

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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YEARS

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SOLDIER is published by the Ministry of Defence and printed by Wyndham (Roche) Ltd. Print contract managed by Williams Lea.

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ARMY

Monty's mission

THIS month marks 70 years since *Soldier* was first published and compared with that initial edition of March 19, 1945 much has changed.

The original editorial team was made up of Service personnel working close to the front line, where Allied forces were engaged in fierce fighting to push the Nazis back across occupied Europe.

The magazine came out every fortnight back then, largely in black and white, with fewer pages but in a larger tabloid format.

Its pictures were grainy and the paper quality was understandably poor.

However, despite the physical differences with today's glossy colour publication our role of presenting the Army's news and information in an engaging manner and unearthing tales of courage and determination has remained resolutely unaltered.

Our special section to mark the anniversary, which starts on page 35, isn't about patting ourselves on the back, though. We wanted to highlight how times have changed and how the Service and its in-house magazine have moved with them.

It's something that, hopefully, would have given Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery a glow of satisfaction, for it was he who ordered the launch of *Soldier* all those years ago.

He rallied his troops with a personal message on that first front cover, signing off with a note of "good luck" to the publication.

His wishes obviously had an effect because we're still here and, amazingly, continuing to work to the brief he originally set.

Long may it continue. ■



Joe Clapson • Assistant Editor

**FEARLESS
FLYERS**

Apache crews descend on
US desert – pages 22-27



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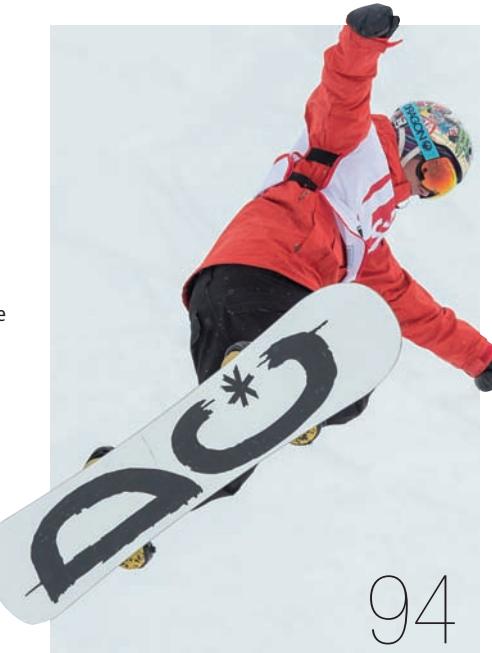
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"It is a magazine for the troops themselves"
Fd Marshal Bramall reflects on 70 years of *Soldier* p42



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"Having a damn good whinge is fundamental to the Tommy"

Personnel past and present air their views p40

"We were buzzing at full time. There were tears of pure joy"

Servicewoman's pride at Six Nations success p91

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Pictures: Cpl Andrew Morris, RAF



Infantry prepare Iraq fighters

Troops 'keen to learn' from expertise of UK Service personnel

THE Kurdish Peshmerga is receiving expert advice from UK personnel as its forces prepare to lock horns with the jihadist group Isis in Northern Iraq.

Troops from 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment have deployed to the region to teach fighters a variety of military skills ranging from how to hold the front line to conducting operations in complex urban areas.

The move comes after the unit was named as a regional standby battalion that will focus on the Middle East and North Africa.

An initial recce revealed the Peshmerga had no real concept of training beyond basic induction so a focus on operational demands at individual, section and platoon level became an immediate priority.

"They are able students and incredibly keen to learn," said the

officer in charge, who cannot be named for security reasons.

"All are heavily conscious that the last range would mark the return, in a matter of hours, to the front line.

"It is serious stuff delivered with humility, humour and deep respect. We are certainly the better for our time with the Peshmerga – as I believe they are for our input."

A private soldier in C Company added: "The variety of drills we offer means I have learnt things I probably wouldn't have otherwise."

"I enjoy building a rapport with the Peshmerga and their officers. They have a completely different scope on life and culture. This can sometimes make for difficult training but it is no less rewarding or enjoyable."

The new standby role for 2 PWRR, which is based in Cyprus, was tested further last month when personnel undertook Exercise Active Tiger.

“
It is serious
stuff
delivered
with
humility
and humour
“



A different scope: UK soldiers teach key infantry skills to the Kurdish Peshmerga personnel



A COLD QUEST



GURKHA soldiers are preparing to reach the summit of the world's highest mountain for the first time.

The attempt is being staged in May to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Gurkha service to the British crown.

"This will be an iconic way to mark the bicentenary," said deputy leader of the expedition Maj Andrew Todd (RGR). "We want to raise awareness of the milestone while helping continue expeditionary mountaineering among Gurkhas."

"In 1991 we came close but the weather turned bad and the team didn't make it."

In preparation for this year's bid, the multi-cap badge party has undergone exhaustive basic and advanced training as well as a 7,000-metre climb on Mount Makalu (pictured) on the Nepal-China border.

The same month will see Service personnel embark on two more daring missions.

Capt Jon Armstrong and Cpl Arjun Limbu from the Royal Gurkha Rifles will undertake a 1,500-mile ski and kayak trip around Ellesmere Island in the Canadian Arctic Circle.

And a separate Army team will take on Mount Everest in memory of George Mallory, who lost his life on the mountain in 1924.

To follow the progress of the Gurkha Everest climbers visit www.g200e.com



READY TO ROCKET

Testing times for the team behind Apache – pages 22-27



Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC

1 UK

TREATING TRAUMA

ARMY medics have gained experience of treating the traumatic injuries they may face in future conflict zones.

Exercise Burton Fell saw Regulars and Reserves from 3 Medical Regiment deploy to Warcop Training Area, where amputee actors and special effects experts simulated an array of casualties.

"It's been good to train with Reservists," said full-time soldier Cpl Denis Murphy. "They've brought a lot of civilian medical experience because some are doctors and nurses in the NHS."



30

Temperature, in degrees Celsius, that medics working in Sierra Leone are having to operate in wearing their protective suits. Read more about one soldier's experiences on page 51.

2 AUSTRIA

SNOW MASTERS

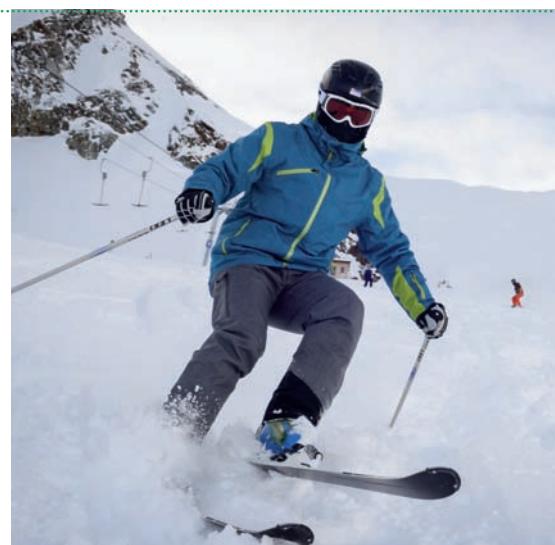
THE ski slopes welcomed members of Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps for a two-week adventurous training package.

Exercise Arrcade Snowmaster saw participants learn a variety of avalanche rescue techniques while building team cohesion.

"We had 12 minutes to get to the victim," explained Capt Alex Mortimore (RLC). "It's great to be tested in conditions we don't see in the UK."

"This helped me integrate with the staff quickly and the hours of skiing stressed a variety of muscles."

"It was an excellent experience."



Picture: Sgt Mike O'Neill, RLC

ARMOURED EXCELLENCE

Soldiers embrace extended exercise on German soil – page 12



INSIDE IRAQ

UK helps fighters take on Isil – page 7

TRACKING TIPS

Troops brush up in Brunei jungle – pages 29-33



4 MOROCCO

READY FOR THE SAHARA

OFFICERS from the 9th/12th Royal Lancers are bracing themselves for the gruelling Marathon Des Sables.

The troops, who decided to take on the challenge while deployed on Op Herrick 19, will be raising money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity and are currently spending every spare minute training in North Yorkshire.

"The thought of supporting such a great cause is keeping us going," said team member Maj Al Grant (pictured below left).

"It has supported close friends and colleagues in their recovery from life-changing injuries sustained in Afghanistan."

Follow the team's progress on Twitter via @912MDS

- Fearless fundraising – page 10



“
I'd been
looking
forward
to
coming
here for
ages
”

“
We
had 12
minutes
to get
to the
victim
”

99

5



5 FIJI

LESSONS IN THE PACIFIC

BRITISH personnel shared their knowledge and expertise with members of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces when they staged three week-long courses in the South Pacific country.

The small team covered subjects including the psychology of leadership and media operations, and the lessons were well received by their counterparts – many of whom had previously deployed on UN peacekeeping missions to Lebanon, Sinai and the Golan Heights.

A new welfare centre for serving and former British Servicemen has also been opened in Fiji thanks to funding from the military covenant.

The project was managed by resident welfare officer Maj (Retd) Jim Hall and newly-elected Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama opened the facility at a special ceremony.

6 JORDAN

BLACK BEARS BRACED

SOME 100 members of 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland are nearing the end of a four-week light infantry package in Jordan.

Operating alongside local troops, soldiers from C Company had to live and work in fluctuating temperatures at more than 3,000ft above sea level.

Company commander Maj Jules Kilpatrick described the trip as an "outstanding opportunity" for those involved.

Pte Scott Jones added: "We had to work hard but seeing everyone improve made it all worthwhile.

"I'd been looking forward to coming out here for ages and it lived up to expectations."

The unit will deploy to Bosnia in May followed by Op Tosca in Cyprus in the autumn.

7 NIUE

HELP TO TINY ISLAND

A THREE-man team from the Royal Engineers joined their counterparts from the New Zealand Defence Force on a mission to complete building and maintenance tasks in one of the smallest countries on Earth.

Exercise Tropic Twilight saw LCpl Sonny Farley and Sprs Thomas Barrow and Luke Woodward test their carpentry and plumbing skills as they helped the local population on the island of Niue.

The trio described the trip as a "life-changing experience".

They were called upon to represent the British High Commissioner at a celebration to mark the 40th anniversary of the nation's self-governance.



**“IT'S UNLIKE ANYTHING ELSE
YOU DO IN THE ARMY”
- EXPORT MISSION, PAGES 55-56**

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



To help the team reach
their target visit:
www.justgiving.com/jan-geer

PADDLE POWER

ARMY loggies are gearing up to row the 125-mile Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon. Sgt Jan Geer, Cpl Chris Conroy, LCpl Kevin Murray and LCpl Tim Nott (all RLC) will tackle the endurance event next month to raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

TROOPS VERSUS GYM

FITNESS enthusiasts Capt Kieran Wilkinson (RE), SSgt Al Walker (RLC) and LCpl Nick Taylor (RE) tested their powers of endurance in a gruelling 24-hour challenge. The trio completed one workout

every hour at the Gibraltar Barracks gym in Surrey – an effort that included handstand push-ups, deadlifts, snatches and burpees.



Money raised:
£527
For:
A local boy suffering with
quadriplegia cerebral palsy

S-TONKING EFFORT

ROYAL Engineer WO2 Steve Tonking took to an exercise bike at his local Tesco store for 24 hours straight. The 34-year-old veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan notched up an impressive 500km during the effort, which he completed alongside 12 friends and colleagues. “It is one of the hardest challenges I have ever taken on,” he said.

Money raised:
£2,000
For:
Blind Veterans UK



“
It is one
of the
hardest
challenges
I have
taken on
”

RUNNERS WANTED

MILITARY charity Stoll is looking for super-fit Service personnel to join its team at a number of sporting events this summer. The London 10k event on May 25 has been included on the schedule, along with the Prudential Ride London from August 1 to 2 and the London Triathlon on August 8 to 9.

To volunteer contact:
tom.howatt@stoll.org.uk
020 7385 2110

REMEMBRANCE RIDE

A TEAM of six cavalrymen from the Queen's Royal Lancers are embarking on a cycling tour to pay tribute to members of the unit who have died on operations and raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. Beginning on March 23, the

Help the team reach their
£10,000 target: www.justgiving.com/leon-reeve

Servicemen will travel 700 miles over five days, visiting the graves of 13 fallen comrades along the way.

SLIDING A MOUNTAIN

TEN members of C Squadron, 208 Field Hospital took to Blackpool's Sandcastle Waterpark to complete 902 trips

Money raised:
£700
For:
Combat Stress

on the slides. The troops calculated it to be the equivalent descent of more than ten Mount Everests.

GOT AN EVENT?

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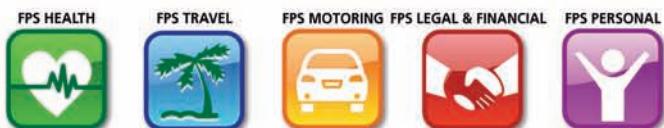
Armed Forces Pensions are complex and we can help ensure you get the most from your pension by advising **when to leave** (and when not to), commutation, how to deal with **pension troughs**, the implications of **redundancy, divorce**, how you might be able to top up your pension, the **impact of AFPS2015** from April and if you are a reservist, what the new pension rules mean for you. Help is available from our acknowledged **Pension Advisory Service** experts.

YOUR INDEPENDENT PENSION WATCHDOG

No other organisation **campaigns for fairness in Armed Forces Pensions**; no-one else has the interests of its Members at heart. FPS is an independent not-for-profit company that **holds government to account on behalf of the whole military community**.

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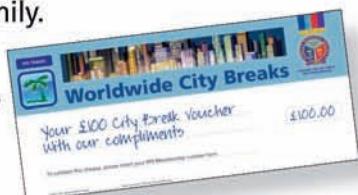
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“WE CAN SPOT IF HE’S WALKING BACKWARDS BECAUSE HE’LL HAVE A SHORTER PACE”

– TRACKING IN THE JUNGLE, PAGES 29-33

‘A BATTLE WINNER’

Why does diversity matter? One Muslim soldier puts into words the unofficial role his faith played on Herrick 18...



“In Afghanistan colleagues and commanders didn’t always understand why certain things were happening in the local community but I was able to explain.

For example, I knew why interpreters sometimes couldn’t work because of certain festivals, or why there might be a drop in the performance of locally employed civilians during fasting.

The feedback I got was really good – especially from the 18-year-olds who hadn’t had interaction with different cultures before.

It was a really interesting job and I didn’t shy away from it.

It is any good soldier’s responsibility to impart expertise or knowledge you might have, and it was great for team cohesion.

Everyone got to know who I was. In my opinion, diversity is a battle winner.

”

Cpl Ahmed Dhalai (Int Corps)

GOT A SCOOP FOR SOLDIER?

If your unit is set to do something out of the ordinary, contact our team via news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Picture: Cpl Mark Webster, RLC

More Muslims required

ETHNIC minority representation in the British Army is “nowhere near where it needs to be”, the head of the Service has said.

Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir Nicholas Carter wants more done to ensure the ranks are as diverse as modern British society – in particular through recruitment of more of the country’s Muslims.

Currently, black and ethnic minority troops make up less than ten per cent of the Force, with many of those coming from foreign and Commonwealth countries.

Capt Naveed Muhammad (R Signals, pictured) of the Armed Forces Muslim Association told *Soldier* diversity was essential for recruitment levels and operational effectiveness.



“Personnel need to understand what soldiers from different backgrounds can offer in the field,” he explained.

“For example, in Afghanistan I often heard it said that bases where British Muslims were deployed usually had good relations with the local community.

“Simply by making Afghan civilians aware of their faith, it contradicted what the insurgency were saying about us being ‘Christian invaders’.

“These soldiers were also able to offer cultural advice to their colleagues about how to behave during Ramadan, for example.”

He added that better community engagement on home soil could help to boost the number of Muslims.

Armoured excellence

Brigade comes together in Bergen-Hohne package

GERMANY-BASED troops from 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade have been training together for the first time as the formation continues its restructuring.

An annual firing camp, Exercise Bergen-Hohne, was expanded to allow units to rehearse their new capabilities, including 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, which has recently transferred across from 7th Infantry Brigade.

The three-week package saw The Highlanders operating

with Mastiff, Jackal and Foxhound in their new protected mobility role, alongside The Queen’s Royal Hussars with the Challenger 2 main battle tank and The Princess of Wales’s Royal Regiment, which is converting to an armoured infantry formation.

Lt Josh Badger (4 Scots) said the serials had given personnel the chance to master their dismounted drills, as well as mounted firing with general-purpose, heavy and grenade machine guns.



Next generation...

BATTLEFIELD technologies of the future have been put on display at an MoD event in London.

Among the innovations on show, which are in the very early stages of development thanks to government cash, was a software package to protect Army data from cyber attack, a vehicle mine protection system that counters blasts with downward force from a special motor and an earpiece that monitors soldiers’

temperature.

