US system of command.

Over all is the Chief of Staffs Committee in Washington. Below the Chiefs of Staff the channels of command in the Pacific bifurcate. Thus there are two parallel command-channels : that of the army command under General MacArthur, and that of the naval command under Admiral Nimitz.

MacArthur himself holds two official positions : he is at one and the same time C-in-C of the US Army Forces

by
Lt. General H.G. Martin, CB, DSO
(SOLDIER Magazine Military Commentator)

in the Pacific (CINCAFPAC) and Allied C-in-C of the South-West Pacific Area (CINCSOWESPAC), in which latter capacity he has as his deputy the Australian General Blamey. Incidentally, it seems likely that, resulting from the recent meeting of Mountbatten and MacArthur, there will be a readjustment of the boundaries between SEAC and SOWESPAC which will allow SEAC full liberty of manoeuvre in any future operations to open the Malacca Straits.

Admiral Nimitz likewise holds two official positions : he is C-in-C of the Pacific Ocean Area (CINCPAO), and C-in-C of the Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC). It is into this framework of command that the air forces and fleets have to be fitted.

Crippling The Oil Plants

First, there is General Spaatz's Army Strategic Air Force. Spaatz works directly under General Arnold — that is, under the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The primary role of the ASAFAF is to cripple Japanese air power by attacking oil and aircraft production plants, towns and workers' living-quarters throughout central Japan but particularly in Honshu. The 7th Fighter Command (Mustangs) based on Iwo Jima, half-way between the Marianas and Japan, gives fighter cover to the Super-Forts based on the Marianas.

Next, there is Maj. Gen. Kenney's Far East Air Force, which works directly under MacArthur.

The Far East Air Force consists of the 5th, 7th and 13th Army Air Forces (Thunderbolts, Liberators and Mitchells). The 5th and 7th AAFs are based on Okinawa and the neighbouring islands : their main job is to supplement the Strategic AF's attack by concentrating on targets in southern Japan, particularly in Kyushu.

Kenney's third and last component — the 13th AAF — works with the aircraft of the 7th Fleet. Together they support the US land forces in the Philippines and the Australian forces in the Borneo area.

Thirdly, there are Fleet Air Wings 1 and 18 (Priveters, Liberators and Marauders) and Marine Air Wings 2 and 4 (Corsairs, Avengers and Mitchells), all of which are based on Okinawa and neighbouring isles.

These air wings are under Admiral Nimitz, and their main job is to blockade southern Japan by interrupting the short sea-routes to the mainland.

Fourthly, there is the 11th AAF, based mainly on the Aleutians, where it works with the North Pacific Fleet Air Wing — both under Admiral Nimitz.

Together the 11th AAF and the air wing attack Japan's bases in the Kuriles, her shipping in the Sea of Othotak and her fishing fleet in northern waters. They thus form the northern pincer of the blockade.

Fifthly, there are the carrier-borne aircraft of the US 3rd Fleet and of the British Pacific Fleet, operating under Admiral Halsey, who in turn is under Nimitz.

Finally, there is the amplified air command in China, which Stratemeyer has just taken over.

This Chinese air command consists of the 14th AAF (B-24s) already in China, reinforced by Stratemeyer's own command, which was formerly in India and Burma, where it included the 10th AAF (mostly medium bombers) and certain additional groups.

Stratemeyer will co-operate not only with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek's "New Model" army, which should soon take the field in China, but also in the bombardment and blockade of Japan and Formosa and in any landing operations which MacArthur may carry out on the Chinese coast.

Such then, very briefly, is the air and naval lay-out in the Pacific in the present "softening-up" stage of direct assault upon Japan. This softening-up process will be far more severe than that applied to Germany. And it will be applied to a far smaller area — an army only 20% larger than that of the United Kingdom.

ROLL IT UP
AND
SEND IT HOME



NAME
ADDRESS

As SOLDIER weighs
more than two ounces,
a penny-stamp must
be affixed here.

On July 26, during the gathering of Allied leaders in the German city of Potsdam, the US issued an ultimatum to Japan, stating they must surrender or suffer prompt and utter destruction.

Three days later the Japanese rejected the declaration and refused to surrender. On August 6, the Enola Gay, a US Air Force B-29 Superfortress, dropped the first atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima.

Codenamed "Little Boy", it devastated the whole area, razing its mainly wooden houses to the ground, killing 20,000 Japanese soldiers and somewhere between 70,000-126,000 civilians.

Sixteen hours later President Truman warned the enemy to "surrender or expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth".

Again they refused, and on August 9 a second bomb, labelled "Fat Man", was dropped on the city of Nagasaki causing yet more destruction.

To add injury to the incalculable hurt, the Soviet Union then declared war on Japan.

The next day, through diplomatic channels, the Japanese foreign minister notified the US government of his country's unconditional surrender and acceptance of the Potsdam declaration. Suddenly, and without any prior indication, the war against Japan, and in effect the Second World War, was over.



Many of the British soldiers scattered across Asia, and especially those who were held as prisoners of war, did not hear the news for days or even weeks.

Issues of *Soldier* printed during this period reflect the mixed feelings of many Servicemen and women in the Far East at the time.

It was mainly overwhelming relief that the war was finally over as many had not been home since the Japanese had launched their attacks on December 7, 1941. Thousands had been held prisoner since those opening battles – those who survived in captivity suffered from disease and malnutrition.

The collapse of Japanese resistance changed priorities almost overnight. After years of fighting, there was now an overwhelming desire to go home and get back to civilian life. Those who had served under Gen William Slim in the 14th Army were of the opinion that they, in particular, had more than done their bit.

Throughout the Burma campaign the British, Indian and Gurkha soldiers had felt they were far from the minds of people at home. Newsreels and newspapers seemed to permanently focus on the exploits of the Desert Rats of the Eighth Army, the D-Day landings in Normandy, ■

ON 12 September Admiral Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, SE Asia, received in Singapore the formal surrender of all Japanese forces in his command. It was the end of a campaign in which the Japs lost six times as many troops as the Allies.

On that day in the middle of September the Allied Fleet was once more riding in Singapore harbour. It would have been there in any case, about that time back, after three-and-a-half years. And with the Fleet would have been men who, in the Supremo's words, "chased the Jap out of Burma," and were on the point of continuing the chase into Malaya.

The surrender meant the return of one-and-a-half million square miles of

territory and the liberation of 128,000,000 people.

Admiral Mountbatten was accompanied by General William Slim, "Uncle Bill" Slim of the 14th Army, and now C-in-C Allied Land Forces, SE Asia.

Model Invasion

The pattern for the invasion of Singapore was the same as that followed in earlier months on the long journey from Akyab to Rangoon. Our troops landed at five points and began occupying the familiar strategic areas — the docks, the airfields and the famous causeway, where the last battle of the Malaya campaign was fought in 1942.

A swarm of ICI's were used to put

ashore troops at the various landing points, just as had been planned if there had been no surrender. The return to Singapore was made by British, Indian and Gurkha troops of the 5th Indian Division, assembled in a convoy which came prepared for fighting but found a peaceful landing.

The landing went ahead as the military operation which had been planned, except that there was no opposition. The first H-hour troops found the Japanese general commanding the area waiting at the dockside.

Instead of a battle our men found streets lined with welcoming, cheering people. Fleet Air Arm planes from carriers out in the bay flew overhead.

When the city was occupied it was

found to be virtually undamaged. Lights and lifts were working and most of the big buildings were ready for reoccupation.

Japs Just Missed It

This occupation took place four days before the planned D-day for the invasion of Singapore. The planning of the operation began many months previously in India and for the first time in the history of the Command, "it would have been an operation short of nothing."

After he had seen the Jap defences Lord Louis said that had there been opposition "we should have been through them just as fast as we have landed without opposition."



Left: British civilian internees in Singapore line up for rice and vegetables

Above: Lt Gen Senechi Tazaka, Japanese commander of the Singapore Defences, surrenders his sword to Lt Col William Thomas of 1st Battalion, The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) at Kluang

BRAVERY IN BURMA

National hero recalls fierce fighting in the Far East

RATHER than being captured, the Japanese soldiers would prefer to kill themselves – they had no value of their own lives let alone ours, which made them a very difficult enemy,” explains Capt Sir Tom Moore.

“They were fearsome opponents with no thought for others.”

As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of VJ Day on August 15, marking both the surrender of Japan and the end of the Second World War, the inspirational veteran, whose incredible £40 million fundraising efforts have earned him a knighthood and appointment as an honorary colonel of the Army Foundation College, shares his wartime experiences of the brutal Burma campaign with *Soldier*.

British Commonwealth troops and their allies fought a bitter four-year war against Japan in the Far East that started in 1941, when the Imperial Army swept across Asia at a ferocious rate. It attacked territories including Hong Kong and Malaya and forced the British to capitulate its major military base in Singapore.

“To begin with they really caught us on the hop. I don’t think we were really expecting the »



“

We were the
British Army
and we were
doing a very
good job

”



» Japanese to be the force they were," the Yorkshire-born centenarian explains.

Entering Burma from Thailand, they captured the capital city of Rangoon by March 1942 and the incumbent British, Chinese and Commonwealth troops were driven back into India, over a distance of 1,000 miles during the largest fighting retreat in British military history.

Around one million men made up the multinational force of the 14th Army, whose efforts, despite enduring some of the most vicious battles of the war, remained largely unrecognised back on the home front, some 5,000 miles away.

"We knew we were the Forgotten Army but that didn't bother us," Moore continues, providing a glimpse of the stoicism and steely determination that encapsulates this generation of wartime heroes.

"You could never look back and think we were badly done to because we weren't. Our morale was always high – the highest you could expect given the circumstances – because we were the British Army and we were doing a very good job."

Above and far left:
Capt Tom Moore, and with members of The Duke of Wellington's Regiment in Burma

Left: Soldiers of the 22nd Division return fire in Burma, surrounded by broken bamboo trees – a result of Japanese shelling

However, it was not just capture by the Japanese – who subjected prisoners to vicious beatings, torture and starvation – that the Allies feared, but the treacherous jungle terrain that saw more troops evacuated off the battlefield from sickness than fighting.

Moore, who suffered from a bout of dengue fever during his time in this unforgiving environment, explains: "Soldiers got hurt not only by the enemy but by the natural surroundings – people got terrible diseases from the jungle, it was full of animals.

"Your boots were never dry so you could get foot rot. There was also malaria, dysentery and jaundice – lots of unfortunate things could happen."

Little progress was made in attempts to recapture the British colony over the next year, in part because the Burma Road – a vital supply route linking neighbouring China – had been cut off.

