

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

OP HONOURS

The stories
behind the
decorations

SPORTING SUCCESS

11 pages of action

+

WIN

some diamond
gifts



FIGHT THE FEAR

How to stop negative thoughts holding you back



LIGHTWEIGHT INTEGRATED FIELD TRANSPORT (LIFT) SYSTEM

In critical situations the right equipment can make the difference between success and failure. Whether it's casualty evacuation, scaling walls or carrying equipment MATBOCK has created a single, multi-purpose operational tool: The LIFT System.

The LIFT SYSTEM utilises the collapsible Combat Carbon Poles that provide the user a range of configurations:
The LIFT ladder, Extension Pole, R-LIFT (rigid litter) and S-LIFT (semi-rigid litter).

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**LEVEL
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ASSOCIATES

SOLDIER

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

All enquiries: Tel: 01252 787107 / 94222 7107

Fax: 01252 787110 / 94222 7110

Email: news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Editor

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

Sports Editor

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

Assistant Editor

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

Assistant Editor

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

Art Editor

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

Designer

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

Photographer

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

Photographer

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

Managing Editor

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

Business Manager

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

Advertising

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

Subscriptions

01252 787107 (7107)

subs@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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ARMY

Year of achievement

A Christmas message from the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter



ANOTHER year has passed and as I reflect on what the Army has accomplished, the scope is impressive.

The breadth and diversity of commitment involving our soldiers from Iraq to Afghanistan, Somalia to the Falkland Islands, Nigeria to Eastern Europe also merits recognition; the Army is busy.

And we need to remain prepared to face an array of potential threats at home and overseas and in an increasingly complex operating environment, which places a premium on the quality and realism of our training.

There have been some remarkable sporting and wider achievements – at the Olympics, Paralympics and Invictus Games; the magical success of LCpl Richard Jones in *Britain's Got Talent*; Maj Gen Susan Ridge being named the *Law Society Gazette* Legal Personality of the Year; the Spear 17 team expedition set out to traverse Antarctica; the pride and professionalism shown by the Royal Regiment of Artillery and Corps of Royal Engineers in their tercentenaries and the Royal Tank Regiment during the centenary of the tank.

And you will all have your own individual, team or unit successes in which you rightly take great pride.

I am conscious of the tension associated with change and the uncertainty it can engender, but we must become accustomed to adjusting to new challenges.

We can do so confidently given the progress we are making in implementing the decisions taken in last year's Strategic Defence and Security Review, which sees the Army resetting from a counterinsurgency-focused campaign footing to an Army designed to fight at the divisional level, persistently engaged overseas and connected at home.

The first Ajax vehicles arrive next year, the contract for a new Apache helicopter is signed, improvements to Challenger 2 and Warrior fleets are maturing and the new Virtus body armour system is being rolled out.

The delivery of Ajax enables experimentation with the new opportunities this capability brings and will adapt our ways of operating.

Next year will also see the establishment of the Specialised Infantry Group and the advent of the first Specialised Infantry Battalions.

We are also making progress with our people initiatives.

The Army Reserve is increasingly integrated, thanks to effective pairing with Regular units.

Next year will see imagination applied to how we evolve Regular Reserves and Sponsored Reserves and the development of new relationships with industry.

We have lifted the exclusion on women serving in close combat roles, which provides the opportunity for all to reach their full career potential.

And maximising the potential of every soldier in the Force remains a top priority for me, including developing our excellent young leaders.

But we cannot be complacent – our culture and behaviour define who we are as an Army.

We could not have achieved as much without the support of our friends and loved ones.

I care deeply about the role of families in our Army, and I am the first to recognise how uncomfortable change can be – especially on issues such as accommodation.

Families deserve transparency, honesty, communication – and a commitment to listen.

I have undertaken to do what I can to ensure this happens and that our Army gets the best possible solutions to meet our needs.

I wish you a relaxing and peaceful Christmas break and offer my appreciation to those whose service takes them away from home and remember the families of those we have lost over the years.

Thank you for your role in our collective achievements and join me in looking to the future with real optimism and pride. ■

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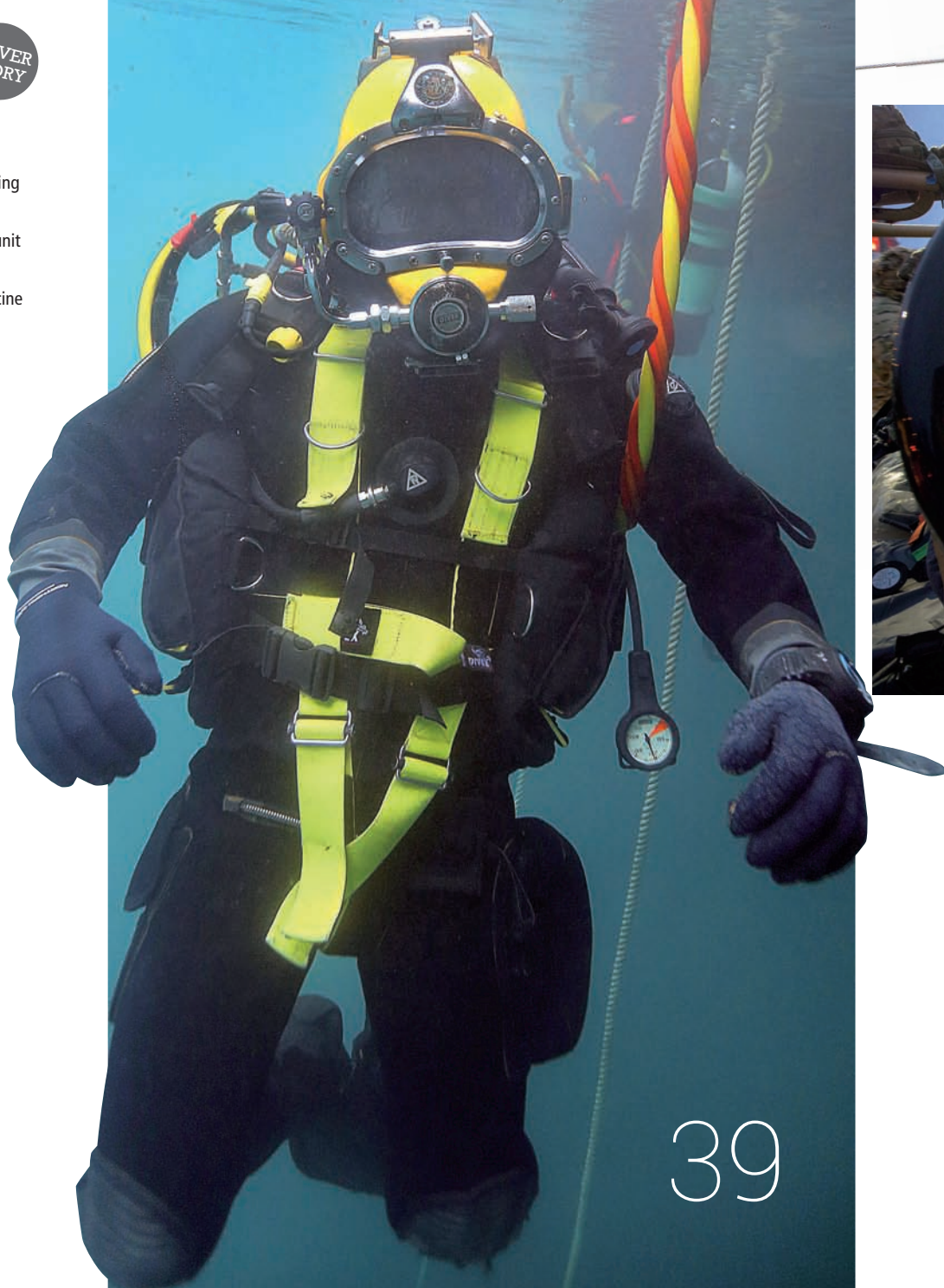
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It can be a dangerous
role so we need to get
things right

”



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"This course acknowledges that we have feelings like stress and it normalises that"

Facing fears of failure p32



"We are now firmly established" p44



Queen Victoria School



Raising to Distinction

**Admissions Deadline
Sun 15 Jan 2017**

Queen Victoria School in Dunblane is a co-educational boarding school for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, or who have served in Scotland or who have been members of a Scottish regiment.

The QVS experience encourages and develops well-rounded, confident individuals in an environment of stability and continuity.

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Families are welcome to find out more by contacting Admissions on **+44 (0) 131 310 2927** to arrange a visit.

Queen Victoria School
Dunblane Perthshire
FK15 0JY

www.qvs.org.uk



Ministry
of Defence



Can they fix it?

Service housing maintenance is improving, contractor insists

Picture: Shutterstock



THE contractor responsible for repairing Army housing, CarillionAmey, says it has improved its service to troops.

In February the MoD gave the company 90 days to meet its obligations on maintenance and occupancy management services, and recent data from the company shows it did that.

"We are achieving our contract key performance indicators and our focus is now on Service families and how we can improve their experience," the firm's spokesman Stuart Jones told *Soldier*.

The MoD's permanent secretary Stephen Lovegrove added that there had been a "marked improvement" and the firm was showing "significant commitment" to its recovery plan.

This year CarillionAmey has installed more than 4,100 new boilers and it plans to fit a further 3,000 before the end of April.

In a bid to fix customers' problems more effectively it is also using social media – see details opposite – to engage with personnel.

However, claims of improved performance have baffled those who continue to receive poor service.

"When the actions and inactions of CarillionAmey coupled with the sub-standard quality of our Service family

accommodation reduces my wife to tears, I know things are not right," Capt Glyn Bourne (RAMC) said.

"Their services have not improved; in my experience they have got worse."

"It took them nearly a month, three appointments and a complaint to get them to fix my boiler."

"They can't even make a phone call with any degree of punctuality so maybe social media is a step too far."

"We have had so many problems; the work that has been done is regularly poor quality and we've had numerous missed appointments."

"I have absolutely no confidence in CarillionAmey or the Defence Infrastructure Organisation – my faith in the MoD has been eroded too."

Earlier this year the government's public accounts committee called CarillionAmey's performance "totally unacceptable" and the private company faced losing its national housing prime contract, worth some £626 million.

IN NUMBERS

49,000

Number of Forces homes overseen by troubled contractor CarillionAmey

A 'POOR CONDITION'

■ THE MoD's failure to invest in barracks, depots and bases across its estate could affect soldiers' ability to fight, according to a report.

The National Audit Office said much of the department's property was "poor and deteriorating" because the department had only been carrying out essential work since 2009.

It said substandard housing was affecting morale and recruitment.

In response, the MoD said it had already had a plan to pour more money into training facilities and better accommodation.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon has announced that soldiers based in the south of England will benefit from better accommodation under a £1.1 billion plan.

The money will be used to improve existing facilities and fund new constructions for troops relocated from Germany as well as those in the UK.

A four-year programme managed by Aspire Defence will beef up garrison facilities at Bulford, Tidworth, Perham Down, Larkhill and Aldershot with 130 new buildings and more than 2,600 additional bed spaces for single soldiers.

New medical and dental centres will also be built at Larkhill and Bulford.



MoD estate sell-off...

"These moves are not imminent"
Home Truths, page 17

ROKO'S TIME TO SHINE

■ THE Army's flying winger LCpl Semesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) took his chance to shine in the England shirt by scoring twice and being named man of the match against his country of birth.

The Bath player was the standout performer as England defeated Fiji 58-15 at Twickenham.

Earning his second cap for the national side after

making his debut in 2014, the guardsman helped England extend their winning run to 12 matches.

The 29-year-old's first try came when he took a quick pass from Alex Goode and skilfully evaded Akapusi Qera and Benito Masivelu. He crossed the whitewash for a second time after receiving a masterful long pass from George Ford.

Picture: Roger Thompson



IN BOOKS...

Serviceman Tim Peake lifts lid on tour-of-a-lifetime – page 72



1 USA

HITTING THE HEIGHTS

AN eight-strong team of adventurers from 156 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps braved the challenges of operating at altitude to complete the Evolution Loop in California.

The Reservists crossed three passes at 12,000 feet as they followed the John Muir Trail through the picturesque Sierra Nevada mountains.

Sub-zero temperatures also greeted the personnel, who covered a total of 77 miles in eight days over a vertical height gain of 14,000 feet.

"It was a truly character building experience for some and a very steep learning curve for those new to long distance, high altitude treks," commented Maj Bill Busby.



2 USA

OPERATIONAL BLISS

BRITISH troops from 1 Armoured Infantry Brigade descended on the Fort Bliss training area in Texas for a joint annual war fighting assessment with their US counterparts.

The test saw the headquarters staff operate within the home nation's divisional structure, while personnel from Australia, Canada and Italy added to the interoperability mix.



3 ESTONIA

RIFLES REASSURANCE

TROOPS from 5th Battalion, The Rifles will deploy to Estonia next year to lead the UK's enhanced forward presence.

The armoured infantry battlegroup is equipped with Warrior armoured fighting vehicles and will support UK allies in the region.

The aim is to confront threats to global security armed with state-of-the-art defensive equipment and 800 highly trained soldiers.

Lt Col Mark Wilson, commanding officer of 5 Rifles, said: "Our purpose is to reassure the Estonian government and the Estonian Defence Force of our commitment to the protection of a fellow Nato member."

IN NUMBERS:

100,000

Amount, in pounds, that six Reservists on the Spear 17 expedition are aiming to raise for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. Skiing 1,100 miles unsupported across Antarctica, they should reach the geographic South Pole in early January and will then go down the Shackleton Glacier and on to the Ross Ice Shelf to complete a full traverse of the continent later that month.

British Army Training Unit Suffield

British Army Training and Support Unit Belize

The Falkland Islands

Germany

Gibraltar

Sierra Leone

Cyprus

British Army Training Unit Kenya



4 NIGERIA

SHORT AND SWEET

A SHORT-TERM training team from 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment has completed a four-month assignment mentoring the Nigerian Army School of Infantry.

The personnel conducted combat trauma medical training, fieldcraft lessons, section battle drills and skill-at-arms coaching.

The team worked on the Nigerian soldiers' weapon handling and supervised counter-terrorism and tracker courses, the latter featuring a 25km insertion, raid and ambush lessons and climbing tests with and without ropes.

The package culminated with a combined march-and-shoot competition that was laid on for course members.

GLOBAL GALLANTRY

Personnel recognised for their actions around the world – pages 27-29

Afghanistan

5

Brunei

“
It was truly
character
building
”

5 INDIA

BACK TO THEIR ROOTS

EARLY next year troops from 9 (Plassey) Battery, 12 Regiment, Royal Artillery will visit the site in India that gave their unit its name.

The expedition will coincide with the 260th anniversary of the Battle of Plassey, a pivotal clash between local forces and those of the British East India Company that cemented Britain's imperial power in the region.

It will be the first time serving personnel have travelled to the town, situated some 120km north of Kolkata.

The soldiers will engage in military history studies and adventurous training activities around the Darjeeling region.

"We're travelling out in March and its aim is to expose our men and women to a part of the world that is rarely visited by the British Army in addition to allowing them to experience a series of challenging activities," said battery commander, Maj Andy McDermott (RA).



6 CANADA

AIRFRAME FIRST

WILDCAT has taken to the skies over Batus during its first tactical deployment in the land environment.

Four aircraft from 661 Squadron, 1 Regiment, Army Air Corps provided intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance support to the Royal Dragoon Guards battlegroup during Exercise Iron Strike.

As well as experimenting with how the helicopters' capabilities could be integrated into an armoured cavalry strike mission, the package tested the squadron's ability to move the platform from the UK to Canada and to operate in the field.

7 GERMANY

CLEAN SWEEP

DOG handlers from 102 Military Working Dog Squadron searched Princess Royal Barracks in Gütersloh to ensure no ammunition or weapons had been accidentally left behind prior to the camp's official handover to the German authorities.

Together with their canine comrades, five soldiers spent four days combing accommodation, storage facilities and the base perimeter.

Officer commanding Maj Ken McKintosh described their work as a "real-life execution of their skills and abilities".

Cross-country canines – page 20





**"I realise what the cost was;
a lot of people lost family"**

– Humbling heroes, pages 27-29

Fixing-up the Falklands



SAPPERS have been braving the bleak conditions of the South Atlantic to take on a daunting building task.

Troops from 32 Engineer Regiment are working on Project Anemoi, the corps-wide mission to replace accommodation there.

Working in wind speeds of up to 80mph, the personnel have erected single-storey steel portal frame buildings on Mount Alice, Byron Heights and Mount Kent to replace blocks dating back to 1982.

The Royal Engineers were selected for the four-year job by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and it amounts to their biggest design and build project since Camp Bastion. It is due to complete in 2018.

"It has been immensely challenging so far, but also rewarding," commented Maj Saskia Hart, OC Project Anemoi.

The feat has required masses of materiel, including steel girders, concrete and sand, to be shipped 8,000 miles from the UK.

Q&A BULLYING OR BANTER?

Lt Col Victoria McNeill, SO1 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination in the Manning Directorate, has a few pointers

During National Anti-Bullying Week units pledged to stop "teasing language". Is that banter?

Banter can be a very healthy two-way exchange of views with humorous intent. When it becomes one-sided and makes either party or those around them feel uncomfortable, it's no longer banter, it's unacceptable behaviour.

Has the Leadership Code made a difference? It will but it is too early yet to see a direct impact – cultural change takes time. Reports of bullying are closely monitored and current trends are very positive.

A former soldier is taking legal action after an initiation ceremony damaged his vision. Do these rituals constitute bullying? Army policy is clear; initiation ceremonies are a form of bullying, illegal and a breach of the Army's values and standards. Anyone acting contrary to policy may be subject to administrative or serious disciplinary action.

What advice do you have for those subjected to bullying or harassment? Seek assistance from your chain of command. If this feels too daunting phone the confidential Speak Out helpline (0306 7704656). Please report any bullying you experience or witness. We could not be more serious about eradicating all forms of this behaviour.



What would be your once piece of advice to other Service personnel?



news@
soldiermagazine.
co.uk

Military words of wisdom

A SERVICEMAN who lost three of his limbs in an IED blast and the first female commander at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst have been picked out as two of the world's most remarkable individuals in a new book.

If I Could Tell You Just One Thing was compiled by Innocent Smoothie founder Richard Reed.

It saw him interview 62 famous figures – from James Corden and

Richard Branson to Tony Blair and Bill Clinton – about the single most important piece of life advice they'd offer to others.

Ex-Yorkshire Regiment soldier Andy Reid and Lt Col Lucy Giles (RLC) both discuss their military experiences in the book, before revealing their personal words of wisdom (see below).

The title is out in hardback now, priced £15.99.

"The most important thing is don't look back on what has happened. Instead look forward to what you can do. Just crack on."

Andy Reid
(ex-Yorks)



Lt Col Lucy Giles (RLC)



"Life is about doing the right thing, on a difficult day, when no one is looking."

Pictures: A&P The Soldiers' Chairty and Steve Dock

"People think you either are or you aren't mentally resilient"

– Troops flex their minds, pages 32-37



Porn warning to troops

SOLDIERS have been issued with warnings after searching for X-rated websites on the Army's Wi-Fi network.

It follows a media investigation, which found that Royal School of Military Engineering personnel made more than 21,000 attempts to access pornographic sites.

The troops, based at Gibraltar Barracks, were also found to have breached Army rules by trying 2,321 times to log on to gambling sites.

A Service spokesman said the defence business internet connection, which bans indecent or obscene material, had been used incorrectly.

Searches made in soldiers' own



time must be carried out on the local welfare networks.

"The figures quoted are not a fair reflection of the number of individuals attempting to access inappropriate websites," the spokesman added.

A £179 Smart Turnout watch

WIN



LAST month's spine line clues were inspired by our cover feature on the Twitter project memorialising fallen soldiers of the First World War.

(2nd Lt Harry) Butters, (2nd Lt William) Forbes, (Pte Lyell) Pocock and (Pte Robert) Purves are four of the troops who were killed during the Battle of the Somme and whose inscriptions were featured in the article.

This month, courtesy of luxury British accessories brand Smart Turnout (www.smartturnout.com), we have this stylish Signature watch worth £179 to give away.

To be in with a chance of winning this timepiece, complete with presentation box and choice of straps, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by December 30.

CAR SMASH COURAGE

■ A SERVICEWOMAN has been commended by the chief of the general staff for saving the life of a badly injured civilian.

Cfn Felicity Waddup (REME, shown) was on her way to annual camp with 118 Recovery Company, 104 Battalion last year when her convoy encountered an accident on the A303 near Salisbury.

A vehicle had collided at speed with a broken-down car and a person was trapped in the wreckage.

Cfn Waddup, a military team medic who was in training to become a civilian paramedic at the time, helped to keep the man breathing until the emergency services turned up.

According to a doctor at the scene, the casualty would have died had she not come to his aid.

"It wasn't just me, it was a team effort," the 28-year-old told *Soldier*.

"But it feels awesome to be recognised in this way."



Good idea takes off

Soldier's work sees turnaround in delays at Brize

IMPROVING the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces sounds like a daunting task that would be allocated to a select team of the highest ranks.

But a single Serviceman achieved this goal in a matter of months after taking on a new position at the Joint Air Mounting Centre (JAMC).