The exhibition was organised by the Centre for Defence Enterprise, which funds research that could benefit the Armed Forces. The organisation is part of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory.

Centre head, Andy Nicholson, said creations funded by his establishment had already made a

difference to front-line operations.

“We continue to look for good ideas that will shape the battlefield of the future,” he added.

Fruitful opportunity:
Fancy helping out at this year's Wimbledon tennis championships? Find out how on page 93



"GETTING SENT OUT HERE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE BEST THINGS I'VE DONE"

- EBOLA WARRIOR SPEAKS OUT, PAGES 55-56



Booze lectures 'don't work'

MoD reviewing its approach to problem drinking in Army

TEACHING soldiers about the dangers of alcohol is a waste of time, a military health expert has said.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, former Royal Navy surgeon Prof Neil Greenberg of the Royal College of Psychiatrists claimed that the Army's efforts to educate personnel with briefings was "ineffective" in getting them to stop binge drinking.

It follows findings from the Commons defence select committee which said the government's strategy has not made any noticeable impact on high levels of excessive drinking in the Armed Forces.

"I think one of the first things that needs to be done is to investigate a little more about why it is that people drink to



excess in the military," the academic added.

"If it is that the military culture encourages people who weren't doing so before to start drinking heavily then really something needs to be done at a very early stage to encourage people to drink in moderate and socially acceptable ways."

The MoD has recently launched a review of its policy in this area to see what more can be done.

YOUR VIEW...

» What would it take to stop British personnel from binge drinking?



Rev Martyn Groves (RACD)

Raising alcohol prices won't make much, if any, difference. It's role models that will lead to change; younger soldiers seeing their seniors setting a good example. Education not legislation will solve problems. I think it's fair to say that there's a big drinking culture in the Armed Forces compared to civilian workplaces, but it is improving.

Capt Hywel Jessop (REME)

From what I've seen I wouldn't say personnel do binge and I don't see alcohol as a problem. The idea that masses of soldiers are drinking in bars every night is false – there's too much work to do.



A/Sgt Anthony Highlands (AAC)

As an aviation unit we have a rule of no drinking within 24 hours of working with an aircraft and that's very pertinent to ground crew too. If you can't perform your role because of alcohol you will lose your job, so that's a strong incentive in itself. A price increase would have no impact.



WELSH GUARDS BEGIN CENTENARY CELEBRATION

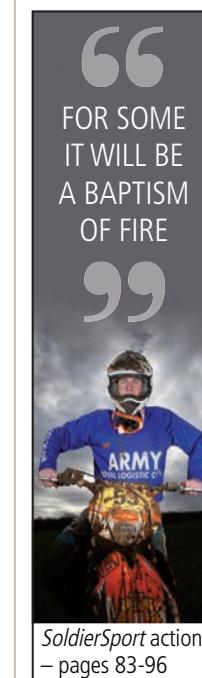
■ PERSONNEL from 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards have kicked off their regiment's centenary celebrations in style.

The Band of The Welsh Guards had the honour of playing the national anthem ahead of the opening fixture in this year's Six Nations Championship at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.

Some 70 guardsmen dressed in tunics and bearskins also lined the perimeter of the ground.

"This is a big year for the regiment – with lots of formal celebrations across 2015 – but to begin in front of a packed stadium was truly an honour for our soldiers," said Col Tom Bonas, the Welsh Guards regimental adjutant.

For more details on upcoming events visit the Army website.



SoldierSport action
– pages 83-96



Pictures: Sgt Rupert Fiere, RLC

DIARY DATE: MARCH 8

International Women's Day

■ KEEN to see females get further? Soldiers of any rank are being sought to join the newly created Army Servicewomen's Network.

Set up to help attract and retain female talent, the group will also provide a forum for personnel to influence future Army policy.

For details on the organisation and its launch on June 10 in Tidworth contact Lt Col Lisa Gill (REME) on 94394 8255.

LAGS LEND A HAND

■ A SCHEME that sees prisoners build basic components for the Armed Forces has been rolled out across the country.

Under the ten-year agreement, offenders at a number of prisons will make items such as sandbags, fence posts and other support products, many of which were previously imported from abroad.

As well as bringing work back to the UK, the project will help the inmates' rehabilitation by developing their practical skills.

The MoD and Ministry of Justice signed the deal after a six-month trial created savings of £500,000.

IN NUMBERS:

During the trial prisoners made

17,375

fence posts,...

...refurbished **128** hydraulic jacks...

...and produced

20,000 sandbags



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Kinloss:	01 - 12 Jun	Southampton:	15 - 26 Jun
Chester:	15 - 26 Jun	Colchester:	29 Jun - 10 Jul
Nuneaton:	20 - 31 Jul	Tidworth:	27 Jul - 07 Aug

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Tidworth:	15 - 19 Jun	Paderborn:	22 - 26 Jun
Colchester:	27 - 31 Jul	Aldershot:	03 - 07 Aug

NEBOSH National Certificate in Environmental Management

Aldershot:	22 - 26 Jun	Aldershot:	05 - 10 Nov
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NEBOSH Certificate in Construction Health and Safety

Tidworth:	20 Apr - 01 May	Tidworth:	29 Jun - 10 Jul
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NEBOSH Intl. Technical Certificate in Oil and Gas Operational Safety

Cleethorpes:	11 - 15 May	Cleethorpes:	13 - 17 Jul
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 email us at info@bvassociates.co.uk or call us direct on +44 (0) 1494 864100**

"I COULD NOT HAVE ASKED FOR BETTER CONDITIONS"

- CROSS-COUNTRY CLASS, PAGE 93



Picture: Sgt SJ Longworth, RLC



COMMEMORATING OP HERRICK

■ A SERVICE of commemoration will take place at St Paul's Cathedral in London this month to mark the end of combat operations in Afghanistan.

The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall are due to attend alongside Forces personnel, veterans, government ministers and families of the fallen.

The ceremony on March 13 will recognise everyone who served on Operation Herrick. It will be followed by a parade.

"This is an opportunity to pay tribute to the extraordinary contribution made by all those who served over 13 years," Prime Minister David Cameron said.



Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC

Soup-er service

ARMY chefs from 16 Air Assault Brigade have been offering their culinary support to a homeless shelter in Colchester.

Two soldiers visit the facility once a week to prepare and cook dinner for its 20 residents and they have also spent time reorganising the kitchen and its stock-keeping system.

Cpl Sam Coote and LCpl Callum McMullan (both RLC) recently offered assistance and served a meal of chicken soup, spaghetti bolognese and chocolate sponge.

"This is an easy way to use our skills as chefs to give something back to the local community," said Cpl Coote.

"We visit a few days before to agree a menu and then come down and cook. They all enjoy the food, it's a friendly place and everyone helps with the washing up afterwards."

HOME TRUTHS



A personal view from Louise Simpson, evidence director at the Army Families Federation...



Divorced from reality

LAST time I wrote this column I asked for help identifying the issues experienced by dual serving families.

Thanks to your support we had more than 300 responses and the report has been sent to, amongst others, the adjutant general for consideration. Read it on our website.

This month the Army Families Federation (AFF) is looking at divorce and the issues that soldiers encounter, particularly with access to children.

No matter how amicable a separation, the practicalities of managing a family split are not easy.

Last year we were approached several times by divorced troops frustrated at the MoD policies they believe place barriers between them and their offspring.

Currently, if soldiers do not have full custody of their child they are eligible to apply for surplus Service families' accommodation (SFA) but they are not entitled to it.

However, as we all know, there is little extra stock available and what is around may be far from a duty station.

Some personnel have told us that after child maintenance payments

private rental is not an option, leaving them no choice but to put up camp cots in their single living accommodation when looking after the kids – not an ideal environment.

Some individuals are able to utilise welfare flats but provision of these is hit and miss. And what about if they are posted overseas?

MoD allowances such as the school children's visits payment (SCV), which funds three return flights a year for youngsters, are not available to those who are not the "prime movers".

So what can be done?

During consultations on the Army's new employment model, the AFF pushed for the entitlement to SFA to include divorced Service personnel with children. We have also asked for divorced troops to be included in allowances such as the SCV.

But we need more evidence to ensure we have captured all issues.

If you have gone through a relationship breakdown that involves biological children, or you know someone who has, complete our website survey and help us help you.

www.aff.org.uk

FAREWELL TO FORMER SOLDIER EDITOR

■ A RESPECTED journalist who led the transformation of *Soldier* from a fortnightly newspaper into a glossy, multi-award-winning monthly magazine has died at the age of 71.

Chris Horrocks worked for the *Portsmouth News*, *Daily Mail* and *Navy News* before joining the Army's official magazine in 1989.

"Whatever Chris did in his life, it was with an amazing passion," recalled *Soldier* photographer and former colleague Graeme Main.

"He approached the job with great humour and was a managing editor of the highest order and integrity, a legendary storyteller and a gentleman. He will be sadly missed."

During his 17-year tenure on this magazine, the civilian oversaw the replacement of typewriters with computers.





"I WANT A EUROPEAN BELT - I'D LOVE TO MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF"

- BOXER EYES THE BIG TIME, PAGE 89

GOOD DRILLS



EBOLA RECOGNITION

TROOPS who have travelled to West Africa to help fight Ebola could be in line to receive a new medal. Prime Minister David Cameron said he would recommend an award to the Queen as a mark of the "immense debt of gratitude" owed to the Armed Forces, NHS medics, civil servants and aid workers. A total of 2,000 people are likely to be eligible for the decoration which, if approved, could be ready by the summer. Soldiers would be able to display it on their uniforms.

● **Ebola warrior speaks out**
— pages 51-52

PROFESSIONAL services firm Ernst and Young has become one of the largest companies to pledge their support to the Armed Forces Covenant. The corporate giant has said it will employ veterans and their families, help staff who want to join the Reserves and give special consideration to holiday requests from Service spouses before, during and after a partner's deployment.



A SALUTE TO SOLDIERS

IT'S A RAP

■ A SERVICEMAN who spends his spare time rapping has produced a single for charity.

Gdsm Olanrewaju Olaiya (IG, pictured) – or CJ Lanre as he is known to fans – began making music at the age of 13 while growing up in north-west London.

Song for a Soldier is available on iTunes now and the artist will donate some of its profits to Help for Heroes.

Follow him on Twitter at @cjlanre



Pressing on in Poland: Troops on Ex Black Eagle in 2014. Another large exercise is planned in the country this year

SOLDIERING ON

■ MEMBERS of the Armed Forces are to be honoured for their inspirational achievements at a special ceremony next month.

The Soldiering On Awards recognise individuals who have shown exceptional commitment across nine categories including courage, family values and sporting endeavour.

Nominees are put forward by members of the public and Service charities and this year's winners will be announced in London on April 18.

For details about the awards, which are run by the Soldiering On Through Life Trust, visit www.soldieringon.org

CONVERSION CRITERIA

■ CHANGES have been made to the conversion criteria for the versatile engagement scheme.

Individual cap badges have now adjusted their rank and trade quotas for soldiers wishing to extend their careers to 24 (versatile engagement full) and 30 (versatile engagement long) years.

The updated policy, full details of which can be found in annex A to 2014DIN01/134, will see more personnel offered the chance to convert.

Further amendments will be published in the coming months, which could allow service until the age of 60.

“
Strong words must be backed up with firm action
”



Baltic commitment gathers pace for UK

More personnel to deploy to the region

Picture: Graeme Main

HUNDREDS of British soldiers will lead a new Nato mission in the Baltic region from 2017. The MoD has pledged to send 1,000 military personnel to head up the newly created Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, which will see international troops able to deploy to the area at short notice from bases across Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.

Announcing the operation, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said that "strong words must be backed up with firm action".

It follows continuing unrest in Eastern Europe as pro-Russian rebels try to take control of eastern Ukraine.

An MoD spokesman said it was not yet known which units the soldiers would be drawn from.

However, their work will follow the efforts of around 4,000 Servicemen and women on Nato training packages in the region this year.

The largest of these, Exercise Dragon, will see 1,000 UK troops and a number of armoured vehicles descend on Poland in September.

Four Royal Air Force Typhoon jets will also be deployed on Nato's Baltic air policing mission in the spring.

UK personnel will be based in Poland, Romania and Bulgaria

The deployment will follow a major exercise in Poland this year



Up close: The Very High Readiness Joint Task Force of 2017

"AS LONG AS WE'RE HEADING TO WAR ZONES, WE'LL NEED IT"

- APACHE CREW TALK FUTURE, PAGE 98



'PAINFUL' REPORT DELAY

NEWS that an inquiry into the Iraq war will be delayed until after the general election has been met with anger. Sir John Chilcot, who is leading the report, told MPs he had underestimated how long it would take to study thousands of documents. The process, which began six years ago, is looking at how UK Forces became involved in the US-led invasion in 2003. Conservative MP Nadhim Zahawi said the uncertainty was "painful" for families of those personnel who died in the conflict.

A BRITISH Army Warrior vehicle gave an elderly couple a shock when it crashed through their garden fence. The incident in Paderborn is thought to have been caused by a mechanical fault which led the platform to swerve off the road and onto the property. "My grandma telephoned and said 'I'm coming somewhat later, I have a tank in my garden,'" the couple's granddaughter told the

Neue Westfälische newspaper. No one was injured and an investigation is under way.



TANKS FOR NOTHING

BAD DRILLS

Training centre shifts focus

AHUB set up to deliver pre-deployment training to soldiers is celebrating a successful first few weeks.

The Mission Training and Mobilisation Centre (MTMC) has replaced the Operational Training and Advisory Group and Chilwell's Reinforcements Training and Mobilisation Centre.

Collective and individual packages will continue to be provided at two separate sites – Folkestone and Chilwell respectively.

However, the two branches will relocate to a single base in

Bassingbourn in the coming months.

"We have moved away from the days of the predictable Herrick cycle to a less predictable but broader selection of courses," explained Lt Col Nicholas Short (Coldstream Guards), the staff officer helping to oversee the establishment.

"It's made our work here very challenging but exciting."

Since the start of the year the Folkestone-based part of MTMC has prepared more than 1,000 troops for seven different missions around the world including Sierra Leone, Cyprus and Iraq.



Prepared for chaos:
A recent pre-deployment training serial at MTMC

COMPARE INSURANCE

■ FORMER Army medic Kevin Richards has launched a new price comparison website that will donate all of its profits to various military charities.

The portal specialises in insurance quotes – from travel and home to pets and breakdown cover – and can be viewed at www.forcesaid.com

WELSH FIRMS PRAISED

■ ARMY bosses in Wales have hosted the first awards ceremony to acknowledge companies that support defence in the country.

Run by 160th Infantry Brigade, Headquarters Wales and Sabre, the event saw the official launch of the Welsh employer recognition scheme, which encourages firms to back the Corporate Covenant.

It was attended by more than 30 firms including Airbus UK and Greggs.

NEW COMPLAINTS BOD

■ THE MoD has appointed Nicola Williams as the new Service complaints commissioner for the Armed Forces.

The civilian will offer an alternative point of contact for personnel and their families who, for whatever reason, are unable to raise problems via the chain of command.

IN NUMBERS

£3m

Amount that has been lent to Service leavers, veterans and military spouses in start-up loans by X-Forces since the organisation was set up in July 2013. For support starting a business after the Army visit www.x-forces.com

More head to St Mawgan

INCREASING numbers of soldiers could find themselves visiting RAF St Mawgan this year as the station takes on a variety of new roles.

The Cornwall-based facility has become home to the Defence Survival School – which will train up to 5,000 personnel from all three Services every year.

Courses will be offered to soldiers from trades who may find themselves in survival situations or danger of capture, and opportunities will be available for

those hoping to become instructors.

The base will also be used for high-level command exercises and is opening its doors to any units seeking accommodation while undertaking adventurous training in Cornwall.

Bed spaces for up to 800 soldiers are available as long as the dates do not clash with major exercises.

To book call 01980 674695 and to discuss more complex plans contact exercise coordinator Mike Seccombe on 01637 857717.



IN MOVIES...



"It raises moral questions about how we fight al-Qaeda"

★★★

PAGES 76-77



**“IT WAS A GOOD BLEND OF
YOUTH AND EXPERIENCE”**
- REDS RETURN IN STYLE, PAGE 86



FRONT-LINE FRIENDS

■ LOOKING for some new wall art? Artist and MoD civilian Melissa Terry is selling 50 signed prints of this impressive painting.

Based on an image captured during Op Herrick 18 by Army photographer Cpl Si Longworth (RLC), the picture costs £30 with all funds raised going to the Stars Appeal – the charity of Salisbury District Hospital.

The centre cared for Mrs Terry's husband before he died of kidney cancer four years ago.