Numerous attempts to reassert military control were hindered by lengthy monsoon seasons and ultimately failed, as did efforts to advance back into the Arakan region of Burma.

It wasn't until 1943 and a restructuring of Allied military command, including a newly formed and better equipped 14th Army under the control of Gen William Slim, that successful attempts were made to repel Axis forces from the country.

Chindit operations behind enemy lines and a recently established air support and supply system proved that »



► the Japanese weren't infallible in the jungle and ensured personnel were now able to hold their ground when supplies dwindled, situations that would have previously seen them withdraw.

"To begin with we weren't in the position to force them back, we just had to hold them in the location they were in," Moore reflects.

"It was really just a holding operation and we weren't expecting them to go any further."

Initially conscripted into the Army in 1940, the 20-year-old joined 8th Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (DWR) before being selected for officer training later that year.

After receiving his commission, he joined 9th Battalion, DWR (later converted to 146th Royal Armoured Corps) and was posted to India in October 1941, arriving in Bombay before embarking on a treacherous three-week road move to Calcutta through the monsoon season.

His unit formed the 50th Indian Tank Brigade and Moore – who had been riding motorbikes from the age of 12 – was instructed to start a motorcycle driving course by the brigade commander.

Dispatch riders were often used to ensure secure delivery of communications to front-line commanders – information that could put lives in jeopardy if sent over the airwaves and intercepted by the enemy.

Moore passed messages between tank formations and front-line infantry troops, a perilous undertaking that required him to ride alone through the jungle and along several miles of track to reach his destination.

"I just used to think about getting to the other end," he replies with a wry smile when pressed about the fear he must have felt when setting out on such a journey.

"We all knew that the Japanese were infiltrating the areas where we were cycling through but, fortunately, they didn't come out much during the daytime, so you felt a bit safer then and you wouldn't cycle at night."

Moore remained overseas for nearly four years, during which time he and his unit took part in numerous offensives, including the Battle of Ramree Island. He later moved to Sumatra, following the surrender of Japanese forces there.

He believes a key turning point in the campaign was

Right: Soldiers from the Indian Tank Brigade inspect a Japanese Type 97 tank, which they have knocked out

Below: Capt Tom Moore

Bottom right: Soldiers from Sierra Leone display a Japanese rifle and helmets after a raiding sortie along the waterways of Burma



due, in part, to the Allies' response when a savage attack was launched on British bases behind the Indian border, in Imphal and Kohima, in the spring of 1944.

A lengthy battle ensued resulting in the largest Japanese defeat of the campaign, and that enabled the Allies to push back across the Arakan and River Chindwin.

"The Japanese never anticipated they were going to get the resistance they did, and both the British and Indian armies had to fight hand to hand in some cases, but we did eventually manage to drive them back," he explains.

"It was a turning point because the Japanese were shown to be beatable and the fact that we were driving them back came as a complete shock to them."

Promoted to captain, Moore was sent back to Britain in February 1945 as an instructor at the Armoured Fighting Vehicle School in Bovington, where he was stationed as victory in Europe and over Japan were declared.

"It was my first time back in England in about four years, so it was very nice," he recalls.

"I've returned to India several times, and despite the war I thoroughly enjoyed my time there and it holds a very special place in my heart."

As the milestone of VJ Day approaches we ask about the importance of marking such anniversaries.



"At the time I don't think the British public was fully geared up for the war against Japan in the Far East, so VE day had much more of an impact for the people at home because it meant that the bombing in England had finally stopped and we could all settle down for peace," he reflects.

"And although it was a day full of celebrations, for me personally it wasn't the happiest time because all my friends were still away.

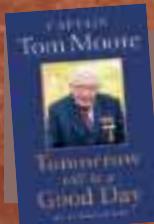
"When VJ Day came there was enjoyment, but it wasn't celebrated in the same way," he continues.

"But it's important to remember because we did such a good job and people must be proud of what we achieved in the East."

Moore initially set out to raise £1,000 for the NHS by walking 100 laps of his garden by his 100th birthday during lockdown.

But as images of the veteran, determined to complete the challenge with the aid of a walking frame and wearing a blazer displaying his military medals, circulated around the world millions of people donated, far surpassing his modest target.

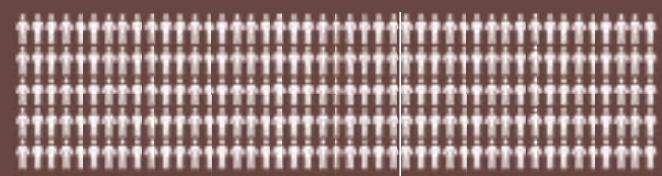
However, despite an incredible array of accolades that include two Guinness World Records (for raising the most money in an individual charity walk, and as the oldest person to have a number-one single in the UK charts), book deals and personal messages of thanks from royalty and celebrities, it is clear that his service for King and country during the longest British campaign of the Second World War remains his proudest achievement of all. ■



Capt Sir Tom Moore's memoir *Tomorrow Will Be A Good Day: My Autobiography* will be published by Penguin Books on September 17

IN NUMBERS

The Battles of Imphal and Kohima



53,000

Troops lost by the Japanese 15th Army



12,500

British and Allied casualties at Imphal, with a further 4,000 at Kohima



19,000

Tonnes of resupply equipment delivered by air



12,000

Reinforcements flown in by the Royal Air Force



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ARMY
BE THE BEST

EMPIRE OF THE SUN

Thousands of troops were taken prisoner by the Japanese – for the survivors, the war lived on forever

KEITH Merritt (pictured far right) can only recall a handful of occasions when his father, Frank (below), spoke out about his time serving in the Far East during the Second World War.

Having been taken prisoner in Singapore and put to work on the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway, the former soldier rarely discussed his three years in captivity.

Remembered as a fun-loving man, he had returned to civvy street, became a nurseryman, married and started raising his three boys.

But when demonstrations erupted during a UK state visit by Emperor Hirohito – who had been Japan's spiritual leader during the conflict and had remained in place afterwards – he broke his silence with a surprising comment.

"Back then, in 1971, dad noticed the protestors seemed to be young people who couldn't have remembered the war at all," Merritt told *Soldier*.

"He felt that if anybody had a right to be angry it was those who had been there."

"But our father didn't say much else over the years," he continued. "I remember him having a strange bump on his head, which he told me was from a spanner dropped on him by a Japanese soldier – he said their troops were brutal."

"He remembered how he'd seen the bamboo growing everywhere and the deluge of the monsoon rains – and how the American soldiers cried openly when they liberated the camps."

Although Frank Merritt, a private who served in the Bedfordshire »

Interviews: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Graeme Main



SIR OR MADAM,
With reference to p
inform you that a rep
War Office to the effect t
(Rank) Pte
(Name) MERRITT
(Regiment) Bedfordshire
is now at Osaka



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen and I bid you a very
Through all the great trials a
you have undergone at the hands of
and your comrades have been consta
we know from the accounts we have
heavy those sufferings have been
these have been endured by you
we mourn with you the de
gallant comrades.

With all our hearts,
Captivity will bring you a
happiness, which you m

September 1945.

» and Hertfordshire Regiment, kept quiet during his lifetime, a box of memorabilia he left to his family after his death two decades ago speaks volumes.

Now, 75 years after the end of the conflict, the documents inside are as much a tribute to those who endured captivity in one of the conflict's most brutal episodes as they are to one quiet man's personal courage and resilience.

Falling into Japanese captivity in February 1942 – two years to the day after he enlisted – telegrams show how Pte Merritt was initially recorded as a missing soldier.

The 21-year-old is later confirmed as a prisoner on a card approved by the Imperial Japanese Army. Using pre-written statements, he declares that his "health is good" and "I am working", before signing off with his best regards.

Delving deeper uncovers a handwritten poetry volume giving a glimpse of camp life, while a battered pay book provides a formal record of service. There is correspondence with the government in Australia – where he was sent to recover – and finally a letter from King George VI welcoming him home.

Keith Merritt recalls a few telltale signs of his father's experiences as he grew up.

"He never touched rice because it was given to the prisoners riddled with maggots," he said. "And he let slip that some PoWs had diseases such as elephantiasis, typhoid and beriberi; I saw him suffer from malaria myself."

Frank was one of 132,000 Allied personnel taken captive by the Japanese forces – a figure confirmed during the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal at the end of the conflict.

Some 50,000 of his British and Australian contemporaries were captured in Singapore alone, while others were incarcerated in places such as Hong Kong, Java and the Philippines.

Some were transported on so-called "hell ships" around Japan's new territories – along with its home islands – providing slave labour so that men could be freed up for military service. In all, more than a quarter would die in captivity before the war ended.

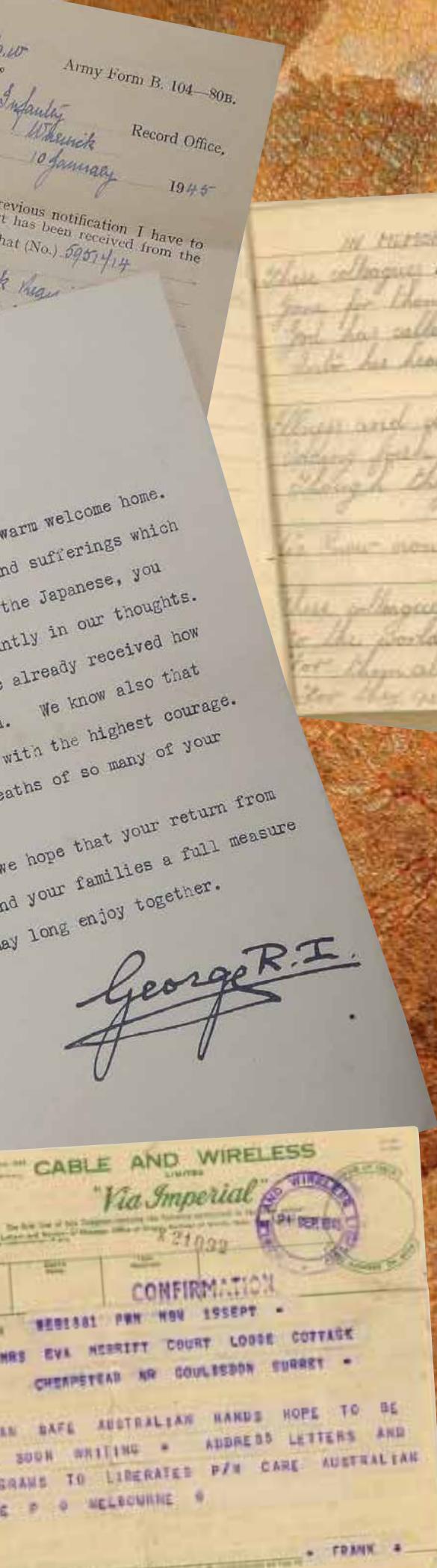
As well as the dire conditions of their imprisonment, the PoWs endured beatings, torture and other inhuman treatment.