Prior to Maj Amar Bhundia's (RLC) appointment as officer commanding, some 22 per cent of flight delays through RAF Brize Norton (pictured) were down to hold-ups caused at the site.

Having noticed a lack of empowerment among the senior NCOs, he led a team of junior movement controllers on a mission to drive down errors, improve passenger and freight handling training and ensure all soldiers were better equipped to resolve any problems.

Within three months of him assuming command, JAMC-attributable delays were slashed to just three per cent.

This is even more remarkable considering the volume of freight passing through the site reached



a high of 106,000kg per month during that period – 25 per cent higher than at any point during the Herrick era.

Maj Bhundia's efforts were acknowledged at the 2016 Gems awards, where he won top honours in the customer focus category.

The scheme rewards personnel who have helped the Armed Forces become more efficient, with cash sums of up to £10,000 presented to those who see their ideas become reality.

"I am humbled to receive this award because it was actually down to the hard work of the junior and senior NCOs of the JAMC that improvements have been enacted," Maj Bhundia said.

"I am pleased that passenger experience and customer service has been improved by our effort."



“I am humbled to receive this”



Money on your mind?

Find out what questions our Facebook followers put to the Army pay team – page 22

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"There was so much we had to overcome"

– Stanning steps down, page 81



Mercy mission accomplished

Ex-soldier reflects on 14-year fundraising quest

A BOSNIAN teenager with a severe facial deformity has undergone surgery for the fifth and final time thanks to a promise made by a former Serviceman nearly 14 years ago.

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

The youngster had been born with a facial cleft that affected his sight and breathing but his family were unable to afford treatment.

Moved by his plight, Ingram stepped in and began fundraising so that Stefan could travel to Great Ormond Street hospital for his first operation.

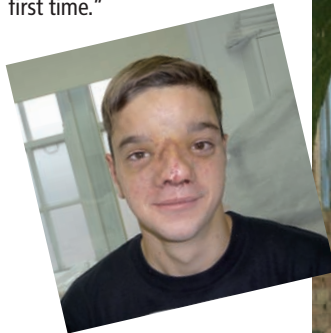
Soldier covered the story at the time and in 2014 when he required further surgery. Now aged 17, Stefan recently returned to the UK for the last step in the process; a cosmetic procedure to give him a normal nose.

In total, Ingram raised more than £140,000 to make it all possible.

Reflecting on fulfilling his promise after so many years, Ingram said: "I feel slightly numb. It's taken up a large chunk of my life with many sleepless nights and worry along the way.

"It was truly amazing to see the results.

"He cried, his mum cried. He now looks like her for the first time."



Past and present: Stefan Savic with Wayne Ingram in 2003 (right) and following his last operation (above)



“
It was
amazing
to see
the
results
”

KIT CARE ACCOLADE

■ TROOPS from 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment won first place in the Land Forces Equipment Care Awards for the second year running.

Judges praised the formation for ingraining kit maintenance in its culture, including holding regular study periods and practical sessions for all sub-units.

Accepting the accolade on behalf of his troops, commanding officer Lt Col Sam Humphris said:

"One of the principal reasons why we have been so successful, on each of our collective training events is because we have had so much of our equipment available to us to fight with."

The King's Royal Hussars were named most improved unit.



BUSINESS BOOSTER

■ VEHICLE leasing firm Vanarama is helping Service-leavers to meet the cost of setting up their own company.

The "business in a box" initiative will cover the initial deposit on a car or van, as well as providing website, social media and branding support, business cards, vehicle signage and business banking – all free of charge.

The scheme is open to personnel approaching the end of their service and for up to two years after leaving.

For more information visit www.vanarama.co.uk/businessinabox

Brush with the past

WAR artist Graeme Lothian has returned to Afghanistan for the first time since he was shot in the arm and hand by a Taliban gunman during Herrick 18 in 2013.

Speaking to *Soldier* about his latest – less eventful – trip to the country with the Royal Gurkha Rifles he said: "I took my easel, paints and canvases and spent a lot of time up on the roof of the headquarters, painting Kabul.

"I was lucky enough to be there when the Gurkhas had their Dashain festival, which I painted.

"I also worked from the hills overlooking the city with two armed guards, one from 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland who was an excellent watercolourist.

"The Royal Air Force flew me around from base to base in the Kabul area and on my last day I captured the city on camera and video – a fantastic experience."





"Many riders crashed off the road"

– Bikers strike gold, page 82

NO NO TO KAVA-KAVA

■ ARMY bosses have reminded troops that it is illegal to import food or drink containing kava-kava – a crop found in Fiji and other Pacific islands.

Under UK legislation the importation, sale, possession for sale, exposure or advertisement for sale of the substance is banned.

Full information on the law can be found in **DIN 2016-06-031**, which states that kava-kava can "cause serious liver damage to consumers and is illegal to import or possess in the UK".



KEYBOARD WARRIORS

■ The UK's military cyber systems will receive an investment of up to £265m, the defence secretary has announced.

Speaking at the international cyber symposium, Michael Fallon said the financial boost will help the MoD better understand computer-based and digital risks.

He said: "Cyber-attack is one of the greatest challenges to our security.

"It's crucial we use our increasing defence budget to stay ahead and investing in this programme will help us protect against these threats."

The cash will support the government's Cyber Vulnerability Investigations programme.

“
We will
provide
better
facilities
”



Mass sale of MoD's estate

THE government will sell off 91 MoD sites by 2040 with money raised invested back into the military, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon has announced.

The mass sale will see the most significant change to the MoD's estate since the Second World War.

According to projections, selling the sites will produce savings of more than £140 million over the next ten years.

Mr Fallon said: "We have been spending billions maintaining a defence estate that doesn't meet the needs of our Armed Forces.

"By putting money where it is needed, we will provide better facilities to train our Armed Forces and deliver more stability for military families."

The portfolio is scheduled to be reduced by 30 per cent to meet commitments made in the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

It currently includes about 50,000

houses, 60,000 technical assets such as hangars or workshops and 20,000 other key facilities such as runways and the electrical network.

In England the Army sites to be disposed of include parts of Catterick Garrison, Prince William of Gloucester Barracks and Imphal Barracks.

In Scotland eight locations will close, including the Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks in Edinburgh.

Wales and Northern Ireland will each lose three bases.

Mr Fallon added: "Over the next decade we will invest £4 billion in improving our infrastructure and modernising our accommodation.

"By locating our Servicemen and women together with capability, we will provide better job opportunities for their partners and more stable schooling for their families, and increase their ability to purchase their own home."

FEARLESS

FUNDRAISING



DISABILITY NO OBSTACLE

A **BLIND** former soldier conquered rope climbs, walls and hurdles during the 5km Rocket Race.

Mark Threadgold (ex-R Signals) was guided by soldiers from the Army's obstacle racing group, including Cpl Martin Wilson (PWRR), who is making a name for himself on this page (see last month).

Money raised:
£500
For: **Blind Veterans UK**



MERCIAN MISSION

A **TEAM** of troops tested their fitness levels to the maximum during the gruelling Ultimate Mercian Challenge. Capt Stuart Viveash, WO2 Marc Giles, WO2 Lee Hollingworth and WO2 Steven Catherwood (all 2 Mercian) ran 22km every day for 22 days, stopping every kilometre to perform 22 push-ups. To donate log on to tinyurl.com/pjav3q9

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"I wanted the opportunity to be part of that elite team"

– Diving determination, page 41



'SELL-OFF WILL UPROOT FAMILIES'



A PERSONAL VIEW FROM SARA BAADE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE ARMY FAMILIES FEDERATION...

THE recent announcement on the future defence estate strategy (page 14), in particular the plan to reduce the size of the Regular component estate by 30 per cent, will clearly have an impact on most Service personnel.

It will affect where they will work in years to come, where they will live, where their children will go to school, where their spouses will work and, finally, where they may put down roots.

It is therefore really important that the AFF is fully up to date on these changes so we can support families in the best way.

We know that some have bought homes, believing their soldier was going to be based in a certain area

for some time and will now have to uproot and start over again.

For those affected in this way it is important to remember that many of these moves are not imminent and some will not be taking place until 2032 so there is time to

assess what needs to happen between now and then.

We will be working with the Ministry of Defence, chain of command and other organisations, including local authorities, to make sure families are communicated and

engaged with in the run-up to, during and after moves to ensure that the impact of rebasing can be kept to a minimum.

www.aff.org.uk

“THEY WILL HAVE TO START OVER AGAIN”

IN NUMBERS:

£21m

The amount that veterans unemployment currently costs the government each year. According to LifeWorks, an employment support programme run by Royal British Legion Industries, 83 per cent of the ex-military personnel it helps go on to find positive career results. For more information email

lifeworks@rbli.co.uk or call 0800 319 6844



Picture: JJ Ellison



STUDY TO SHED LIGHT ON FAMILY SUPPORT

■ A NEW survey is canvassing the views of Reservists' families on the welfare support available to them.

Funded by the MoD and carried out by academics at Oxford Brookes University, King's College London, and Aberdeen University, the research aims to better understand the needs of the dependants of part-time personnel.

"Previous studies have asked Reservists for their opinions but there have been none seeking the views of the family members themselves," explained Prof Vincent Connelly.

"We want to understand how much families know about their entitlement to support services, their experiences of these services both during deployments and on a day-to-day basis and we will use this information to make recommendations to the MoD."

To fill in the questionnaire visit www.frame-sw.org.uk

Troops prep for flood relief



MORE than 1,000 personnel have been put on 24-hour standby to assist civilian authorities with flood relief this winter.

Among them are 120 troops drawn from The Yorkshire Regiment (pictured above), who have been trained by Environment Agency staff to construct 1.25-metre flood barriers out of waterproof tarpaulin and flat-pack frames.

If mobilised, soldiers could also be called on to provide engineering and logistics support, as well as assisting with the evacuation of affected areas.

“We are being forced to rush into marriage”

TALKBACK
PAGE 57



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the University of St Andrews.



"People ask if I'm scared of dying"

– Fighting dementia, pages 48-49



Picture: Graeme Main



Vehicles back on track

Herrick kit ready for new operations ahead of schedule

THE programme to deliver more than 3,000 vehicles and pieces of major kit back to service following their endeavours in Afghanistan has been completed a month ahead of schedule.

Organised by the British Army and Defence Equipment and Support, the Herrick exchange programme saw specialist staff in Warminster certify 673 protected mobility vehicles as fit for use after an intensive inspection and repair process.

Platforms they dealt with included Mastiff, Wolfhound, Ridgeback, Husky, Jackal, Coyote (pictured above) and Foxhound.

The process also included the delivery of weapons and electronic systems from the campaign.

All items will now be used to support future operations, training and exercises.

"In 2012 I was in Afghanistan

helping to keep these platforms in the hands of the user," Brig Colin McClean, the Army's head of equipment, commented.

"It is hugely rewarding to see their successful return from theatre and once again available to soldiers as part of our contingent forces.

"It has been a true team effort and I congratulate everyone who contributed to this sizable task."

IN NUMBERS:

160

The average time, in hours, that it took to inspect, repair and release each piece of kit



“It has been a true team effort”

AT THE RECCE

MEMBERS of the Reaction Force honed their skills under cover of darkness on Salisbury Plain. Troops from the Household Cavalry Regiment practised night manoeuvres during Exercise Iron Scout 3.

Service personnel from C Squadron are currently held at high readiness to deploy anywhere in the world. The unit is equipped with CVR(T) vehicles and will soon take delivery of the new Ajax platforms.

GOOD DRILLS

INSPIRED INSTRUCTOR

AN instructor has been recognised for his tireless work with foreign troops. CSgt Fred Oldenburg (R Anglian) has been named Reserve trainer of the year by the Army's Recruitment and Training Division. His citation praised his "enthusiasm" delivering short courses in Brecon.



TOP PLACE TO TRAIN

THE Infantry Training Centre Catterick has been labelled "outstanding" by education inspectors. It is the first time the institution has received the top possible grading by Ofsted.



FAKE KIDNAP FAIL

A NIGERIAN soldier who faked his own kidnap was arrested after turning up at his girlfriend's apartment. Media reports said the member of 13th Brigade had staged the abduction in Calabar in order to visit another state illegally.

FOOTBALL FARCE

FIFA has begun disciplinary proceedings against England and Scotland for wearing poppies at Wembley on Armistice Day. Both teams ignored the ban on "political statements" by football's governing body and donned the symbol anyway during the World Cup qualifier, which England won.

BAD DRILLS

Picture: Cpl Tim Jones, RLC





"Find positives to work on. You've got to pick yourself up"

– Battling on after a bullet in the eye, pages 54-55

EXERCISE TRAGEDY

■ A SERVICEMAN has died during a live-firing exercise in Scotland.

LCpl Joe Spencer of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles was on the range at RAF Tain when the incident happened on November 1.

An investigation into the circumstances is under way.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster said: "My thoughts are with Joe's family, friends and colleagues at this terrible time."



OLD SALUTES NEW

■ A FORMER paratrooper and one of the last surviving veterans of the Battle of Breville was the guest of honour as the latest generation of airborne personnel passed out of the Infantry Training Centre.

Herbert Marsh, aged 92, looked on as 21 soldiers from Breville Platoon went on parade at the end of their 28-week course before joining 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment.

"These young men have worked hard for the last six months and deserve what they have achieved today," said the ex-soldier.

SCOTTISH SUPPORT

■ A FREE service to support veterans and their families has opened a new drop-in centre in Lanarkshire.

Veterans First Point has ex-soldiers, psychologists and specialists working across Scotland to assist people with their mental and physical wellbeing.

For more information go to www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk

CENTENARY SPECIAL

■ THE Royal Star and Garter Homes charity has produced a special book encapsulating its 100-year history using a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Centenary Book includes stories of courage and determination and is illustrated with photos, sketches and historical letters.

To order the impressive tome call 020 8481 7676 or view it at www.starandgarter.org

IN SPORT...



"The Super League is expanding. I'm excited to be part of it."

PAGE 85



Picture: Dominic King

Dog soldiers in action

A FIELD of 42 soldiers from 102 and 105 Military Working Dog Squadrons assembled for a canine biathlon in Sennelager.

The event was designed to showcase the endurance and working abilities of the Army's dog teams while building a good relationship between the handlers.

"It was a cross-country course over open and wooded terrain that covered about five miles," explained WO2 Paul Joblin.

"The different tasks tested the dog control of the handlers."

Hound specialists from the Regulars and Reserves also joined forces during training on Exercise Chiron Alliance.

The troops from 102 and 101 MWD Squadrons worked with their four-legged comrades on the Sennelager training area to hone skills on section attacks and searching vehicle checkpoints and areas under threat from IEDs.

Cancer sufferer's support site

A SOLDIER who was diagnosed with leukaemia has set up a social media support group to help other personnel suffering from cancer.

Sig Daniel Chapman was told last year that he had chronic myeloid leukaemia, a rare form of the disease that attacks the body's white blood cells.

He described how he initially put off going to the doctor because he thought his symptoms were related to stress levels.

"It wasn't until a friend said he'd noticed the changes in me and encouraged me to go to the med centre that I made an appointment," he said.

"I had a blood test the next day and they told me I had leukaemia."

Thanks to medication the 29-year-

old has been able to continue his career at 216 (Parachute) Signal Squadron and he also ran this year's London Marathon to raise money and awareness for the charity

Leukaemia Care.

Sig Chapman decided to set up the Royal Signals Cancer Support Group on Facebook for others in a similar position to him.

"There were civilian chat forums but nothing really aimed at the military," he continued.

"It's a place for people to ask questions, get advice and just discuss some of the issues that are affecting them."

"I'm a success story in a way and I wanted to share my experience to show that, depending on your illness, you can still serve."





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"It was a challenge but positive thinking made it bearable"

– Troops talk mental resilience, page 90

YOUR QUESTIONS... PUT TO THE EXPERTS



Looking after the pennies: Troops quiz the Service on pensions and the operational bonus

Q&A

GOT A QUERY ON PAY?

HERE BRIG CHRIS GHKA, HEAD OF THE ARMY PAY TEAM, ANSWERS THE QUERIES YOU PUT TO HIS DEPARTMENT VIA OUR FACEBOOK PAGE...



facebook.com/soldiermagazine

CASH-FLOW CONCERNS

- If you're receiving the operational bonus and end up deploying for more than six months, will the rate increase?

– Name and address supplied

The rate (£29.02 per day) does not increase after six months but those in specified campaign continuity posts become eligible for campaign continuity allowance after 228 days' qualifying service. This is paid at a daily rate of £60 and recognises the significantly increased burden placed on personnel assigned to longer operational tours. Chapter ten, section 15 of JSP 752 explains.

- With in-service death benefits, will the payout your spouse gets vary depending on what Armed Forces pension schemes (AFPS) you've been on? – WO2 Karl Williams, RLC

Yes. For AFPS 05 and 15 members (including those with accrued rights in AFPS 75 or 05), surviving spouses would receive a tax-free lump sum payment of four times their annual salary. They would also receive an immediate pension that takes into account time served in each scheme. More details can be found in 2014DIN01-178. For those with transitional protection who remained on AFPS 75 (that is, they didn't transfer to AFPS 15), the surviving spouse would receive three times their annual salary and a survivor's pension. Further details on AFPS 75 dependant benefits can be found in Armed Forces pension

scheme 1975 family benefits section.

- What's going to be taken away next? Longer separation allowance (LSA) is my guess! – Name and address supplied

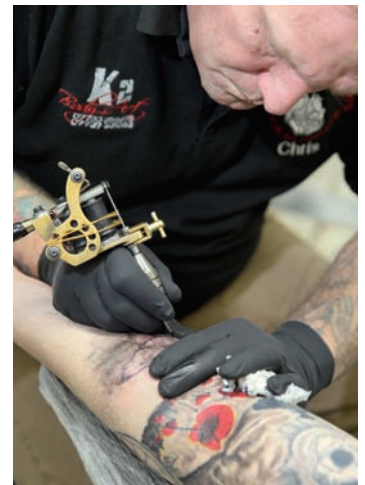
It's right that we regularly review allowances alongside all other expenditure to ensure that our offer remains fair, balanced and affordable. Despite this, there are currently no plans to change the rules for LSA, which remains an extremely important allowance. Details and qualifying criteria can be found in JSP 752. Under the new joiner offer, the MoD is looking

at how we can better compensate those who suffer disadvantage at the time it is experienced; separation is considered part of that.

- If we need to find out about an Army pension paying out at 55, who should we ask? –Sheelagh Stagg

The Armed Forces pension calculator (www.mod-pc.co.uk) will give you an idea of benefits when you retire. For a more accurate forecast complete pension request form 12, which can be downloaded from www.gov.uk. Six months prior to discharge you will receive your *Service Leavers Guide* and should complete AFPS application form one to indicate how the money is to be paid. For tailored advice you can join the Forces Pension Society. Membership is highly recommended, certainly in your final few years of service.

66
THERE ARE
NO PLANS TO
CHANGE THE
RULES FOR LSA
99



Picture: Graeme Main

ETCHES FETCH

- A TATTOO studio popular with British troops has been raking it in by offering poppy-themed designs in exchange for £25 donations to The Royal British Legion (RBL).

K2 Bodyart – which was featured in our January 2015 issue – launched the idea last year in remembrance of a friend who lost his life while serving in Afghanistan.

Such was its success that they formed an official charity, Tattoo Poppy Appeal, and repeated the event this year, linking up with similar businesses around the country in order to raise as much as possible.

It has led to them doubling the cash generated 12 months ago to almost £4,000 – partly thanks to the work of three tattoo artists who worked flat-out to serve more than 40 customers, raising some £2,300.

The auction of a special tattoo by one of K2's top artists also raised £1,300.

"I'm absolutely astounded by how much support we've had and we'll definitely be doing this again next year," said owner and former Royal Engineer Chris Moss.

- Fearless fundraising – page 14

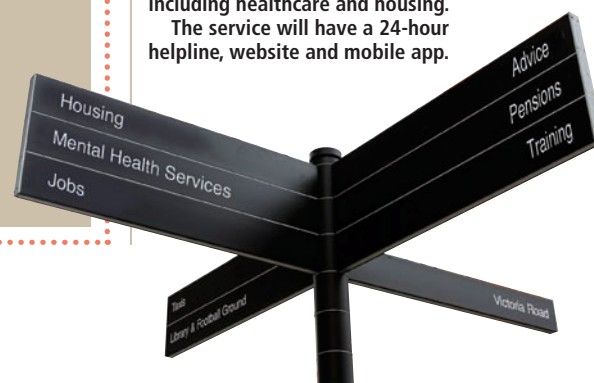
ON THE RIGHT PATH

- THE MoD will work with The Royal British Legion and other military charities to create a dedicated information service for veterans.

The announcement comes in response to calls for more help navigating the many organisations that support ex-Forces personnel.

Around £2 million will be spent on creating the Veterans' Gateway, which will provide advice on many issues, including healthcare and housing.

The service will have a 24-hour helpline, website and mobile app.



"When you look at the planet from space you don't notice borders"

– Peake's perspective, page 72



FIX A RACE

■ AN app to help Forces fitness fans look up local sporting events has been launched by a veteran. Known as Racedate, the tool lists some 32,000 marathons, fun runs, swims, cycle rides and obstacle races which users can search by location and date.