To purchase a painting email melissaterry2@hotmail.com

“
QUOTING
THE BIBLE
OUT OF
CONTEXT
IS A LOW
BLOW
”

*Talkback turns up
heat – pages 59-65*



Sgt Dean Connolly

‘Try a transfer to us’

Branch offers new direction to serving troops

SOLDIERS looking for a new direction are being encouraged to transfer into the Adjutant General's Corps.

The Staff and Personnel Support branch, which provides administration and financial management to every unit of the British Army, has scores of posts available.

It is looking for troops in the rank of corporal and below who are medically fully deployable. Sergeants and medically limited deployable soldiers will also be considered.

“You might not get ten-year-old boys saying they want to be a military administrator when they grow up but it's only when personnel mature a bit that they realise they might be suited to a career in the SPS,” said Lt Col Terry Robson (AGC (SPS)), of the Directorate of Personnel Administration. “It's a very rewarding job with lots of variety.

“Everywhere you go there is an SPS soldier; from embassies to Army HQ or airborne units.”

Good promotion prospects and the chance to gain professional



qualifications are also benefits.

Among those to have recently joined the branch is former Royal Logistic Corps driver Dean Connolly.

“The main attraction was the variety and the opportunity to develop myself,” he explained.

Since his transfer the Serviceman has been promoted to sergeant. He now works with 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment.

“It's exceeded my expectations,” Sgt Connolly added. “My role has required hard work and commitment but I wouldn't want it any other way – I haven't looked back.”

For details on transfer opportunities speak to a regimental administrative officer or visit www.rhqagc.com

Crave a better sex life?

Ditching the fags could be the answer, experts say

SERVICE smokers are being urged to take up the challenge of quitting this month.

Around one in three soldiers have the habit – a far higher proportion than in the civilian population – and with No Smoking Day taking place on March 11 there has never been a better time to give up.

A recent British Heart Foundation (BHF) survey found that, as well as the increased risk of heart disease and cancer, smoking can destroy relationships – with some 21 per cent of men admitting it had negatively affected their sex life.

“Low libido and erectile dysfunction are common side effects in men who smoke,” said Dr Mike Knapton, Associate Medical Director at the BHF. “The habit can also increase the risk of impotence, damage sperm and reduce sperm count.”

Visit www.nosmokingday.org.uk or use the Twitter hashtag #nosmokingday

AVOID THE DROOP: 5 TIPS TO QUIT

< 1 > Set a date to give up and stick to it.

< 2 > Make a plan. What could help you stop?

< 3 > Get your mates and family to support you. Tell them that you intend to quit.

< 4 > Keep busy. Hit the gym when you feel a craving.

< 5 > Treat yourself with the money you save.



“
Erectile
dysfunction
is a
common
side effect
”

Need a new strip?

BRITISH Army units running their own No Smoking Day campaigns are being offered the chance to win new sports kit for up to 22 players in a team of their choice.

To enter, send a short description and photos of your event to Maj Eric Lewis in the Army health promotion team via eric.lewis140@mod.uk by April 10.



"IT'S FOR THE TROOPS, DELIVERED IN THEIR OWN WORDS"

- SOLDIER AT 70, PAGES 35-49



Waterproof your best outdoor kit

LAST month's spine lines clues may have rung a bell with those who read our "Vets in the city" feature on ex-soldiers who work in the financial sector.

(Nathan) Bostock, (Stuart) Gulliver, (Antony) Jenkins and (Ross) McEwan head up some of the UK's best known banks – Santander, HSBC, Barclays and the Royal Bank of Scotland respectively.

This month, courtesy of the waterproofing experts Aquapac (www.aquapac.net), we are giving away four bundles of protective kit including phone, map and camera cases and a very handy dry bag.

To be in with a chance of scooping a set, tell us what links the words on the spine of this issue. Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by March 31.



Army musician gets Frank

Sergeant prepares for star part in London musical

ASERVICE saxophonist who has turned his hand to acting will take centre stage in the capital this month.

Sgt Moray Innes (CAMUS, pictured) will play the lead role in *Sinatra – The Final Curtain*, a poignant musical that looks back on the life of the late American singing sensation Frank Sinatra, and the Serviceman admits he is nervous – despite the show already having enjoyed two successful runs at the Edinburgh Fringe.

"I have been impersonating Sinatra for 20 years but had never

acted before this show," the musician from the Band of the Royal Armoured Corps told *Soldier*.

"I was on the radio to promote a charity gig and the DJ was looking to put on a play about Sinatra. I read his



Picture: Stuart Scott

script afterwards and agreed to do it straight away."

The 50-year-old Iraq veteran will perform at the Lost Theatre for four nights from March 18 alongside a cast of professional actors and actresses.

"It will be great but a huge challenge. I worked on Sinatra's accent for months and had lots of dialogue to learn," the Scotsman added.

"After all these years of performing in Army bands I am comfortable on stage, but I will still be nervous."

Visit www.sinatrafinalcurtain.co.uk for ticket details.



ARMY 2020 UPDATE

ALDERSHOT OVERHAUL

■ REDEVELOPMENT work has begun to prepare barracks in Aldershot for the arrival of three medical units this summer.

Members of 4 Armoured Medical Regiment and 22 Field Hospital will move from Normandy Barracks to Keogh Barracks. The Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit (Frimley Park) will also relocate there.

The £50m project, part of the Army basing programme, will last for three years and will see bespoke digs created for all three formations.

Existing single living accommodation will be transformed into single-occupancy rooms and a large laundrette and common areas will be built. The officers' mess is also set to be upgraded.

"Co-locating these three units, with their differing specialisms, will provide greater interaction in their operations," said Maj Eddie Rae, 2iC of 4 Armd Med Regt.

"Working with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation gave us the opportunity to help shape the facilities to provide exactly what the soldiers need."



IN MUSIC...



"The songs are, as ever, underwhelming and generic"

★★★



"As impressive as a second-rate student band"

★

PAGES 78-79

NEW BRIGADE BRINGS SPECIALIST KNOW-HOW

■ A NEW force specialising in unconventional warfare and psychological operations is being set up next month under the Army's ongoing restructuring programme.

Part of Force Troops Command, 77th Brigade will provide expert capabilities on military deployments around the world, including reconstruction and humanitarian tasks and political, economic and commercial support missions.

The organisation will be made up of soldiers from the Military Stabilisation Support Group, Media Operations Group and 15 Psychological Operations Group, around 42 per cent of whom will be Reservists.

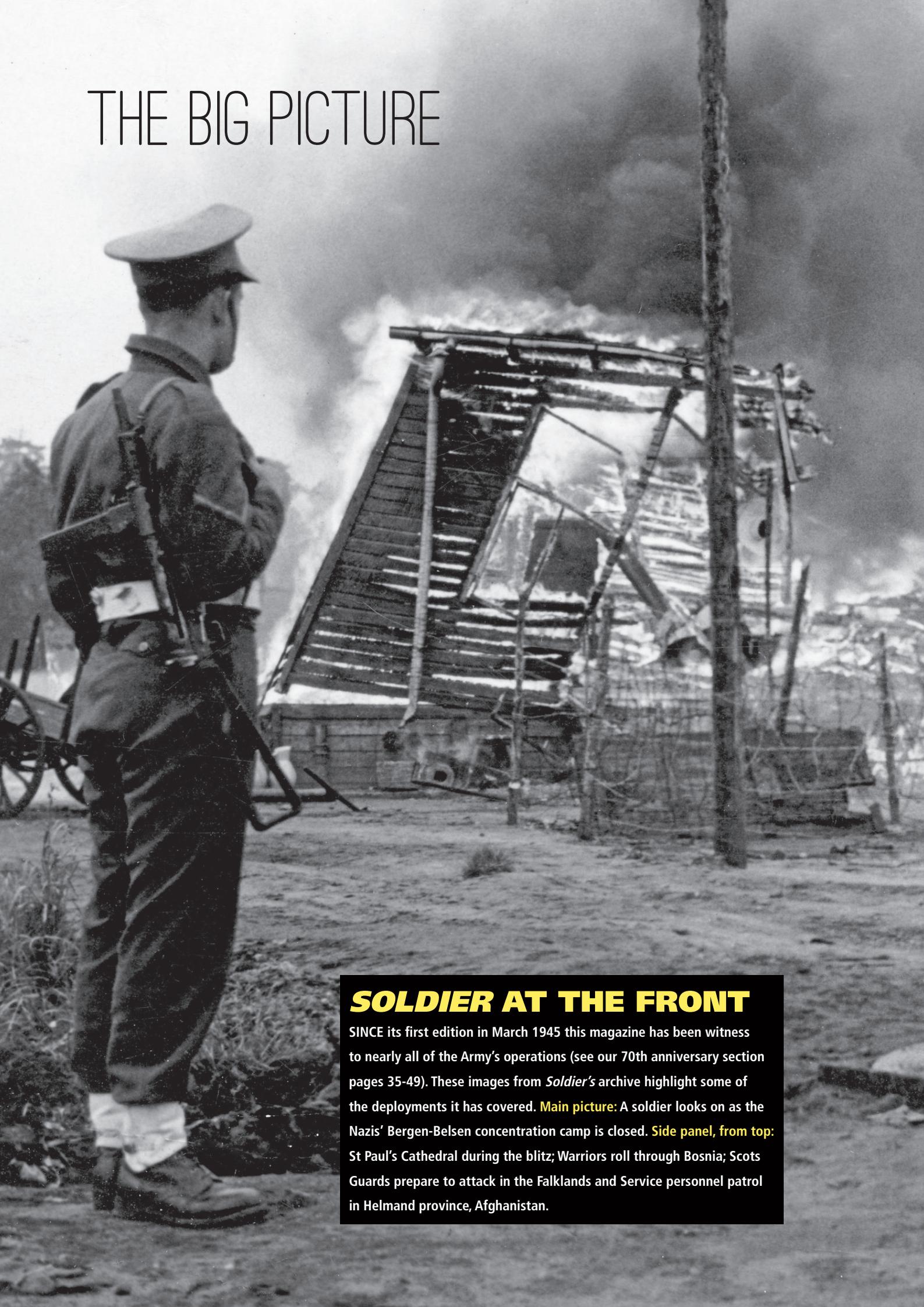
Recruitment of additional personnel for the force's component units has already begun.

An Army spokesman said the creation of the brigade "recognises that the actions of others in a modern battlefield can be affected in ways that are not necessarily violent".

"It draws heavily on important lessons from operations in Afghanistan amongst others," he added.

To find out more about joining, or transferring to, the formation visit the Reserve pages of the Army website.

THE BIG PICTURE



SOLDIER AT THE FRONT

SINCE its first edition in March 1945 this magazine has been witness to nearly all of the Army's operations (see our 70th anniversary section pages 35-49). These images from *Soldier's* archive highlight some of the deployments it has covered. **Main picture:** A soldier looks on as the Nazis' Bergen-Belsen concentration camp is closed. **Side panel, from top:** St Paul's Cathedral during the blitz; Warriors roll through Bosnia; Scots Guards prepare to attack in the Falklands and Service personnel patrol in Helmand province, Afghanistan.



Brutal beast: Troops on Exercise Crimson Eagle at Gila Bend on the outskirts of Phoenix. The Apache attack helicopter is armed with a 30mm chain gun, 70mm rockets and missiles including Hellfire

**“
IF YOU WANT THE
BEST FORCE TO
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HAVE TO INVEST
IN THE BEST LIVE
EXERCISES
”**



DESERT DESTRUCTION

ARMY AVIATORS SHOWCASE THEIR FULL SUITE OF WEAPONS

Report: Joe Clapson

Pictures: Graeme Main

THE arid Arizona desert is a harsh environment for wildlife to endure but one beast that thrives in these surroundings is the Apache attack helicopter and its crew.

Soldier is visiting the rugged landscape, close to the Mexican border, which has become a temporary home to Army Air Corps troops and their attached elements as they put their ground and air skills to the test on Exercise Crimson Eagle.

The annual package is one of the only opportunities that members of the Attack Helicopter Force (AHF) – the headquarters for all offensive aviation in the Army – get to fire Hellfire missiles for real, something that is relished by the operators.

Following Army 2020 restructuring, 653 Squadron has become a permanent training unit under AHF's command, producing pilots ready to deploy anywhere in the world.

Drills on the exercise have all the intensity and precision of a live operation – and not just for those who set to venture skyward.

This year's detachment of more than 200 soldiers includes joint tactical air controllers, aircraft technicians, ground crew, ammunition experts and military chefs, all of whom work round the clock to get the Army's most valuable asset operating to its maximum. **»**



» Pilots undertake live-firing scenarios lasting 45 to 90 minutes while seven-man ground crews carry out full-scale uploads of weapons for each of the squadron's six aircraft in as little as half an hour.

SSgt Lewis Whittaker, second-in-command of the ground support flight, explains to us how a shift in focus from Afghanistan pre-deployment training to contingency operations has given this year's serials a fresh feel.

"It's actually a faster tempo here than in Afghanistan because on ops you're reacting to the situation in the field, whereas in training we're landing, refuelling, then getting the next flight off," he says.

"The role of the ground crew is absolutely vital to the pilots because without them the Apache cannot function."

The exercise schedule is tight. Allocated time on the ranges means that as soon as one helicopter lands there is a rapid turnaround to unload its munitions and prepare the next one for take-off.

"It's very different working out here because in the UK we would only upload a couple of times a year but now we could be doing that five times a day," the Serviceman adds.

After lifting off from Gila Bend Auxiliary Air Field the choppers cut through the blue skies over the Barry Goldwater M Range – 7.5 million hectares of premium real estate designated purely for live firing.

Flying at altitudes of between 100 and 1,500ft, pilots are talked onto their targets by a joint terminal attack controller (JTAC), who directs the action from the ground before the gunship's selection of 30mm rounds, 70mm rockets and Hellfire missiles are deployed.

While one pilot plunges down to 200ft to destroy a target at a range of three kilometres, JTAC Bdr Jordan Bush (7 Para RHA) reveals how air and ground troops work together as a team.

JTACs paint a picture of the battlefield to gunner pilots over the radio and request that the mock enemy's mortar base plate is destroyed.

Armed with a full brief on what munitions he should strike with, the crew then duly oblige.

"We manage all of the airspace up to 17,000 feet," he explains. "From British helicopters to the American UAVs, U2s and A10s,



we have to deconflict all of the aviators involved.

"Everyone in aircraft will be talking to us and we'll give them clearance to fire and move into different areas."

According to Royal Air Force JTAC Cpl Paul Marshall, the expanse of the Arizona desert really allows troops to flex their hardware muscle.

"In the UK there's a lot of space restriction but here we can bring a lot more things into play and are able to put targets all over the area of operations," he comments.

WO2 John Cocks (653 Sqn), Apache simulation and lead range conducting officer, agrees that the location allows soldiers to master important tactics.

"With the gun the aircraft can fire off-axis [side] shots at 87 degrees," he says.

"This allows it to be trained on a target for a maximum amount of time, giving ground troops support and keeping casualties to a minimum."

“TRAINING OUT HERE BREEDS THE CONFIDENCE TO ENGAGE TARGETS”

IN NUMBERS:

Munitions consumed during Exercise Crimson Eagle...

30,000
x 30mm rounds

1,600
x rockets

700
x flares

45
x Hellfire missiles

Elsewhere on the desert plain Apaches are called in to an unprepared site to mimic an emergency scenario.

"We have to learn to land without spending any time in hover to reduce the amount of dust that kicks up," explains pilot Capt Nathan Torbett (653 Sqn).

"The gunship is required to touch down on all types of terrain anywhere in the world, so although this would only happen in an emergency, the training for it is vital."

After cruising at 80 knots against a crystal clear – almost tranquil – backdrop, the black beast quickly changes its angle to steeply descend towards the sandy ground.

The immense downward pressure of the 7.7-tonne machine creates an immediate dust cloud for the pilots to contend with.

"They have to wait to touch down, then allow the debris to settle before lifting off again,"



says Capt Torbett.

"Dust landings like this mean the rotary blades have to be completely repainted because they are sanded down by the loose ground."

The value of being able to practise these impressive techniques in day and night conditions is not lost on Lt Col Justin Stein, deputy commander of the AHF (pictured below).

"We are at high readiness for contingency operations so we need to train in an environment that allows us to prepare appropriately," he says.

"The best place is somewhere rugged, mountainous and dusty with the scope for us to go out and fire our weapons."

But with the exercise costing up to £10 million a year to run, is the expense worthwhile when simulators in the UK can accurately mimic the helicopter in combat?

"Synthetic preparation has its place," admits the

Sandy serials. Clockwise from top left: Air Tpr Kim Williams loads munitions into the 30mm gun; an Apache on a night mission; a live-firing sortie; LCpl Luke Wanniaratchy runs a safety check; LCpl Paul McNish looks at the avionics; ground crew members prepare for take-off; pilots perform a dust landing; JTACs Bdr Jordan Bush and Cpl Paul Marshall work to control the airspace



commander of Crimson Eagle. "But you cannot simulate the training for the ground crew and technicians and it's essential to test and train them."