With Japan having never ratified the Geneva Convention and its soldiers taught to consider surrender a disgrace, prisoners were often seen as the lowest of the low.

Hong Kong-based military historian Tony Banham – who has interviewed a number of troops who were captured when the then British colony fell in December 1941 – said many survivors were, unsurprisingly, left with serious mental scars.

"I never found a PoW who hadn't suffered some form of PTSD," he pointed out. "But when you look »





IN MEMORY OF OUR COMRADES
These colleagues we have lost this life
for the wall struggle and step
for us will lay under her wing.
To be known where a angel wing.

Now and forever we taking their toll
many just numbers to be honored with
though thy suffered in silence and until
though in pain
You now their courage was all in vain.

These hours of need we shall never forget
nor the bold the few paid in full their debts
for them all under now on the peace
they yet have not in full peace.

IN NUMBERS

132,142

Allied prisoners taken by Japan

27

Per cent who died in captivity

“
There was no
anger in him,
and I shall
always admire
the way he
lived his life
”



Above: Lt Gen Arthur Percival, led by a Japanese officer, walks under a flag of truce to negotiate the capitulation of Allied forces in Singapore, on February 15, 1942

SOLDIER TERMS OF SERVICE



Contains the Terms of Service for Regular and Reserve Soldiers

This is the new Soldier Terms of Service (or 'SToS') policy publication. It replaces 7 separate documents, making terms of service policy simpler, easier to find and accessible to all. It is the first time that the major elements of terms of service policy for soldiers have been centralised into a single authoritative document.

This 1st edition SToS document is a major milestone in part of an Army-wide effort to simplify, update and improve personnel policy.

Soldiers, commanders and career managers should refer to the SToS to find information on:

- Engagements (VEng, SSCP, Type 'S', MLSE and Reserve engagements)
- Promotion policy
- Assignments
- Transfers (Capbadge to capbadge, Regular to Reserve and Reserve to Regular)
- Soldier opportunities available within the Army and across Defence

DUE FOR PUBLICATION 15 JUL 20

SToS is available on MODnet and Defence Connect.
Produced by Workforce Policy, Personnel Directorate, Army HQ



■ back to the period after the Second World War the term didn't exist and there was officially no support for those returning home.

"As for the behaviour of the Japanese, I think the main factor in their treatment of the prisoners was that their army itself was internally brutal," he continued.

"Corporal punishment was normal and if the NCOs beat the private soldiers, the only thing lower in the food chain were the prisoners."

Banham recalled one story in which an ex-captive had returned to his parents but couldn't bring himself to enter their house and instead lived in the garden shed. However, an unusual ceremony helped him come to terms with his mental suffering.

"His father encouraged him to write down his experiences," the historian added. "Then they ritually burned them over a bonfire, and he walked in the home."

"It occurred to me after hearing this that the parent possibly had PTSD from the Great War and had enough empathy to understand how to help his son."

While some remained deeply affected by their treatment and forever resented their former adversaries, Banham said a number of them – like Frank Merritt – did reconcile their experiences and were able to rebuild their lives.

"One Royal Scot I knew returned from a trip to his old camp at Kobe, where he was royally entertained by both the locals and British representatives, saying that he had nothing at all against the Japanese people," he said.

"I also knew two men who met on a log floating in the South China Sea after their hell ship was sunk – they phoned each other every week for the rest of their lives."

Keith Merritt certainly remains proud of his father, both for his service as a soldier in an outfit now assimilated into the modern Royal Anglian Regiment, and for the gentle civilian into which he transformed in peacetime.

"I went to the Imperial War Museum once and saw an exhibition about the Burma Railway and quickly fell apart at the seams," he recalled. "Dad had seen so much – so many died out there; the scale of it all is unimaginable."

"My father was truly amazing – he loved my mum, his family and his football; there was no anger in him, and I shall always admire the way he lived his life." ■

IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

I am interned in *Nong Pen Camp, Thailand*
My health is excellent.
I am ill in hospital.
I am working for pay.
I am not working.
Please see that *ALL MY WIFE* is taken care of.
My love to you



Q&A

Tony Banham

Q: How many veterans have you interviewed?

A: Between 100-200 who served in Hong Kong.

Q: What happened to the surviving prisoners immediately after the conflict?

A: With many taken to prison camps in Japan, they were liberated by the Americans who flew them from Okinawa to Manila as a first step. Sadly, some aircraft crashed, killing PoWs that had survived the entire war. Others came home on aircraft carriers of the British Pacific Fleet.

Q: Do you have a view on what would have been the outcome if the atomic bomb had not been dropped?

A: Had Operation Downfall, the invasion of Japan, gone ahead, it would have been unimaginably bad. Perhaps the best measure is that the United States made 500,000 Purple Hearts to be ready off-the-shelf to be issued to the wounded. Estimates of the numbers who would have died on both sides vary, but most run into the millions. Perhaps the only open question is whether the second bomb, Nagasaki, was truly necessary.

Q: What lessons do you take away from the Second World War era in Asia?

A: I have to answer this quite simplistically and it's the answer everyone wants to hear – we should learn the futility of war.

BENEATH THE CLOUD



Hiroshima survivor reflects on a day 75 years ago that changed the world

KEIKO Ogura recalls her father having a strange feeling of unease early on the morning of August 6, 1945.

After a night of false air raid alarms he was worried enough to tell his eight-year-old daughter to skip school, which was located towards the centre of Hiroshima, and stay at home.

His gut feeling almost certainly saved her life. Like others in the city, Keiko was terrified by the frequent appearance of American aircraft, although she did not see the B-29 Superfortress carrying the atomic bomb.

But one of her three brothers working outside near the railway station clocked its stratospheric presence – a black speck cruising across the blue morning wash.

At 32,000 feet pilot Col Paul Tibbets, of the US 509th Composite Group, had put the aircraft – called Enola Gay after his mother – into a steep bank and opened the throttle. Having dropped the device known as Little Boy at 0815, it began a 43-second fall before detonating over the city.

“There was no colour; it was the brightest of white, blinding flashes,” Keiko – who as a survivor of the atomic bomb strike is known in Japan as one of the “hibakusha” – recalled to *Soldier*. “Then a huge blast came and I was knocked unconscious. When I opened my eyes there was darkness.

“Although we were all scared of the American aeroplanes, people did not have any warning and there had been no time at all to get to the air raid shelters.” ▶

“
The black rain
started to
fall...
”

Main picture: Hiroshima, just after the atomic bomb strike
Picture: US Army, courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Right: Inside an emergency relief station on the Otagawa River Embankment, August 9, 1945
Picture: Yotsugi Kawahara, courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum



» In the skies above, the shockwave from the uranium bomb's detonation at 2,000 feet smashed into the Enola Gay and two other B-29s – The Great Artiste and Necessary Evil – on the raid.

"It was as if somebody had grabbed my airplane and given it a real hard shaking," Col Tibbets would later explain.

"We saw a cloud coming up at our altitude – it was like a barrel of tar and where before there had been a city, there was now just black boiling debris."

Underneath the blazing shroud, Keiko, who had been just a mile-and-a-half from the hypocentre – the site directly below the mid-air detonation – was enveloped in an acrid black fog that gradually lifted to reveal a hellish new landscape beyond.

Having begun to regain her senses, the youngster clambered to her feet and returned to her house. She was intensely relieved to find her family alive.

"The ceiling was blown in and thousands of pieces of glass were stuck to the wall," she continued. "Then the black rain started to fall; charcoal coloured droplets contaminated with radiation, although we did not know this at the time."

"We lived near a Shinto shrine so if something happened they would become first aid stations."

"Soon hundreds of injured people who had rushed out of the city arrived but there was little help – later I remember seeing bodies of animals and people floating in the river."

As the vast human tragedy unfolded, speculation mounted about what had happened.

During 1945, with US forces closing in on the Japanese homeland, a systematic bombing campaign had already laid waste to large parts of the country's cities.

A conventional incendiary raid on Tokyo in March had killed 80,000 people alone.

But these strikes involved large numbers of aircraft over

Hiroshima: The devastated city and human suffering after the atomic bomb

Pictures: Onuka Masami Onuka, Shigeo Hayashi and US Army, courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum





Keiko the survivor

Born in August 1937, Keiko was eight years old and just under a mile-and-a-half away from the hypocentre of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima.

She has since dedicated her life to telling the world about her experiences. In 1984 she established the Interpreters for Peace organisation while giving tours and lectures in English for overseas visitors and writing several books.

long periods – Hiroshima had seemingly been obliterated in seconds; wiped from the earth in a single stroke.

Politicians presiding over a country isolated and blockaded, yet still unwilling to surrender unconditionally as the Allies demanded, were equally puzzled.

It took two days before they fully understood the atomic bomb and its realities, although they had already been warned about the consequences of failing to capitulate. Following a meeting at Potsdam, Germany, Allied leaders had announced that Japan would face "prompt and utter destruction".

In Hiroshima, the scale of the devastation and human suffering alone were testament enough to this new weapon. Climbing a hill in the 24 hours after the explosion, Keiko gazed out across a city flattened all the way out to the coast.

She saw those left attempting to treat the dead – estimated to be up to 80,000 – with as much dignity as possible. "My father cremated bodies in a park – there were hundreds of them," she recalled. "He told me to stay well away."

Amid the devastation, however, there was relief for Keiko that her entire family had survived the attack.

Although he had been injured, the brother who saw the Enola Gay was alive, along with her other brothers and two sisters. All were eventually reunited.

Following a speech to the nation by Emperor Hirohito, the Japanese formally surrendered on August 15.

This was six days after a second atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki and a declaration of war against the **»**



» country by the Soviet Union.

With peace secured, Keiko remembers British, American and Australian troops arriving in Hiroshima as the Allied powers despatched occupation forces. But there was deep suspicion of the soldiers among the local people.

"My teacher told us not to go near them because they were so cruel," she said. "I remember at the time even asking if they had horns, but when I actually saw them they were very tall and handsome – nothing at all like I had expected."

"The first English words I learned were 'give me' because the troops would hand out chocolate and sweets to us – we would circle all around them."

"Back then I also remember my father coming home with a tin that had cookies and candy in it," she added. "It was the first time I had tasted something that was sweet – we had nothing like this at all during the war years."