"When I was serving and was sent on courses there was often a lot of downtime, especially at weekends, and I would get frustrated when I found out I'd missed out on events just around the corner," said mastermind Tim Colebrooke (ex-RAF).

"It's faster than using Google and lists more sporting events than any other website."

The app will be available to download for free on iTunes from December 17, with an Android version planned for next year.



Picture: Graeme Main

The impact of injuries

Project will shed light on longer-term effect of wounds

PERSONNEL at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre Headley Court are embarking on a groundbreaking research project into the outcome of combat injuries.

The team is looking at both short- and long-term conditions and will work with a study group comprised of 600 Servicemen who were wounded on operations in Iraq or Afghanistan.

They will be matched to a control group of the same size, made up of individuals who served in either country but were not injured.

A series of tests will be carried out during an initial appointment and again at three, five, ten, 15 and finally 20 years.

The research will examine a wide range of areas including cardiovascular problems, osteoporosis, mental health, lung function and bone density.

Former sergeant Simon Harmer (ex-RAMC), who lost both legs in an explosion in Afghanistan in 2009, is involved in recruiting volunteers for the study.



Picture: Graeme Main

"We're looking at the long-term outcomes of battlefield injuries," he explained. "For example, if a lot of individuals have cardiovascular problems and it seems to be related to the same injury and we're not noticing it in the control group, that's relevant."

"So far we have around 100 people signed up but we need another 1,100, so we want to get the word out there, not just to injured veterans but also to potential members of the control group, which is equally as important."

For more on the project and to register an interest visit www.advancestudydmrc.org.uk

[advancestudydmrc.org.uk](http://www.advancestudydmrc.org.uk)



● THE Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre, which will replace Headley Court when it opens in 2018, will receive £20 million from bank fines to help fund a world-class facility, it was announced by Chancellor Philip Hammond in his autumn statement.

The hub for wounded Armed Forces personnel is currently being built in Nottinghamshire, with the overall cost of the project estimated at £300 million.



Picture: Shutterstock

STAMPING OUT 'EVIL' POACHING MENACE

■ THE Army will offer more support to anti-poaching efforts in Africa in the new year with a team from 1st (UK) Division set to deploy to Malawi.

Service personnel will travel there to train park rangers as combat tracking instructors in a bid to protect elephants from smugglers who wish to traffic ivory.

Details of the units and number of personnel had not been confirmed when this issue went to press.

"We will support partners, including Malawi, to help stamp out organised crime and the evil menace of poaching," commented Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Mike Penning.

The mission forms part of a three-year plan between the MoD and Defra, which could potentially be extended to other countries as well.

UK personnel have previously carried out anti-poaching training in Gabon, and the British Army Training Unit Kenya is supporting the building of a fence to protect the endangered animals.

“We want to get the word out there”



MANPOWER MATHS

■ PARTS of the Infantry are facing a shortage of personnel among junior ranks, according to figures released under the Freedom of Information Act.

The number of private soldiers serving in the Royal Regiment of Scotland's five Regular battalions has fallen by 230 in the past five years, while the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Royal Anglian Regiment have lost 140 between them in the same period.

Elements of the Foot Guards are in a similar position, with the Scots Guards now listing just 260 guardsmen, compared to 410 in 2011, and the Irish Guards 90 fewer.

The statistics were published by the *Sunday Express*, which claimed the numbers revealed "the worst manpower crisis in history".

An MoD spokesman said the Infantry, including the Division of Foot Guards, is sufficiently manned "to deliver its operational and ceremonial requirements".

A large group of soldiers and civilians are running on a tarmac at sunset. The runners are in various stages of their stride, and the sky is filled with dramatic, golden-hued clouds. The scene is captured from a low angle, emphasizing the length of the line of runners.

THE BIG PICTURE

> MOD LYNEHAM, WILTSHIRE

SUNSET SPRINT

TROOPS from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers smashed the Guinness World Record for the most individuals taking part in a 20-metre bleep test. A 700-strong team made up of soldiers and civilians from 8 Training Battalion collectively reached level five on the infamous fitness trial, raising £4,000 for ABF The Soldiers' Charity in the process.

The previous record was 593 participants. Picture: Steve Dock



COURAGE KABUL-STYLE

Combat operations may be in the past, but that isn't stopping British troops proving their mettle in Afghanistan... as the stories behind the latest operational honours and awards show

Words: Melissa Terry and Sarah Goldthorpe



WHEN a Puma helicopter crashed in Kabul last October killing five people, WO2 Shane O'Rourke (AGC (RMP)) sprang into action.

"The first thought that went through my head was that we couldn't save everyone," the Serviceman (pictured opposite) recalled of the scene at Nato's training and support mission HQ.

"We could see the helicopter was smouldering, on its side and crumpled quite badly.

"There were probably about 100 people gathering."

Two Royal Air Force personnel had lost their lives in the accident, and the close protection manager quickly found himself overseeing the chaotic scene.

"In situations like that everyone wants to save lives and do the right thing but people were pulling parts off the helicopter which could have been harming those inside," he said.

After closing down the helicopter's systems, WO2 O'Rourke began identifying the condition of the crew and passengers inside.

“I feel quite emotional, and also a real sense of pride for the team”

Taking command from the top of the damaged fuselage, he instructed stretcher-bearers and search parties and organised casualty triage areas to be established a safe distance from the wreckage.

Despite the threat of aviation fuel igniting, the warrant officer was determined to free the stricken occupants.

"We managed to pull two casualties out alive followed by a

deceased crewman and another casualty," he said.

Recalling what happened when he pulled the second fatality out, he added: "I remember praying.

"I said, 'come on God, give me



your strength now'.

"The greatest thing I did that day without doubt was managing to pray for him.

"As I was behind him I was able to pull him up, kiss his cheek and say, 'brother, I've got you and I won't let you go'."

Now the Regular-turned-Reservist's efforts have been recognised with the award of a Queen's Gallantry Medal.

His citation says: "There is no doubt that O'Rourke's actions prevented further loss of life as four were pulled from the wreckage alive.

"For his courage, leadership, compassion, skill and determination, he is worthy of formal recognition."

Speaking about the decoration, the 41-year-old took time to pay tribute to his comrades.

"I feel quite emotional, and also a real sense of pride for the team," he explained.

"When you get any form of gallantry medal, it's never awarded to an individual, it's always the team.

"The guys were fantastic.

"I suppose as a sergeant major I led them, but it was their incredible, dogged determination that prevented further loss of life."

● **ANOTHER** British soldier proved his mettle on the same streets after taking control of a similarly chaotic scene when a suicide bomber attacked his vehicle patrol.

Sgt James McKenna (Scots) was commanding a convoy of three Foxhound vehicles on its way to the Afghan Border Police HQ when a suicide bomber struck.

A civilian 4x4 pulled out from a track and attempted to block the military assets.

But from the lead vehicle, Sgt McKenna judged this to be a potential attack and ordered his troops to conduct evasive action.

The first Foxhound successfully negotiated the block, but the second was forced to slow down.

As it did so a second civilian car crew alongside and an insurgent detonated himself – the blast forcing the platform some 30 metres across the road into a drainage ditch.

Assessing the situation, Sgt McKenna sent a contact report to his HQ.

He then directed the remaining vehicles into a protective cordon around the vulnerable soldiers in the stricken machine.

"Controlling a confused and dangerous scene for 50 minutes until the arrival of the quick reaction force, Sgt McKenna's outstanding command and bravery in the direct face of the enemy must be recognised," his citation states.

The Serviceman has been awarded a Mention in Dispatches.



Sgt James McKenna (Scots)



Mentor might

● IT isn't just action on Kabul's dangerous streets that features in the latest operational honours list.

Following his tireless work as a mentor at the city's Afghan National Army Officer Academy, Maj Stephen Wall (PWRR) has earned an MBE.

The Serviceman has been praised for his "outstanding contribution to UK-Afghanistan relations" during the nine months he was based at the facility.

Faced with multiple challenges including a lack of equipment and uniforms, he ensured the higher headquarters provided the much-needed supplies, securing additional weapons and issuing each officer cadet with one.

His citation states: "Maj Wall has single-handedly done more to ensure the success of the Afghan National Army officer Academy than any other mentor."

23 Army personnel were recognised in the latest list of honours and awards, which acknowledges acts between October 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016



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Myriad missions

This year's honours cover everything from disease to traffic disasters

“
I think this
shows what
a huge role
British soldiers
have to play in
the world
”

FROM quick thinking in civilian emergencies to delicate humanitarian missions, the latest operational honours and award list certainly reflects the diversity of life in uniform.

Take Maj Julia Symons (RLC), for example, who has been recognised for her efforts in Sierra Leone during the Ebola outbreak.

Working closely with the country's armed forces, the Servicewoman was at the forefront of the fight to defeat the deadly virus, using her logistical planning skills to relocate the national response centre.

"I am very humbled," she commented after receiving the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

Maj Symons' meticulous planning meant every department moved on time, in perfect order and, crucially, with no drop in output.

She also succeeded in leading the urgent refurbishment of two Ebola treatment centres.

"Symons threw herself into every challenge," her citation states.

But unsurprisingly, the officer, who has also been given an award by the country's president, remains modest.

"It's sometimes difficult to feel deserving of anything," she told *Soldier*.

"It's nice to be recognised but equally I realise what the cost was; a lot of people out there lost family.

"I think this shows what a huge role British soldiers have to play in the world, to train and develop other armies."

Operational honours and awards

Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE)

Lt Col Melissa Emmett, Int Corps

Sgt Robert Seely, Int Corps

Maj Stephen Wall, PWRR

Queen's Gallantry Medal

WO2 Shane O'Rourke, AGC (RMP)

Mention in Dispatches

Sgt Roy Bowden, REME

Sgt Matthew Calland, KRH

Sgt James McKenna, Scots

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Sgt Gil Gittins, R Signals

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

SSgt Carl Bushell, WG

Capt Alexander Crisp, Int Corps

Lt Col Ewan Harris, R Welsh

Brig Charles Herbert

Cpl Nicholas Hillyard, R Signals

Sgt Richard McAulay, RA

Maj John Sefton, Scots

Maj Julia Symons, RLC

SSgt Dominic Warren, REME

Cpl Daniel Wells, Int Corps

Non-operational

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Capt Anthony Cole, RE

Spr Daniel O'Driscoll, RE





LISTEN UP

The latest generation of hearing protection has hit quartermasters' shelves.
Soldier is all ears...



WHATEVER your trade in the Army – be it armoured vehicle driver, helicopter ground crewman

or heavy machine gunner – soldiering is one of life's noisier professions and protecting your hearing is vital.

The balancing act for boffins in charge of developing new ear defence is reducing noise while maintaining the all-important situational awareness.

Recent months have seen a range of solutions introduced under the new tactical hearing protection system, which promise to do just that.

Split into three user categories – basic, specialist and dismounted close combat – the kit caters for all roles and scenarios and is designed to enable troops to hear what is going on around them, but still shield them from the damaging effects of intermittent or constant noise.

While the yellow foam earplugs and green Peltor earmuffs will remain in service, the new system offers troops more choice and tailored protection than ever before.

Here, Maj Toby Mellor (R Anglian) from the combat delivery team of the Integrate department at Army HQ gives a breakdown of its capabilities...

Report: Becky Clark

Basic user

Can be worn in open or closed mode, via a plug or rocker switch.

Available models: 3M CAEP v4.1, Surefire EP4 and MCL TIPPS

A word in your ear...

The basic user earplugs come in three models and sizes for individual comfort.

Open mode is for scenarios when situational awareness is a priority, closed is for continuous noise environments such as when you're sitting in a vehicle or operating machinery.

In open mode the baffle inside the device will manually shut when the air pressure from an impulse noise – such as a loud bang – reaches it.

IN NUMBERS:

9,600
specialist user
earmuffs distributed
so far

17,000
dismounted close
combat user headsets
issued, with priority
given to high-
readiness units

131,000+
basic user earplugs
that will have
been rolled out by
February

Need more info on what ear defence to wear and when? Check out PAM 21

Specialist user

Reduces exposure to hazardous levels of noise and can be connected to in-service communication systems

Available model: Peltor ComTac XP fitted with a boom mic

A word in your ear...

This is a dual-layer system for soldiers firing more powerful weapons such as an unsuppressed sniper rifle or Javelin.

You wear an earplug on the inside – either a yellow foam one or one of the basic user types – and then the earmuffs sit over the top.

When it's set to 'plug-in' mode it listens to the noises on the outside and transmits amplified sounds that you need to hear on the inside, but it doesn't re-broadcast loud bangs.

It probably stops as much noise as it's practically possible to keep out with hearing protection alone; the shock wave will still travel through the bones in your face and skull but there's not much you can do about that.



Peltor ComTac XP

Dismounted close combat user

Features electronic situational awareness and impulse noise protection and can be connected to in-service communications systems. Its combined weight is just 150 grams and the control unit is smaller than the size of a credit card

Available model: Invisio S10 headset

A word in your ear...

This system cuts out impulse sound electronically.

There is a microphone on the outside, which will transmit sounds the wearer needs to hear – like people talking – but it has a certain noise threshold and once that is reached it will shut down and won't re-broadcast it.

It is designed for infantry rifle companies, for example, who use weapons systems that create noise below a given level, but anyone firing any weapons above that, like mortars, will have to wear the specialist user kit.



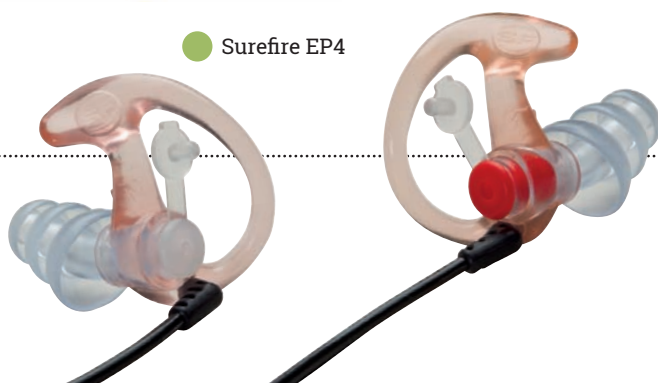
Invisio S10



3M CAEP v4.1



MCL TIPPS



Surefire EP4

FLIGHT THE DEMONS



How training your brain can help you to become the best soldier



DRAINED and disillusioned recruit is "hanging out" during P Company test week in Catterick. Every part of his body aches and he's ready to quit.

A private soldier slams the desk as he fails yet another literacy test in the education wing. Why can't he grasp something so simple?

A Servicewoman has been captured during a dangerous mission in the Middle East. Escape isn't viable and it's time to panic.

Although each very different, these situations have far more in common than you might think.

Their outcomes hinge on maintaining a positive mental attitude.

And although a confident mindset can't necessarily secure your release from enemy fighters, it can equip you to deal with the challenges ahead and so give you the best possible chance of success – or even survival.

Don't believe us? Just ask the athletes.

Up to 90 per cent of optimal performance in elite sport is attributed to mental factors.

In other words, individuals can improve what they do physically by making sure the right things are going on upstairs.

So in a bid to ensure that the brain doesn't let the side down for the British Army, a new training package put together by the School of Infantry is seeing formal lessons being delivered in so-called mental resilience.

The idea is that, in the same way that PT and battlefield tactics can be taught and practised, so too can the skills for dealing with negative thoughts, pain, anxiety and emotion.

Borrowing elements from the much talked-about mindfulness therapy – a technique where people focus their awareness on the present moment while calmly accepting their feelings, thoughts and physical sensations – it coaches troops in how to cope better with difficult scenarios.

This could be anything from breaking up intimidating physical training with lots of short-term goals, to methods for reducing your anxiety when the pressure is on in an operational scenario.

The course equips Service personnel

with different methods that can be selected according to the situation.

"People think you either are or you aren't mentally resilient – you either have it or you don't – but that's just not the case," explains clinical psychologist Capt Duncan Precious (RAMC), who created and piloted the training with CSgt Austin Lindsay (R Irish, page 36) and CSjt Chris Sanson (Rifles) at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick.

"Resilience is such an important part of what we do, but although we expect our soldiers to be mentally robust we have never explicitly talked about it or explained it. We've just left it to chance."

According to Capt Precious and his colleagues if you don't train your brain as you would the body, you could face failure in a task you are more than capable of completing, physically-speaking.

So convinced is the Infantry of this that it is already delivering mental resilience training to all of its new recruits.

And over time it is hoped its lessons will be extended to the rest of the Army through additional courses and an app.

When *Soldier* visits Catterick to observe a "train the trainer" course for Army Recruitment and Training Division instructors, it is immediately apparent that this issue is something that hits home with participants.

Within half an hour of being asked how they would address anxiety with their recruits, instructors are recalling an abundance of personal experiences.

From ultra marathons to a battlefield encounter in the Falklands and the devastating loss of a child, those with experience have no problem demonstrating how confronting your anxiety and setting short-term goals to overcome it (see over page) makes all the difference.

"I think this training is a breakthrough," says Capt Will Pacter (RAPTC), based at Army Training Centre Pirbright.

"In the past you would 'grizz it out' and get on with it but now the approach is different.

"This course acknowledges that we have feelings like stress and it normalises that, I →



“
IT'S GOING
TO CHANGE
THE WAY WE
TACKLE OUR
PROBLEMS
”

→ think it's going to change the way we tackle our problems.

"It's not just about being able to do a ten-miler but dealing with day-to-day rigours of life.

"A lot of soldiers will struggle when they leave the Army and skills they learn here, like goal setting, can help with that too."

Sgt Mark Saunders (Para), a P Company course instructor, is keen to pass the lessons on to his troops as well.

"We get a lot of guys coming through who, physically, are probably up to standard but mentally they aren't.

"We need to find ways to make them mentally stronger so something like this should be embraced.

"In P Company people are under a lot of pressure and often their demons get the better of them."

Course attendees are given classroom lessons in mental resilience before putting

these skills to the test 55 feet up on the infamous Trainasium assault course.

Overseeing the adrenalin-inducing task, Maj Alan Armstrong, OC P Company, says he has seen plenty of fit soldiers fail at it because of their mental attitude when the pressure is on.

"Some struggle with self belief and coping with their inner fears," he adds.

This, the course leaders say, is why mental resilience training is so crucial.

Fatigue and negative thoughts – telling yourself you can't do it – are inevitably going to lead to your body following suit.

So by learning some basic tricks-of-the-trade when it comes to the way you think (see right), Service personnel will be as prepared as possible to succeed when the moment comes. ■

FINAL WORD – PAGE 90

ARE YOU MENTALLY ROBUST?

Four steps to getting through a tough training task: Just one of the lessons delivered on the Army's mental resilience package...

1. **ACCEPT** that pain and discomfort comes with the struggle. Embrace the challenge
2. **BE WILLING** to experience the negative and positive emotions that come with it
3. Try to keep your mind focused on the **PRESENT MOMENT**
4. Have **SELF-BELIEF**. If you believe you can do it, you're probably right

ALL THE DIFFERENCE

› **MENTAL resilience** is a useful skill to have in just about any scenario. But just like the muscles of the body, it needs exercising regularly. Here are some examples of situations where soldiers can boost their performance with a few simple techniques...

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING ANXIOUS



- Remember that performance-related anxiety is normal
- Expect to feel nervous during certain tasks
- Tell yourself "it's just a feeling and will pass"
- Reassure yourself with positive statements – "I can do this"
- Focus your attention on what you are doing here and now, or by taking slow deep breaths (in for four, out for four)

WHEN YOU'RE HANGING OUT



- We have more negative thoughts when in pain
- Emotions can include anger, frustration, anxiety, self-pity and shame
- This increases suffering and reduces concentration and focus
- Remember the pain is only temporary. It will pass!
- Do not look to avoid the sensation. Expect it and embrace it. This will increase what you can cope with
- Then try to focus your attention away from the pain. Sing a song in your head, count your breaths or look around you

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO GIVE UP



- It's normal to have negative thoughts
- You can't control what pops into your head but you can control how much attention you give it
- Let the thought go and focus on something else like your breaths in and out
- Or try challenging all your negative thoughts with positive answers:

"This is tough, I can't do it"

"Of course it is, but it will be worth getting through"

- Remember that thoughts are not facts. They are opinions which means they can be wrong
- Repeat your favourite positive statement to yourself: "dig in", "never give up" etc



When doesn't it work?

For injury.

When mental resilience coaches talk about "tolerating pain" it means that which can be endured safely such as fatigue, lactic acid and aching muscles.

If you suspect you have an injury do not continue your training as you risk making the problem worse.

“There were
mock executions
and at night we’d
hear people being
abused”

Try telling this Serviceman that mental resilience training isn't valuable. In a *Soldier* exclusive, CSgt Austin Lindsay (R Irish) talks to Sarah Goldthorpe about his capture during Sierra Leone's civil war and how some simple 'exercises' kept him sane during the ordeal...

SIXTEEN years ago CSgt Austin Lindsay (R Irish) faced the mental challenge of a lifetime. He was taken hostage during a mission to provide training to Sierra Leone's armed forces.

As a 23-year-old lance corporal with tours of Northern Ireland and Kosovo under his belt, he hadn't been a stranger to gritty operations.