"If you want the best force to protect our troops you have to invest in the best live exercises."

Maj Stewart Pearce, officer commanding 653 Sqn, agrees.

"Pilots learn to fly at Middle Wallop but they acquire the skills to fight and command the Apache out here in Arizona," he adds.

"They have a complex array of weapons at their fingertips and training in the US breeds the confidence to engage targets, which is vital."

"There is nothing worse for soldiers on the ground than having pilots not firing properly."

With this remarkable stint in American airspace under their belts, there is little doubt that the next generation of Army attack pilots are more than ready for whatever combat missions the future may hold. ■



LIVE AND DANGEROUS

NEW APACHE PILOTS ON UNLEASHING HELLFIRE

AFTER four years of training with the Army Air Corps – including nine months to qualify as Apache aviators – these Servicemen are fresh graduates with 653 Squadron, Attack Helicopter Force and at high readiness for any operation the Army requires them for.

Capt Barry Briggs and Capt Sam Jarrett were among 12 personnel to pass the final section of the conversion-to-role course before heading to Gila Bend, Arizona for live-firing training. Here, they take time out from Exercise Crimson Eagle to tell *Soldier* what their first ever mission as Apache pilots was like...

Capt Barry Briggs

We officially qualified as pilots one week before heading to Gila Bend so I was pretty excited but also apprehensive about firing live weapons for the first time.

I served with 59 Commando Squadron, Royal Engineers and did two Herrick tours so I've come from watching the Apache in action to being in the position of firing rockets and Hellfire missiles myself, which is cool.

We've effectively done all of this in a simulator in the UK and although it's the same controls the feeling is completely different when you're in the air – you get the real effect.

In firing off a rocket or a missile there are lots of sequences and data to go through but ultimately there is a trigger you pull to hit a target – it is awesome. Yes, it's a decent job.

Capt Sam Jarrett

It's pretty epic to see the fall of shot for the first time because you don't get that with the simulator.

There were tracks in the ground to an old bus and an ISO container and I was asked to take them out, which I did.

Training in a simulator is brilliant but you will always hit the target unless problems are factored in, so getting up in the air is good because every cab is different and it's a great experience to feel the guns firing.

The scenarios they build out here are incredible. You can practise on static and moving targets.

It's a perfect setting to hone our skills at high and low altitudes and to learn the best ways to engage threats.

Now, to be brutally honest, I would like to fly on a live operation – either as force protection or as an Istar asset.



“IT'S PRETTY EPIC TO SEE THE FALL OF SHOT FOR THE FIRST TIME”

**EVERYONE WANTS TO BE A PILOT...
... DON'T THEY?**

If you think that the job of flying the Army's premium attack asset loaded with the best weapons and technology money can buy is oversubscribed you are wrong.

THE Army Air Corps is constantly looking to recruit new aviators, especially from the non-commissioned officer ranks.

WO1 Steve Jones, a pilot instructor with 653 Sqn, believes that misconceptions about the requirements could be to blame for a lack of applicants.

“Lots of people assume that you need to be a university graduate to become a pilot but you do not need a degree,” he said.

“We are actively recruiting and we're really looking for senior NCOs – as long as you can do the job, we want you.

“WE WILL TAKE YOU FROM ZERO TO HERO”

“As instructors we will take you from zero to hero.”

One soldier who tried his luck by applying for the course is Sgt Simon Otter of 656 Squadron.

He had served with the Royal Engineers for eight years before qualifying as a pilot in 2011.

“It was during a posting to Belize that I heard that I could train to fly a helicopter – I would never have thought that three years later I would be a serving Apache pilot.

“Absolutely anyone can apply; you don't need any prerequisite qualifications you just need to be able to pass the specific tests.

“One of the great things about the Army Air Corps is the fact there are many experienced people with different backgrounds.”

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BRUNEI JUNGLE DETECTIVES

HUNTING THE ENEMY WITH
STUDENTS ON BRUNEI'S
OPERATIONAL TRACKING
INSTRUCTORS' COURSE

Report: Becky Clark
Pictures: Steve Dock



EEP in the Bruneian rainforest a small section of British soldiers is waiting.

Since inserting by helicopter 24 hours earlier they have been patiently stalking their quarry – enemy fighters who have kidnapped a local man.

But for now the trail has gone cold.

The lead tracker examines the undergrowth. A broken twig; a partial footprint. Both could be a sign that their targets passed this way but following the wrong trail could cost the team valuable time.

Under the canopy the heat is oppressive; the humidity between 80 and 90 per cent.

The minutes tick by. Their next move is crucial...





This particular scenario may be fictitious but the challenges of decoding the impenetrable rainforest are very real for students on the operational tracking instructors' course run by Training Team Brunei.

Five weeks ago they had little or no jungle experience.

Now, during their final test exercise, they must prove not only that they are adept at operating in one of the world's most hostile environments, but also that they can decipher the tiniest clues left behind by their foe and teach others to do the same.

"It's exactly like a crime scene," says Cpl Gary Partridge (R Anglian).

"We call it an incident site – a place where something has happened. It's about piecing the information together and getting all the facts to make your assumptions at the end of it.

"If you go too fast you could miss something important. For example, the enemy could spread out or join

back together and you might not spot it.

"So you have to be as quick as possible but also accurate – it's finding the happy medium between the two."

Working in six-man combat tracker teams, the troops take turns in the mentally draining role of lead visual tracker. Concentration is key.

To the untrained eye, the task of unlocking the jungle's secrets seems impossible, but gradually students on the tri-Service course learn to interpret different types of "sign" on or above surface level.

"Ground sign is anything below the ankle," explains CSgt Frank Skinner (Para).

"Stuff like footprints, any rocks that have been squashed into the ground, old wood that's been crushed, colour changes in the earth, leaves cracking and so on.

"Top sign is anything above that – for example, Bergen scuffs against trees or a broken twig."

IN NUMBERS

370

Students who participated in courses run by Training Team Brunei in the last year, including packages in jungle warfare instruction, ground sign awareness, tracking and long range reconnaissance



“A DECENT ENEMY WHO'S DECIDED TO SLOW YOU DOWN COULD USE A FEW DIFFERENT METHODS”

CSgt Frank Skinner (Para)



"Something like that could be down to a person's mannerism; one man could be bored and snapping twigs as he goes along."

Identifying sign, however, is just the beginning. The trainee trackers, who range from corporals up to captains, also learn to interpret how old a clue might be in order to estimate how long ago the quarry passed through.

At the start of the course bits of food or vegetation, and even samples of human blood, are placed in a box and left in the open so that the troops can observe how they degrade over time.

Another crucial element is developing the ability to distinguish between traces left by a potential target and those caused by civilians or animals traversing the area.

"As we pick up the trail we do a thing called a quarry card," says Cpl Carvas Garraway (PWRR), describing how a tracker team ensures it stays on course.



“WE CAN SPOT IF HE’S WALKING BACKWARDS BECAUSE HE’LL HAVE A SHORTER PACE AND THE HEEL WILL LEAVE A DRAG MARK”

“We look for a sign such as a boot print and draw it on the card and then if we come across more than one print on the ground we can take out the sketch and check we’re following the right set.

“For example, in the scenario we’re working through here we’ve identified that there are four or five opponents.

“Some of them are very small with an athletic build and one of them smokes Lambert and Butler cigarettes.

“When we found an incident site this morning we found foot powder and they ate a mixture of military and civilian rations.

“So, all in all, we can say that they’re mixing their diet and they are between four and six feet tall.

“We can’t tell yet from that whether they’re a professional force or militia but we know they are using some military tactics.”

Building up a detailed picture of the enemy in this way is one of the tracker’s most important tasks and while students also get to grips with

Clockwise from left, Super sleuths: Sgt Raj Rai (RGR) makes up part of a combat tracker team; Cpl Chris Lunson (PWRR) delivers a lesson on how sign degrades; a heli-insertion kicks off the final exercise; Cpl Gary Partridge (R Anglian) acts as lead tracker during a jungle pursuit

trailing their quarry through settled and rural areas, it is in Brunei’s dense jungle that the skill really comes into its own.

For all its technological wizardry, the Army’s modern intelligence and surveillance equipment cannot easily penetrate beneath the rainforest canopy, so old-fashioned visual tracking remains a key capability.

“It’s very pertinent in a jungle environment because we don’t have as much information from Istar on what the enemy’s up to,” says CSgt Michael Firth (Para), an instructor at Brecon’s Infantry Battle School.

“So we’re going to rely on individuals on the ground to find out about an adversary.

“It’s a skill set that we shouldn’t lose. Even though we’ve closed down Operation Herrick it’s important for all young soldiers to be able to recognise sign and understand what they’re looking at – whether that’s footprints or flattening – because ultimately it could help them identify

an IED placement or just an increase in activity in a certain area.”

Of course, any opponent worth his salt will be aware that he is being followed and will try his best to confuse his pursuers.

Describing how deception makes the tracker’s job more complicated, CSgt Skinner explains: “A decent enemy who’s decided to slow you down could use a number of different methods.

“He could walk backwards to make you think he’s going a different way or he could enter a river at one point and exit at another.

“But by doing a large circle called a cast we are often able to find the route he took.

“And we can spot if he’s walking backwards because he’ll have a shorter pace and instead of the toe leaving a drag mark like normal, instead the heel will drag.

“If he stands on an area of grass it would also be lying in the opposite direction.”



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PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

What makes a good military tracker?

"YOU have to have the right attributes; perseverance, observation and determination are important but a lot of it boils down to patience and the ability to apply the methodology you've learnt in the classroom in the field," says Maj Arran Wade, officer commanding Training Team Brunei.

"A tracker also has to be physically and mentally robust. They're carrying a fair amount of kit and the days are long, starting at sunrise and finishing at nightfall, with a lot of concentration required."



Having mastered the complexities of tracking, successful graduates of the course will go on to instruct others in the art form.

Among those looking forward to putting their skills into practice in the near future is Sgt Ben Coulter (PWRR), who along with Cpl Garraway was due to embark on a company exercise in the forests of Belize as this issue went to press.

"As a battalion we have little jungle experience so it's great for us to come here and get that tick in the box so we can pass on what we've learnt," says the 28-year-old.

"Hopefully we can then teach people the ground sign awareness side of life."

"It's helpful because it makes you more open-minded about the

Above, Far Eastern allies: Troops from the Bruneian armed forces regularly train alongside British soldiers on courses run by Training Team Brunei. The formation also swaps expertise with the US, Australian, New Zealand and Dutch militaries

'IT'S A SKILL SET THAT WE SHOULDN'T LOSE'



kind of things to look out for in any operational environment, not just the jungle."

According to the officer in charge of Training Team Brunei, the skills taught by his team have the potential to be extremely useful to British Army commanders around the world, in particular those elements of the Adaptable Force assigned to equatorial regions under Army 2020.

As Maj Arran Wade (Para) explains: "If you look at current threats and opportunities, where the UK might want to position itself worldwide, a large swathe of the globe – basically everything in between the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer – is covered by what is classed as close combat tropical environment.

"That's not just jungle, but also

the fringes and grasslands, which we cover on the course.

"I think as the focus moves towards more conventional operations again tracking will become more valued.

"It's a skill set that wasn't touched on much in Afghanistan or Iraq but now that we're going back to basics the awareness should increase.

"The more students come through here and leave as instructors, the more they will be able to go back and sell the advantages of this capability to their chains of command."

Should the latest class of trackers to graduate from Borneo's rainforests find themselves on jungle operations in the future, their potential enemies will have one less place to hide. ■

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SOLDIER

THE BRITISH

ARMY MAGAZINE

IF YOU MUST
JITTERBUG
PLEASE WATCH
YOUR STEP!

Celebrating our 70th!

The man behind the mag p36

Talkbacks in time p40

Retired Army chief appraisal p42

Sporting stars of yesteryear p44

Ad nausea p48

E. Earmham

DANCE. FOX TROT

SOLDIER'S 70 YEAR STORY



Report: Joe Clapson

AFTER years of discussion about an Army-wide magazine the decision to finally publish was taken by none other than Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery (pictured left). It was early 1945 and at the time he was commanding Allied troops engaged in pushing Nazi forces back across northern Europe.

Monty realised that there could be great value in supplying a morale-boosting publication to keep his soldiers informed of the latest developments at home and at the front.

It was launched on March 19, 1945 as a fortnightly publication (it went monthly in 1946) and was produced by teams of serving personnel. Initially, and somewhat ironically, it was printed in Belgium and then on the captured colour presses in Hamburg that had once produced Joseph Goebbels' German propaganda sheet, *Signal*.

Within the 20 pages of the first edition was coverage of the Reichswald battle, with accounts of "fierce forest fighting" and the East Lancashire Regiment moving forward under the "barrage of a thousand guns".

There were also letters, details of release schemes and a sports feature with England footballer Eddie Hapgood, not a dissimilar editorial mix to the one produced today.

A few months later *Soldier* had its first scoop, revealing details of Pluto (Pipeline Under The Ocean), a fuel supply project that ran from the Isle of Wight to the Cherbourg peninsula, one of the greatest engineering feats of the war.

A uniformed team of staff near the front line may be a far cry from today's operation, which is based in Aldershot, but 70 years on *Soldier's* mission remains the same as it was back then – to bring exclusive stories and all the latest important news to the soldiers of the British Army. ■

SOLDIER HAD IT Covered

Looking back on seven decades of front cover designs...

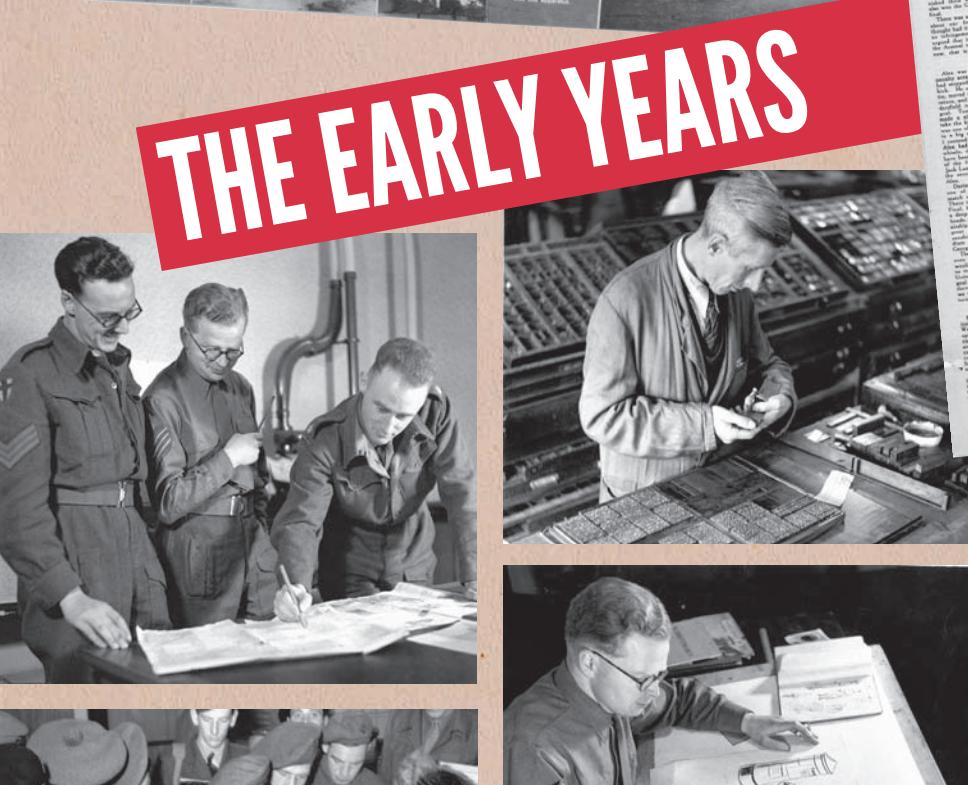
1940s



Left: VE Day celebrations were commemorated in this souvenir volume of *Soldier* in May 1945



Inside scoop: The top secret project Pipeline Under The Ocean revealed for the first time
Below: England footballer Eddie Hapgood's exclusive interview



Clockwise from top left, Made by hand: Uniformed troops design the layout of *Soldier*; a compositor manually creates the magazine's pages ready for printing on hot-metal presses; a military illustrator in action; Servicemen grab the latest edition of their in-house title

Left: The January 1947 issue featured an exclusive report on British Army officers attached to the War Crimes Investigation Unit hunting down Nazi war criminals across Europe



CONFLICTS CAPTURED



● *Soldier*'s writers and photographers have been present at just about every major conflict since the magazine's inception seven decades ago. Here's a small selection of some of the most memorable moments...