The rebuilding of Hiroshima began and Keiko went on to marry a director of the city's peace memorial museum – Kaoru Ogura – and have two children. Although her husband died in 1979, she continues to assist with translation work and remains committed to keeping the survivors' stories alive.

But the legacy of August 6, 1945 still resonates with her. She suffered from nightmares for many years and still has her physical health monitored by international researchers, with medical checks taking place every two years.

Thousands from Hiroshima have continued to die over the decades from diseases such as cancer, linked to radiation exposure. Meanwhile, the world now lives with the spectre of nuclear weapons very much more powerful than the Little Boy.

But now aged 82, Keiko – like many of her fellow hibakushas – remains determined to promote peace and reconciliation, while encouraging leaders to think very carefully about their responsibilities.

"I am so pleased I am here to tell our story," she concluded. "Let us think not only of our own country alone but of the earth – talking is the most important thing and we should recognise that even the smallest deeds can make a difference." ■



FACT FILE

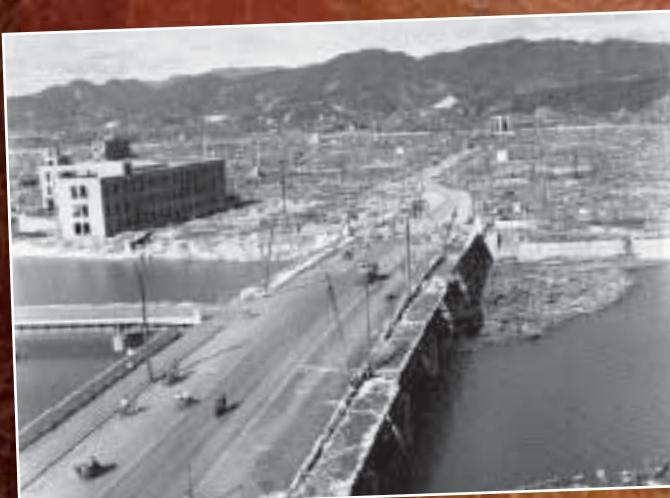
Hiroshima and Nagasaki

A staging post for Japanese soldiers during the Second World War, **Hiroshima** was a bustling city with barracks, naval docks, shipyards and a railhead.

While many civilian residents had been evacuated by the time of the attack, the atomic bomb is reckoned to have killed around **80,000** people – a third of the population. It is also believed that as many as **70,000** were injured.

Surveys carried out by the US found that **4.7 square miles** of the city were destroyed with nearly **seven out of ten buildings obliterated** and many others damaged.

Nagasaki was attacked **three days later** – the city was a major sea port as well as an industrial heartland. The conurbation was hit by Fat Man – a plutonium bomb – that killed more than **39,000** people.



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HIGH STAKES

The military has been on a steep learning curve since Hiroshima...

THE level of training that British military personnel receive today on the effects of a nuclear attack is a world away from the little that was known, or taught, about radiation back in 1945.

Thanks to the continuing work of the Defence Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Centre (DCBRNC) in Wiltshire, soldiers are better prepared than they've ever been when it comes to protecting themselves, colleagues and civilians in such circumstances.

Managed and run by the Army's Royal School of Military Engineering since last year, this facility was established back in 1917 but has never stood still when it comes to acquiring the very latest knowledge, skills and equipment.

"It simply can't afford to," SSgt Jason Pain (RA), one of the centre's instructors, tells *Soldier*.

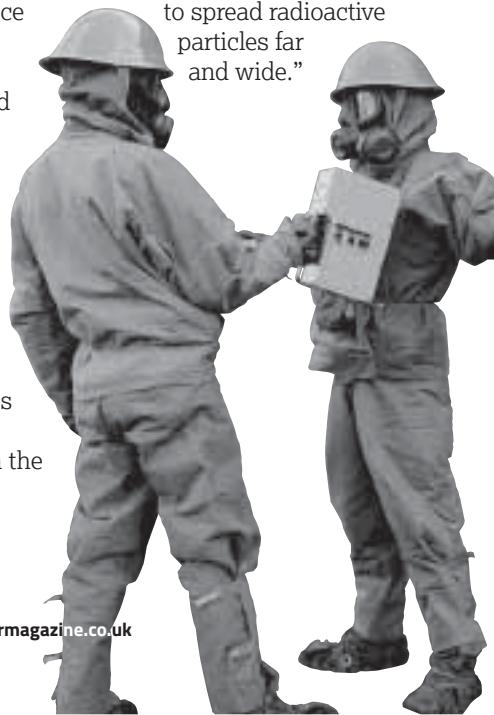
"The syllabus here has changed an awful lot in the 22 years I've been in the Army.

"It used to be mainly

focused on Cold War tactics or the actions of a known enemy state with similar capabilities to ours, but what we teach now is much broader in scope."

"The last couple of decades have demonstrated that we cannot ignore terrorist organisations or even lone-wolf operators.

"Yes, we still dedicate time to military nuclear strikes, but a considerable chunk of our teaching is also spent on how to deal with radiological dispersal devices – or dirty bombs – that do not create a nuclear explosion but use conventional devices to spread radioactive particles far and wide."



Report: Steve Muncey Pictures: DCBRNC





EXPLOSIVE STUFF

The lethal radiation cocktail from a nuclear explosion...

Alpha: Charged particles emitted from **uranium, thorium, radium and plutonium**. They have **low penetrating power** and **short range**, will generally fail to breach the skin but **can cause health effects** if introduced into the lungs or wounds

Beta: These are **fast-moving electrons** emitted by **many radioactive elements**. Exposure produces **an effect like sunburn** but they can be **easily shielded by a few millimetres of wood or aluminium**

Gamma: **Electromagnetic radiation of high energy** that can **travel great distances and penetrate other materials**. For that reason, gamma rays (such as from cobalt-60) are often used in medical applications. **Several feet of concrete** or a **few inches of dense material** (such as lead) are able to block them

Neutron: **High-speed particles**, neutrons can be **very destructive to human tissue** and are the only type of radiation that **can make other materials become radioactive**. They require **very thick hydrogen-containing materials** (such as concrete or water) to block them

Above: A student uses the ADM300 multi-function survey metre on an exercise at the recce and exploitation team course at the Defence CBRN Centre in Winterbourne Gunner

Left: Personnel from the Defence NBC School, Winterbourne Gunner trial the MD3 – the replacement for the RADIAIC No.2 radiation metre in 1971

And because radioactive materials have a greater presence in civilian life these days, CBRN specialists must also be prepared to provide support to other emergencies.

"A fire at a hospital, for example, with its various scanning machines and radiopharmaceuticals could potentially cause a radioactive incident," SSgt Pain continues.

"And what if there was an accident or attack at one of the many nuclear power stations we have around the country, or at one of the commercial sites that use radioactive sources in industrial applications?"

Calculating how large an area any fallout could potentially cover, how hazardous it actually is and for how long it will last, is the job of a handful of personnel within each regiment who have been trained up by the DCBRNC.

They include defence advisers – responsible to the unit commander for the tactical planning and execution of CBRN defence measures – and instructors whose job it is to assist them, especially with training, as well as cell controllers who carry out the CBRN warning and reporting function.

Collectively, they provide the capability to assess an extreme situation and save lives, advising commanders on where and where not to go, what kit is required in certain environments and the time spans for radiation levels to drop.

Dealing with such high stakes means the centre's training courses, which typically last from two to four weeks, are in-depth and intense affairs for the 1,200 or so Servicemen and women who pass through its doors every year.

But the learning never

stops, says SSgt Pain.

"We have discovered a lot about the effects of different types of radiation from the experiences of people who were actually on site at major nuclear incidents, such as Hiroshima and more recently Chernobyl and Fukushima," he explains.

"There are a lot of boffins working in this area who produce good information and predictions, but this type of occurrence isn't something you can easily replicate in a laboratory so each one provides extremely valuable data, as tragic as the circumstances might be."

"That expands our knowledge and helps inform how we modify or improve the operating procedures and capabilities we need."

In addition to keeping abreast of this information, the Army's CBRN specialists have to be aware of the latest kit being introduced.

"The equipment changes and improves all the time," notes SSgt Pain.

"For instance, we are now starting to receive a new handheld radiation detector called the ADM-300.

"It's a great piece of gear used to measure alpha, beta, gamma, and neutron radiation. It's highly digitised and easier to set up, carry and operate than our current kit, which for the soldier is key."

There was nothing resembling this sophisticated equipment and high levels of training 75 years ago – or even in the 1950s or 60s when nuclear weapons and knowledge of countering them were still in their infancy.

But Hiroshima changed the course of warfare forever, forcing the world's most advanced nations, including the UK, to devote significant resources to developing the highly capable CBRN capabilities we have now. ■

HANDY ADDITIONS

Soldiers' input leads to rapid improvements of the SA80 A3

THE SA80 A3 Service rifle has been further refined after feedback was received from personnel.

As a result, the modified design will feature an upgraded handguard, offering more flexibility and comfort to the user, as well as some engineering enhancements to provide a more robust and safer weapon system.

The A3 version was first fielded in 2018, predominantly to light role dismounted troops from all three Services. It enabled the fitment of the assault rifle in-line low light sight – that utilises cutting-edge sighting technology – which started to be fielded from early 2020.

Most feedback on the weapon system was positive, but some user comments led to an investigation and a number of changes. As a result, the Army worked with Defence Equipment and Support and manufacturer Heckler and Koch to come up with an early prototype using 3D printing technology.

This allowed the Infantry Trials and Development Unit (ITDU) in Warminster to carry out early test sessions and produce a metal prototype handguard for more comprehensive and live-firing trials.

"The ability to produce 3D printed mock-ups allowed the project to move at substantial pace, with various designs tested and the ability to make quick changes as issues were encountered," explained Maj Richard McMahon (REME) a member of the Army Headquarters

dismounted close combat through-life support team.

It took just over 12 months from initial identification of issues to fielding a solution – in equipment procurement terms an exceptionally short time.

"ITDU have now secured a 3D printer for themselves, allowing in-house instant prototyping, supporting an even more agile development process," continued Maj McMahon.

"As an example, since getting that kit, they have developed and trialled several new designs of battle sight for the SA80 A3 for close country tropical environments, allowing much simpler, quicker and low-cost experimentation."

The new A3 handguard will offer more flexibility and comfort to the user as well as some engineering enhancements to provide a more robust and safer weapon system, explained the officer.

Some 10,000 of the updated weapons will start to be delivered later this year, with all existing SA80 A3 units receiving the new handguard as a direct replacement for the current one from October 2020.