But when a jungle patrol ended with him and nine colleagues being seized and subjected to days of mental torture at the hands of the notorious West Side Boys, it was the soldiers' mindsets that became the problem.

"We didn't know if we were going to live or die," he recalls.

"It was a complete shock; something we had never experienced.

"We weren't mentally prepared for it."

The troops were put through a chilling ordeal;

Picture: Steve Dock

events that are clearly difficult to talk about.

But CSgt Lindsay says that in the same way that physical defence tactics are drilled into soldiers, so too should mental ones.

And he would know.

He is now a member of permanent staff at the Infantry Training Centre's learning development wing, where he works with the Army's only uniformed clinical psychologist to deliver mental resilience training (see previous page).

"When I tell the students about my experiences it brings the topic to life and shows that this stuff is not just a bunch of words," he explains.

And on hearing his story, I can see why.

"We were surrounded by a 100-strong group of men, women and children, all armed," CSgt Lindsay recalls of the day he was seized back in August 2000.

"The initial reaction was to fight back but we were completely outnumbered.

"Our commander told us to surrender our weapons to try and calm the situation down.

"We were getting roughed about and the captors were going into panic mode."

He and his colleagues were stripped of their kit and moved to tiny prison huts in a new location across the river.

"We had mock executions daily," he continues.

"Our Sierra Leonean liaison officer was taken away and when he came back he looked like a different person.

"He was withdrawn and couldn't speak to tell us what had happened.

"He'd been tortured, and seeing him like that increased the fear in us; they were quite clever like that.

"But with us it was pretty much mental anguish. They let us hear what was happening outside at night; people getting raped and abused.

"We kept wondering if we would be next, and started to withdraw into ourselves.

"No one was talking to each other."

Shocked into silence, the troops were left with only their thoughts.

And this, the coach tells me, is where the so-called "pillars" of mental resilience come in.

Put simply, these are things which determine what attitude you have in a difficult scenario.

Self-belief, support from your peers, a sense of humour, focus and the ability to control your emotions are just a few traits which can help a person to weather difficult situations.

But if they crumble, CSgt Lindsay says, your mindset can start to hold you back.

"We were thinking 'it's all over, we are going to be killed,'" admits CSgt Lindsay.

"I wondered if I would ever see my family again. My wife was pregnant at the time, and I thought I was never going to meet my child.

"We started to question, why am I here?

"But thinking like that can lead you to give up

and lose hope."

With comradeship and any sense of direction depleted, the team's two senior officers stepped in.

And this, the Serviceman says, is where things took a "lucky" turn.

"Back then we hadn't any coping strategies; it wasn't really part of Army training," he continues.

"It had got to the point where we couldn't focus on what was real or not.

"But a day or two in, the officers picked the 'pillars' back up for us.

"They paired us up, gave us little recce and sentry duties and got us talking.

"We set goals each day, from noticing what weapons our captors were carrying to looking for escape routes.

"They had remembered grid references from the patrol and we were also building up a picture of where we'd been taken.

"All this gave us the belief we could escape.

"And we moved from thinking 'it's all over' to 'I'm going to get out'.

"There was light at the end of the tunnel."

The ordeal ended in the release of some of the group, including CSgt Lindsay, and the rescue of others, but nevertheless their escape-orientated tasks had not been in vain.

They had provided a focus for the troops to keep thinking positively.

"The whole thing became the plan of the escape," says the senior NCO.

"The officers gave us little talks; they were being positive and pushing what I now recognise as mental resilience skills towards us."

By creating a formal training package, CSgt Lindsay and his team at the Infantry Training Centre are trying to ensure that all their soldiers, not just those who have been through ordeals like this, are properly equipped.

"Those two officers were very experienced and very good leaders and I definitely do look at that as lucky," he continues.

"If it wasn't for them we might have given up.

"If we'd had mental resilience training back then I reckon everybody who was taken hostage that day would still be in the Army now.

"A lot of people found it really hard afterwards and had to leave; some have suffered from mental health problems.

"It's always hard to know what new situations will be like but you can prepare yourself for the worst and mentally rehearse things.

"I do feel passionate about that.

"Wherever you go you will be tested in different ways, but these skills can be used for almost anything." ■

**TURN TO THE PREVIOUS PAGE FOR TIPS ON
HOW TO BECOME MORE MENTALLY RESILIENT.**

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An underwater photograph showing two divers in a clear blue sea. A thick, multi-colored rope hangs vertically from the top of the frame. The divers are positioned on either side of the rope, appearing to be working on it. Bubbles are visible around the divers, and a rocky seabed is visible in the upper left corner. The overall tone is teal and blue.

JUST ADD WATER

**Sappers showcase engineering
expertise below the surface**



“
You have
to give it
your all
”

Report Becky Clark Pictures Graeme Main



LAYING explosives can be a hazardous business on dry land but imagine doing it under water in zero visibility. For the Royal

Engineers divers,

however, such complex tasks are all in a day's work.

From demolition to construction, these specialised sappers carry out many of the corps' bread-and-butter jobs at depths of up to 50 metres.

The dangerous nature of the role means keeping skills and drills up to date is vital and a new package for personnel from across 8 Engineer Brigade was designed to do just that.

Exercise Submerged Crusader took place over two weeks at Chepstow's National Diving and Activity Centre – the country's deepest inland dive site – and it was the first time the formation's regimental dive teams had come together to train as a collective.

"Diving is classed as a risk-to-life activity," said Maj Mick Stewart, group diving officer for 12 (Force Support) Engineer Group.

"The main reason for training together, apart from economy of effort, is to share best practice so that the newer divers and supervisors can benefit from the knowledge of the more experienced guys.

"This concentration has allowed us to pool resources, and exercise some of the tasks that are more difficult to achieve in a unit team.

"It can be a dangerous role, so we need to get things right."

The package was also a chance for all divers to log additional hours on the two types of diving equipment they routinely use on the job.

Depending on the nature of the task, personnel either wear standard scuba-diving gear or what is known as the open space diving system, where the air is piped from the surface down to the diver's helmet, allowing him to stay at greater depths for longer.

In order to remain current every diver must complete a set number of hours on both apparatus in any six-month period, as well as on the various heavy tools at their disposal.

"We have a wide range of capabilities," explained diving supervisor WO2 Pete Donnelly (36 Engr Regt).

"From concreting to explosives, hydraulic tools, chainsaws, jack hammers, grinders, ultrathermic cutting equipment and lifting gear – pretty much any engineering task can be carried out under water.

"It just takes longer because of depth and visibility limitations and restriction on movement."

Alongside the more experienced personnel, eleven new divers were in the final days of their initial training.

The five-week class two course is run three times a year by Portsmouth's Defence Diving School and has a reputation as one of the toughest packages around.

Prospective candidates must first pass a five-day Army diver selection phase to assess their fitness and suitability.

Once accepted onto the programme, a challenging combination of physical and theory-based testing begins.

"It's renowned for being an extremely arduous course," said student 2nd Lt Joshua Thomas.

"But there's also a mental side that I wasn't fully aware of when I started, which is fundamental to being a good Army diver.

"You have to have the mindset that there's no option of quitting – you just have to give it your all and go as hard as you can.

"Royal Engineers divers are held in such high regard and I wanted the opportunity to be part of that elite team."

The 24-year-old described how troops have to be at peak fitness, not only to endure long dives and hard graft but to combat decompression illness or "the bends" – the potentially lethal effect caused by nitrogen bubbles expanding in the body during an ascent.

"We need to be fit because of the demands of the job itself, but medically, having a low body fat percentage lessens susceptibility to decompression illness", he said.

As well as getting to grips with scuba gear, the course teaches skills such as night diving, lifting techniques, casualty or object recovery, demolitions, rescue drills and river recce, where personnel learn how to measure the profile of a river or lake bed.

After completing the course and accruing some 50 hours



Panel operator Capt Mark Lawrenson monitors the open space diving system from the surface

PAY PERKS

£8.86 – Extra salary earned every day by newly-qualified, class two divers. This rises to

£12 for class one divers and

£20.79 for those who reach diving supervisor level.

Picture: Capt Benjamin Stickland, RE



Interested?

The Army diver selection course is open to soldiers and officers from the Royal Engineers, and Royal Logistic Corps personnel from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment. Speak to your regimental Army diving supervisor to see if you fit the bill.

under water, troops return for the six-week class one course, which qualifies them to operate in the open space diving system and use heavy machinery at depth.

Despite the lengthy and challenging nature of the training 2nd Lt Thomas said Servicemen and women should not be put off the role.

"I had done no diving whatsoever," he explained.

"I wasn't a great swimmer either and I thought that might be a disadvantage but it's not actually about swimming, it's about being able to do the job under water.

"The mentality I had beforehand was that you need to be superman to be able to pass the course and I don't think the staff are looking for that – they're looking for somebody who won't give up, no matter what happens.

"It's a matter of pride. Wearing that badge on my shoulder would be a great achievement."

Divers in demand

These are just some of the challenging missions Army divers have deployed on in recent years...

UK, 2014

As part of Operation Pitchpole, the military contribution to flood relief efforts, Army divers were called in to support the Environment Agency by surveying bridges and riverbeds. They also helped position flood defences and were on standby to move people away from flooded areas.

Iraq, 2003

In the early days of Op Telic, Royal Engineers divers were key in clearing the port of Umm Qasr of mines and obstructions so that military and humanitarian supplies could be shipped in. Other tasks included clearing explosives on the North Ramallah Bridge, assessing the damage to Saddam Hussein's private yacht and recovering weapons dumped in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Afghanistan, 2009

Among the many tasks carried out by British personnel during Herrick 11 was a joint mission with US forces to recover the bodies of two American paratroopers who had drowned in the Arghendab River near the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan border.

SSgt Paddy Kearney (3 RSME) recalled: "We were diving there for about three or four weeks and we ended up in a lot of contacts on site. We would be in the water and the Taliban would start firing at us, which was a weird situation. I never thought I'd be in my wetsuit and body armour getting in a firefight. We found one of the bodies one week into it and the other guy was found later on. There was a ceremony and he was sent back to the States. It was nice getting closure for the families"

Haiti, 2010

Royal Logistic Corps divers were part of the UK relief efforts in Haiti after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the Caribbean nation.





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CREATING A COMBAT REGIMENT: A USER'S GUIDE

We've all struggled putting up flat-pack furniture but imagine being told to build a whole new regiment – without any instructions

THERE aren't many people who can say they have set up a new regiment from scratch – and believe it or not the Army doesn't have a manual or pamphlet for such a task.

But two years ago a handful of Regular officers along with a couple of hundred Reservists rolled up their sleeves, tapped into all their experience and got stuck in to build the Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry (SNIY) – a brand new Reserve light cavalry formation.

Here, some of the unit's key personnel explain to *Soldier* what it took to complete this mother of all self-builds...

1 LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

"That's what they always say when you're looking for a home and never underestimate how important this is," says commanding officer Lt Col James Campbell-Barnard.

"For Reserve units especially so because of the recruitment and retention implications.

"We have squadrons in Cupar, Ayr and Belfast which were inherited from the Queen's Own Yeomanry (QOY) after it was reconfigured under the Army 2020 plan.

"They have a longstanding presence in their particular areas so there was no question of moving them.

"But we needed to establish a new command and support squadron along with an HQ, and Edinburgh was the obvious choice.

"The area had available infrastructure in Redford Barracks that was vacant and it also had a great population base for recruiting new talent with the various skills we need for a cavalry regiment, such as medical, clerical, intelligence and welfare not to mention drivers."

E Squadron
(Lothians and Border Yeomanry)

A Squadron
(Ayrshire (Earl of Carrick's Own) Yeomanry)

B Squadron
(North Irish Horse)

C Squadron
(Fife and Forfar Yeomanry / Scottish Horse)

2 COME UP WITH A CAP BADGE

"Appearance is so important to identity so it's always a contentious issue," says Maj Mark Gannon, officer commanding B Squadron and a schoolteacher in design during the week.

He was one of those charged with helping to generate a "look" for the new formation.

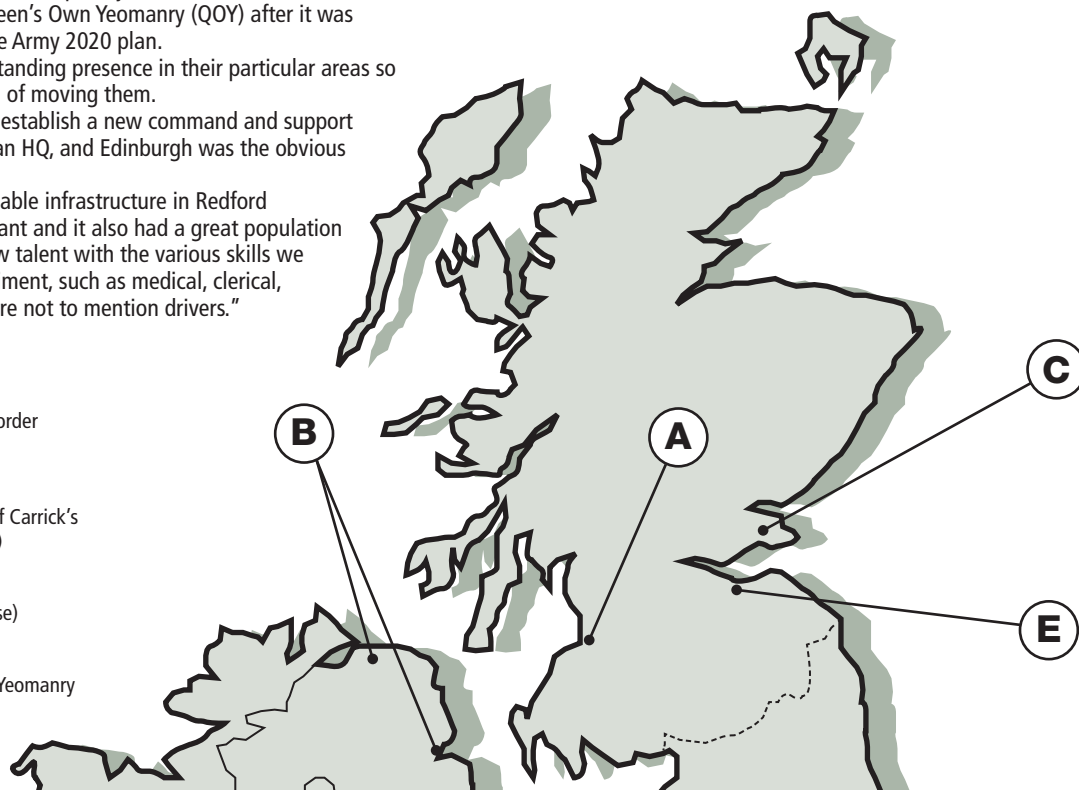
"The cap badge is a prime example; the Irish soldiers wanted it to feature a harp while the Scots were pushing for a saltire.

"So the squadron leaders consulted their troops and then stuck themselves in a room along with a few other senior personnel to thrash out various ideas.

"In the end they settled on a wolf's head with crossed lances behind, sitting on a green patch to recognise the Irish connection.

"The wolf is a pack animal renowned in Gaelic folklore for guiding, aiding and protecting, and as light cavalry we thought those qualities reflected our role.

"The blue-green-blue scheme on our tactical recognition flash reflects the geographical location of the squadrons and the grey beret is the same as the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards', our paired Regular



unit, so that made sense to everyone."

A similar process was employed when it came to refining the look of the dress uniforms.

"We wanted to keep some of the existing squadrons' heritage but also create a unique appearance, explains Maj Neil Potter, 2iC of the regiment and an airline pilot for Jet2.

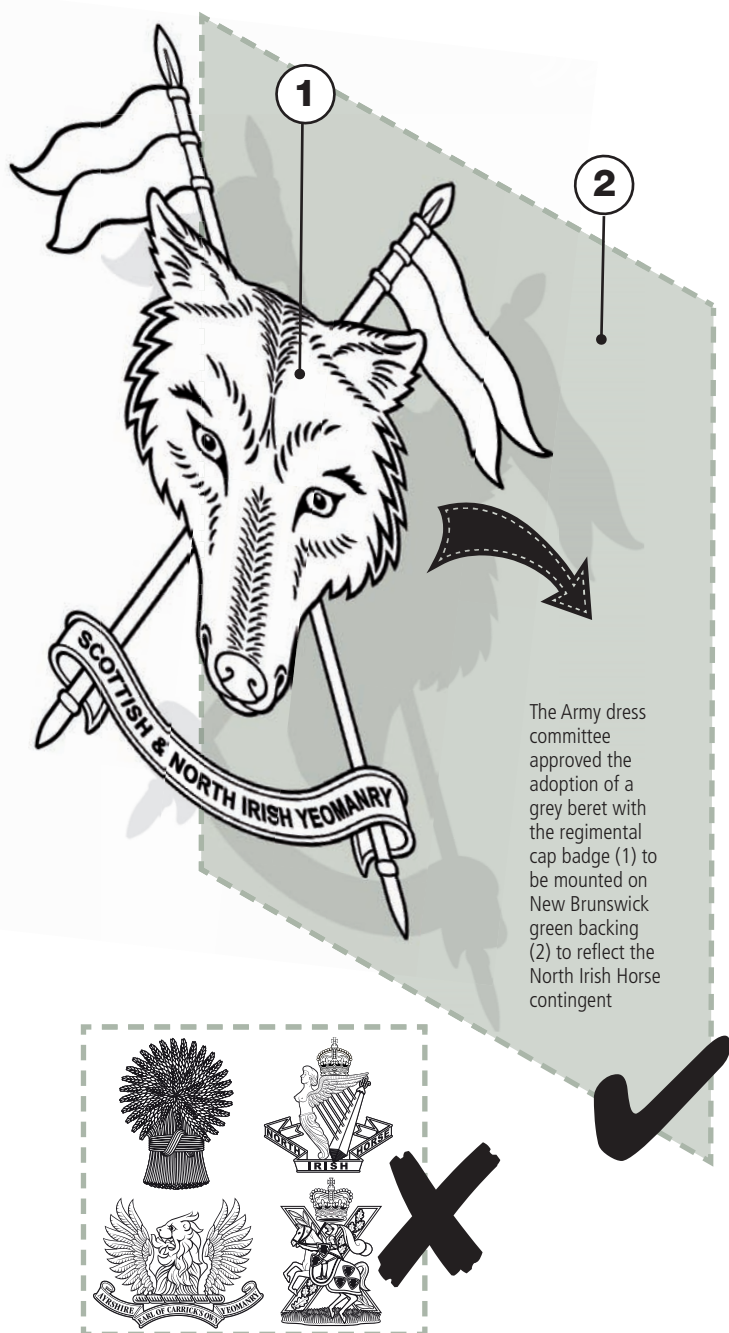
"One good tip for anyone doing this sort of thing is to consult extensively with an expert from the outset.

"We had a historical adviser to the Army dress committee on-board called Charles Webb, and he provided invaluable advice along the way about what was likely to be approved or not.

"Our parade outfit features some traditional cavalry touches such as double yellow stripes on the trousers, a cross belt and chain mail on the shoulder.

"For the mess dress we've taken a traditional look but added colours such as scarlet and green from the dress of the QOY squadrons who moved over to us.

"But it hasn't been easy and the officers' mess dress alone has taken nearly a year to finalise."



3

SOURCE THE RAW MATERIALS

"When it comes to recruiting, working closely with a private company in the area can make a real difference," comments WO2 John Morris from E Squadron in Edinburgh.

"We linked up with a local firm called Pertemps that specialises in supplying drivers for the transport industry.

"It has signed the Armed Forces Covenant so is very open to employing Reservists, which it sees as a reliable source of good drivers.

"Pertemps has agreed to provide complimentary top-up training for our guys to obtain a commercial licence, which would normally cost around £1,000.

"The company also has civilian drivers on its books who have gone on to join us in the Reserve so we are mutually supporting one another.

"Because we're part of the Royal Armoured Corps, we're also the first Reserve regiment in Scotland and Northern Ireland to recruit women for close combat roles and that has raised our profile and boosted recruitment.

"We have four women here in Scotland who have applied to join us and hopefully they will all make it through the selection process."



4

SET UP A KITT

"Like all building projects, you can forget how much money you need just to get going once you've moved in," explains Maj David Ronaldson, the regimental administration officer.

"We had little cash at first except some money from the two messes and regimental funds that came with the QOY squadrons who moved over to us," he adds.

"That came to nearly £7,000 but £4,000 of that stayed with the messes so we only had the balance to spend on ancillaries.

"The money was soon eaten into by purchasing basic stuff like a regimental flag and stationery items, providing grants for adventurous training, even purchasing rank slides, tactical recognition flashes and temporary woven cap badges because the new metal ones hadn't yet been issued.

"There are many things we needed to procure upfront because they are not funded by the public purse.

"We'd have liked to have given Redford Barracks a lick of paint when we took it over but there wasn't enough money to do so.

"We also needed regimental stable belts but there was no way we could afford to pay for them until the old squadron associations generously granted us more than £2,500 to purchase 200 belts.

"Another initiative was to link up with a local brewery in Stirling who agreed to produce a special label beer exclusively for us called Wolf's Head.