Clockwise from left: Sentry duty during the British withdrawal from **Egypt** in 1955; Scots Guards celebrate after the Battle of Mount Tumbledown in the 1982 **Falklands** conflict; Black Watch soldiers man a vehicle checkpoint in **Northern Ireland** in 1991; 7th Armoured Division (Desert Rats) on patrol in **Basra** in 2003; Paratroopers on patrol in Nahr-e Saraj, **Afghanistan** in 2011; A sergeant attached to the Royal Malay Regiment instructs a Dayak tribesman during the **Malaya Emergency** of 1955



1950s

Left: The April 1951 edition included a major feature on the war in Korea plus a special report on how successful the Bazooka, a tank-busting rocket launcher, was proving to be in that conflict



MODERN MISSION

SOLDIER
70 YEARS
THE BRITISH ARMY MAGAZINE

As part of the Army Media and Communication branch, *Soldier* is produced in Aldershot by an 11-strong team of civil servants.

Some 50,000 copies are shipped worldwide every month, with an estimated total readership of 250,000.

From interviews in the field to the finished product landing in your hands, here is the how the magazine is created each month...

WORK IN PROGRESS...

1

As soon as one magazine goes to print, *Soldier*'s editorial team put their heads together to come up with news and feature ideas for the next edition. From operations or exercises at home or abroad to new equipment, adventurous training, sports, welfare issues and more, its aim is to reflect the topics that matter to Servicemen and women.

2

Writers and photographers visit units and interview key personnel to gather copy and images.

3

The creative minds of the design team begin work on the layout of the article.

4

The finished pages are sent to Army headquarters, where its Media and Communication branch checks the copy with subject matter experts and approves the content for publication.

5

Pages have to be sent to the printers, Wyndham Roche, in Cornwall at the end of the third week of every month. The finished files are uploaded online and transferred electronically to the printing plates.

IN NUMBERS

22.5

AVERAGE TIME, IN HOURS, THAT IT TAKES TO PRINT, CUT AND BIND 50,000 COPIES OF SOLDIER

15

weight, in tonnes, of sustainably sourced paper used for each edition – or 114,887 metres

21.322

speed, in metres per second, at which the paper is fed through the printer

4181

weight, in kilograms, of ink used to print a year's worth of magazines

Got a story?

We rely on you to tell us about what your unit is up to and what you want to see in the magazine. To get in touch email news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Left: The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was marked in the March 1952 issue which also included a special tribute to the late King George VI



TALKBACK IN TIME

Our archive of letters reveals troops getting in a tizz over some unexpected topics

1947

GIRLS IN UNIFORM

Speaking as a man, I would say that Lord Mancroft's description of the ATS uniform as a "humiliating mixture of sackcloth and sandbag" is unfair (SOLDIER, May). Many ATS look very smart in their uniforms; but everything

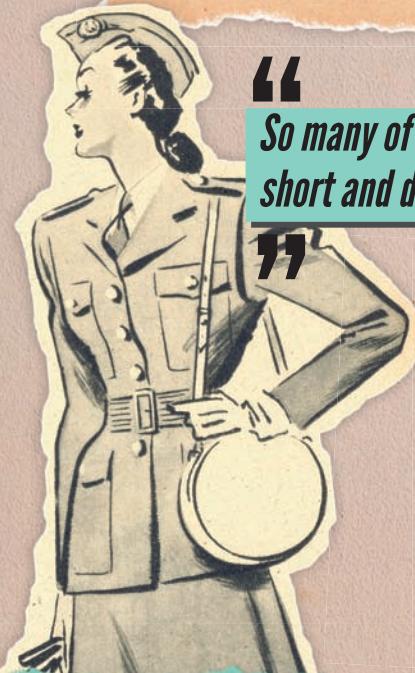


"... fattening food..."

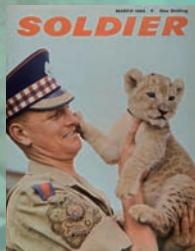
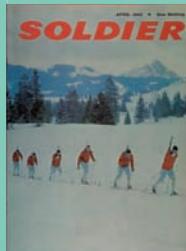
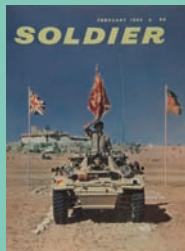
depends on their figures. So many of them (I never knew why!) are short and dumpy, and so few of them make any serious effort to carry themselves properly. They stuff themselves with fattening food and put bulky objects in just those pockets which a sensible girl would leave empty.

Now, if all ATS looked like the girl in Earnshaw's drawing... — Sjt. W. Richardson (ex-gunsite).

“
So many of them are
short and dumpy
”



1960s



1955

IMMATURE?

Your correspondent A. O. Freakes (Letters, March), should bear in mind that it does not need even average intelligence to learn how to handle weapons and execute drill movements. But can anyone honestly say that an 18-years-old youth is capable of the serious thought necessary to decide how he should vote in a General Election?

The average youth of 18 is only interested in comics; he knows the name of the Prime Minister, and that is about all he does know. He takes no interest in politics. He does not read the leading articles in the newspapers until he is about 25. Some adults never read them.

No one should be allowed to vote until 25. As for marriage, this calls for an even greater sense of responsibility. The law wisely puts the minimum age at 21, unless parents (or magistrates) give consent. — WO II R. Smith, RAOC, Peninsula Barracks, Warrington.

★The complaint by A. O. Freakes was that though a man might be called upon to die for his country at 18, he might be 25 or 26 before he could vote in a Parliamentary election.

In 1948 a Forces lecturer, Mr. J. H. Blaksley MC, in a book entitled "Background to Citizenship," said that he asked his Services audiences this question: "If every voter was required to spend an average of one hour a week without pay in qualifying himself for voting, would you or would you not be in favour of adult suffrage?"

To this question, 70 per cent of the men and 80 per cent of the women answered "No."

THAT VEXED QUESTION

Once again I write to you as the Army's forum. The armed forces need men. Recruitment is down. The Ministry of Defence has said that neither pay nor Ulster is a prime cause and that it is investigating the problem.

The very simple answer is hair. Young men—potential soldiers—have realised that the Army today does offer an exceedingly good career to those who are prepared to work for it. I have three in my own village, good material, 19, 19 and 17, who would love to join but say, quite bluntly, "I'm not going to have my hair cut just to join the Army." When is the Ministry of Defence going to wake up to the fact that this is 1974 and that lads do wear their hair long? I have served in four armies, in three of which a proportion of the soldiers had long hair. Apart from discipline, morale, or fighting qualities.—Maj I A S McEwan, Al Husn, Tarbrax, Midlothian, Scotland.

1974

“
I'm not going
to have my hair
cut just to join
the Army
”

1982 STAUNCH ALLY

I would like to say a few words about the Falklands situation and my feelings as an American concerning it.

Speaking for myself and most—if not all—Americans, I stand foursquare with the people of Britain (among them are many of my dearest friends) in their opposition to the unprovoked, unwarranted and insupportable actions of the Argentine government. There is no argument that Britain is in the right, nor can there be any argument that my country's proper place is squarely at the side of her oldest and staunchest ally. We over here fervently hope—as you must also—that the issue can still be settled and British sovereignty rightfully restored without further bloodshed. It would seem to me that the best possible way for my government to help bring this about, would be to support Britain and join with the EEC in levelling severe sanctions against the Argentine government and condemning them publicly in the strongest terms.

It disturbs me greatly that events caused doubts to arise in the minds of Britons as to where the American people stand in all of this. I hope this letter will help dispel any such doubts. Kenneth G Petrie, 1805 Florin St, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902, USA.

£5 is winging its way across the Atlantic to you, Mr Petrie, for your unqualified support for us. Your letter, we hope, will boost the morale of our Forces currently engaged in the defence of the Falklands. — Ed.

Left: The February 1964 issue recounted events at Rorke's Drift in Natal, when 11 VCs were won, to mark the premiere of the film *Zulu* starring Michael Caine

Vita brevis est!

I have fired away before in **SOLDIER**'s pages at the Army's habit of giving itself long, pompous and tedious names. Now I have a splendid new target in the list of designations of units in the Territorial & Army Volunteer Reserve (not itself the snappiest of designations).

Quite a lot of new names go to ten words and numbers, some into the 'teens. Most have one set of brackets; many have two. Why the clerks who have to write them often, and the keen types who expect the newspapers to get them right!

Streamlining was the watchword for the reorganisation of the Reserve Army, but who is going to feel streamlined if he has to write down his unit as (for example) HQ Company (Lancashire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Volunteers)) Lancastrian Volunteers? Field-Marshal Lord Slim used to say the Territorial was twice a citizen. This Lancastrian will be twice a Volunteer and twice a member of his county. How many citizens does this make him?

The smaller the units or sub-units, the longer the names tend to be. The silliest I have found is an unfortunate body in Stoke-on-Trent which has an establishment of three (yes, three) and is to be known as 125 (Staffordshire) Field Park Squadron Signal Troop Royal Signals (Volunteers). That is three words per man, with the number left over. The nominal roll will be shorter than the title!—“Scribe.”

Arms and the role of women

I MUST take issue with my regimental colleague Maj N W Wilkinson, RCT (V), who expressed sadness that females were excluded from bearing arms on ceremonial occasions (Letters, September 21).

For my part I am in the Territorial Army to preserve our country's moral and cultural heritage.

The thought of women bearing arms is complete anathema to most English gentlemen. Yes, they have an important role to play in the Services; bearing arms is not one of them.

Let us leave that to the old communist empire and the banana republics. — Maj Godfrey W Bloom, 522 Sqn, 150 Regt RCT (V), Londesborough Barracks, Hull.

1992

“
The thought of women bearing arms is complete anathema
”

1967

2000
Our right to whinge

I TAKE exception to those who say “moaning” is the reserve of soldiers less committed to the Army. The practice of having a damn good whinge is fundamental to the British “Tommy”. It is a serving soldier's right to complain, and believe me it does not affect his commitment to the job. **Soldier** serves us as an open forum for discussion on issues that affect our careers. If people don't want to hear about our issues, they should stop reading our magazine. — LCpl S D Ellis, 42 Survey Engineer Regiment, Hermitage, Berks.

▲ We're with LCpl Ellis on this one... although we'd rather no one actually stopped reading the magazine. — Editor.

“
It is a serving soldier's right to complain
”

2009

Pride before a fall?

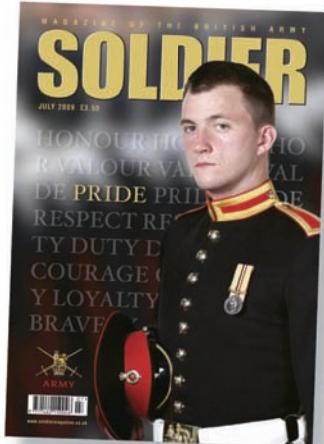
I READ with interest your article on Tpr James Wharton (The Household Cavalry Regiment), “Pride, not prejudice” (July), which tackled the issue of homosexuality within the modern army.

I too was proud of how you handled this subject and am pleased that the debate is now open and honest, and that the prejudices and misconceptions were dealt with in such a balanced manner. I agree that a soldier's sexuality is irrelevant and that individuals should be judged on their performance alone.

My concern is that we must resist defining ourselves as sub groups, be that LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] soldiers or black officers, a trend which can be divisive and operationally damaging.

Equality works best when minorities are not perceived as victims requiring support or different treatment, a point well made by Tpr Wharton's article. However, soldiers being granted permission to attend a political rally, such as Gay Pride, in uniform is a mistake, as is the inclusion of single issue pressure groups such as Stonewall in Army personnel policy.

It has the danger of opening us up to other political demands. If Pride is ok, why



not the Countryside Alliance or even such unpleasant organisations as the British National Party. I'd hate to see the day that the Army ends up like the police, where the competing agendas of minority groups — backed by associations — create degrees of mistrust within the force as a whole. — Maj C Ball, Isle of Wight.

2011

Steaming over ironing on ops

I AM just about to return to Afghanistan and was horrified to hear that the ironing of uniforms has become policy for British troops in Camp Bastion.

This rule has clearly been thought up by somebody sat bored behind a desk. While I'm sure the decision will please those who stand around looking to pick people up on the standard of their dress, it comes at a financial cost.

Based on an approximate figure of 6,000 UK Service personnel at Bastion and taking into account usage of irons, the price of non-duty diesel and generator efficiency, the annual expenditure equates to a minimum of £37,000.

This sum does not include the expense of supplying irons to theatre, the logistical costs of providing the extra diesel or generator maintenance bills.

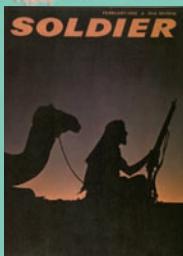
I'm sure this money could be far better spent, especially in this financial climate, and preferably on something more worthwhile which adds to morale rather than depletes it.

We are at war after all and should be focusing on our jobs, not unnecessary policies. — Cpl Atherton.

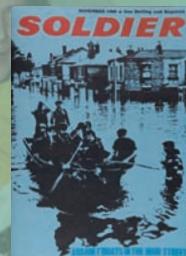
How Cpl Atherton calculated the cost of crease-free uniforms:

6,000 [number of troops in Camp Bastion] x 40 minutes of pressing per person, per week (three sets of uniform) using a 1,600W iron = 6,400kWh per week or 332,800kWh per year

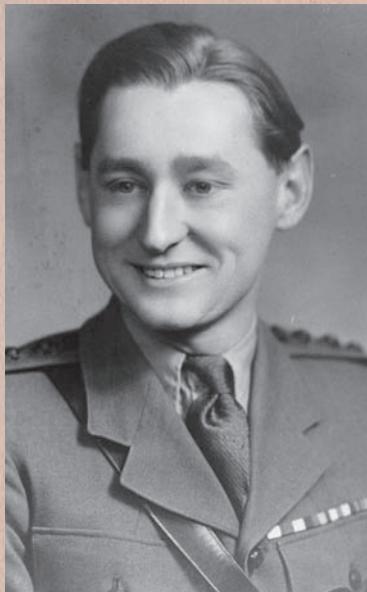
1p/kWh [based on red diesel at 40p per litre] x 332,800kWh per year



Left: The Shades of Blue, winners of the Army Beat Group Championship, were featured on the front cover of the June 1967 issue



WHAT THE TOP BRASS REALLY



Top, Early days: Capt Edwin Bramall in the 1950s

Above and right, Looking back British soldiers read the second issue of the newly launched *Soldier* in 1945 and Lord Bramall peruses the very first magazine at his Hampshire home

One of the magazine's oldest and highest ranking subscribers, Fd Marshal Lord Bramall, tells it like it is to Editor Sarah Goldthorpe...

MUCH like its readers, *Soldier* has encountered its fair share of enemies over time.

From the victims of our April Fools' Day stories to those who angrily opposed the appearance of the Army's first openly gay soldier on the cover in 2009, producing a lively and sometimes-controversial publication is certainly not without its challenges and pitfalls.

Nevertheless, the title counts many of the Service's most senior and respected personnel among its loyal band of readers.

And of those, former Chief of the Defence Staff Lord Bramall has one of the longest running relationships with the magazine.

His 43-year military career began with the Normandy landings, just weeks before the very first *Soldier* magazine was created by Fd Marshal Bernard Montgomery, and the 91-year-old believes the publication is as useful today as it was during the final stages of the Second World War.

Leafing through the browned pages of the original March 1945 issue at his Hampshire cottage, the ex-commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets recites part of Montgomery's rousing good-luck message adorning the front cover.

You and I have come a long way together; we have been through some very bad times and some very good times.

By no possible conceivable chance can Germany win this war; victory for the Allies, absolute and definite victory, is certain. All that now remains is the

conquest of Germany itself.

We are fighting on German soil and we have entered the ring for the last round; there is no time limit for this round; we shall continue until our opponent has had enough.

"This is just typical Monty," the veteran recalls of the former Allied ground forces commander, famed for his victory at the Battle of El Alamein.

As the first *Soldier* was being printed in Brussels, a young Bramall was serving in Holland as a platoon commander with 4th Armoured Brigade.

"Monty would have thought the magazine was a very good idea," the veteran continued.

"He knew that part of leadership is about getting yourself across to the soldiers and he was a showman.

"Having a platform where he could write directly to the troops was a good way of inspiring confidence in that leadership."

Although the retired field marshal admits that he "probably wouldn't have had time" to read the inaugural magazine when it was first distributed to fighting troops, he maintains it was an important asset during a crucial period.

And although the design may have changed considerably over the last 70 years, Montgomery's original mission of keeping troops informed and entertained continues in earnest today at the magazine's headquarters in Aldershot.

"I think the publication is very helpful in maintaining high morale," the retired officer said.

"But importantly it is a magazine for the troops themselves, delivered in their own words, and not just a news sheet by the chain of command.

"There may be things the chiefs would like to put across on its pages but it is always done in *Soldier's* own style, which is right."