Maj McMahon believes the development of the system is proof that the chain of command pays attention to soldiers on the ground.

"If you are asked for your thoughts, please give them freely because we do listen, and your opinion drives change," he added. ■

Report: Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main





ON THE MOVE

The first batch of the revolutionary new vehicles has been delivered to the Army

THE AJAX FAMILY

The name Ajax applies to the family of vehicles, but also to the turreted variant (above right) specifically.

The other versions are:

- **Ares** – reconnaissance support
- **Athena** – command and control
- **Apollo** – equipment repair
- **Atlas** – equipment recovery
- **Argus** – engineering reconnaissance



“WE'RE all just chuffed they are here,” shouted LCoH Ashley Halstead (RHG/D) over the thrumming engine noise from an Oshkosh 8 x 8 heavy equipment transporter. “It's a brilliant piece of engineering and it certainly opened my eyes when I first saw it.”

The junior NCO watched on as the most sophisticated vehicle ever produced for the British Army was gingerly lowered down on to the Tarmac at the Household Cavalry Regiment's base in Bulford.

The unit was taking possession of its first batch of armoured fighting assets from the Ajax family, consisting of five of the Ares reconnaissance support variants – which don't feature the 40mm cannon-equipped turret.

These platforms might look pretty conventional on the outside, but under

the armour plate they are brimming with the latest technology.

“For me, the fail-safe features are super impressive,” said LCoH Halstead, one of the regiment's driving and maintenance instructors on the vehicle.

“Basically, if something breaks down the systems will find their own work-around to keep the vehicle functioning.

“That's a capability that will really benefit us out on the battlefield.”

The British Army's first fully digitised armoured asset, the Ajax variants are not only more capable than their CVR(T) predecessors in every way but their highly computerised systems allow the personnel inside to fight the fight rather than be occupied operating the vehicle, explained commanding officer Lt Col Mark Berry (LG).

“This really feels like it has been designed around the personnel,” he added. “The advanced sensors,

computers and digitisation of functions do a lot of the thinking for the crew, allowing them to devote more time to their role in the battle than they ever could before.”

With an ability to collect and share data, be it images or other information, via an integrated Bowman communication system, and to be networked with other platforms in the combat zone, Ajax vehicles are virtually mobile computers, explained another of the regiment's instructors, WO2 Nathan Turner (LG).

“The crew have to log on just to start operating them,” he added.

“I've found, when training soldiers, that the younger generation just get it really quickly because they're so familiar with this sort of technology – in my opinion it's totally suited to the so-called Playstation generation.”

He added: “We are training up on the



IN NUMBERS

230

UK companies providing products and services for Ajax

42

Weight in tonnes of heaviest variant

800

Output in horsepower of its MTU V8 engine

£5.5

billion

Estimated economic benefit to the UK

2025

Scheduled year of the last deliveries to the British Army

Ares variant first but as a regiment we'll be using all six versions.

"Once we're fully equipped, we'll be capable of observing and engaging the enemy further out with optical, infrared and thermal imaging sights and the more capable weaponry.

"Other stand-out features for me are the protective capabilities such as the laser warning system, so you know when you've been targeted, a self-defence weapons station for any light armament we put on it, such as a L7 GPMG up to a .50-cal or grenade launcher, and the advanced armour, which is a huge improvement over the CVR(T)s."

Ajax provides such an uplift in capability the Household Cavalry is already thinking about ways they can exploit the vehicles' potential with their role in the new Strike brigades in mind.

"It's fair to say we are already looking

at new tactics," explained Lt Col Berry.

"This family of vehicles is so advanced we have the option of changing the established way we do things, which is very exciting.

"The sights and sensors and the way information can be shared means we can see out much further and understand the battlefield more quickly.

"So, as an example, we could spread our forces further apart if we wanted. In theory, whereas a troop of four Scimitar vehicles would have covered, say, between five and ten kilometres of frontage, that could now be covered by fewer Ajax vehicles."

"That means you can do a lot more with the assets you have."

WO2 Turner is also looking forward to exploring the potential of the platform.

"For years in the CVR(T)s we sneaked around the battlefield – our mission was to remain undetected because we were

pretty vulnerable, but with this range of assets we can look for the enemy, fix their position and strike if necessary.

"Even if we are detected we have the ability to fight back. The Scimitar's 30mm weapon was nicknamed the peashooter and was considered our last form of defence – you'd always look to artillery and fast air to get you out of trouble first."

"But now we have the capability to punch our own way out with the CT40, and it has a 62-round magazine so you can really take a pop at the enemy."

The regiment is hoping to start using the Ares variants in the field within a few weeks as an increasing number of personnel are trained up and become qualified to operate the sophisticated systems in these impressive vehicles.

Commanders hope the first complete squadron will become operational in early 2021. ■

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Time to take steps on retention

LIKE many of my colleagues, I'm perplexed and disillusioned by those who sit at the top table.

Why is there always a focus on recruiting numbers when we fail to retain the quality we already have?

Manning levels will continue to drop until commanders start listening to those at the foundational level of the military pyramid. Wake up! — **Name and address supplied**

Col Rob Alston, Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Personnel, Headquarters Field Army, replies:
Increasing the Army's manning is CGS' top priority and we are focused on doing this through measures that address both inflow and retention.

Total outflow has remained relatively consistent since 1990 and still sits within the historical average of between nine and 12 per cent of the Force each year, but the Army does aim to both reduce the number

of those who are being discharged and those choosing to leave.

The Service has a comprehensive series of measures to improve retention, from an empowerment programme that encourages tactical activity from unit level, up to Programme Castle, which aims to deliver transformational change in the way in which the Army employs and retains people.

Our retention strategy is underpinned by extensive research on the reasons people choose to either remain in service or leave, supported by the optimising physical performance programme which comprises a range of research that aims to reduce people leaving through injury.

The Army also relies on the delivery of a number of pan-defence initiatives to support retention, such as the future accommodation model and targeted financial measures.

“Manning will continue to drop”

CAR TROUBLE ON POSTING ABROAD

● I WOULD like to share my experience of being posted abroad midway through a personal contract purchase (PCP) agreement in the hope that others might avoid the same difficulties.

Having taken out a contract with Audi/Volkswagen Financial Services in 2017, I was subsequently posted to Germany in 2019.

The PCP stated I must seek permission to take the car overseas for more than 60 days, so I applied and was refused.

I appealed the decision, citing the Armed Forces Covenant and explaining the vehicle would still be DVLA-registered, however this was unsuccessful, too.

Not satisfied with this "computer says no" approach, I took the case to the

Financial Ombudsman Service and, to cut a very long story short, ten months on, have finally been allowed to hand the car back without incurring a penalty for ending the contract early.

This has saved me a few thousand pounds, but I have ultimately spent a similar amount in monthly repayments for a vehicle that I haven't been able to use for the best part of a year.

Other companies may be more understanding about the extenuating circumstances that come with military service, but my advice is to clarify this before signing anything if there is even the smallest chance your next posting might take you abroad.

You could save yourself a lot of frustration. — **WO2 Mike Owens, RE**

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

✉ mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk



CAREERS

Army Communications, the specialist unit based at Army Headquarters at Andover, is recruiting two Reserve SO1s and three SO2s. The new incumbents will be Reservists or recent ex-Regular officers with specialisms in media, comms, marketing, PR or journalism. The roles encompass an exciting, broad portfolio opportunity, with potential to support or lead projects across any of the Army Comms branches, eg campaigns, news, media ops, internal comms, digital comms and events. Look out for the job specs on [MS web](#).

Linx Security Training is offering a 20 per cent reduction on 28 courses for serving and former personnel through the MoD-approved Defence Discount Service. The courses on offer range from technical skills to management with industry-approved qualifications. Visit www.linxtraining.co.uk

Interested in a career as a personal trainer? Ultimate Performance is expanding and on the lookout for more ex-Service personnel to join its growing ranks. Visit www.upfitness.com/en/careers for more information.

The Recruit for Spouses coaching programme, which helps Army partners get back into employment, has received a funding boost to help it reach more husbands and wives. To apply for a six-week course of one-hour sessions contact coaching@recruitforspouses.co.uk

Forces Families Jobs is a new platform designed to help partners into meaningful employment. Visit www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk to see the site, which is free to advertise on for employers who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant.



SEARCHLINE

Hugh Corby is trying to trace the military medals and citations of his late father, Capt Eric Corby (RA), who served as a forward observation officer during the Second World War. Anyone with information is asked to contact him on 07961 606766.

Jacqui Ritchie, general manager at St John's Wood Care Centre, 48 Boundary Road, London

is trying to find more information about the building's former life as an Army barracks. The centre celebrates its 20th anniversary in October and is keen to invite veterans to the celebration. Anyone with memories to share should email stjohnswoodmanager@bondcare.co.uk

Retired Royal Air Force

Serviceman Andrew Clark is a collector of British military tokens used in Iraq and Afghanistan and is seeking examples of pre-2007 issues to boost his collection. If you have any items of interest email amcpapermoneyman@aol.com

The Air Training Corps, now part of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets, will celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2021. To help mark the occasion, they would like to identify those who were cadets when the formation launched in 1941 and interview them to capture memories of those early days. Email al.munns@btinternet.com

The Women's Royal Army Corps Association has launched a campaign to find the oldest British female Second World War veteran. To nominate someone you think may meet the criteria visit www.wracassociation.org or use #FindOurOATS on social media.

Anita Louise Watson is trying to trace her father, James Watson, who served as a lance corporal in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers during the 70s. Anyone with information should email anitawatson164@gmail.com



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chair@armylgbt.org.uk

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Army Ornithological Society:

www.armybirding.org.uk

Army Welfare Service:

01904 882053;
www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support

Big White Wall:

www.bigwhitewall.com

Blesma, The Limbless Veterans:

020 8590 1124;
www.blesma.org

Blind Veterans UK:

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

Care After Combat:

www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:

020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service:

01980 618244;
dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk

Combat Stress:

24-hour Mental Health Helpline for service personnel and their families
0800 323 4444;
www.combatstress.org.uk

Defence Humanists:

www.defencehumanists.org.uk

Erskine:

0141 814 4569;
www.erskine.org.uk

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Germany – 0800 1827 395;
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Falklands – #6111;
from operational theatres –
Paradigm Services *201; from
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will call back) – 0044 1980 630854

Forces Pension Society:
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www.forcespensionsociety.org

Help for Heroes:
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01980 846 459;
www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
www.highground-uk.org.uk
07951 495 272

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01252 787574

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or
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Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group):
www.mutual-support.org.uk

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The Forces Pension Society is staging a number of roadshows at garrison locations throughout the year, as well as FAR (financial aspects of resettlement) briefings. See www.forcespensionsociety.org/news-events/events for the latest dates and details.