"We sold it internally to the guys and it generated a modest profit for our regimental fund. As a result, we have just taken delivery of a second batch so this small income stream can continue for the coming year."



5 MAKE IT FEEL LIKE HOME

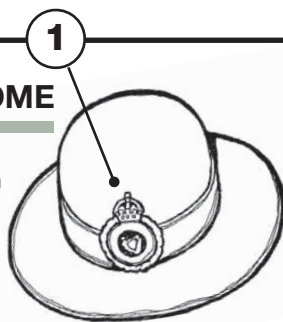
"You need old pictures, trophies and memorabilia on the walls if you want your headquarters to feel like home – and that's so important for engendering a feeling of belonging and loyalty among personnel," explains Lt Col Campbell-Barnard.

"We didn't have any of that at Redford Barracks – which had been home to 3rd Battalion, The Rifles – so we had to dig around and procure all of it ourselves.

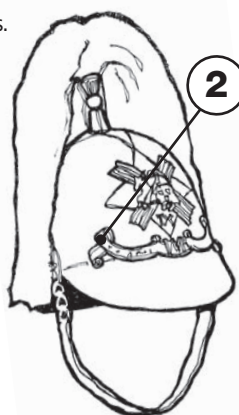
"We've contacted the veterans' associations of the three QOY squadrons that joined us and they are helping us to locate historical objects.

"We've also named our new Edinburgh squadron after the Lothians and Border Yeomanry, which was removed from the order of battle in 1997, so we're trying to find objects associated with that unit too.

"Poppy Scotland gave us a huge painting called 'Dunbar Sands' which depicts soldiers of the Lothians and Border Horse on exercise and it's made a world of difference to the place."



1. Hat and badge.
North Irish Horse c.1914



2. Black leather helmet.
Fife Volunteer Mounted Rifles c.1864



3. Senior NCO. Lothians and Berwickshire Yeomanry Cavalry c.1890

6 GET TO KNOW THE NEIGHBOURS

"Once you've moved in it's so important to feel welcome and you can only do that by connecting with the community," says Capt Huw Bell from E Squadron.

"It's good for recruiting, obviously, and for building good relations with local authorities who we might need to cooperate with in the future.

"I have established links with councils and the East Lothian Museums Service, who loaned us a few historical items like old military swords and tunics to display in our headquarters.

"In Edinburgh we used the official opening of our HQ at Redford Barracks to build some bridges.

"More than 100 people came, including local dignitaries and a few descendants of Maj Harry Younger, who we named the building after.

"He was killed in action in the Second World War while serving with Lothians and Border Yeomanry and his family are still very influential in this area.

"The SNIY has also contributed personnel to remembrance parades around the region, including at Dunbar where the Lothians and Border Yeomanry used to be based.

"It was a valuable opportunity to re-establish our historical ties with the town."



SNIY structure

HQ: Redford Barracks, Edinburgh

● **E Squadron (Lothians and Border Yeomanry)** Command and Support
Location: Edinburgh

Role: Employs drivers, chefs, medics, storemen and clerks in support of the combat troops.

● **A Squadron (Ayrshire (Earl of Carrick's Own) Yeomanry)**
Location: Ayr

● **B Squadron (North Irish Horse)**
Location: Belfast/Coleraine

● **C Squadron (Fife and Forfar Yeomanry/Scottish Horse)**
Location: Cupar

Roles: Light cavalry units fighting both from the RWMIK and dismounted when required. Deployable across a wide range of operations, from peace support to combat, their aim is to find the enemy, locate key local personalities, understand the regional cultures and sensitivities and influence as required.

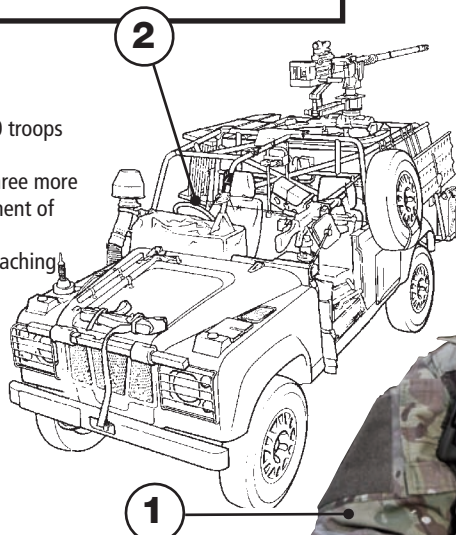
SNAGGING LIST

When the regiment joined the order of battle in late 2014 it had under 200 troops mainly drawn from the three squadrons that moved over from the QOY.

Now it has four squadrons and requires another 36 personnel (1) and three more RWMIKs (2) to add to the 16 it already has to reach its maximum complement of troops and equipment.

With a headquarters now in place, the regiment is well on the way to reaching full operating capability by the scheduled date of 2020.

"It's been a demanding couple of years for us all and very much a start-up phase," says Lt Col Campbell-Barnard. "But we are now firmly established and well able to support the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and 51st Infantry Brigade, which was demonstrated by our deployment with RWMIKs on Exercise Wessex Storm in the summer and will be again on Exercise Viking Storm in Denmark next year."



1



FAMILY MATTERS



As the National Charity of the British Army, we believe that all Army families are important and we support them as well as serving soldiers and veterans.

For wounded, injured or sick soldiers the spouse often becomes the main carer and the impact for families can be huge.

Other issues such as education, relocation, separation, isolation and bereavement can leave families in need of support.

We're here to help.

For every soldier, veteran and their families – for life.

Find out more
soldierscharity.org/family

Follow us @soldierscharity
Join in #armyfamilymatters

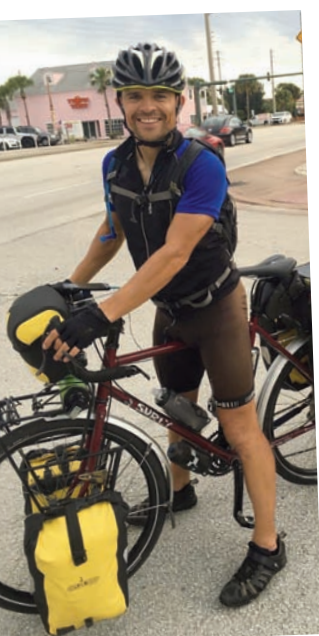
ABF

THE SOLDIERS'

CHARITY

'It could be worse – I could be a Man City fan'

How squaddie humour is keeping this veteran smiling despite dementia diagnosis



Above: Chris Graham during his 16,000-mile cycle ride

Right: Chris at home with Vicky and two-year-old son Dexter
Picture: Steve Dock

BY the nature of their jobs, soldiers are forced to confront their own mortality sooner, perhaps, than most people. While no one likes to think of dying, it would be strange to deploy to a combat zone without at least considering the possibility of being killed in action.

But what if you are faced with the prospect of an early death, not on the battlefield but from an inherited form of dementia?

Former staff sergeant Chris Graham (ex-RLC) knows all too well about the rough cards life can deal out.

At the age of just 38 he was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's, a rare form of the disease which had already killed his father and put his older brother in a nursing home.

The devastating news not only ended his military career just short of his 22-year mark, but presented him and his girlfriend, Vicky, with an agonising dilemma.

Having recently found out they were to become parents, the couple now had to decide whether to terminate the pregnancy or risk passing the gene on to their unborn child.

With his life in turmoil, few would have blamed Chris for crumbling but in true squaddie style he decided he wouldn't be going down without a fight.

He and Vicky decided to keep the baby and in the spring of 2015, not long after the birth of Dexter, he embarked on an eight-month, 16,000-mile solo bike journey around North America.

"I'd always wanted to do a challenge when I left the Army," he explained.

"But it was also about spreading the word about dementia.

"They reckon one in three people over 63 around the world will get it.

"The number of people I met along the way who said 'oh, my grandad's got that' or 'my aunt's got it' was uncanny.

"It's an epidemic."

Starting and ending in Toronto, Chris headed westwards across Canada, before making his way up to Alaska, back down to Los Angeles, across Arizona and Texas and back up the East Coast – an effort that saw him raise £53,000 for charity.

Despite having no cycling experience, the former senior NCO was never in doubt that he could complete the epic route – in his Army days his natural fitness and determination, coupled with his small stature, had earned him the nickname "Gurkha".

He insists it was Vicky who had the more difficult job.

Back at home in the UK, she would be on the phone to him until the early hours, using Google maps to guide him on his way and checking the weather conditions in his path.



Interview: Becky Clark

I had the easy bit – I was just sat on my arse all day



"I had the easy bit – I was just sat on my arse all day", he joked.

But while he makes light of it, Chris encountered his fair share of danger along the way, from tornados to bears and – at one point – a swarm of bloodsucking flies.

Recalling another hairy moment on a lonely highway in Ontario he said: "I was in Canada and the road was straight as a die.

"I had stopped for a bite to eat and this truck – the first one I had seen all day – pulled over on the other side of the road.

"The driver was a big bloke, quite tubby, with a beard and he looked very dodgy to me.

"He said, 'gee man, can you just help me get something out of the back of my truck?'

"Straight away my hackles went up and I said, 'why the hell would you want me to check the back of your wagon?'

"I was quite confident I'd be fast enough to get away, but I purposefully stayed where I was and told him to do one.

"He got back in his vehicle and drove off but for a long time I was looking over my shoulder because he could easily have run me off the road and no one would have known."

The anecdote is included in Chris's recently published account of his travels.

Five Minutes of Amazing – so titled because of Vicky's decision to stick by him and enjoy whatever time they have together – charts not only his "dementia adventure" but his early life and career.

After a difficult childhood that saw him spend time in care, he joined the Army at 16 and served as a postie all over the world, including Bosnia, Kosovo, Norway, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Nepal and the Falkland Islands.

Tragically, in describing the fates of his father and brother, the book also reveals what could lie in store for Chris further down the line.

It is something he had plenty of time to ponder with so many hours alone on the road, along with some of life's big questions.

"People ask if I'm scared of dying and I say 'I don't know – I've never died before,'" he continued.

"Do I believe there's an afterlife? Not really. If there is it's a bonus.

"Maybe I'm putting on a brave face, I don't know. Dementia is a slow process and it's not very dignified.

"I see my brother in the old

folks' home, drugged up and fed through a drip. Do I want to be stuck like that? No, definitely not.

"Am I brave enough to jump in front of a truck? Probably not.

"Most people with this kind of illness might think about assisted dying but knowing my luck I'd do it and the next day they would announce a cure."

It's clear that Chris is determined to remain upbeat and is taking every day as it comes.

Following his return from America the avid Manchester United fan married Vicky, and Dexter is now nearly two years old.

Researchers are making promising inroads into new treatments and Chris is confident he can stave off the illness until such time that a cure is found.

"Believe it or not I actually think I'll survive it," he said.

"The doctors say the best thing is for me to keep myself fit, so that's what I'm doing.

"I don't dwell on things. All I can do is stay positive and keep cracking the jokes.

"I know it's ridiculous but I think I'll get away with it.

"It could be worse – I could be a Man City fan." ■

● For more information visit www.alzheimersresearchuk.org





12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

THERE are few places more miserable than the shops in the run-up to Christmas. So if you need to source a decent gift but can't quite face the hassle of the high street, look no further than *Soldier*. We will spend the first 12 days of December giving away a host of fantastic prizes on our Facebook page, which you can palm off as your own gift.

From a luxury spa day to diamond jewellery, skincare products, outdoor gear, gadgets or free coach journeys to a destination of your choice, there are plenty of ways to say thank you to those at home for their support throughout the year.

Like us on Facebook now and keep an eye out on our page for updates on each draw.

Readers can enter once for every prize, meaning you could even be lucky enough to score more than one free gift.

Good luck and happy Christmas from the *Soldier* team.

THE PRIZES A selection of some of the Christmas pressies up for grabs this month...

SPA DAYS



DOWN SOUTH...

Courtesy of the luxury spa break specialist Champneys, we have a pampering day for two people at a choice of four locations (Tring, Forest Mere, Henlow or Springs) to give away. The winners will be welcomed with refreshments before enjoying a full day of pampering and relaxation, including a three-course buffet lunch. Facilities include swimming pool, steam room, sauna, whirlpool and we are also throwing in an hour of "Champneys time" for each person, which includes two specialist treatments.

www.champneys.com

Background picture: Shutterstock



FREE COACH TRAVEL

National Express has teamed up with us to offer a stash of return tickets between any two locations on its UK network. Want to send a loved one off on a special reunion as your gift to them this year? We have 48 pairs of return tickets.

DESIGNER WATCH

A striking Krug Baumen men's watch is also up for grabs. Worth an impressive £339, this is sure to put a smile on any bloke's face this Christmas.



...OR UP NORTH

Thanks to The Spa at Ramside, a beautiful and luxurious retreat at Ramside Hall Hotel near Durham, we have a special day of relaxation for two people to give away including a two-course lunch and bespoke 90-minute treatment package. With sauna and steam rooms, a fitness suite and several swimming and vitality pools, there are plenty of chances to unwind. www.ramsidespa.co.uk

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MORE PRIZES AND
HOW TO ENTER





Want to avoid the Christmas comedown? Why not enter our competition to see *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* in Concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London? Steven Spielberg's masterpiece will be performed live and in full by the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra, in sync to the film projected on a huge HD screen, and we have a pair of tickets for the matinee on December 28 up for grabs – worth £123. Thanks to our friends at National Express we are also throwing in a pair of free return coach tickets from your chosen UK destination.



HANDBAG

This Chelsea leather accessory from Fur, Feather and Fin would make anyone feel special
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PHOTO MEMORIES



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RRP £159.99

MALE LUXURY SKINCARE

Who says women should hog all the bathroom time? RRP £110



HOW TO ENTER



"Like" the *Soldier Magazine* page on Facebook and keep a beady eye out for our daily draws between December 1 and 12.

Each post will flag up details of the prizes on offer and how to enter.

Only one entry per person is allowed for each prize and winning names will be drawn at random the following day.

If you have been successful, you will be contacted via the email address you provide us with.

Make sure you check your inbox every day in December so we can arrange delivery of the prize or voucher code before Christmas Day.

Prizes that require physical delivery can only be sent to a UK address.

Good luck and happy Christmas
from everyone at *Soldier*!

facebook.com/soldiermagazine

With thanks... The following companies have kindly donated prizes to this year's competition: Snuggpak, Go Outdoors, National Express, ProofCam, Watches2U, Rotary, Alan Bick, ChrisElli, Diwah, The Bluebeard's Revenge, Haynes, Smiggle, Lindy, Edifier, Plustek, The Royal Albert Hall, Fur Feather and Fin, Champneys, The Spa at Ramside, Bonusprint



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Test your limits and raise vital funds for SSAFA by entering our newest challenge, Soldier 30:30 Midlands. Teams of four will run 30 miles or 30 kilometres, carrying 30lb on their backs around the beautiful countryside surrounding Denstone College near Uttoxeter.

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Visit ssafa.org.uk/soldier3030

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Hard-won lessons

This month a Herrick veteran explains how remaining positive and being prepared effectively saved his life after he was left with brain damage...

Name: Sam Jack

Age: 28

Dates of service: 2006-2011

Cap badge: RE

Standout operations: Op Herrick (Afghanistan, 2009) as a combat engineer and advanced searcher with 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD).

After six weeks on tour he was hit by a ricochet round, which destroyed his eye and penetrated his skull, causing brain damage.

Current status: After recovering from his injuries and leaving service, Sam turned to The Royal British Legion for help with his compensation claim and since then has thrown himself into various adventurous activities. He is currently training to be a mountain leader and spent last month championing the Poppy Appeal's "rethink remembrance" campaign, which calls on the public to consider younger veterans as well as elderly ones.

PREPARE FOR ALL EVENTUALITIES. I always knew that I might get injured; that was my mindset. When I woke up four weeks after being hit, I couldn't speak or move my right side. The doctor said it was as good as I was going to get but my recovery was quicker than expected because I was so fit and that meant my body was in a good state to mend itself.

HAVE A POSITIVE OUTLOOK. You might be in a dark place sometimes but try to pull yourself out of it and find positives to work on. I know it's hard because I do have down days, but you've got to pick yourself up. I was given a ten per cent chance of survival but now I am fit and able to drive.

ENJOY YOUR SERVICE. I loved the Army and thought it was brilliant. You have to enjoy it and throw yourself into the opportunities. It has a lot to offer – the camaraderie, the adventurous training and the many different skills and roles you get to learn.

GET INVOLVED WITH CHARITIES and understand what they do. Before my injury I wasn't very aware about organisations like the Legion and I know other soldiers are the same. You never think it's going to be you that needs help.

CIVILIANS ARE DIFFERENT – DEAL WITH IT. It is a simple fact that it's very, very tough to go from working with soldiers to dealing with civvies on a daily basis. They just have a different approach to life than Forces personnel and we have to accept that. You have to forget the Army way of doing things even if you think it's the right way. Being late in the military is unacceptable and rarely happens, whereas in the outside world that's not the case. But you have to get on.

“
I always
knew
that I
might
get
injured
”



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TALKBACK

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

'Our relationship doesn't fit the Army'

I AM engaged to another Servicewoman and she is pregnant so we were considering Service family accommodation (SFA).

After looking at JSP 464 we found it is possible for couples to live together in a location halfway between two duty stations when they are within 100 miles of each other.

But according to JSP 752 we can't do that because there are only two relationships catered for in the personal status categories the Army uses. You are either married/civil partnership (category one) or divorced/separated (categories two, three and four).

This means that only my fiancée would be able to claim for SFA near her duty station.

Due to the distance between us I would then only be able to see her and my child at the weekends and, even worse, would not even be allowed to stay at the SFA due to the cohabitation rules.

So the Army is leaving us in a situation where we are being forced to rush into marriage or live separately which, in all honesty, I find disgusting.

Due to JSP 752 not being able to categorise our situation each of our clerks have interpreted the rule in what they believe is the correct manner and this has resulted in both of us being told completely different things.

I find it hard to believe that we are the first personnel to be in this position yet it seems as if the policy hasn't been updated in decades.

Can you tell me what the correct course of action should be as no one seems to be able to give a definitive answer to our predicament?

– Name and address supplied

Col Nathan Sempala-Ntege, Personnel Capability Directorate responds: In a long-term relationship where there is a dependant child it would be the parent considered to be the prime mover in the offspring's life that would be regarded as having category two personal status.

Therefore, it is they who would receive the entitlement to SFA, which would routinely be made available at the parent's duty station.

A request for surplus SFA in a location of choice can be made where this housing is available.

The other parent would remain as category five, and their entitlement to Service housing would be limited to single living accommodation.

You are correct that cohabitation is not allowed under current policy, however the individual who has elected to be the child's primary parent and occupies the SFA is permitted to have



visitors stay at the property on a temporary basis.

These visits are to last no more than 28 days (aggregated or continuous) in any 93-day period.

It is a personal choice if and when to have a family or indeed to get married, however the current situation is that those who cohabit are not entitled to Service family accommodation.

This would mean that personnel who have not tied the knot and wish to live with their partners, whether they have children or not, would have to make their own housing provision.

This situation could change with the implementation of the future accommodation model which, although still under development, may broaden the housing offer in years to come.

CONFESSIONS OF A COMMANDER

● I LIKE to think that when I was a commanding officer I was as loyal to those who were preparing to leave the Service as I was to everyone else, but it's a difficult balancing act, especially when operational pressures rise.

However, I now realise I should have done much more.

At a recent career transition workshop it was disappointing to hear anecdotal evidence from a warrant officer who hadn't taken up his resettlement opportunities, believing himself to be indispensable to his unit, and a tale of a commanding officer dismissing someone's plans with, "you're

not seriously going to do any of that resettlement rubbish, are you?"

Sadly, there is far too much statistical evidence available to show that those who do not prepare for their exit early, make a resettlement plan and attend career transition training are very likely to fail to find fulfilling second careers.

I urge all senior officers and senior NCOs to consider carefully how they provide their personal leadership to those preparing for their next career and to resist leaving it to the regimental association to pick up the pieces later. – Lt Col Fiona Galbraith, Int Corps

RANT OF THE MONTH

The lifting of the ban on women in ground close combat in the Royal Armoured Corps led to some rounds going off on social media...



Jon Clegg

Great news on the equality front – but when are they going to drop the two-tier fitness standards. You want to do the same job for the same pay so you should have to meet the same standard as everyone else



Paul King

Some of the females in my last regiment out-fitted some of the males. It is their choice. I'd imagine only limited numbers will take up such an option, but good luck to those that do.



Loz Ellis

Pretty sure women have been part of gun crews in the artillery for years, living with blokes on an AS90 or light gun. And how many males have been saved on the front line by women medics? Just leave this here then.



Neil Brimage

Women in the close confines of a Challenger 2 main battle tank with three male colleagues living off compo rations. Don't think they'll last long.



Phil Smith

We're doomed Mr Mainwaring, I tell you, we're doomed.



Can it pay to borrow more?

I RECENTLY used Forces Help to Buy for a house purchase and restricted myself to the £10,000 limit so it would not affect my tax code.

Could someone please explain exactly how this scheme affects tax and, more importantly, what this means on a monthly basis – in other words, how much more tax would we be paying if we borrowed more?