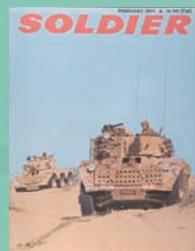
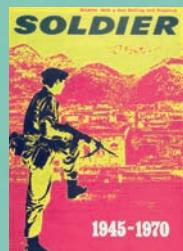
The idea of being led by the readers was certainly evident in the maiden issue, with features including a satirical cartoon, some tongue-in-cheek battlefield tips and an article called "It's your war".

But in order for it to remain relevant to those at the sharp end of military operations, the publication must also acknowledge the challenges that troops face.

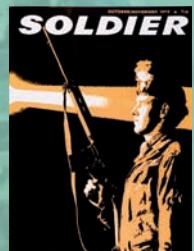
That, as Lord Bramall and I both know, can be where things get sticky.

I ask the former Army chief what personnel of his standing really think about *Talkback* and other more controversial elements of the publication.

"Although we don't want to do anything that disrupts discipline, this particular medium is a good way of airing problems and getting a responsible



Left: Sioux helicopters of the Army Air Corps' Blue Eagles display team added a splash of colour to the July 1973 issue's cover



1970s

THINK OF SOLDIER...

SOLDIER
70 YEARS
THE BRITISH ARMY MAGAZINE

answer for troops," he says.

"The magazine is theirs after all, and not some official document that only includes what defence wants to hear.

"I find it so interesting and I like receiving it.

"It explains the modern Army, and has a modern look which pays a lot of attention to sport – something very important to Service life."

So what has been the most memorable operation spanning *Soldier*'s history? If anyone is qualified to answer this question it is surely the field marshal.

"The Falklands was the most remarkable conflict," he replies without hesitation.

"It really showed the professionalism of our Armed Forces.

"The recapture of Kuwait was also an extraordinary operation in my opinion."

Like so many others since, the missions are recounted in detail throughout *Soldier*'s extensive archive by those who did the fighting.

And as for future deployments, Lord Bramall is clear that the magazine and its readers will have many more adventures to look forward to.

"Ours is a fine and very professional Army," he tells me. "The argument now is really about whether it's properly funded.

"But its people are very fit and so well equipped compared with the days I was serving.

"You can't imagine the ghastly battle dress I had to wear during the Second World War – items that came apart and none of the waterproof kit that is available now.

"The Army of 2015 is in higher public esteem than ever; you are almost automatically a hero if you serve today."

Lord Bramall may have retired long ago but his admiration and support for the Service and its official magazine is obvious.

"Who am I to decry Monty," he concludes. "I think what he did by introducing the title was absolutely right."

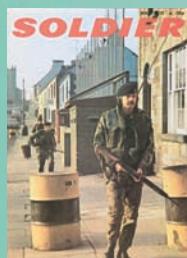
With a much reduced staff number when compared with the 41-strong editorial team of the Second World War, doing more with less is the name of the game in 2015, and *Soldier* intends to roll with the punches in the same way our readers have always done.

With the continued support of senior figures such as Lord Bramall, it is hoped we can continue serving the country's bravest men and women for another 70 years to come. ■



Importantly, it is a magazine for the troops themselves

Picture: Steve Dock



Left: The August 1975 edition carried a special report on British personnel working for the UN in war-torn Cyprus



DECades of Dominance

Report: Richard Long



Soldier reflects on the Service's sporting heroes from the past 70 years

WHO: Sir Tom Finney

SERVED: 1942-1946, Royal Armoured Corps

SPORT: Football

SUCCESS: 76 England caps and 30 international goals, Footballer of the Year in 1954 and 1957

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: July 2002

THE STORY: Finney was an aspiring winger with Preston North End when the Second World War put his football career on hold. A call-up soon followed and the tank driver mechanic saw action with the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers against the Germans near Rimini, Italy. Finney made his long-awaited league debut for Preston in 1946 and scored against Leeds United in a 3-2 win. Famed for being a one-club man, he made 433 league appearances and was regarded as one of England's best-ever players, representing his country in three World Cups. However, when *Soldier* asked him if he was tempted to extend his career in uniform, the sporting great joked: "I couldn't get out quick enough." Finney passed away aged 91 in 2014.

WHO: Jim Fox (pictured above)

SERVED: 1957-1983, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

SPORT: Modern pentathlon

SUCCESS: Team gold at the Montreal Olympics in 1976

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: September 1976

THE STORY: Considered to be one of the most influential figures in the development of his sport in Britain, Fox nearly retired after the 1968 Games but was persuaded to continue and went on to win team gold eight years later. His success was achieved amid the backdrop of one of the Olympics' most infamous cheat stories when Russian rival Boris Onischenko used an electrical device in his epee to affect the scoring in the fencing. "The light went on for a hit and I knew he hadn't touched me," Fox told *Soldier*. "I just thought there was something wrong with the mechanism and asked for it to be checked. It was a real hammer blow to find out about the switch in the handle."

Fox later became chairman of the Modern Pentathlon Association.



WHO: Sir Bobby Charlton

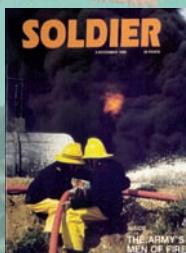
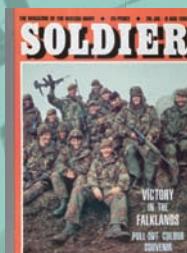
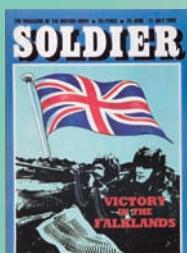
SERVED: Mid-1950s, Royal Army Service Corps

SPORT: Football

SUCCESS: World Cup 1966, European Cup 1968, First Division champion 1957, 1965 and 1967, FA Cup 1963

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: October 2002

THE STORY: Manchester United legend Charlton had just embarked on his glittering football career when he was called-up for national service. He was an ammunition storeman based near Shrewsbury and travelled home to play at weekends whenever he could. His time in uniform proved to be an inconvenience but the Service taught him a great deal. "I have a lot to thank the Army for," he told *Soldier*. "I learnt how to get the best out of myself and how to do things together. The Army is like a football team and I learnt that you can't do it all on your own." Charlton later survived the Munich air disaster – which claimed the lives of 21 people including seven United teammates – and went on to become England's record scorer, with 49 goals, in a trophy-laden career.



1980s

Left: In August 1982 we produced a special pull-out colour supplement to celebrate victory in the Falklands conflict



WHO: Tim Rodber

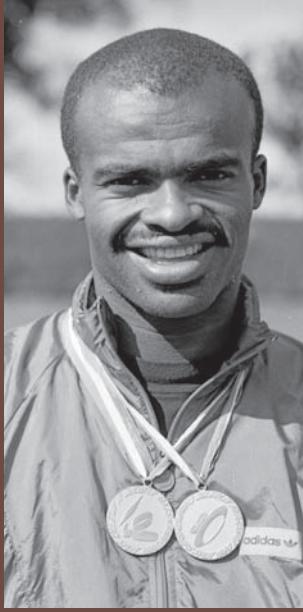
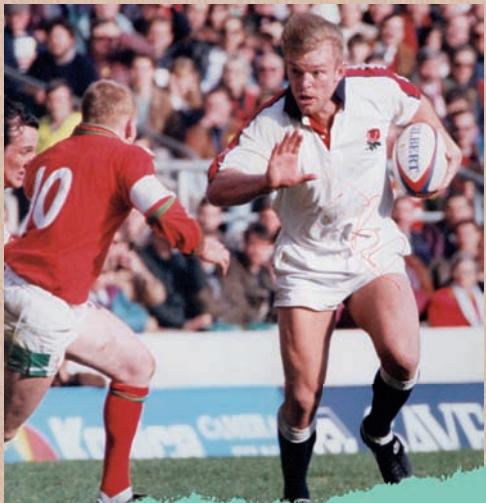
SERVED: 1992-2001, Green Howards

SPORT: Rugby union

SUCCESS: 44 England caps, two tests for the British and Irish Lions, Heineken Cup 2000

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: June 1997

THE STORY: Rodber fulfilled a childhood ambition when he arrived at Sandhurst in 1992, when rugby union was still an amateur sport. He deployed to Norway, Canada, Germany and Ireland during the early stages of his military career and later worked for the director of Army recruiting. In 1994 the back-row player was allowed to tour South Africa with England and was part of the British and Irish Lions squad (along with fellow officer Maj Rob Wainwright (RAMC)) that triumphed against the same opposition in 1997. A stalwart for Premiership outfit Northampton Saints, he lifted the Heineken Cup in 2000 before retiring a year later. Speaking to *Soldier* about the Lions tour and his time in uniform, Rodber said the chances of personnel following his dual career were pretty slim. "Sandhurst and top league or international rugby simply do not mix in this professional age," he added.



WHO: Kriss Akabusi

SERVED: 1975-1990, Corps of Royal Signals and Royal Army Physical Training Corps

SPORT: Athletics

SUCCESS: Three-time Olympic medallist, 1990 European Championship gold in 400m hurdles, 1991 World Championship gold in 4x400m relay

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: October 1990 and February 2010

THE STORY: Akabusi joined the Army as a teenager and went on to achieve the rank of warrant officer in a 15-year career. He combined his time in uniform with success on the track, making his international debut in 1983. The runner won an Olympic silver medal in the 4x400m relay a year later and won gold in the 400m hurdles at the European Championships in 1990. However, his career highlight came at the World Championships in 1991, when he ran a sublime anchor leg to secure gold for Great Britain in the 4x400m relay. Akabusi won two bronze medals at the 1992 Olympics before retiring from the sport. "Through the Army I discovered my athletic prowess," he told *Soldier*. "I worked from 0700 to 1300 on fitness drills with the battalion and in the afternoon I did my own training."

WHO: Dame Kelly Holmes

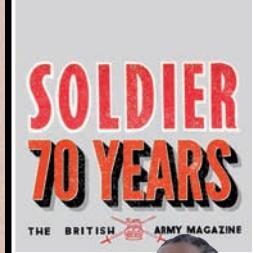
SERVED: 1988-1997, Women's Royal Army Corps (later AGC). Also qualified as a PTI

SPORT: Athletics

SUCCESS: Gold medals in the 800m and 1,500m at the Athens Olympics in 2004. Also a double champion at the Commonwealth Games and a silver medallist at the World Championships of 1995 and 2003

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: October 2004

THE STORY: Holmes served as a sergeant in the Army and excelled as a track athlete, setting a number of Inter-Services records that still stand today. She is also a former Army judo champion. After leaving military life to focus on her running she cemented her place as one of Britain's greatest-ever Olympians by winning gold in both the 800m and 1,500m at the 2004 Games. And with victory complete the then 34-year-old told *Soldier* she had no plans to retire. "My rivals won't be getting rid of me that easily," she added. Holmes retired from the sport in 2005.



WHO: Matthew Fleming

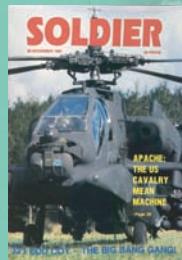
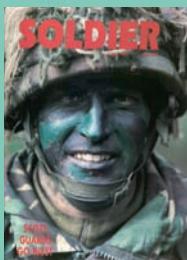
SERVED: 1985-1989, The Royal Green Jackets

SPORT: Cricket

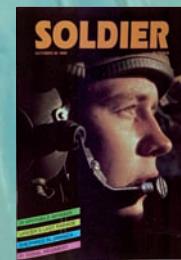
SUCCESS: 11 one-day internationals for England, Kent County Cricket Club captain

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: May 2010

THE STORY: Fleming commissioned into The Royal Green Jackets and served in Germany, Northern Ireland and Hong Kong. He skippered the Army cricket team and represented the Combined Services. The all-rounder joined Kent in 1989 and enjoyed a 13-year career with the county. International honours followed in 1997, when Fleming was named in England's limited overs side and he took four wickets for 45 runs on his debut against India. After retiring from the game he joined the Marylebone Cricket Club Committee and spearheaded its efforts to develop the sport in Afghanistan. Speaking to *Soldier* about the role, he said: "They have some exciting and brave cricketers who are incredibly aware of their role within their country."



Left: This edition in November 1987 contained a feature on the new Apache helicopter that had just gone into service with the US Army





WHO: Nigel Benn

SERVED: 1983-1987, 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

SPORT: Boxing

SUCCESS: Commonwealth and WBO middleweight champion, WBC super-middleweight champion

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: January 2000

THE STORY: "The Dark Destroyer" followed his brother John into Service life and told *Soldier* if it was not for the Army he'd be "inside [prison] or in the ground". During his time in uniform he learnt to box and proved unstoppable. When Benn turned professional his first 22 bouts ended with his opponents knocked out and he went on to fight two brutal encounters with his flamboyant nemesis Chris Eubank. "Whupping ass is my God-given talent," he said. "They put Steve Davis on this earth to pot balls, Maradona to score goals and Nigel Benn to whup ass. That's the way it is."

WHO: Capt Heather Stanning

SERVED: 2007-present, Royal Artillery

SPORT: Rowing

SUCCESS: Olympic gold medal in the women's pair at London 2012

APPEARED IN SOLDIER:

September 2012

THE STORY: Stanning and partner Helen Glover landed Team GB's first gold medal of the Games as they stormed to the line in a time of 7min 27.13sec. The duo had won all three World Cup events in the build-up to the race and reproduced their fine form as the pressure mounted.

"We were up against people we have raced against all season and we knew we could beat them as long as we didn't do anything silly," she told *Soldier* in the aftermath of the closing ceremony. Stanning deployed to Afghanistan a year later and is now back in the boat to challenge for a second gold at Rio in 2016.

WHO: Josh Lewsey

SERVED: Graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2001, served with the Royal Artillery for two years

SPORT: Rugby union

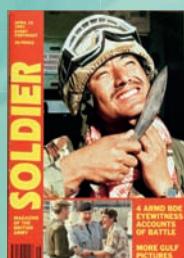
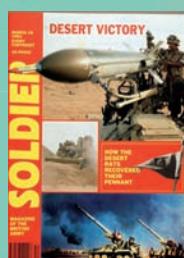
SUCCESS: World Cup 2003, Six Nations 2003, Heineken Cup 2004 and 2007, Aviva Premiership 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2008

APPEARED IN SOLDIER: September 2007

THE STORY: Lewsey's scintillating form with Wasps earned an England call-up in 1998 and the full-back was one of the few bright spots during the team's "tour from hell" in Australia. However, he struggled to win further caps and sought a new challenge at Sandhurst. As well as performing the same duties as his fellow cadets he completed daily rugby training and remained a key member of the Wasps team. "Mentally it was fantastic and the experience I had there and friends that I made will hopefully stay with me for the rest of my days," he told *Soldier*. Lewsey soon found himself with the dilemma of how to marry his pursuit of an England recall with his ambition to serve with the Royal Horse Artillery and reluctantly walked away from Service life. A World Cup win and a string of club honours followed before he retired from the sport in 2009. He is now head of rugby at the Welsh Rugby Union.



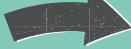
Disagree with our selection? Email your alternative suggestions to news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Left: In August 1992 *Soldier* covered Princess Diana attending the farewell ceremony of the Royal Hampshire Regiment as it amalgamated with the Queen's Regiment



1990s



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IN AD TASTE

A trip into the advertising archive of *Soldier* shows how times – and the British Army – have changed. From cigars to sexist suggestions, the promotions of yesteryear were certainly products of their time...



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1966

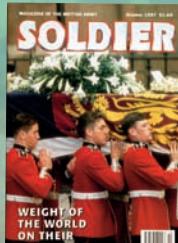
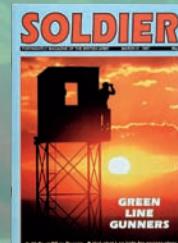
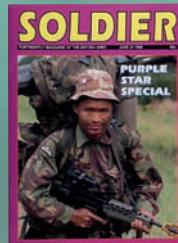
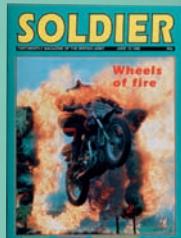
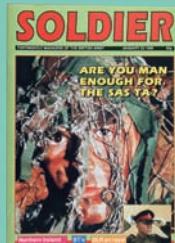
Booze and fags: Certainly not the way to the Army health promotion team's heart these days



Gib, Borneo or Aden---
Under many skies
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Nicely with supplies:
Now what, arriving newly
Excites these thirsty groups?
Stout like this is surely
Stuff to give the troops!