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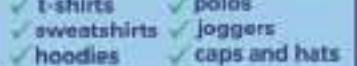
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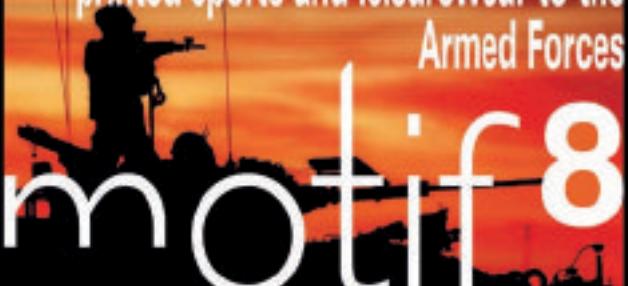
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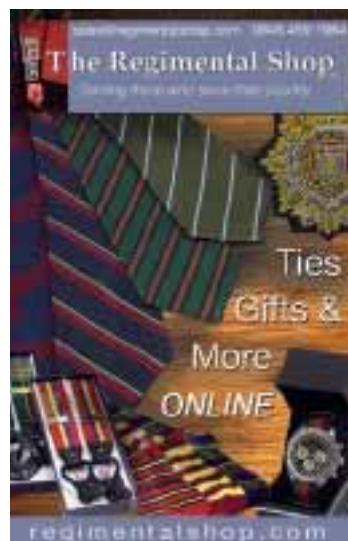
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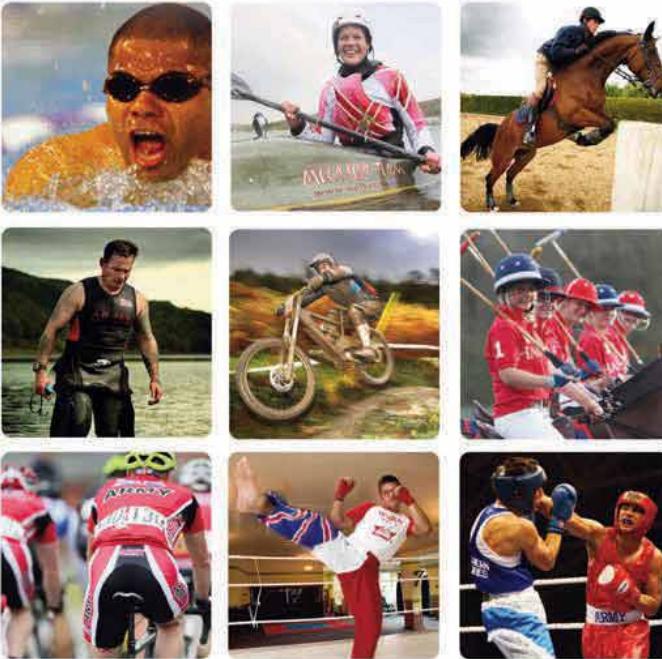
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REVIEWS



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A Celebration of Endings

Turbocharged trio inject much needed impetus into musical landscape

► DECENT British rock music is hardly saturating the charts at present, meaning there is little in the way of competition for the manufactured teeny-pop and unintelligible American rap offerings that currently dominate proceedings.

However, **Biffy Clyro's** latest effort is an album that could potentially break the stranglehold.

Here, the Scottish three-piece manage to mix their traditional vocal, drum and guitar combinations with pianos in, dare I say it, a Queen-esque manner – *The Champ* being the prime example.





Opening track *North of No South* will blow you back into your sofa with its *Bohemian Rhapsody* harmonies. Don't believe it's possible? Neither did I, until I heard it.

Summer festivals may not be happening this year, but if they were, *Tiny Indoor Fireworks* would be an obvious anthem. Complete with cheeky lyrics and occasional guitar picking, it is easy to imagine everyone – bandanas on, lighters in the air – singing along in a muddy field drinking home brew.

Following that up, and surely the band's set-list closer, would have to be *Instant History* – a track that could easily finish any 21st century live show thanks to its synthesisers, pianos and eerie vocals. It is just a shame we will have to wait until 2021 to see it properly.

There are hints of old-school punk on *Cop Syrup* which, if you didn't know it was Biffy Clyro, you could easily mistake for a 70s leather-and-denim-clad garage outfit singing about how angry they are at their situation.

But the song I found myself listening to again and again was *End of*.

With bone-rattling bass notes and high-pitched lead guitars throughout, this epic tune hasn't had anything like it since **Limp Bizkit** dared to provide the soundtrack for *Mission Impossible II*.

While the aforementioned offerings are the best, the strength of this album comes from the fact I couldn't remember a bad song or one I couldn't happily listen to again.

A Celebration of Endings was certainly a pleasant surprise, and Biffy Clyro are a band I'll be looking out for when they hopefully return to the stage in the not-too-distant future. ■



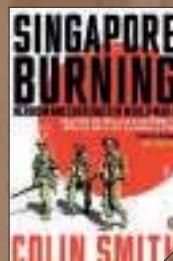
VERDICT:

Anthems galore as rockers return in style ★★★★

REVIEW: CPL SCOTT ROBERTS, RIFLES

VJ DAY 75: REQUIRED READING

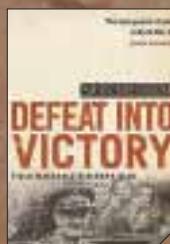
Want to brush up on your knowledge of the Second World War in the Far East? *Soldier* contributor and historian Mike Peters (ex-AAC) gives his five top tips...



Singapore Burning

by Colin Smith

IN DECEMBER 1941 Singapore was Britain's main outpost in the Far East – an impregnable base for British and Commonwealth naval forces, defended by a large garrison, RAF fighters and coastal gun batteries. This book documents the shocking collapse and ultimate capitulation of the Allies in the face of an audacious Japanese attack, really bringing home the grim realities of the early weeks of the war. It is an uncomfortable read from a British perspective, but there is much to learn from what is still regarded as our greatest military disaster.



Defeat into Victory

by Field Marshal William Slim

THIS recommendation is a classic read on the subject, written by the man who commanded the "Forgotten Army" that is mentioned so much on VJ Day. This is a book that I have read many times – it really does give a feeling for the time and the remarkable achievements of the men who fought in Burma. It describes the campaign from both the strategic and operational level, but it is the mark of Slim as a commander that he still gets down into the trench of the private soldier and views the battle from there – a classic in the true sense and the most readable memoir written by a senior officer.



Burma '44

by James Holland

EQUALLY engaging in its narrative, this book offers a wider view of a campaign that was very much at the heart of Britain's effort to block the Japanese advance into India – and was the turning point of the Far East war. The 14th Army – the aforementioned "Forgotten Army" – fought their way back almost from India, across Burma, driving the once invincible Japanese before them. This superb effort tells that story from many perspectives, each phase of the campaign illustrated with a good range of maps and photographs.

BOOKS



Quartered Safe Out Here

by George MacDonald-Fraser

THIS choice is probably the most outstanding personal memoir of the campaign in Burma from 1944-45. If you want to try to understand the British soldier's experience of fighting in the most unforgiving terrain against a relentless and merciless enemy, this is the book to read. The author's gripping account of his own war and that of the Commonwealth, Indian and Gurkha soldiers alongside him is totally absorbing.



With the Old Breed

by E B Sledge

VERY much written from an American viewpoint, this is an immersive chronicle of the US Marine Corps' hard-fought island-hopping campaign in the East, and was the basis for the HBO TV series *Pacific*. The fighting is savage by any standard and the author pulls no punches in his descriptions of combat in that theatre.

And one for the collectors...

Eagle Against the Sun

by Ronald H Spector

FIRST published in 1985, this account of the war in the Pacific was awarded the Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt Prize for Naval History and remains compulsory reading for officer cadets at the US Military Academy West Point.

Reproduced as a collectors' edition to mark the 75th anniversary of VJ Day, this Folio Society offering features three entirely new hand-drawn maps, 32 pages of black and white photographs and a new foreword by Paul Kennedy, Professor of History at Yale University.

The text details the conflict on land, sea, and air – from the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor, through to the battles of Midway, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and finally the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The author, himself a Vietnam veteran, analyses the command

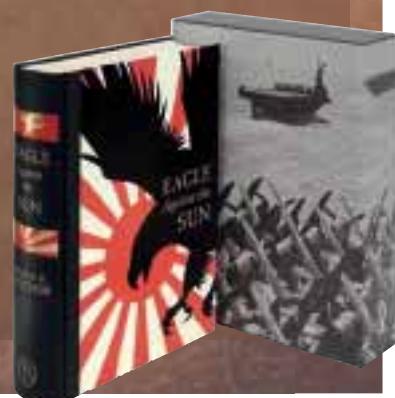
decisions – both mistakes and successes – and the impacts they had on the course of the conflict, as well as those who fought in it.

A must-read for anyone with an interest in the Second World War, this special edition is the ultimate keepsake for any military enthusiast.

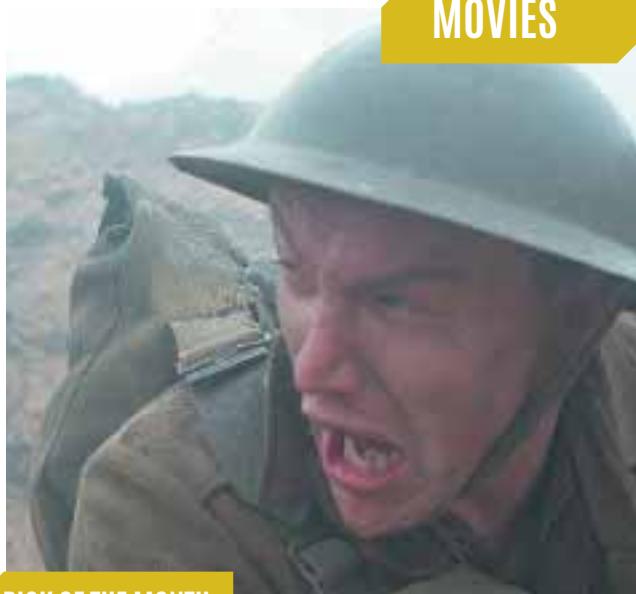
I couldn't rate this book any higher – I find myself going back to it at least once a week to re-read passages and study the maps again.

It is simply splendid and well worth the investment.