I feel this aspect of the programme is stopping a lot of people using more of this excellent allowance when it might mean only a few extra quid from their wages each month.

– Name and address supplied

Col Nathan Sempala-Ntege, Personnel Capability Directorate responds: Your individual tax code would be adjusted to account for the tax which would have been paid had you taken the loan from a private sector company.

This rate is set in accordance with the HMRC official rate for beneficial loans for personnel of three per cent, as laid down in chapter one of JSP 752.

Income tax regulations are explained in chapter two and also in chapter 12 of JSP 464 as “the amount liable to tax equates to the notional interest that would have been paid by the recipient with a borrowing from a commercial firm”.

A beneficial loan made after 2014 would be exempt from tax if the amount outstanding on it and other beneficial loans over any single tax month within the tax year did not exceed £10,000.

If they did the whole of the amount will cease to be tax exempt for that tax year. So with a £25,000 FHTB loan, notional interest at three per cent would total £750 per annum.

A higher rate taxpayer would owe an additional £300 (40 per cent of £750) tax per year, or £25 per month.

If the FHTB and any other beneficial loans over the tax year do not exceed £10,000 the amount will be exempt from tax.

More details are available on the gov.uk website.

“THIS ASPECT OF THE SCHEME IS STOPPING MORE PEOPLE USING IT”

‘IT’S LIKE BEING TAXED BY YOUR PARENTS’

● I NOTE from a letter in September’s *Talkback* that core meals should be the subject of value-added tax (VAT).

I know this is payable on cooked food in restaurants, but why is it charged on meals taken in a mess?

This is like a parent charging a son or daughter VAT when they are at home on leave.

And what if the meal is a salad and therefore uncooked? – Victor Hunt, Belfast

Col David Wheeler, Assistant

Head of Personal Services Group, responds: You raise a valid question, however HMRC view the charging for VAT at standard rate under the rules applying to the supply of food and drink as part of a contract for catering.

This is exactly what happens in messes.

Likewise, in all pay-as-you-dine establishments where this levy is applicable the same criteria applies and as such all food and drink (hot or cold) must be standard-rated for VAT.

“I’m paying for a service I didn’t receive”

TALKBACK



Drinks rule leaves bad taste

FOR years I have interpreted the rules concerning the daily subsistence allowance to include any soft drink purchased during the qualifying period up to the value that is stipulated.

This subject is covered by a section of JSP 752, which states: “Daily subsistence is the reimbursement of actual receipted costs up to a limit for expenditure necessarily incurred for food and drink (no alcohol) during the day for periods of over five hours absence from the permanent or temporary assignment station, when neither a core meal or an entitled casual meal can be purchased.”

However, my regimental administration officer tells me his interpretation is that drinks only qualify when taken with a meal.

I have two issues with this.

First, should JSPs need interpreting? Surely the intent should be crystal clear.

Second, I travel to Glasgow on a monthly basis and if he is correct I will have to pay for coffee from pricey retail outlets at my own expense.

It is bad enough that these trips require me to be away from home for 14 hours with no recompense – I am on full-time Reserve service (home commitment) so don’t qualify for the X-factor – and now it seems that I will have to be out of pocket as well.

Can you confirm which interpretation is correct and if the JSP should be reworded to remove the confusion?

– Name and address supplied

Brig Chris Ghika, Director Personnel Capability, responds: You make an interesting point but no attempt has been made to cover every conceivable situation.

This would result in an unwieldy document leaving little room for sensible discretion.

Instead, staff responsible for the administration and implementation of the regulations have a duty to interpret them taking into account the aim of the allowance and defence interests.

Interpretation is therefore an intended and necessary feature of allowance policy.

The aim is to reimburse allowable subsistence expenditure within MoD limits.

In essence, the food element compensates personnel who, by the nature of their duties, cannot access pay-as-you-dine meals.

The guidelines state that meals should be “prepared food, ready for consumption at the point of sale or temporary duty location”.

A hot or cold soft drink and snack or light refreshment may be claimed in lieu if, for service or travel reasons, this is the only option available for a meal.

A flight spanning lunchtime, where only snacks and drinks from the airline are available, may be one such occasion, for example.

The interpretation by your administration officer is therefore consistent with the policy.

“IT SEEMS AS IF I WILL HAVE TO BE OUT OF POCKET AS WELL”

MIND THE GAP

● I AM being forced to pay a mess subscription for a month when I was booked out because I was between postings and on leave and training courses.

I have been told that every officer of the unit or headquarters has to be a member of his respective mess.

Yet when I worked with the Reserve and with Defence Equipment and Support there was no mess I could be a member of.

How is it fair that I am being asked to pay for a service that I didn’t receive? – Name and address supplied

Col David Wheeler, Assistant Head of Personal Services Group, replies: Yes, it is correct that in accordance with Queen’s Regulations you should be paying mess subscriptions at your current location until such time that you move to take up your new appointment.

This occurs even while on leave and courses.

The inconsistency regarding postings where there is no mess is being looked into.

However, you are not charged in those circumstances because you are not a member and nor do you receive the benefits of mess membership.

DOUBLE DELIGHT

● IN 2014 I was presented with the police long service medal after serving for more than 20 years with the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

However, previously I’d spent 25 years with the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters regimental band and in 1987 I was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal by the Army.

While being presented with either of these awards is not remarkable in itself, I believe very few people have both and would love to know if my experience is unique and, if not, how many others have achieved something similar.

It’s ironic that during a medical prior to leaving school, the doctor told me I had flat feet and would never be able to be a soldier or a policeman! – Chris Burry

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Veteran Employment Transition Support programme, aimed at connecting ex-Forces personnel with employers. For details visit www.veteranemployment.co.uk

Transition Force provides personalised career support to ex-Service personnel nationwide. To register visit www.transitionforce.com/events

Ex-Military Recruitment helps veterans of specialist technical regiments trained in electrical and mechanical engineering, logistics and telecommunications to find similar civilian careers. For details visit www.xmr.co.uk

HighGround is a charity providing land-based skills to serving and former Army personnel, helping them move into civilian life. Log on to www.highground-uk.org for more



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Cpl Pauline Daniels, AFCO Redruth, Cornwall

Level Up DVD: William Smith, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire; Sharon Jackson, Army Reserve Centre, Kempston; Gordon Crandles, Edinburgh; C Story, Broughton, Chester; L Mathews, Basildon, Essex



DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

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Armed Forces Christian Union: 01252 311221; www.afcu.org.uk

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Army Welfare Service: 01904 882053;

www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support

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

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

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Felix Fund – the bomb disposal charity: 07713 752901 www.felixfund.org.uk

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Forces Pension Society: 020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome: www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround: www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

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

Regular Forces' Employment

Association: 0121 236 0058; www.rfea.org.uk

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stoll (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation): 020 7385 2110; info@stoll.org.uk; www.stoll.org.uk

The Not Forgotten Association: 020 7730 2400 www.nfassociation.org

The Poppy Factory: 020 8940 3305; www.poppyfactory.org

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

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

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

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



INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 149/16: Civilian resource decision-making tool

ABN 148/16: The management of trade and employment competencies on JPA

ABN 147/16: Career information for professionally qualified healthcare personnel

ABN 146/16: Diversity and inclusion

training

ABN 145/16: Equality analysis

ABN 144/16: Soldier career development handbook published

ABN 143/16: Remembrance and Armistice Day activities 2016

ABN 142/16: Alignment of eligibility for versatile engagement conversions – Brigade of Gurkhas

ABN 141/16: Launch of the MoD mental health network

ABN 140/16: The Service complaints ombudsman

ABN 139/16: Army Reserve employer notification

ABN 138/16: The Game of Remembrance

ABN 137/16: Medical preparation for Reservists deploying overseas

ABN 136/16: Applications for Welbeck College

ABN 135/16: Revised rates of uniform and laundry tax relief

DIN 2016DIN01-168: Late-entry commissions in the Royal Logistic Corps

DIN 2016DIN01-165: The Firmin Sword Of Peace Awards competition 2016

DIN 2016DIN01-164: The Firmin Sword Of Peace Awards 2015 – results

DIN 2016DIN01-163: Saudi Arabia project team allowance change of mark time status

DIN 2016DIN01-162: RAF Roman Catholic retreats 2017

DIN 2016DIN01-161: Service of prayer for the Armed Forces

DIN 2016DIN01-160: Appraisals – new recruiting duties recommendation on Army SJARs

DIN 2016DIN01-158: Remembrance: A humanist reflection and defence humanist network annual general meeting 2016

DIN 2016DIN01-157: Medical officer conversion of commissions through the board and offer process

DIN 2016DIN02-006: Volunteers for specialist human intelligence duties interrogation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62

INTELLIGENCE CONTINUED

DIN 2016DIN03-033: Priorities for the allocation of parachute training resource

DIN 2016DIN03-032: Establishment of the UK Joint Personnel Recovery Centre

DIN 2016DIN04-190: Declaration of obsolete ground support equipment

DIN 2016DIN04-189: Correct use of the advanced respirator test system (Arts) and guidance on the purchase of permanent Arts facilities

DIN 2016DIN04-188: Declaration of obsolete ground support equipment kismet pump – 4320-99-1047435

DIN 2016DIN04-187: Virtus helmet accounting instructions/return of surplus helmets

DIN 2016DIN04-186: Conversion of a selection of manual direct supply contracts under the logistics commodities and services transformation contract to direct delivery

DIN 2016DIN04-185: Notice of requirement to return unmodified fuel blending rigs

DIN 2016DIN04-184: Partnered electronic warfare support element

DIN 2016DIN06-032: Contracting commercial diving services

DIN 2016DIN06-031: Importation,

possession, selling or use of kava kava

DIN 2016DIN06-030: Adventurous training safety regulations

DIN 2016DIN06-029: Publication of DSA02-DMR shipping regulations

DIN 2016DIN07-140: Expedition slots at the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre in 2017

DIN 2016DIN07-137: Joint operations planning course – 2017/18

DIN 2016DIN07-136: Nuclear department course dates March 2017 – March 2018

DIN 2016DIN07-136: Application to attend a nuclear department course, annex G, form 1

DIN 2016DIN07-134: Central Flying School aircrew instructor and flying training management courses

DIN 2016DIN07-132: Biathlon rifle security, administration and training

DIN 2016DIN07-131: Air Warfare School courses 2017/18

DIN 2016DIN07-130: Maritime Warfare School aviation warfare 2017 course dates

DIN 2016DIN09-025: Royal garden parties 2017 – civilian staff

DIN 2016DIN09-024: Armed Forces Day national event 2017

DIN 2016DIN09-023: Revised regulations for the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal

DIN 2016DIN10-052: British Army Motorsports Association event – Mudmaster 2016

DIN 2016DIN10-051: AGC Alpine ski championships 2017 (Exercise Alpine (IMT) White Lion 2017)

DIN 2016DIN10-050: British Army Motorsports event – Comets Chase 2016

DIN 2016DIN10-049: Travel at public expense for Army sport

DIN 2016DIN10-048: Army overseas sports visit

DIN 2016DIN10-047: Berlin Infantry Brigade memorial trust fund

DIB 31/16: Civilian apprenticeship schemes for band C and below – application process is now open

DIB 30/16: New employment model officers talent management



REUNIONS

13 (Martinique) 1809 Battery reunion on April 7-9, 2017 at the Copthorne Hotel, Merry Hill, Dudley. For details email k.brooksusher@hotmail.co.uk

Army Apprentices National Memorial Trust annual reunion weekend on May 6-7, 2017 at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire. AGM in the Poppy Room at 1300 on May 6 followed by gala dinner at the Hallmark

Mickleover Court Hotel. The annual drumhead memorial service will be held at the Army Apprentices Memorial at 1200 on May 7. All ex-apprentices welcome to attend. For further details contact mohope118@gmail.com



ROADSHOWS

The Army Engagement Group wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a reception, is followed by a presentation, questions and culminates with refreshments. There will be a range of military personnel on hand to answer any of your questions. Call 01276 412880 or email your name and address to armymediacom-aeg-mailbox@mod.uk with the event you are interested in attending. **January:** 17, Liverpool



SEARCHLINE

Mrs P Horne has a **bible from the First World War with the inscription "Lt Hy C Lovell, 2/20th London Regt, Palestine 1917"** which she wishes to pass on to a surviving family member. Anyone with information should contact subs@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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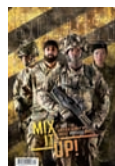
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ARMY



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REVIEWS

DECEMBER'S
DELIGHTS



TOP GEAR

IDENTITY CRISIS

Topless model impresses and confuses

WHEN it comes to knowing their market Land Rover is renowned for continuously hitting the nail right on the head with a seemingly clairvoyant ability to predict what consumers want, before they know they want it.



P71

MUSIC

P72

BOOKS

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MOVIES



The success of the original, stylish Evoque is a perfect example of the manufacturer understanding their audience.

But now, in the sleek shape of the Range Rover Evoque Convertible, the off-road titans have unveiled the world's first luxury compact SUV soft-top.

Slightly longer and a touch wider than its hard-top predecessor, it retains its head-turning look with the roof up or down.

Some extra under-body bracing was required to keep the car's structural rigidity, which means a not-insubstantial weight gain of 227kg for the diesel models.

However, this hasn't impacted on performance too much.

There is no doubt that this stylish beast looks the part and that the geniuses in the marketing department will sell this by the ship-load.

But the big question is, who is it actually aimed at?

Without wishing to be lynched by the PC-brigade, it seems like a model that could be favoured by women.

To put my neck further on the line, I'd suggest the more wealthy "yummy mummies" will be queuing up for it.

But the irony is that, despite having the look of a large beast, the three-door Evoque Convertible is quite small inside.

If you are of semi-tall stature, getting into the back is no mean feat and requires you to effectively curl up into a ball and post yourself through the designated gap.

And for the likes of buggies, Bergens or golf clubs, the 251-litre boot space with a letterbox-style opening is laughable.

Gripes about storage aside, the interior is as eye-catching as the exterior with top-end HSE trim as standard. Leather seats come in all models and leather-effect material cover the dash and doors.

Perhaps more importantly for genuine 4x4 fans, though, is the fact that this convertible does actually pack a punch off-road.



VERDICT:

Stylish, powerful but cramped

★★★★★

None of the original Evoque's tough-terrain prowess has been lost although the pay-off for gaining an open-air ride is that the car now only has four seats instead of five.

Again, it might be remiss of this reviewer to say so, but it's probably a safe bet to venture that most drivers of this model won't make much use of the 4x4 technology.

But Land Rover's patented hill descent control is in place anyway.

It also features wade sensors to remove any uncertainty in water to a depth of 500mm, with a visual showing on the in-car display and a tone signalling water depth.

All in all, this vehicle performs well.

But to me it gives the impression that Land Rover is less and less concerned with creating true utility vehicles. ■

REVIEW: JOE CLAPSON

CLOSE-UP



▲ The small letterbox boot that will allow for shoeboxes but will almost certainly pose a problem for storing prams or golf clubs

▼ The 10.2-inch touch screen provides easy access to settings for audio, climate control, telephone and satellite navigation



PICK OF THE MONTH:

LIVE
IN SAN
DIEGOEric Clapton and special
guest JJ Cale

► WHEN you think of a musician with more than 50 years of blues experience who is also a founding member of the first official super group **Cream**, well, it can only be **Eric Clapton**.

The artist's new double album featuring his idol **JJ Cale** seems to lack the obligatory string of well-known and loved hits we've become used to but that doesn't take anything away from what is on offer.

Yes, there are a few old classics like *Layla* and *Wonderful Tonight*, but most of the 16 tracks have been given over to his exemplary guitar playing.

The concert took place a decade ago during the two-year long Doyle and Derek World Tour, when Clapton performed alongside **Doyle Bramhall II** and **Derek Trucks**.

Despite having numerous legs across the globe the audio and filming for the album was completed in March 2007 during the concert in San Diego, where more than 10,000 people packed

into a sold-out arena to help the show gross \$837,570.

Cale's presence on stage was the driving force behind the project, with Clapton stating his appearance was the fulfilment of a lifelong dream

"This is the realisation of what may have been my last ambition; to work with the man whose music has inspired me for as long as I can remember," he said.

As a listener you will not be sold short when it comes to perfection, which is what we've become accustomed to on Clapton's albums over the years.

The whole record is nothing short of pure brilliance.

It is predominantly a blues collection and even if you are not a fan of his material, the sheer quality of the music played cannot be ignored.

Cale's input along with the likes of **Robert Cray**, who come together on *Crossroads*, makes this an absolute must-have.

While Clapton has released 12 previous live albums this is one of the best. Ultimately, it's a second collaboration with Cale and on hearing the two giants play together on a set list that includes the likes of *Cocaine* and *After Midnight* you can clearly appreciate how much admiration there is between them.

As Clapton once said, JJ Cale is one of the most important artists in the history of rock.

That's a worthy tribute from someone who himself is known simply as "God". ■

VERDICT:

A simply beautiful album

★★★★★

REVIEW: TONY DAVID, EX-RE



Revolution Radio by Green Day

YEARS ago I can remember **Green Day** having everyone singing 'I don't want to be an American idiot'. Is there an equivalent offering on this album? Sadly not. The closest you get is *Bang Bang*, which has all the hallmarks of previous painted fingernail anthems. *Revolution Radio* is a bit all over the place and no song seems to naturally follow what went before. The guitars are good, the drums are good and even the vocals are good. However, there is something lacking that I can't quite put my finger on which means it just doesn't pull together. Perhaps the punk rock revolution is a little beyond us over-25s. Either way it's neither good nor bad – just average.

LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



Tonite at Midnight by ZZ Top

HAVING formed in 1969 it is safe to say that if a band like **ZZ Top** do a greatest hits tour it's going to be a pretty extensive collection. Assembled from various shows around the world, this album mines a similar musical vein and collects highlights from the group's latter-day tours. This means newer material is largely ignored in favour of their more classic 80s rock staples. Older songs such as *Lil' Ol' Band from Texas* sound heavier from the polish of the studio versions and the undeniable highlights are two tracks featuring cameos from **Jeff Beck**. He contributes lyrical solos to *Rough Boy* and helps with the heavy-footed boogie of *Sixteen Tons*, pushing the trio just far enough out of their comfort zone to provide some crackle. One for the die-hards.

Damian Hern, ex-AGC (SPS)



Keepin' the Horse Between Me and the Ground by Seasick Steve

HAVING seen interviews with **Seasick Steve** on TV and briefly heard some of his earlier music I've always thought he's a fascinating guy. I was surprised when the first track on his latest offering wasn't 'yee-haa' country or 'we're all going to die' blues. It was a rather pleasant listen and made good driving music. Although not my normal style I really enjoyed this thoughtfully produced album and the artist's use of various stringed instruments (some home-made) is an aural delight. If you like your blues a little less 'I woke up this morning' and more 'I don't feel too bad today', then this record is for you. Try something different; I highly recommend it.

Martyn Timmis, civvy



Nobody but Me by Michael Buble

AFTER an absence of three years, **Michael Buble** is back. But he doesn't just explode onto the scene, he makes a musical grand entrance that only someone like him could pull off without so much as a hair out of place. Yes, this album is that good. This is a collection of both new material, including the very catchy duet *Someday* with **Meghan Trainor**, and immaculate cover versions of tracks from artists such as **Brian Wilson** and **Johnny Mercer**. It is exactly what we have come to expect from the star and his professionalism and class shines through with every note. It doesn't matter what the tempo is – from pop numbers to his more classic swing style – each song is delivered perfectly. An absolute gem.

Rodge Tappley, ex-RE

PICK OF THE MONTH:

SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE

Tim Peake shares his window on the world

THIS year has been nothing if not eventful but among the more positive things to come out of the past 12 months was Tim Peake's history-making stint on the International Space Station.

During his 26 weeks, three days and 23 hours in orbit, the Army Air Corps Reservist became the first British astronaut to complete a space walk, ran the London Marathon on a zero-gravity running machine and even presented a Brit award to Adele.

It's fair to say his exploits reignited the country's interest in all things extraterrestrial.

Some 24 million people watched him blast off from Kazakhstan's Baikonur Cosmodrome last December and two million fans followed his updates on social media, in particular the breathtaking aerial photos of the world spinning past far below.

These – and many more as-yet-unseen photos – have been collated into a glossy new book.

Named after the moment Peake famously dialled the wrong number and got through to a bemused stranger, *Hello, Is This Planet Earth?* reveals the amazing vistas he saw daily from his high-altitude perch.

"It's impossible to look down on Earth from space and not be mesmerised by the fragile beauty of our planet," he writes in the title's opening pages.

"I was struck by just how thin our atmosphere really is – a tiny strip of gas that sustains all life and differentiates our planet from the barren, hostile conditions of Mars or Venus.

"I became determined to share this unique perspective of the one place we call home."

By his own admission, the father-of-two wasn't a natural photographer but says that with such a beautiful subject his job was made much easier.

He continues: "Often I would just happen to be passing by the cupola window and be struck by the most incredible view – a sea of thick green fog as we travelled through the aurora borealis or the disco lights of a hundred lightning flashes along a massive storm front."

From glaciers to deserts, river basins to mountain ranges, Earth's natural wonders take centre stage by day, while at night, billions of lights reveal the pattern of human habitation.