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1990s *continued*



1972

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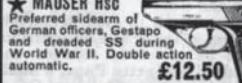
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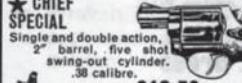
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Marie Stopes was snipping
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Left: In October 1997 an image from the funeral of Princess Diana was used on the cover

1958

Shoe shiner: Her lovely fella purchased an extra large tin, just in case she ran out

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Honest, we just set out to make a car that anybody's mother would feel happy in. You know the sort of thing:

Compact and easy to park, with a smooth, kindhearted gearbox. Economical enough to seemingly run for ever on a tankful of petrol. A vast boot for shopping, room on the inside for half a patrol of Scouts, and tenacious roadholding for popping from one coffee morning to the next.

Stylish, but not flashy.
With servicing so simple and seldom

that mother would still think 'lifting the bonnet' meant raising a hat.

The car we came up with was, surprisingly, the Ford Escort.

We say 'surprisingly', because Escorts have emerged as the winners of over a thousand desperate, gruelling races and rallies.

Which is nice to know, even when you're just nipping down to the N.A.F.I.

Especially if it's early closing.

The Ford Escort



If you are being posted overseas and you want to buy a tax-free Ford, (maximum prices from £758) get in touch with your local Ford dealer and ask for details.

1974 Even women can park it! Surely the very definition of a good car

1973

Pecs appeal: We hope he hasn't been taking supplements to get that impressive physique

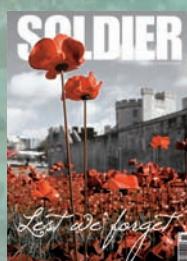
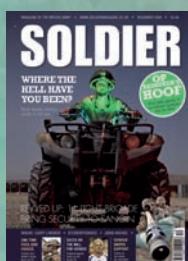
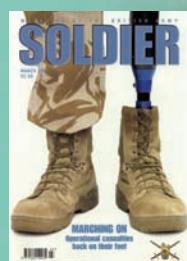
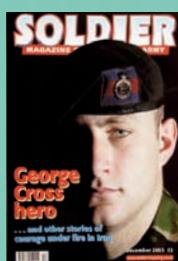
1966

Favourite sweetie: Back then pretty girls were used to flog anything

1971

Bargain barnet: A fix for the follicularly challenged

2000s



Left: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated in the June 2012 issue

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"Given its comprehensive nature and easy-to-read style we have no hesitation in recommending it."

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‘A PATIENT CAME BACK TO SAY THANK YOU. IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST MOMENTS OF MY LIFE ,’

The highs and lows of fighting Ebola, in one Serviceman's words...

Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe

“I THINK we've made a big difference,” combat medic LCpl Niranjan Rana (RAMC) reflects.

“But when you're looking after patients and building a bond with them, and then they don't make it, that is challenging.

“You ask yourself if you could have done any better.

“But we gave them our very best care. There was nothing else we could have done.”

The 27-year-old Serviceman is talking to me from Sierra Leone, where he has been deployed since October with 22 Field Hospital.

He may have begun the aid mission with a Herrick tour under his belt, but for LCpl Rana the tasking to try and stem an outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus stands out above any other of his military career.

The soldier is philosophical with good reason. His stories of trying to provide a human touch to desperately ill patients at Kerry Town Treatment Unit, while wearing the kind of personal protective equipment (PPE) that wouldn't look out of place in a Hollywood bio-war film, are ones he will take to his grave.

“When I was first deployed my

reaction was that I was back from Afghanistan and therefore more experienced,” he explains.

“I had also been on exercise elsewhere in Africa, going into various villages and treating civilians, so I was ready for it.

“We knew about the disease and were prepared for what we would encounter. But it has been completely different to Op Herrick. There you had a clear enemy, weapons, body armour and the like.

“In Sierra Leone it is about understanding and treating a virus while talking to the patients and listening to them.

“Back in the UK the people we are treating can see our faces and we have eye contact, whereas here the PPE and gloves stop us doing that.

“It's certainly tough wearing it in temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius and above.

“The fact some sufferers can't speak English is a barrier to communicating too.

“We've had to use pen and paper, hand signals, that sort of thing.”

Such ability to think on their feet and reassure civilians in the face of panic and fear is something British Army personnel are well used to.





From above,
Taking on the
virus: Soldiers
and civilians
work together
at a district
Ebola response
centre; troops
decontaminate
a building; hard
at work at the
Kerry Town
Treatment Unit;
public billboards
attempt to stop
further spread

Pictures: Cpl Paul
Shaw, RLC

» But setting up and running specialist treatment facilities alongside NGOs and other international organisations has undoubtedly created new insights for troops – often very poignant ones.

"One of the survivors that we treated came back to the centre to say thank you," LCpl Rana recalls of the last few weeks.

"She was in tears and so grateful. She thanked us for allowing her to survive and getting her back to her husband and children.

"That was definitely a highlight of the tour, and probably one of the best moments of my life.

"I was almost in tears myself.

"Sometimes you'd think patients weren't going to make it and they did.

"We asked her how she had felt when she first came in to the centre. The answer was 'scared'."

Following a period of rest and recuperation in the UK, the Serviceman will spend the remainder of his tour in a logistics role, where he faces far different challenges to those of direct patient treatment.

"The measures were strict when I returned home," he adds.

"I had to monitor my temperature every day.

"My family made a joke out of it and told me to stay away from them, but I think the infection risk was at the back of their minds."

So how will members of 22 Field Hospital and their comrades look back on Operation Gritrock?

"It's certainly been a very big part of my life and I'm going to miss having contact with the patients," LCpl Rana says.

"In ten years' time, when this disease has hopefully been wiped out, I would like to come back on holiday and see what the place looks like.

"My team set up Kerry Town Treatment Unit and I would like to say a big thank you to all of them.

"There have been some difficult moments but getting sent out here has been one of the best things I have done.

"I think we have managed to make a difference. We have saved lives."

With every deployed medic offering a different story on the experience of treating Ebola, the lessons of Operation Gritrock are likely to stay with the British Army for many years to come.

Not only does the mission demonstrate the vast range of threats that its soldiers are equipped to deal with, but the commitment and compassion they carry with them while going about this lifesaving work. ■



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Report: Becky Clark
Pictures: Graeme Main

RUBBING shoulders with President Obama and David Cameron may not be an everyday occurrence for the average British soldier but for a small group of Larkhill-based personnel, such encounters are all part of the job.

The Army's Export Support Team travels the world to showcase military equipment as part of the UK Trade and Investment Defence and Security Organisation and it is a role that regularly sees them briefing foreign political and military leaders at high-profile events.

Anyone who watched media coverage of last year's Nato summit in Wales, for example, would have seen the unit's staff hard at work in the background demonstrating the latest kit and capabilities to assembled heads of state and journalists.

As well as carefully manoeuvring heavy-duty assets such as Foxhound and the Scout specialist vehicle onto the immaculate greens of Celtic Manor, the team showed off the smaller gadgets and gizmos that make up the soldier's kit bag.

Cpl Thomas Wall (RE) said that despite the serious hardware on show, a humble water bottle had been one of the items to create a buzz.

"It's made by Lifesaver and it has a filtration unit with lots of different fibres that take out dirt and any impurities like cholera or other bacteria," explained the 26-year-old.

"It's used around the world.

"At the conference there was a pond, which we stirred up and made as muddy as possible and then filled up the bottles.

"People were expecting it to take much longer but we showed how after just a few pumps you've got instant clean water. You can have a swig and it tastes good." >>

IN NUMBERS:
9.8 BILLION

amount, in pounds, of export defence sales achieved by the UK in 2013, holding its position as the second largest global exporter of new products and services in this sector



THE GLOBETROTTING PERSONNEL PROMOTING THE UK DEFENCE INDUSTRY ABROAD



GEARING UP IN 2015

>> Having joined the export support team a little over a year ago, the junior NCO was fairly new in post when the summit took place.

Describing some of the personal attributes he has called on for the role, he continued: "To work here you have to have a bit of confidence and find it easy to talk to different people about important things.

"You also have to be proactive and keep in mind that whatever you talk about, you're in the light of the press and the public, so you need to know your job."

Comprised of a mixture of cap badges and ranks from corporal and above, the 27-strong formation is organised into four main areas of responsibility: Infantry, Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers and Royal Armoured Corps.

Artillery team member Sgt Lee Christie (RA) is a subject matter expert on unmanned systems as well as intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance assets.

According to the 34-year-old, demand for his specialist knowledge is increasing.

"My post is new because the field is growing and not many people understand it," he said.

"So I've come in from 32 Regiment, where we use Desert Hawk 3 and Tarantula Hawk, with Watchkeeper coming into service.

"I work a lot with companies that make robots and unmanned systems for land and air.

"I attended a big UAS show in Florida, where we hosted the delegations as they came round.

"The people from other armies would rather speak to someone in uniform than a civilian in a suit.

"It gives them confidence in the kit, especially when we can talk about our experiences on ops.

"It's not our job to sell the product, though. We stay diplomatic and don't talk about prices or costs.

"There's always a company rep there to answer those sorts of financial questions."

In addition to travelling abroad to industry exhibitions, the unit hosts potential buyers on visits to the UK.

Another key area of its work is to deliver training packages to militaries after a product is sold.

When the Bangladeshi army purchased a hostile artillery locator in 2014 from electronics firm Selex ES, SSgt Paul Tarpey (RA) was among those to deploy to the Asian country to instruct its personnel on how to use the asset.

"A small group of us went out and ran a four-week course for officers

and senior NCOs so that they could then train other troops on the kit," he explained.

"We were embedded with their army in Comilla, 300 kilometres south of Dhaka, so it was a massive logistical challenge to get the kit over.

"However, as serving soldiers from different backgrounds we can deploy into any environment.

"The language barrier was another difficulty but all in all it was a great package and they asked us to come back and deliver a second.

"It's something that you would never normally get to do and was very rewarding.

"We are lucky enough to get to some really nice places in this role. I've been to India, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi and Dubai and I've had a fantastic time."

But beyond individual job satisfaction and the opportunity to notch up an impressive amount of air miles, the work of the export support team also brings substantial benefits to the wider Army.

As the unit's officer commanding pointed out, those posted to the formation will leave with a much greater understanding of how the defence sector works.

"Personnel will take a huge amount of knowledge and confidence back to their units," said Maj George Shapland (RA).

"So the Service is getting a soldier who is better informed about the capabilities of the kit and who has actually helped develop some of them because we also have an input into how products could be improved upon before they go to market."

The officer added: "It really is unlike anything else you can do in the Army.

"Soldiers don't normally talk in terms of financial targets so coming here and having to be commercially aware is a very different way of doing business.

"But we're very proud to be able to do this job.

"The British Army has a fantastic reputation abroad and we're honoured to be part of that." ■



"PERSONNEL WILL TAKE A HUGE AMOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE BACK TO THEIR UNITS"
Maj George Shapland (RA)



High-profile pitch: Cpl Thomas Wall (RE) showcases a Lifesaver water bottle and Sgt Des Routledge (RA) demonstrates d30 shock-absorbing putty to Prime Minister David Cameron at the Nato summit in Wales

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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.



DINE-OUT DISASTER

● I WANT to express my disappointment at the way in which my 22-year career with the Royal Corps of Signals has ended.

I was not given a dine-out when I left and while I am not bitter towards the corps itself I do regret not being granted this privilege.

This is not just for me, but for my wife too. During my time in the Army she moved from the UK to Holland, Germany and back to the UK again, always without complaint. She also had to look after our children on her own through my many lengthy exercises and two arduous tours in Afghanistan.

Marking my departure with one of these functions would have been a fitting way of saying thanks to her for being an unsung hero at home.

I believe the reason might be that I opted to return to the UK from Germany three months before I left the Army in order to prepare for civilian life and, as a result, I was not serving with my final unit at the time I left. Can this be right? – **Name and address supplied.**

Maj (Retd) John Fradley, S01 Communication and Heritage, Headquarters Royal Signals, responds: It is unfortunate you have been left feeling this way.

Having looked into the case it has become clear that the pressures of leaving the Service and transitioning to the UK have clouded the issue.

The warrant officers' and sergeants' mess, as an institution, is very good at looking after its own and it is unusual that someone would be allowed to slip away without being formally dined out after 22 years of service.

The Royal Corps of Signals affords the opportunity for all warrant officers and senior NCOs who are not members of a Royal Signals mess at the time of their retirement to be dined out of the warrant officers' and sergeants' mess at its headquarters. Details are contained in the corps' policy directive 162, which allows the Serviceman or woman to receive this privilege while accompanied by his/her spouse or partner at no cost to themselves.

Please get in touch with the president of the mess committee at the corps' headquarters and arrangements will be made for you.

“Poor food failing troops”

WHILE attending a regimental sergeant majors' convention at Sandhurst, one of my colleagues said personnel in his unit were failing courses due to under-nourishment as a result of the pay-as-you-dine (PAYD) system.

I have been an Army chef for more than 30 years and I have witnessed the transition from the daily messing rate to the current regime.

My personal view is the food on offer is essentially the same everywhere but standards vary a lot due different contractors being used.

Consequently, fewer troops are using the mess facilities than they used to and those that don't are often eating poorer and more expensive food.

Interestingly, at the convention we were asked to pay £60 in advance for all our meals and I believe this is the way forward for the Army.

Soldiers should hand over a set amount each week or month and have access to all the meals served.

This would eliminate the need for tills, gives the contractor steady funding and numbers to work with.

And it almost brings back the old system, which we now know worked perfectly well! – **WO1 Dan Broadhurst, RLC.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A) responds:

Your letter identifies a number of familiar inconsistencies with the current catering system.

These will be addressed when new food contracts are introduced in the next few years.

Despite this, the industry partner delivering the food must provide the core menu offer in accordance with the policy outlined in JSP 456.

Since the introduction of PAYD there have been a few initiatives to allow different means of paying for dishes in advance which have all, after some time, stopped being used.

You raise the question of introducing an opt-in for meals in advance and while this scheme has many merits and was included as an option during the original PAYD cost-benefit analysis, it was rejected because of the sizeable administrative burden it would generate, among other things.

‘DITCH BLOCK LEAVE’

● CAN someone explain to me why I was directed to take leave lasting three weeks at Christmas?

I have a son of school age who did not break up until Friday, December 19 and I would certainly not have chosen to start my leave any earlier if I'd been given a choice.

There is no operational reason nor any economic one that I can see for the directive since our camp remained open for civilian staff. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: It is MoD policy that all

personnel take 38 days' annual leave, unless it is unavoidable owing to factors such as operational requirements.

Individuals should take their leave in the year it is allocated and, where possible, at the time of their choosing.

If your unit has been directed to take block leave when there is no operational imperative to do so, and it does not suit you for family reasons, then you should have approached your chain of command to find a solution that meets both your needs.



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“ I failed to spot anyone wearing trousers that fitted them ”



Picture: WO2 Will Craig, RLC

On the left eye is right

I WROTE to *Soldier* last year to complain about the way some troops wear their berets.

The situation hasn't changed. I often see personnel putting on headgear in the wrong position so the cap badge sits above the left ear and not over the left eye.

To make matters worse, this is now being copied by cadets and even their instructors, who should know better.

Are dress regulations not being enforced because of the cutbacks?

Or is it because senior NCOs are letting standards slip?

If those in charge don't get this rectified troops will soon end up

walking around looking like Andy Capp.

When I was serving this was really frowned upon and, as I recall, the beret was only worn towards the left ear by members of The Parachute Regiment. — **Glyn Morrison, Ex 9/12L**

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, replies: Army dress regulations state that the cap badge should be located on the front of the beret about two centimetres above the band. The headwear should be offset so that the badge is positioned towards the left eye but it is a matter for the chain of command to enforce this.

“ WHEN I WAS SERVING THIS WAS FROWNED UPON ”

THE ODDS OF A WIN ARE...?

● I HAVE been a member of the Army Sports Lottery for the past 18 years.

Having never been fortunate enough to win a prize, I emailed the administrators to enquire what the odds were of winning.

They didn't provide me with an answer but if individuals were aware of them they might decide not to participate. Any chance you can enlighten us? — **Name and address supplied.**

Lee Dyson, Army Sports Lottery Manager, replies:

The Gambling Commission, which is responsible to the government for the regulation, governance and licensing of all society lotteries – so-called because they are not run for profit – do not require these charities to advertise the odds you have of winning a prize.

The Army Sports Lottery chooses to publicise the full benefits of membership – funding grants towards the cost of overseas visits or coaching/officialating courses and so on – rather than focusing on the chances of hitting the jackpot.

That said, the current probability of coming up trumps is around one in 80,000 based on having one ticket – your odds

improve slightly if you hold two or more.

This compares with a one in 14 million chance of winning the National Lottery's main haul and a one in 76 million possibility of grabbing the EuroMillions' top payout.

The odds of winning one of the Army Sports Lottery's 20 weekly prizes are roughly one in 4,000, although this fluctuates slightly every month as ticket sales increase or reduce.



TALKBACK

WHY IT'S TIME TO CUT US SOME SLACKS

● I RECENTLY attended a conference where barrack dress had to be worn and I failed to spot anyone among the 80 or so attendees wearing trousers that actually fitted them.