Sgt Adam Jackson, Para



MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH:

BEHIND THE LINE

War drama packs a punch

AMIDST the chaos of the British Expeditionary Force's retreat to Dunkirk, soldiers Danny and Billy are separated from their unit and captured by the Germans.

Taken to a holding camp along with several other prisoners, their chances of escape seem bleak, but then the Nazi commander recognises Danny as a champion boxer and forces him to fight for his troops' entertainment, sowing the seeds for an audacious breakout plan.

That's the premise of new independent film *Behind the Line*, released on digital this month.

It stars **Sam Gittins** (*EastEnders, The Smoke*) in the role of Danny and was directed by documentary and filmmaker **Ben Mole**, who explained he set out to create an authentic telling of a Serviceman's experience in the Second World War.

"I was looking for true stories because I didn't want it to be all fantasy," he told *Soldier*.

"I found an account about some troops who were massacred, but some had escaped and been taken prisoner, and one was a boxer – and I thought what if they could use his boxing to stage an escape?

"So, it's not technically his true story, but it's very much inspired by him."

Having seen Gittins' performance in another movie, Mole approached him to play the lead – a decision that was to pay dividends.

"I wanted to work with him because he's brilliant," continued Mole.

"I knew he'd be perfect, but then it turns out he's a boxer too. It was like every star aligned."

Gittins' ability in the ring is clear to see as Danny is forced to take on opponents of increasing size, culminating in a turn from none other than **"Big Joe" Egan** in the role of the Nazis' hulking star pugilist.

A further coincidence transpired in the choice





Ben Mole
is keen to hear from
any readers who have
comments on the film,
or suggestions for future
projects. Email him on
ben.mole@yahoo.co.uk

Behind the Line is
available on iTunes from
August 3



of filming location – Suffolk, which was picked for its strong resemblance to north-west France.

"It turned out that the real Danny Finnegan was in the Suffolk Regiment," Mole added.

"That unit was in the BEF, in the battle for France, and some of its troops did get captured and were taken to the holding camps, before getting transported to Germany.

"There are lots of little details like that, which I think – put together – make it feel a bit more gritty and immediate."

Shot over two weeks on a limited budget, this is not an epic panorama on the scale of Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*, nor is it really the boxing equivalent of star-studded footballing caper *Escape to Victory*.

Instead, it tells a more intimate story of one group of men struggling to survive their war.

Its small cast and modest sets give it the feel of a stage production translated for the big screen – not unlike *Journey's End*.

But that is also in keeping with the era it portrays – the BEF was scattered into isolated groups during the retreat, and the Germans had yet to establish the massive infrastructure that would have been more challenging for Mole and his team to recreate.

There are some decent special effects in the opening sequence, too, and Gittins brings an intensity to his role throughout, not just during the fight scenes.

Ultimately, Mole believes what the movie lacks in scope it makes up for in heart, and hopes he has done justice to the veteran community.

"Over the years I've made various documentaries about conflict and met hundreds of ex-soldiers, from Iraq to Vietnam and the Second World War," he said.

"You always come away wanting to honour their stories and this film allowed us to do that." ■

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*

Q&A with *Behind the Line*'s leading man, Sam Gittins

What made you sign up for this film?

I just loved the concept. I liked that the script was true to a tough, tight-lipped soldier of that time, but also it had this boxing journey in it and some really cinematic action moments. As a kid I loved films like *Rocky*, *Raging Bull* – anything that involved boxing. Also, Ben and I connected really well and I was excited to work with him.

How much boxing had you done before filming?

I got to an Amateur Boxing Association final when I was younger and more recently boxed in the Queensbury League on Eurosport. I don't really fight anymore but I still train with my mates, so I was fit going into this film. I loved doing the fight scenes.

How did you go about preparing to play a soldier?

Just before filming this I was doing a Netflix shoot where I was playing an American soldier,

so I'd already spent quite a lot of time in the Imperial War Museum – it's local to me and I've always liked going there. I also listen to podcasts by historian Dan Carlin, who does really in-depth episodes about the world wars. I'd recommend them to anyone who's interested in history.

What other projects do you have in the pipeline?

The Netflix film is called *The Liberator* – it's about the discovery of the Nazi death camps at the end of the Second World War. And I'm in a snooker film called *Break*, which is out soon.

Ever thought about joining the Army?

Not really, but some of my boxing friends did. Like most of Britain though, I've always felt an allegiance to the military. People have a massive respect for them and deservedly so, so when you're preparing for this kind of film you feel an extra responsibility to do right by them.

Want to join our review team?

Email reviews@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Arkansas

Out now on DVD

DESPITE promising an entertaining storyline, this is a slow and quite flat offering. Director **Clarke Duke**'s debut brings some Tarantino-esque flashes, but they don't really add any depth. The plot revolves around Kyle Ribb (**Liam Hemsworth**) – a small-time drug runner working for Frog (**Vince Vaughn**) – and his escapades with fellow trafficker Swin Horn (Duke). Surprisingly, the duo are assisted by Ranger Bright (**John Malkovich**), who is also on the drug lord's payroll. There are a few twists and turns, which are all pretty predictable, as are the peaks and endings. That said, this is an easy watch that will pass the time on a quiet evening.

WO1 Alan Brewer, RLC

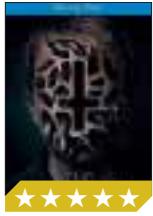


Greyhound

Out now on digital

HAVING fallen victim to pandemic-induced theatre closures, this edge-of-your-seat naval epic is now available on Apple TV+ instead. **Tom Hanks** is at his usual best as the captain of the titular destroyer, protecting Allied convoys during the Battle for the Atlantic – surely one of the most terrifying and overlooked campaigns of the Second World War. The film captures the nerve-shredding tension of crossing stormy seas, while German U-boats lurk below, ready to strike at any moment. Some of the action sequences are hard to follow if, like me, you lack a detailed knowledge of maritime warfare, but at least watching from home you can pause and rewind.

WO2 Mike Owens, RE



The Assent

Out now on DVD

IN this new tale of supernatural terror, single father Joel (**Robert Kazinsky**) suspects his son may be possessed. However, he is struggling with his own mental

health and cannot be sure what is real. He is aided by Father Lambert (**Peter Jason**), who seeks his own redemption after the death of a child during a failed exorcism. What follows is a clever and well put-together plot – a refreshing change in the saturated horror genre. Turn the volume up as the sound effects are seriously good. This is an excellent watch.

Roger Tapply, ex-RE



PICK OF THE MONTH:

HELL LET LOOSE

Online WW2 campaign expands

► THE Second World War has been the backdrop to countless outings on the video game scene in the past two decades – some far better than others.

The trend started with the highly acclaimed *Medal of Honor* on the original PlayStation in 2000 while the *Call of Duty* and *Battlefield* titles have since attracted subsequent generations of digital warriors over the years.

But thankfully, games with some depth have emerged from the hordes of first-person shooters set during the 1939-45 conflict.

And *Hell Let Loose* – which bizarrely started on the sketchbook of a former movie special effects pro as he recovered from an accident on holiday – is the latest case in point.

The PC multiplayer tactical shooter has been picking up a decent online following since its release as an early access title on Steam in the summer of last year.

But now the seventh update, which includes an overhauled animation system, enhanced audio and a new campaign, has raised the bar significantly.

Players can take to the field as infantry as

well as armoured personnel, while separate chats for commanders and subordinates make this an intensely tactical outing requiring some significant planning. And with battles involving 50 players per side, *Hell Let Loose* is also warfare on a serious scale.

Max Rea – the driving force behind the title and boss of studio Black Matter – recalled first conceiving of the title after suffering an injury on the ski slopes.

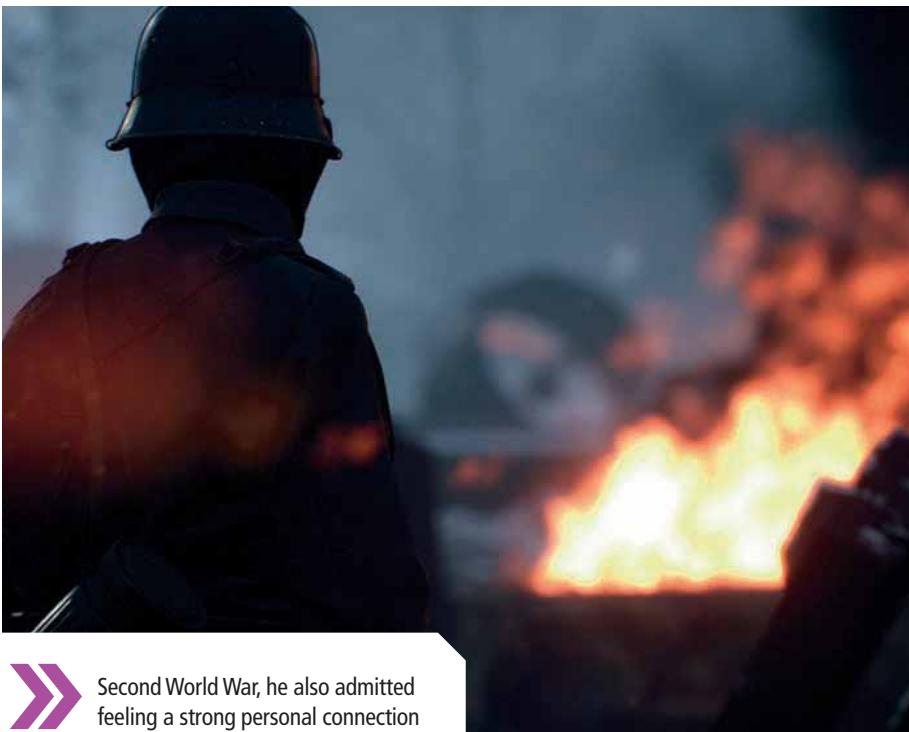
"Back in 2010 there were six days when I was recovering and had nothing to do," he recalled. "I'd never had any involvement with creating video games before but had a pen and paper with me – so I had started putting down some ideas for what I saw as the ultimate Second World War PC experience."

"Since then we've had a regular core of people working on the game plus five or ten repeat collaborators with us – it is exciting and we continue to have a loyal community of players who have supported us throughout."

While the project was continuing to gather pace following its first appearance in the summer of 2019, Rea stressed that his team had painstakingly worked to capture the authenticity of the period, kit and battlefields.

With both his grandfathers having respectively served with the British Army and Royal Air Force during the





Second World War, he also admitted feeling a strong personal connection to the conflict – and responsibility to doing the era justice.

"As well as having relatives who were serving, I was brought up on films such as *Saving Private Ryan* and the TV series *Band of Brothers*," Rea added. "I think there is generally quite a mystique around the whole period.