"We often think of the world divided into countries and peoples," adds Peake.

"But when you look at the planet from space you don't notice borders or the divisions of continents.

"The only divisions we see are those created by nature, 4.5 billion years in the making."

A visually stunning record – not to mention a slightly disconcerting reminder of our insignificance in the overall scheme of things – this book offers a bit more than your average coffee table tome.

Put it on your Christmas wish list now. ■

REVIEW: BECKY CLARK

VERDICT:

An awe-inspiring tour of the planet's wonders

★★★★★

● *Hello, Is This Planet Earth?* by Tim Peake, is out now, priced £20 and all proceeds will go to The Prince's Trust



BOOKS

“

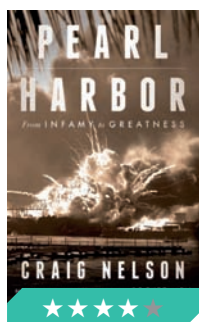
**It's impossible
to look down
and not be
mesmerised**

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Pictures: ESA/Nasa

BOOKS CONTINUED

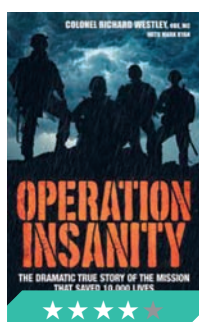


Pearl Harbor by Craig Nelson

SEVENTY-FIVE years on from the "day of infamy" this great read offers a concise study of how the USA sleep-walked into the Second World War, as well as the mindset of the Japanese government and military in thinking they could take on the world's biggest superpower. The book also tells us the story of the men who were at Pearl Harbor on the day – 15 of whom won the Medal of Honor for their actions – before dealing with how the USA

struck back at the Japanese with the Doolittle bombing raid on Tokyo and the Battle of Midway. A concise and very informative account.

Andy Kay, ex-RS

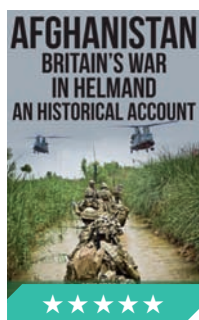


Operation Insanity by Col Richard Westley

BOSNIA in 1995 was not a safe place to be a UN peacekeeper. The Royal Welch Fusiliers were tasked with patrolling a town called Gorazde, which was under bombardment from the same Serbian troops who had carried out the massacre at Srebrenica just weeks earlier. Cut off and outnumbered, the British personnel – among them the author – were in just as much danger as the local population. This title makes for a harrowing reading experience, at times

going into great detail on "ethnic cleansing". Richard Westley has produced a book written with passion, brutal honesty and, at times, gallows humour. A great account of a terrible episode.

Tony David, ex-RE



Afghanistan – Britain's War in Helmand by David Reynolds

THE war in Afghanistan has defined a generation of British Service personnel and its legacy will dominate our military thinking and technology for some years yet. That said, much of what happened in the early stages of the campaign has already faded from current thinking. This officially sanctioned book goes some way to refreshing memories and reminds us all of the scale and

complexity of the effort made in Kabul and Helmand. It is exceptionally well put together and is a fitting tribute to those who deployed to the country.

Mike Peters, ex-AAC



The Art of War by Stephen Coonts

THIS is the latest instalment in a bestselling series and sees intelligence operative Jake Grafton serving as director of the CIA and trying to foil a Chinese plot to wipe out America's Atlantic Fleet with a nuclear strike. There is enough here to keep not only the author's faithful followers happy, but any new reader who picks the book up at random too. Yes, the main character has a long backstory, but this is also a gripping stand-alone thriller. It's one of those

race-against-time novels that has you turning yet another page when you really should be going to bed. A quality read.

Tony David, ex-RE

MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH:

AWAY FROM HOLLYWOOD

Veterans tell it like it is

► MOVIES are arguably one of the most powerful mediums through which people can share their stories or experiences.

So when the first ever UK International Veterans Film Festival got under way in Wales as this issue went to press, *Soldier* put some of the shortlisted titles to its very own judging panel of willing reviewers.

With no big budget or Hollywood stars to draw the crowds, these 15- to 30-minute showcases had to rely on their powerful scripts to make their mark.

From the harrowing to the inspiring, they were all produced by people involved with Veteran Films (www.veteranfilms.org) – an organisation that helps ex-soldiers share their stories and struggles with the wider world.

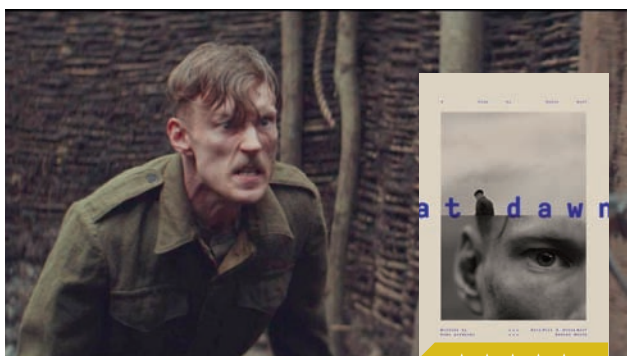
Read on to find out how they fared with military movie fans.



The Letter

SET in Europe in September 1944, this title tells the story of a wounded American captured by a German soldier. But while taking his prisoner into captivity he triggers an anti-personnel mine and, frozen with fear, must accept the help of his detainee. This should be a charming story but its brevity and wooden ending limited the impact. It seemed contrived, a little bit saccharine and not hard-hitting enough to fully justify the effort. Call me a philistine; I must be missing something.

Maj Neil Johnson, AAC



At Dawn

BASED on a true story, this powerful title by director **Ollie Wolf** follows Royal Engineer Michael Nash in the Second World War. After the protagonist's motorcycle breaks down, he finds himself under direct enemy gunfire and is forced to seek cover in a neighbouring forest. But he plunges into a disused enemy trench, knocking himself out. When he regains consciousness he is face-to-face with an armed German soldier. This film really packs a punch with its portrayal of the horrors of war and the weight carried by many veterans who possibly just want to lay their demons to rest. I would like to believe that Nash managed to do that with his actions at the end.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



The Space

THE acting is strong in this portrayal of a young infantryman in the immediate aftermath of his first patrol in Afghanistan. The central character's best mate has been killed and he has narrowly escaped capture, suffering a wound in the process. This film would be a good starting point for a group discussion as part of training to recognise the signs of PTSD. I would like to see a longer version.

CSgt Colin Tester, PWRR

Queen Ethelburga's - Girls and Boys

Thorpe Underwood, York. YO26 9SS. Tel: 01423 333 330 Email: info@QE.org www.QE.org

Living as a member of a Forces family is an unusual experience and not normally one understood by those unfamiliar with service life. Civilians



Steven Jandrell - Principal

find it difficult to imagine a job where you can be moved at little or no notice and where you can be sent into a hostile zone with no regular means of contacting your family.

Rest assured, we understand the pressures that your family has to go through. About a fifth of our pupils come from Forces backgrounds and we work hard to support those children and the difficulties they face being away from home and worrying about their serving parents.

The College has seen another outstanding year with its A level results. 87% of grades at A level were A*-A and 98% were A*-B.

The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's,

which offers students the opportunity to do more vocational subjects at BTEC, celebrated some of its best results ever. 84% of grades at A level were A*-A and 96% of grades were A*-B. The Faculty's 91% Distinction*-Distinction pass rate at BTEC (equating in UCAS points to an A/A* grade at A level) shows equal strength in these qualifications.

Over the last few years our Combined Cadet Force has gone from strength to strength and we have a thriving contingent with cadets split between the Air Force and the Army.

With the backing of The Collegiate Charitable Foundation we are able to guarantee that your contribution to fees is no more than £895 per child per term. This makes us one of the most competitively priced boarding schools in the United Kingdom for Forces children.

With our investment now standing at £100m, 2016 has seen more facilities come online including 8 new grassed sports pitches with over 100 floodlights, state-of-the-art gym and

Activity Centre with further developments underway for 2017. Please see our dedicated sports village website (www.sportsvillageqe.org) for further information, including Elite Rugby (supported by Yorkshire Carnegie) and Netball (with Yorkshire Jets). With the number of young people we have living on campus it is important that there is always a range of things to do in their spare time. This is the idea behind our new Activity Centre, packed full of all the favourite things young people like. It combines outdoor energetic activities and challenges such as a huge climbing tower, assault course, trampolines, roller booting, go-karts, Segways and a professionally built BMX track with indoor activities like electronic games, musical activities plus much more. Don't just take our word for it, pay us a visit and see for yourself.

Call us on 01423 333330 for a prospectus and DVD.

**Next Open Days
21st January 2017**

➔ **Your parental termly contribution is only £895.**

This extremely low, termly, parental contribution of £895 means we rank as one of the most competitively priced schools for UK Forces. Childcare Vouchers also accepted.

➔ **Queen Ethelburga's College is league table ranked as the 5th best UK independent school for academic results and our Faculty is 8th.**

We accept a broad range of abilities. As one parent said: "QE has the ability to turn the average youngster into well above average academically and have them also turn out as happy and well-rounded." 95% of Year 13 students go to university with majority to Oxbridge, Ivy League or Russell Group universities.

➔ **Our boarding facilities are the best in Europe. No one else even comes close.**

Every bedroom has its own private shower and toilet plus telephone, voice mail, large plasma TV/DVD player + gaming port (on timer), a Sony PS3, fridge, microwave, trouser press and hot drinks facilities. House staff are friendly and caring.

➔ **A vast amount of fun-filled activities and trips out.**

Each week we run 150+ non-sports and sports extra-curricular activities. Fun packed weekends.

➔ **£30m Sports Village with 7 Astro-Turfs + 250,000 sq feet of indoor facilities.**

QE is Regional Performance Coaching Centre for: England Basketball, England Hockey, England Netball, and Regional Centre Developing Player Programme England Rugby, plus QE Cricket Academy is in association with Yorkshire County Cricket Club. In 2015 QE won the British Colleges Rugby National Cup Final.

➔ **More British Forces children than any other boarding school - because we care.**

We understand the needs of Service families with staff who are married to serving members of the Forces. With years of experience in ensuring our 300 + Forces children settle well, are confident and successful. Easy to get to by road, rail and air. Dedicated, professional, friendly and helpful staff go the "extra mile" to ensure your child is happy and doing well. We have Forces families from all over the UK.

➔ **Over £100m invested in new facilities in the last 8 years.**

Why choose an independent school education for your child if you qualify for CEA? If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, academic results, a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, excellent sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects, first class confidence and self assurance. If you want the best for your child, and to stand a chance of achieving most of this list, we believe you would need to pick one of the top 10 UK Independent boarding schools as ranked by the Sunday Times. BUT, most importantly of all, we unashamedly also offer TLC - tender, loving care!

UK's 2016 Top 20 Independent Schools

based on Telegraph rankings for
% A*/A grade A levels

1	Cardiff Sixth Form College	92.96
2	Westminster School	89.91
3	Magdalen College School	87.85
4	North London Collegiate School	87.44
5	Queen Ethelburga's College	86.86
6	Wycombe Abbey School	85.81
7	King Edward's School, Birmingham	85.59
8	The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's	83.67
9	Guildford High School for Girls	83.64
10	James Allen's Girls' School	82.91
11	Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls	81.89
12	Withington Girls' School	81.43
13	The Perse School	80.22
14	St John's College, Cardiff	80.17
15	Brighton College	79.13
16	The Stephen Perse Foundation	79.03
17	Royal Grammar School	78.49
18	Concord College	78.47
19	Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School	78.46
20	King's College School (KCS)	76.99



SOLDIERSPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long

Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Best of the best: Boxing sensation Cpl Steph Wroe (REME) was named the Service's top female athlete of 2016 at the Army Sports Awards. Read about the other big winners on pages 80-81...





Inter-Services under-23 rugby

Army 18
Royal Navy 20

HOPES of early season silverware for the Army rugby union set-up suffered a major dent as the under-23 side succumbed to their Royal Navy counterparts in the opening match of their Inter-Services campaign.

The early signs looked promising for the young guns, who opened a slender 8-7 lead at the break.

However, a lack of control proved costly in the second half as a succession of penalties handed vital territory to their rivals – and it was an advantage they ruthlessly

exploited to eventually win the contest 20-18.

The match started at a frenetic pace and the Senior Service struck the first blow when they forced a penalty try in the second minute.

With the early error count easing, the soldiers finally hit their straps and their first spell of meaningful possession reaped rewards.

As the forwards and backs expertly rolled through the phases the hosts created the opening they needed and fullback Spr Marcus Mercer (RE) was able to touch down.

Spr Tom O'Rourke (RE) missed a difficult conversion and AB Gareth Rees suffered the same fate with a penalty attempt moments later.

The Army ace made amends in the 24th minute with a superb strike from the left of goal and the scores

remained unchanged as the half-time whistle sounded.

The Navy returned to the field in a determined mood and they struck an immediate blow as Rees found his range.

Some heroic last-gasp defending denied the visitors a try as the pressure continued to mount before O'Rourke offered some respite with another sweetly-struck penalty.

But their opponents were not to be deterred and another Army misdemeanour gifted them further territory.

Rees finally profited as he bundled his way to the line and Mne Toby Papp extended the lead after some determined work from his fellow forwards.

Scrum half Pte Lloyd Wheeldon (Para) gave the Army hope with a superb solo effort but with the clock rapidly ticking down they were unable to add to their tally. ■

Game brief

Date: November 16, 2016

Competition: Army v Royal Navy –
Inter-Services under-23 rugby union

Venue: Army Rugby Stadium

Army

Jenkinson 1	Ross 2	Nye 3
Murphy 4	Ashton 5	
Peek 6	Temple 8	Scurr 7
Wheeldon 9	Cocks 10	
Coombs 12	O'Rourke 13	
Porter 11	Boginisoko 14	
	Mercer 15	

Subs: Morley, Barker, Lewis, Rees, Long, Cramoysan, Owen, Mataceva

Coach's comments

“It was a hard-fought game. The Navy came with a strong plan of kicking to the corners and playing from the lineouts and we did not cope with that.

They got into the final third and kept us pinned in which meant we could not exploit the pace of our backs or the strength of our forward players.

Lt Col Mike Atkinson (AGC (ETS))



Bundeswehr revel in remembrance win

THE German Bundeswehr recorded a 2-1 victory over the Army in football's latest Game of Remembrance at the home of Burton Albion.

Having lost 1-0 to their UK counterparts in 2014 the result offered sweet revenge in a fixture that commemorated 100 years since the end of the Battle of the Somme.

More than 1,000 spectators watched the clash, which was decided by strikes from Florian Stahl and Holger Wulff. Sig Ryan Paddock (R Signals) was on target for the Reds.

However, the Army women beat their German rivals 3-1 in the day's earlier fixture.



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Honouring excellence

ANOTHER year of athletic achievement was celebrated at the annual Army Sports Awards at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Double Olympic champion Maj Heather Stanning (RA) was among the special guests on the night and the officer looked on as the great and the good were honoured for their efforts in 2016...

SPORTSWOMAN OF THE YEAR



» BOXING star **Cpl Steph Wroe (REME)** emerged as one of the Army's premier female fighters thanks to a trophy-laden spell in the ring in 2016.

The welterweight prospect put a nine-month injury nightmare behind her to win an England title belt on her return to competitive action and became the first woman to fight on the card at the Inter-Services in the process.

Her winning run continued a few weeks later as she claimed a national title at the Amateur Boxing Association Championships in Liverpool.

Wroe faced a tough challenge in the shape of semi-final opponent Hannah Shield but triumphed in a tight contest.

She then recorded a unanimous verdict against fellow finalist Laura Stevens to secure the prestigious silverware.

"It was a fantastic feeling," she told *SoldierSport* at the time. "They announced the result and it took a few seconds to sink in; I was so excited."

An England international, Wroe is now targeting a place at the 2018 Commonwealth Games and has been crowned Army sportswoman of the year.

SPORTS OFFICIAL



» A DECADE of service as a Premier League official saw **WO2 Andy Halliday (RAPTC)** rewarded with the honour of being assistant referee at last season's FA Cup final.

The soldier oversaw a 2-1 win for Manchester United against Crystal Palace in front of a crowd of more than 88,000 people.

But Halliday's focus stretches way beyond the game's elite level and he has played a pivotal role in developing the next generation of Service referees, with 21 personnel recently passing their basic course in Catterick.

The NCO was named official of the year.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



» HALF a century of service to Army hockey saw **Brian Mower** presented with the lifetime achievement award.

Having finished his military career in 1990 he has continued to play a pivotal role in the sport from unit to national level.



SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

» WAKEBOARDER **Sgt Dale Crossley (RE)** underlined his status as a main contender on the international stage with some sensational displays over the past 12 months.

Having defended a number of titles from 2015 he narrowly missed out on top spot at the national championships but has since been ranked as the premier athlete in the country in his field.

He is also number one in the world men's masters category and was named in the Great Britain squad that travelled to Mexico for the World Championships as this issue went to press.

Crossley was selected as a judge at a number of high profile events and has been a driving force behind the sport's expansion within the Service.

His continued run of success and enthusiasm for the discipline saw him named Army sportsman of the year.

» THE Army karate team confirmed its ranking as the military's dominant force by claiming 18 wins out of 20 at this year's Inter-Services showdown.

But their success spreads way beyond the Forces arena.

With a number of national and international victories to their name, the set-up saw seven members selected for the England squad that competed at the World Union of Karate-do Federations' World Championships.

Of the 2,284 athletes in action, the Army contingent contributed a third of the medals won by the national side – including two individual and two team world champions.

Over the past 12 months they have fought at 22 events, claiming 88 gold, 61 silver and 53 bronze medals.

The soldiers have now added the team of the year accolade to their haul.



TEAM OF THE YEAR



ADAPTIVE ATHLETE

» ADAPTIVE athlete of the year Dave Henson capped a tremendous rise on the track when he claimed a bronze medal at this summer's Paralympic Games.

The former captain in the Royal Engineers lost both legs in an IED blast in Afghanistan in 2011 and soon realised that sport could play a huge role in his road to recovery.

This process started in earnest at the 2012 Warrior Games and he hasn't looked back since.

Having won medals at the 2014 and 2016 Invictus Games, as well as the Anniversary Games of 2015, he continued his good form on the international stage when he travelled to Rio for the sporting showpiece.

Competing in the T42 200 metres, Henson progressed from a tense qualifying round to win his medal with an astonishing dip for the line.

RISING STAR



» TRACK sensation Rfn Alhagie Drammeh (Rifles) continued his progression on the athletics scene with a series of stunning performances that saw him narrowly miss out on a place at the Rio Olympics.

His standout moment came at the German National Championships, where he came within three hundredths of a second of winning the 400 metres title.

The soldier later won the West German competition in a time of 46.48sec and represented Gambia at the African Championships in Durban.

Lining up in a field that included the current world record holder, Drammeh proved more than a match for his rivals, finishing in fifth place. His excellent form was rewarded with the rising star accolade.

IN NUMBERS

1998

The year in which the Army won its first gold award since the Second World War. The accolade was claimed by WO1 Steve Hunt (REME)



12

International Six Days of Enduro events completed by Sgt Kevin Murray (REME). He is now third on the list of gold medals won by UK riders

1913

When the first International Six Days of Enduro competition was held in Carlisle, England



450

The engine size, in cc, of the bikes used by the Army in Spain



Spanish test ticked off

THE Army's off-road motorcycle stars made history at the International Six Days of Enduro as they returned from Spain with three gold medals.

Staged in the Navarra region, the event saw more than 750 riders race over extreme obstacles and rugged terrain for up to eight-and-a-half hours a day in what is considered to be one of the sport's most gruelling tests.

Having been regular participants in recent years the soldiers stepped up a gear in 2016 as the trio of Cpl Tom Ellwood (RE), Sgt Kev Murray (REME) and Sgt Kalem Hicks (RLC) helped the team claim an impressive golden haul.

The extreme nature of the discipline means competitors have to carry their own spare parts and tools and must complete any repairs without outside assistance.

Army champion Ellwood had to do just that on the opening

day after his drive chain derailed on a spectacular hill climb in front of hundreds of cheering spectators.

But what would have been the end of the event for most was only a minor delay for the determined sapper as he fixed his bike among the rugged backdrop and made it back to the pits.

"With fine dust clouds lingering in the valleys and thick cloud on the hilltops visibility was a challenge all week and as a result many riders crashed into obstacles or rode off the track," Murray told *SoldierSport*.

"But we played it safe and although we lost a bit of ground on the first few days consistency proved to be the key as some of the leading teams dropped out of the event with injuries or mechanical problems.

"The physical endurance and gritty determination ingrained in us as military personnel

played a factor in our success."

Regularly posting times ahead of their professional counterparts in the later stages, the Army moved up to finish tenth from 123 teams and were second in a field of eight British outfits.

In a class of 177 amateur riders Murray claimed fourth spot, while Ellwood was 12th and Hicks 24th.

Gold medals are awarded to those who finish within ten per cent of the class winner's total elapsed time, with silver going to riders at 25 per cent and bronze to competitors completing all six days in the time limit. ■



Anyone wishing to get involved should request to join the Army Motorcycle Association Facebook group, adding a brief history of their background in the sport

BACK TO SCHOOL



WITH a second season in the Army Stage Rally Championship about to be ticked off preparations have already started for another year in the fast lane.

Members of the set-up recently gathered at the London Rally School in Bicester for a day of training that was aimed at honing the skills needed to achieve a decisive edge in 2017.

The fact the session was staged before the current campaign had even finished is a sign of the long-term thinking that exists within the ranks and the expert guidance was well received.

"It is good to come here and brush up on things," Sgt Blair Thomson (RE) told *SoldierSport*. "Some of the guys have never driven on

gravel before so it is great to get that knowledge.

"This is the first time I have ever done any proper training; we are only in our second season so it is important we do things on the right footing."

The competition sees racers tested in various civilian events throughout the year with their scores and times from five rounds counting towards the overall Army championship.

They also come together for a Service challenge against the Royal Air Force, the latest staging of which was taking place as this issue went to press.

However, the sport doesn't come cheap and an

initial set-up of a car, tyres, service tent and safety requirements can cost in the region of £7,000.

While Thomson endured a frustrating year trying to get his car on the track

it has been a different story for Sgt George Morrison (REME).

The experienced racer finished second in the British Trials and Rally Drivers Association mixed surface challenge

– where his modest 1400 MG ZR has competed against some top rivals.

"I've been up against cars like the Subaru and Mitsubishi Evo, all of which are bigger than mine," the soldier explained.

"I led the championship for a while; dropped to fifth and then managed to get back up to second.

"But the Army scene is also growing and the sponsors are slowly coming in. We want to get the word out there to hopefully achieve wider recruitment and investment.

"This is a great chance for fellow personnel to get out and see what is going on within the Service."

The championship is not just aimed at those behind the wheel and there are also opportunities for mechanics, pit crew and co-drivers. ■

“IT IS GOOD TO COME HERE AND BRUSH UP ON THINGS”



For details see the Army Stage Rally Championship page on Facebook.



Mountains prove no obstacle

A HEALTHY contingent of Army athletes descended on Canada's Blue Mountains for the Obstacle Course Racing World Championships.

Having qualified as individuals at various events across the UK and Europe throughout the season, the 13-strong squad was keen to test itself on the global stage.

Cpl Tristan Steed (REME) lined up in the elite ranks and finished 22nd in his class, building on the 16 wins achieved this year.

Teammate Capt Jim Douglas (AGC (SPS)) came fifth in the short course race and ninth in the 15-kilometre main event, while SSgt Becky Frostick (R Signals) placed ninth in her age category.

"The opportunity for the whole team to run against the foremost obstacle course racers in the world and on the finest terrain was something we will never forget," Douglas said. The team was in action at the UK Championships as this issue went to press.

MONTH in sport

December's key fixtures...



WHAT: Army v Western Counties Boxing

WHEN: December 6

WHERE: Bristol

COMMENTS: The Army senior team pick up the pace in December with a tough fixture against the Western Counties followed by a clash with the Royal Navy two days later



WHAT: Olympia Horse Show

WHEN: December 13 to 19

WHERE: Earls Court, London

COMMENTS: With dressage, show jumping and driving competitions included in the line-up there will be plenty for the Army equestrian team to enjoy. The show also includes a variety of displays from around the world



WHAT: Army v Aylesford Harlequins Rugby Union

WHEN: December 17

WHERE: Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot

COMMENTS: The women's team round off a successful 2016 with a clash against Premiership opposition on home turf



Court queens: The Army Medical Services walked away with the top prize at the end of a hard-fought contest

Medics upset the odds

Inter-Corps Netball

Gold: AMS 1
Silver: AAC
Bronze: AMS 3

Inter-Unit: 22 Engr Regt

NETBALL underlined its status as a sport on the rise with another fiercely contested Inter-Corps showdown in Aldershot.

With numbers hitting new highs in recent years the trend was maintained in 2016 and it was the Army Medical Services first team who emerged as surprise champions at the end of the two-day battle.

They defeated their rivals in the Adjutant General's Corps 8-7 in the showpiece final and the tournament's top players returned to court for the Army trials as this issue went to press. With 24 places up for grabs the competition for places promised to be intense.

"We are looking really strong at the moment," Army manager SSgt Kirsty Price (RAPTC) told *SoldierSport*.

"There are a lot of defensive players and shooters fighting for those positions so we'll see what happens.

"We let ourselves down in the Inter-Services last season; we let our heads drop and were beaten by a strong Royal Navy team but we are confident we can put that right next year."

Price saw encouraging signs at the corps competition and believes the strength of the game will hold the Army in good stead for years to come.

"When I first started playing 12 or 13 years ago we would be lucky to see four teams turning up," she explained.

"But the corps are now boasting two or three teams each. Smaller formations like the AMS and Int Corps would not compete but they now have two sides.

"It is also about publicity. In the past nobody really knew about netball but we've got a website and Facebook and Twitter pages that let people know what is happening.

"The standard is getting better and we have more younger players coming in."



DATE WITH THE DRAGONS

Court star secures a place in netball's top tier as international form reaps dividends

THE bright lights of the Netball Super League await Pte Fern Davies (RLC) after the Army star signed a one-year deal with Welsh outfit Celtic Dragons.

An ankle injury prevented the soldier from lining up in this year's competition but with the road to recovery now complete she has high hopes for the 2017 campaign, which gets underway in February.

Davies is no stranger to the big stage having made her international debut at the age of 18 and she recently captained the Wales Under-21 side to a third-place finish at the Netball Europe event in Cardiff.

In the process the team qualified for the World Youth Cup in Botswana and the defensive player believes progressing to the top tier of the domestic game can only help her development.

"I've wanted to play for the Dragons since I was eight years old," she told *SoldierSport*.

"I was genuinely shocked by the contract offer but it means all the hard work has paid off.

"I feel as though I have established myself over the last few years so I want to get in the starting seven and go from there.

"The Super League is expanding to ten teams and the fan base is huge. Our team has one of the biggest followings and I'm excited to be part of it.

"I won my first senior cap at the Echo Arena in Liverpool as an 18-year-old and I was terrified.

"But I've learnt a lot over the past few years and this league will only make me better."

Davies will juggle her work commitments with regular training sessions and matches with the Dragons.

She is also part of the Army's Talented Athlete Sponsorship Scheme and has reaffirmed her allegiances to a Reds' squad that suffered Inter-Services defeat in 2016.

"That scheme helps a lot," she added. "It is good to be recognised as an elite athlete.

"As an Army team we have something to prove. I know we can do better than last season and we will come back stronger than ever."

● The Celtic Dragons start the season with a home clash against Team Bath on Saturday, February 18.

Visit www.celticdragonsnetball.com



HOCKEY REACHES RESERVES

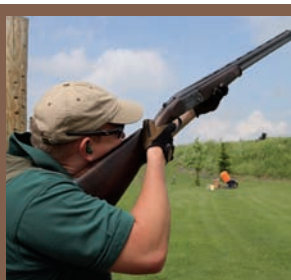
PLAYERS from the Oxford University Officers' Training Corps were crowned champions of the inaugural Reserve Forces mixed indoor hockey tournament in Aldershot.

The round-robin competition also featured teams from Northern Ireland, Bristol and London, with the Royal Yeomanry finishing as runners-up.

All Reserves are eligible to compete at corps and Army level, with support also available to those wanting to pursue coaching and umpiring courses.

Email Reserve Forces hockey secretary LCpl Sally Aldridge via reservehockeysec@outlook.com for more details or visit www.armyhockey.org





Target achieved

THE Army clay target shooting team capped an impressive run of form in 2016 by claiming the Inter-Services title.

Victory in the final round of the Armed and Emergency Services League sealed the military silverware for the soldiers, who finished second to the police in the wider standings.

The shooters posted a score of 917/1,000 to win the Royal Air Force-hosted event, with Capt Dean Martin (R WxY) named high gun thanks to his total of 95 out of 100.

"The season has shown a great improvement on 2015," said team spokesman Maj Alex Stanger (R Signals).

"The top three shots for the year were separated by only five points and that indicated how tight it was at the top."

For details on how to get involved in 2017 visit www.armyshooting.org/clay



Goal rush sparks title win

Inter-Services indoor hockey

Winners:
Army women
Army under-25s

THE Army women produced another dominant display as they emphatically crushed their Forces rivals on the way to winning yet another Inter-Services indoor hockey title.

A 15-0 thrashing of the Royal Air Force was followed by a sterner test against the Royal Navy but an 11-4 victory emphasised the gulf in class that exists between the sides.

Star player Capt Emma Lee-Smith (AAC) opened the scoring against the Senior Service and turned provider moments later as Capt Gemma Darrington (RLC) flicked the ball into the net to double the advantage.

The duo notched further

strikes as the Reds surged into a 4-0 lead at the end of a relatively low-key first half but it was their rivals who struck first after the break, converting within seconds of the restart.

Lee-Smith completed her hat-trick following some smart work from skipper SSgt Katy White (RLC) on the right and she added a fourth with a low strike into the bottom corner.

A fifth goal followed soon after and the punishment continued as WO2 Sharon Stones (REME) added a hat-trick of her own, with Maj Nic George (R Signals) completing the rout.

"We wanted to play high intensity, basic hockey," White told *SoldierSport*. "We did that against the Navy, although there were a few moments where our skills slipped."

"We always want to do well

in this tournament and it has been a real team effort. We've got some skilful individuals but it is all about coming together as a group."

While the women clinched another title there was disappointment for the men.

Despite losing 5-3 to the Navy in their opening match they were still in contention after the RAF beat the same opposition.

Victory over the airmen would see the competition decided on goal difference and the calculations were tipping in their

favour as they opened a 4-1 lead at half-time.

However, a stirring comeback saw their rivals surge 6-4 ahead before the soldiers reduced the arrears from the final play of the game.

Goal difference helped the under-25s retain their title as they drew 5-5 with the Navy after beating the RAF 13-2. ■

20

Successive indoor titles won by the Army women's team



STANNING STANDS DOWN

ONE of the Service's greatest ever athletes has called time on her sporting career after a golden decade on the water.

Double Olympic and world rowing champion Maj Heather Stanning (RA) made the announcement at last month's Army Sports Awards and in the process ended her all-conquering partnership with Helen Glover.

The duo retained their coxless pairs title at this year's Rio Games as they extended an impressive unbeaten run that stretches back to 2011.

They took gold at the London Olympics in 2012 in a time of 7min 27.13sec.

"It's hard to identify a key highlight," Stanning said while reflecting on her successes. "Obviously, winning back-to-back Olympic golds is up there but so is our first victory at the World Championships.

"There was so much we had to overcome to achieve that."

Stanning was a product of the GB Rowing Team Start Programme and won her first major medal at the World Under-23 Championships.

She was later paired with Glover and they end their partnership unbeaten in 39 international events.

After her success at the London Games she resumed her military career and completed a tour of Afghanistan the following year.

However, she returned to the boat to win the World Championships in 2014 and



2015 and also collected ten World Cup titles and two European golds.

With the prospect of another gruelling four-year Olympic cycle looming and little left to achieve she has walked away from the sport to concentrate on life in the Armed Forces.

"Throughout my rowing career I have been continually

supported by the Army and I am forever grateful," the officer added.

"It has made transitioning from the sport to another career much easier.

"Having the ability to slot back into a life I knew before being an Olympian was so helpful post London and I now have something I know to throw my energy into." ■

SPORT SHORTS



Dutch delight

» A STRONG contingent of Army players helped the UK Armed Forces retain their Kentish Cup title in Holland.

Strikers LCpl Matt Glass (RLC) and LCpl Calum Wilkinson (RLC, pictured) spearheaded the Services' attack in their opening clash with the hosts and a header from the latter sealed a comfortable 2-0 win.

The team returned to action against their French counterparts two days later and the match proved a close-fought affair, with the score locked at 0-0 at the break.

With the clock ticking down Wilkinson again came to the fore as he pounced on a defensive error to play in substitute Pte Josh Hughes (RLC) and the forward lashed home an angled drive to give his side a 1-0 victory.



Catterick fighters up for the cup

BOXERS from the Infantry Training Centre Catterick celebrated success in the ring at the inaugural Alexander Cup match.

The contest saw the fighters square-off against their rivals from Army Training Centre Pirbright and some emphatic displays on the night saw them secure a convincing 4-2 win.

Former British middleweight champion Martin Murray was among the guests at the Surrey base and it is hoped the match will now become an annual fixture.

Pirbright has traditionally played host to a fixture for the Army team but the new format sees instructors from both establishments battling it out.

CYBERBULLYING

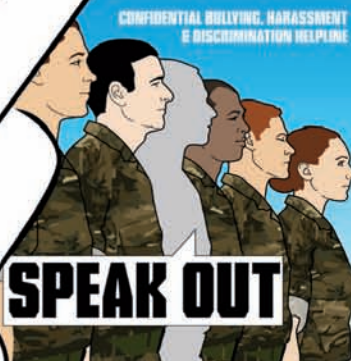
Excluding individuals, whether face-to-face or online, is a form of bullying.

The Army will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment.

Cyberbullying will be investigated and may result in administrative action being taken.



CONFIDENTIAL BULLYING, HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION HELPLINE



SPEAK OUT

Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and with respect. If you feel that you are not being dealt with fairly, are being bullied or harassed or if you notice unfair treatment of others speak to your chain of command or your Equality and Diversity Adviser.

If you are not content with how you are being treated or need advice on how to respond to or deal with a complaint speak to the Army's Bullying Harassment and Discrimination Team on

0306 7704656* (civ) or 96770 4656 (mil)

or email Army-SpeakOut@mod.uk

Your call will be dealt with in confidence

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ARMY

Call the Speak Out helpline on:
Civ: 0306 7704656 / Mil: 96770 4656
or e-mail: Army-SpeakOut@mod.uk

RACERS WANT POLE POSITION

THE Army Motorcycle Race Team is plotting a successful return to the grid in 2017 after a disappointing end to the season saw silverware slip from their grasp.

Having opened a 30-point lead over their military rivals the soldiers looked set to top the podium with just two rounds remaining in the Forces series but a nightmare run of results handed the title to the Royal Navy.

"We had a shocking weekend in Donington with a number of crashes and mechanical problems," manager and team rider SSgt Andy Kewley (RAPTC) told *SoldierSport*.

"That left us trailing the Navy by 30 points as we headed to the final race at Cadwell Park.

"We didn't have a great time there either; our highest placed rider was fourth and that meant we finished 12 points behind.

"It was very disappointing as we had been leading throughout the season. But the Senior Service had strength in numbers and that made the difference."

Kewley is already plotting a winter testing camp in Spain so his riders can hit the ground running when the action resumes and he is actively encouraging newcomers to get involved.

The nature of the sport means it is expensive but funding is available from the Army to offset some of the costs.

"The guys who come really enjoy it," he added. "It is a good opportunity for the lads to go racing and stretch their legs ahead of the new season.

"We want to improve next year and to do that we need a strong core of riders."

For more details on how to get involved call SSgt Kewley on military 94384 8407 ■



Picture: Garry Fox

FINDING THEIR FEET



Picture: Alex James Photography

» THE season also proved to be challenging for riders on the Army Endurance Motorcycle Race Team.

Having switched to the No Limits civilian championship midway through 2015 the soldiers knew what to expect ahead of their latest campaign and every position on the grid offered fierce competition.

The outfit's top riders finished sixth in the National 1,000 Class, while the novice pairing claimed third place in the rookie championship.

"Two or three of the teams above us in the national class have British Superstock riders on the bike," manager Sgt Richard Spencer-Fleet (REME) said. "They can change tyres every 30 minutes while we try to make one last for two sessions. That makes a real difference.

"We hope to bring in a new rookie team next season and are always looking for more people to come along. We are still quite a new sport so it is all about building on what we have."

Visit the Army Motorcycle Endurance Race Team Facebook page for more information.

Final word

Soldier asked troops on the all-arms basic drill course at ITC Catterick how positive thinking has helped them through challenges in their military career



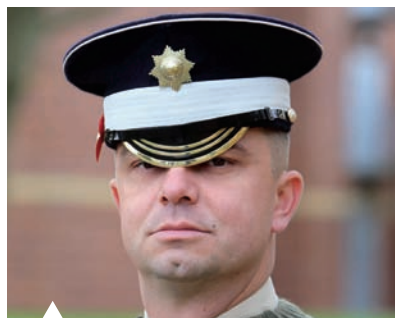
Cpl Jasmine Clifford (AGC (RMP))

Herrick 19 was a challenge but positive thinking made it bearable. At one stage we didn't know when – or if – we were going home but we ended up having a laugh about that. You have to. Telling yourself that you are all in the same boat and knowing that each day is a day closer to going home means you can enjoy the small things like good food or a can of Coke.



Cpl Mark Ward (Scots)

My battalion was involved in training the Libyan Armed Forces in Basingbourn back in 2014 and that was challenging. Through interpreters we had to work with troops from a completely different cultural and social background, as well as dealing with some individuals who did not want to be taught. It was quite hard to motivate ourselves; we had to try and inspire them and it took a lot of different approaches. But we got through it by reminding ourselves that these were the people Libya was relying on.



Sgt Andrew Cutts (Coldm Gds)

I gave a rifle lesson to a recruit once and he just couldn't grasp it. I got him to visualise six months down the line, when he would be doing well. I also kept drilling the word "positive" into him. Within a couple of weeks he'd nailed it.



Cpl Gemma Johnson (RADC)

I am a section commander at ATC Pirbright, where some of the recruits can suffer from self-doubt and negative thinking. Fear of failure can be a real obstacle so I tell them to focus on one thing at a time.



Cpl Andy Monk (AGC (RMP))

The eight-week close protection course was physically and mentally challenging but I got through it by saying "you can do it". That kind of thinking draws you on to continue. It meant I passed the course.

Sgt Marco Galliano (RG)

I was attached to The Royal Anglian Regiment on Herrick 6 when we suffered three casualties in a blue-on-blue attack. It was a very hectic time. I was stationed at the OP and felt so isolated when the names started coming through; we wanted to be down there helping. But we leaned on each other and kept our chins up. We had done well with all the contacts and were trying to think positively; we knew we had done good work there. We became family on that tour. The tempo was so high. I'm an infantry soldier and was doing my bread-and-butter during that mission. You can't ask for anything more than that really.



Sgt Grant Soper (RA)

Having been downgraded with various hip and back injuries, there was a period when I found myself falling by the wayside, missing out on the phys'. But I didn't let that feeling of being sidelined overcome me. I trusted the system to get me fitter again, went through rehabilitation, gained fitness, and had a strong friendship group round me. Things all fell into place.



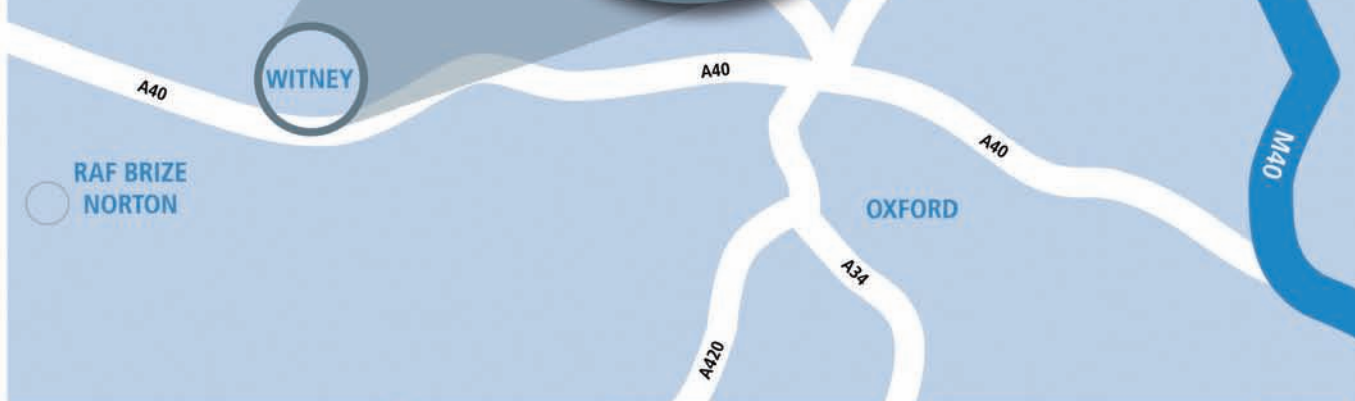
WO2 Ian Robinson (RLC)

Working as acting sergeant major in Camp Bastion on Herrick 20 was challenging because I was still in the rank of staff sergeant, having to tell officers and senior personnel where to be and what to do. It was hectic but I kept thinking about being in Cyprus – that's when you know you're on your way home. Calling my family and hearing my kids kept me afloat. I encouraged the lads to do the same with their loved ones.



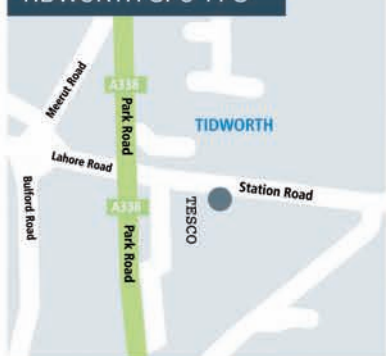
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