"We all did a lot of research for the game and had historical advisers helping us – it was important that we had a good general understanding of the time.

"It is not until you have actually had the chance to hold a German MG42 machine gun or an American M1 Garand rifle that you realise how heavy they were for soldiers," he added.

"And the average infantryman then was only 5ft 8in tall."

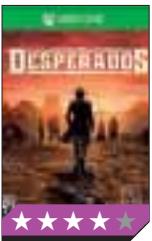
The battlefields on which *Hell Let Loose* take place have so far included the D-Day beaches and the countryside of northern France. But the developer said the new campaign in the French town of Carentan was an opportunity to engage in urban combat.

"The real-world fighting there was brutal, and it is that experience that we have aimed to reproduce as accurately as possible for players," the ex-movie pro – whose work included *Hacksaw Ridge* with Mel Gibson – said.

"And the new animation we have introduced with the latest update is the icing on the cake of all this – we're pleased that it pushes everything a bit further."

Hell Let Loose is certainly an ambitious first video game project for the lead developer – who has been working with publisher Team 17 on the title.

GAMES RELEASES



Desperados 3

for Xbox, PS4 and PC

WITH its mix of real-time strategy, tactics and stealth, the latest outing in the *Desperados* series is every bit as engrossing as it is rewarding to play.

Featuring five characters with their own abilities and weapon sets, this effective prequel to the first game in the franchise plays out against the American west of the 1870s while centred on the fortunes of bounty hunter John Cooper. With different ways to approach a variety of missions, the experience is underpinned by some spectacular graphics and a well-rendered soundtrack. Showdown mode – which allows for multiple attacks on your adversaries with overtones of the old *Max Payne* titles – is especially fun.

Sgt Ben Maher, RLC



Minecraft Dungeons

All formats

Presented very differently from its previous incarnations, this title isn't about mining or crafting. It's a hack-and-slash styled dungeon crawler, a la the iconic *Gauntlet* games

that were the mainstay of arcades in the 1980s. Packed with baddies, all of which have been taken from *Minecraft*'s regular pool of monsters, this is essentially a more accessible and gore-free version of *Diablo*, where you get to enjoy the series' environments from a different perspective. There's plenty of scope for multiplayer mayhem in this simple but fun offering.

David McDougall, civvy

WIN



Do Not Feed the Monkeys for Switch

● THIS unconventional offering has had us captivated. *Do Not Feed the Monkeys* provides players with access to the CCTV cameras of the shadowy fictional Primate Observation Group. With this window into the lives of seemingly random individuals, some of whom appear to have nefarious intentions, there are soon ways to influence events for better or worse. A warning – this title contains mature content. We have a copy to give away. Simply tell us who wrote the novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Send your entry to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk. Usual rules apply.

VERDICT:

Virtual tacticians and soldiers will not be disappointed



INTERVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, SOLDIER
GAME REVIEW: DAVID MCDougall
AND CPL CAMERON WHATMORE, RLC

SOLDIER SPORT



BACK ON COURSE »

WITH lockdown restrictions easing the Army Sport Control Board has announced a return to action for a handful of athletic pursuits – with golf proposing a resumption of play at unit level. Read more about this, and the plans made by other disciplines, on pages 70-72...





LET THE GAMES BEGIN

SERVICE MOVES TOWARDS A SPORTING RETURN AS FIRST DISCIPLINES GET THE GO-AHEAD TO RESUME

AFTER an absence of more than four months, Service sport has been given the green light to make a tentative resumption.

Angling, archery, equitation, golf and surfing all received the go-ahead to proceed last month, with cricket, shooting, sailing and motorsport swiftly following suit as Army Headquarters rubber stamped a return to play.

Details of exactly how these disciplines will proceed are still being ironed out but social distancing and observing criteria set by the military and various governing bodies will be integral to the planning.

The initial proposals were made by the Army Sport Control Board (ASCB) and its director, Maj Gen (Retd) Shaun Burley, has welcomed the decision after what has been a challenging period for personnel.

And in a further positive step, plans are now being drawn up for a phased return of other disciplines in the coming weeks, with decisions on the likes of athletics, swimming, cycling, tennis and triathlon due early next month.

A verdict on contact sports such as football, rugby union and boxing is expected to be made later in September.

While this represents good news, Burley admitted the Service's athletes will experience a distinctly different sporting landscape when their fixture lists resume.

"Most facilities and clubhouses are still closed," he told *SoldierSport*. "The Army has said we can only stage single day activities – there can be no car sharing and people must turn up in their kit, and

then go home and change.

"Obviously, hand washing will be a requirement and we will look to minimise the use of shared equipment.

"But on the whole, I am delighted – as I'm sure a lot of other people in the Army are. They want to be playing sport as it offers them respite from such busy programmes.

"As an organisation we're all about making sure there are opportunities for every soldier who wants to take part.

"To get this boxed off has been really important."

Angling was an obvious inclusion on the initial list given the fact it was one of the first sports to resume as the government started to ease lockdown restrictions.

"It was not unexpected," Maj Gus Brindle (AGC (SPS)), secretary of the Army Angling Federation, explained.

"The various discipline chairmen are now in the process of rewriting safety guidelines. From a regional perspective, the programme will start fairly quickly but we are not anticipating a full Army Championships at this stage.

"We'll look to conduct draws online so when people arrive at a fishery they can go straight to their peg and start fishing.

"In many ways, competitive angling under Covid-19 rules is much safer in comparison to recreational fishing.

"With the latter, you cannot control when people will turn up and leave – they can also get up and move around. In a match, you are in a set position for a certain amount of time, which means maintaining social distancing is easier.

"The guys are really keen to



**"I HOPE
WE WILL
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ON THE
COURSE"**

get back up and running. As one of the first Army sports to reopen, we see this as an opportunity to perhaps attract a few more people to the fold."

Like angling, golf was one of the first pursuits to return at national level and Capt Jack Musgrove (RA), captain of the Army men's team, told *SoldierSport* unit-level competitions will provide the initial focus.

A decision on this season's Inter-Services showdown has yet to be made but he said simply returning to the course is the most important thing.

"It is very good news," Musgrove added. "The guidelines on what we can and cannot do are very clear.

"For now, we are working on unit-level, one-day events so we can get some participation back.

"The Army Golf Association is looking to organise regional competitions in a bid to get as many people involved as possible. I hope we will see some new players out on the course, or individuals from other sports coming in.

"This is definitely a step in the right direction and has been really positive news."

For surfing, the situation is slightly different given the fact the season does not fully start until September.

"We pushed hard to be one of the first sports to get the green light from the Army," explained Capt Tim Cushnie (R Irish), secretary of Army Surfing.

"It is an activity that lends itself to social distancing; you're out on the water in what is quite a wide playing field.

"Having said that, we have got some work to do to make sure we keep everyone safe. →



AWARDS ON HOLD

WITH this year's fixture list decimated by the coronavirus outbreak, the decision has been made to cancel the annual Army Sports Awards.

The gala event, which was due to be held in November, is scheduled to return in 2021 and the athletic achievements recorded prior to the lockdown will be carried forward to form an extended qualifying period for honours and nominations.

"It is something we didn't want to do," Maj Gen (Retd) Shaun Burley, director of the Army Sport Control Board, explained.

"We spoke to all the secretaries and while a number said there had been enough activity this year to make nominations, there are other sports that are missing entire seasons.

"We will make sure the next awards capture everything that has happened during these times, while also reflecting the achievements of our athletes at big events like the Olympics and World Masters Games.

"It is a real shame. This is something that has grown and grown and is now a flagship event for the Army."



**"THE
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→ "We've been fortunate that this has happened in a period of time where the waves are not as good, and we now have a couple of events planned for September through to November."

The coronavirus outbreak meant a proposed tour to Indonesia was cancelled and Cushnie said the surfers are still waiting to discover if the Inter-Services competition will happen this year.

"There is a possibility it will be delayed until November," the officer added.

"But, on the whole, I believe the resumption of sport is important – it's part of what draws people to the military."

While archery has been given the go-ahead at Army level, the Service's sharpshooters are still waiting on permission for competitions to resume from the sport's governing body.

"At the moment we are allowed to train, which is great," said SSgt Craig Cherrie (RLC, pictured left), secretary of the Army Archery Association.

"Archery GB are all over this and when we do start up again all the relevant guidelines will be in place. There will be fewer people on the shooting lines and we will have to avoid

sharing equipment.

"We've used the lockdown period to organise some new kit and the team is excited to go out and start competing in that.

"We might have to push the Inter-Services back slightly, and we'll try to fit a training camp in, but we're really pleased to be shooting again."

The Army Equitation Association staged a get-together for its dressage riders as this issue went to press and secretary Maj Nicola Rush (RAMC) told *SoldierSport* similar facilities for the eventing and show jumping teams will follow this month.

"A lot of work was needed very quickly and we are taking it a step at a time," she added. "We have to see where our riders are at as they've all had varying experiences during the lockdown – some have not even had access to their horses."

"It is fair to say they are champing at the bit. We have got a really good team and I'm confident we can return in the safest way possible."

Rush is now finalising a fixture list for the rest of the year, including the possibility of a condensed UK Armed Forces Championships in October. ■

RACE THE WORLD



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AFRICA



EUROPE



SOUTH AMERICA



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Final Word



Personally, it is the camaraderie that our teams and associations offer when we come together to train and race.

Capt Katrina Matthews, RAMC



For me it is all about getting back in the ring – sparring and fighting – and travelling the world doing what I love.

Gnr Tori-Ellis Willetts, RA



My focus will be on Olympic qualifying and fulfilling my childhood dream. I want to make my family proud and show the world what I am capable of.

Cpl John Marvin, PWRR



Most of us in the Army Triathlon Association and Army Cycling Union are just excited to train together as a team again and have some tangible race goals to focus on. 2021 will be our year.

Capt Rosie Wild, RA



I want to get back into the swing of things and start shooting. It will also be great to be back with the Army archery squad again.

SSgt Craig Cherrie, RLC

We've been playing tennis individually outside of the Army, as that's been allowed for a while now, but we've missed the team cohesion. We were gutted to miss this season's Army and Inter-Services Championships, so that'll be our aim as soon as we can get together.

2Lt Reece Munnery, RTR



Sport returns

With certain disciplines now resuming, we asked Army athletes what they are most looking forward to about getting back to business

It will be nice to see fellow members of the Army Equitation Association face-to-face again. It is about refocusing on what we want to achieve and enjoying the sense of teamwork that goes with it.

Maj Nicola Rush, RAMC



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