Baggy 1970s flairs or clown trousers would have been the best description of most of the garments.

The only people who had decent fitting slacks were those who had dusted off their old service dress trousers – and the difference in cut, style and quality was marked.

We seem to have managed to get a sizing and cut for barrack dress trousers that fits or suits no one despite the best efforts of regimental tailors.

Why could we not have copied the Royal Marines or Royal Air Force pattern, which seem to be designed for the normal human shape?

Looking smart and sharp in Future Army Dress is, I fear, almost impossible. — **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, responds: I have consulted with the teams at Logistic Support and Defence Clothing and this is the first time any of us have heard adverse comments on the cut and style of our barrack dress trousers.

These have been an issued item for almost five years and their pattern, style and fabric are identical to the RAF's working dress trousers.



DIGITAL DOSSIER

Your views from the web...



#FUNDRAISING (P 10)

@912MDS

@soldiermagazine popped down today to take some photos of the boys training #remindedmeofmymodellingdays

#HOME TRUTHS

@MsMonicaColling

I agree with @AFCChiefExec "dependants" is a dead term and I'm lobbying the government to make a policy change



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

RELIGIOUS RANTS

Stuart Neilson

I was quite shocked by a couple of items in *Soldier*. The insulting dismissive attitude to those who commented on your earlier puff piece for religion and your even more insulting, dismissive and patronising comments regarding women on the front cover. I don't know if the latter was supposed to be funny but it wasn't.

VETERANS

Sue Bevan

Everyone who has served should get in touch with The Royal British Legion if they get into difficulties, it's what the Legion is there for and the reason I have for the past 26 years stood selling Poppies.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Christopher Mount

My team and I are going to be crated beyond belief for this but we are very proud to have made the February cover. Thanks *Soldier*.

GOT A GRIPE?

✉ mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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TALKBACK



“
IF THEY ARE
COMPULSORY
THEY
SHOULD BE
PROVIDED
FREE OF
CHARGE
”

Clothing confusion

NOT only have many units created their own dress regulations based on looking good rather than comfort or practicality, there seems to be little consistency when it comes to soldiers having to pay out for added extras to their uniform.

If you are required to have, say, a white belt with a brass plaque, a sword belt or a Sam Browne they should be issued to you as a matter of course. In some regiments you have to pay for extras like these and in some you don't.

There are also certain units that insist you obtain items such as silk shirts for parade dress, pace sticks, tuxedos or blazers with unit badges.

Officers get additional allowances for their uniform so why aren't senior NCOs and warrant officers, who attend the same type of events annually, eligible for them too?

I have even witnessed recruits being forced to purchase new tracksuits, even though they had their own already, but in my opinion if they are compulsory they should be provided free of charge.

When I queried this I was told to back down in no uncertain terms by my chain of command.

We are encouraged to have moral courage and integrity yet displaying these qualities can lead to disciplinary action it would seem.

With pay rises capped at one per cent in recent years, those of us who have survived the recent culls have effectively had wage cuts so I fail to

see why we must spend our money on mandatory uniform items. — **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, replies: It is Army policy that all items of uniform that the Service requires an individual to wear are provided at public expense.

Officers' parade clothing is provided through a grant because of low volumes.

However, it cannot be repaired or replaced at public expense, although in order to ensure personnel are not disadvantaged they receive tax relief on the cost.

The only exceptions are stable belts, tactical recognition flashes, formation flashes and name tapes, which are still considered optional.

The Army dress committee only approves changes if there are good operational or historical reasons – and if the Service agrees to fund the new items.

In the last eight years it has not approved anything that soldiers are required to pay for.

However, many regiments and corps include additional items in their dress rules that do not need its approval.

These include tracksuits, regimental T-shirts and blazers.

While I appreciate that a junior soldier is unlikely to complain, it is up to the more senior cohort to challenge any issues they think unreasonable with their corps or regimental headquarters.

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'I feel like a second-class soldier'

AFTER serving in the Regular Army for 24 years I am now employed on a full-time Reserve service (home commitment) contract.

But since taking up this post two years ago I have started to feel like a second-class soldier with regards to pay and the way the contract is interpreted by my superiors.

For a start, we are not eligible for the X-factor but we should be for the same reasons other Reserves receive it.

I, too, am liable to be mobilised with my unit, I work unsociable hours and I am deployed on exercises, but for some reason we do not receive the same level of benefits.

In addition to the X-factor, we are not eligible for medical and dental cover, or the home to duty payment (HTD), and I live 45 miles from my station and can get called in any time.

Compounding the problem is the fact that different units seem to interpret the regulations in various ways.

I have spoken with several comrades serving with other formations and they are all being told different things.

We need a clear and standardised code of practice that everyone can understand and work to.

I know the Army has to come first but it needs to change full-time Reserve service so it can be a career and not just a job. At the moment we just don't feel valued – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: The X-factor reflects the many differences between conditions of service experienced by personnel over a full career and conditions in civilian life, which cannot be taken into account in assessing pay comparability.

Mobilised Reserves and those in full commitment posts receive the whole X-factor payment. Those in limited commitment posts get five per cent and individuals in home commitment positions, like yourself, receive none.

These rates have been set by the Armed Forces pay review body.

Regarding mobilisation, the assumption that you will be called up with your unit is incorrect.

Any decision in that regard will be made against your Reserve

liability and the associated conditions of service, not your current appointment.

You also express frustration at not being eligible for HTD but this is paid to Regulars and certain categories of full-time Reserve personnel because they are obliged to be mobile.

You are not, and therefore you cannot claim the allowance.

You are not allowed to use Defence Primary Health Care for the same reason – although there are exceptions such as treating injuries suffered during training.

The rationale is that because you are employed in a home commitment role you can seek treatment from the NHS.

I do not accept your point about the regulations.

They are set out in clear language and updated when necessary. Confusion only arises when they are interpreted incorrectly by human resources staff at unit level.

Finally, your suggestion that full-time Reserve service should be considered a career goes against current policy.

It is designed for Army Reservists to engage for short periods in full-time service in order to gain experience and then go back to their Reserve units and utilise those skills.

There is a great deal of work going on at the moment which will result in a new employment model that seeks to introduce a continuum of employment for both sections of the Army.

However, until that has been concluded you will remain part of a distinct cohort with varying conditions of service.



“
WHY DO
WE NOT
GET THE
SAME
BENEFITS?
”

BELIEVER SLAMS ATHEISTS' VIEWS

● I SEE a few atheists brought out their bows and arrows in the February edition of *Soldier* to comment on the December issue's discussion about the role of religion in the Service.

I thought the topic was about keeping the faith, so I don't understand why the secular commentators decided to take everything out of context.

All I could garner from their sentiments were examples of anti-Christian bigotry.

The Army has a rich Christian heritage that has had a massive impact on everyone, believers and non-believers alike.

As such, calling the article concerned a "marketing exercise" was unfair and uncalled for.

Such comments reveal just how intolerant secularists are of Christianity – just as we see so often in wider civilian society.

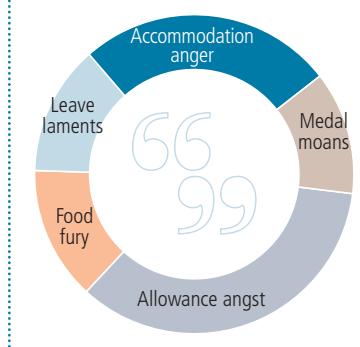
Cherry-picking and quoting the Bible out of context as a way of attacking the Christian faith is a low blow because doing so undermines the premise of the December issue, which was all about the vital role of religion in the Service and not the clash of views or beliefs.

The padres are there as a guide for Army personnel and to cater for everyone who needs them. They certainly don't cause any harm. – **Spr Oghenekaro Obido, RE.**



SLICE OF SERVICE LIFE

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



Boarding School - Girls & Boys - 5 to 19 years

Why choose an independent school education for your child if you qualify for CEA?

Everyone's answer may be different, but, if you made a list, the same reasons keep appearing, albeit in a different order. 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 schools as ranked by the Sunday Times. **Yes we are in the top 10!**

Getting Value For Money - with your CEA you can afford a top ten school - just £795 per term!

For 4 years running we have pegged your contribution per child, per term, at £795. Childcare Vouchers also accepted. This now means we rank as one of the most competitively priced schools for Forces in the UK. Over £100m invested in new facilities in the last eight years. 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 with gaming port (on timer), a Sony PS3, fridge, microwave, trouser press and hot drinks facilities. House staff are friendly and caring.

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 350 + 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. 98% of Year 13 students go to University with majority to Oxbridge, Ivy League or Russell Group universities.

Into Sport? QE has its own £20m Sports Village with 7 Astro-Turfs and 250,000 sq feet of indoor facilities

- QE is the Regional Performance Coaching Centre for: England Hockey, England Netball, England Basketball
- QE is the Regional Centre for the Developing Player Programme for England Rugby

Who comes where in the independent schools league tables?

All independent schools want to portray themselves as academically successful. So how do parents make a sensible comparison of all the different claims made? The answer is to use the internationally recognised independent school league tables produced by the Sunday Times each year. It contains virtually all UK Independent Schools. Where does the school you might be thinking about come? We are 7th and 9th.

Queen Ethelburga's
Thorpe Underwood.
Yorkshire. YO26 9SS
www.QE.org
Tel: 01423 333 330
Email: info@QE.org

Top 10 Boarding Schools 2014 Sunday Times % A*/A A-Levels

1	Wycombe Abbey School
2	Winchester College
3	St Paul's School, London
4	Eton College
5	Westminster School
6	Sevenoaks School
7	Queen Ethelburga's College
8	Concord College
9	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's
10	Brighton College



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

Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School
21st	66%	Abingdon School	77th	49%	Dean Close School	60th	53%	Merchanton Castle Sch	172nd	31%	St Felix School
155th	34%	Ackworth School	138th	38%	Denstone College	100th	45%	Mill Hill School	107th	44%	St Francis, Letchworth
120th	41%	Adcote School Girls	182nd	29%	Dover College	192nd	25%	Millfield School	161st	33%	St George's, Ascot
94th	47%	Ampleforth College	16th	70%	D'Overbroeck's College	109th	44%	Monmouth School	178th	29%	St James Senior Boys
90th	47%	Ardingly College	15th	73%	Downe House	95th	47%	Moreton Hall	72nd	50%	St John's, Leatherhead
70th	52%	Ashford School	112th	43%	Downsides School	108th	44%	Mount Kelly	167th	32%	St John's, Southsea
137th	38%	Ashville College	27th	63%	Dulwich College	58th	53%	Mount School, York	92nd	47%	St Leonards School
23rd	66%	Badminton School	140th	37%	Durham School	88th	47%	New Hall School	31st	61%	St Leonards-Mayfield
171st	31%	Barnard Castle School	76th	49%	Eastbourne College	127th	40%	Oakham School	128th	40%	St Margaret's, Bushey
143rd	36%	Battle Abbey School	36th	58%	Epsom College	49th	55%	Ockbrook School	97th	46%	St Mary's, Cambridge
87th	48%	Bedales School	4th	85%	Eton College	144th	36%	Oratory School, Reading	13th	75%	St Mary's, Ascot
154th	34%	Bede's Senior School	9th	78%	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	179th	29%	Oswestry School	83rd	48%	St Mary's Shaftesbury
93rd	47%	Bedford School	190th	26%	Farlington School	34th	59%	Oundle school	3rd	86%	St Paul's Sch, London
159th	33%	Bedstone College	163rd	33%	Felstead School	191st	26%	Padworth College	51st	54%	St Peter's, York
82nd	48%	Bellerbys Coll Brighton	55th	53%	Fettes College	146th	36%	Plymouth College	14th	75%	St Swithun's School
98th	46%	Bellerbys Coll Cambridge	193rd	24%	Framlington College	168th	32%	Pocklington School	91st	47%	St Teresa's, Effingham
44th	56%	Bellerbys Coll London	NR	20%	Giggleswick School	177th	29%	Princess Helena College	123rd	41%	Stamford High Sch
28th	62%	Benenden School	149th	36%	Glenalmond College	63rd	52%	Prior Park College	135th	39%	Stonhurst College
71st	50%	Berkhamsted School	89th	47%	Godolphin School	162nd	33%	Queen Anne's, Cavsham	174th	30%	Strathallan
187th	27%	Bethany School	121st	41%	Gresham's School	7th	82%	Queen Ethelburga's College	116th	42%	Sutton Valance Sch
37th	58%	Bishop's Stortford Coll	53rd	54%	Haberdashers' Mon Girls	20th	66%	Queen Margaret's, York	150th	35%	Talbot Heath School
85th	48%	Blundell's School	118th	42%	Haileybury	110th	43%	Queen's College, Taunton	111th	43%	Taunton School
69th	52%	Bootham School	158th	34%	Hampshire Collegiate	46th	56%	Queenswood	157th	34%	Tettenhall College
156th	34%	Box Hill School	119th	41%	Harrogate Ladies College	26th	64%	Radley College	194th	24%	The Leys School
132nd	40%	Bradfield College	25th	65%	Headington School	147th	36%	Ratcliffe College	99th	50%	The Purcell School
103rd	45%	Brentwood School	183rd	28%	Heathfield, Ascot	99th	45%	Reed's School	170th	31%	Tonbridge Schol
10th	76%	Brighton College	114th	42%	Ipswich School	195th	24%	Rendcomb College	11th	76%	Trinity School
52nd	54%	Bromsgrove School	80th	48%	Kent College, Canterbury	42nd	56%	Repton School	141st	37%	Wardour School
96th	46%	Bruton School Girls	32nd	60%	Kent College, Pembury	79th	49%	Roedean School	180th	29%	Trinity School
78th	49%	Bryanton School	125th	41%	Kimbolton School	48th	55%	Royal High Sch, Bath	115th	42%	Truro High School Girls
73rd	50%	Burgess Hill Sch Girls	105th	44%	King William's, Castletown	26th	48%	Royal Masonic Sch Girls	81st	48%	Truro School
38th	57%	Canford School	189th	26%	King's Bruton	147th	41%	Royal Russell School	133rd	40%	Tudor Hall
22nd	66%	Caterham School	164th	33%	King's College, Taunton	99th	57%	Royal School, Haslemere	47th	56%	Uppingham School
181st	29%	CATS College London	113th	43%	King's Ely	195th	54%	Rugby School	169th	31%	Warminster School
185th	27%	CCSS Centre 6th Form	35th	59%	King's School, Canterbury	42nd	69%	Ruthin School	33rd	60%	Warwick School
176th	30%	Chase Grammar School	129th	40%	King's St Michael's Coll	142nd	37%	Rydal Penrhos Senior	19th	67%	Wellington College
86th	48%	Cheltenham College	184th	28%	King's, Rochester	67th	53%	Ryde School U Chine	134th	40%	Wells Cathedral School
12th	76%	Cheltenham Ladies' Coll	43rd	56%	Kingswood School, Bath	188th	26%	Rye St Antony School	75th	49%	West Buckland School
117th	42%	Chetham's School Music	126th	41%	Kirkham Grammar School	186th	27%	Sedbergh School	101st	45%	Whitgift School
50th	55%	Chigwell School	61st	52%	Lancing College	6th	82%	Sevenoaks School	29th	62%	Winchester College
66th	53%	Christ College	148th	36%	Langley School	59th	53%	Sherborne Girls	2nd	89%	Wycombe Abbey Sch
56th	53%	Christ's Hospital	166th	32%	Leighton Park School	104th	45%	Sherborne School	1st	91%	Wycombe Abbey Sch
18th	67%	City London Freeman's	68th	52%	Leweston School	39th	57%	Shrewsbury School	106th	44%	Woldingham School
65th	53%	Clifton College	131st	40%	Lincoln Minster School	124th	41%	Sidcot	45th	56%	Woodbridge School
130th	40%	Cobham Hall	102nd	45%	Lord Wandsworth College	173rd	30%	St Bees School	151st	35%	Woodhouse Grove
8th	81%	Concord College	136th	39%	Loretto School	24th	65%	St Catherine's Sch, Bramley	160th	33%	Workshop College
57th	53%	Cranleigh School	40th	57%	Loughborough Grammar	165th	32%	St Edmund's College	152nd	35%	Wrekin College
175th	30%	Culford School	139th	37%	Luckley House School	145th	36%	St Edmund's Canterbury	153rd	35%	Wycombe Abbey Sch
64th	53%	Dauntsey's School	30th	62%	Marlborough College	62nd	52%	St Edward's Sch, Oxford	1st	91%	Wycombe Abbey Sch
State Schools Not Ranked						29%	Duke of York's Royal Military		29%	Welbeck College	

BULLET POINTS

BITE-SIZED DATA TO KEEP YOU IN THE KNOW

APPOINTMENTS

Maj Gen Mark Carleton-Smith to be appointed **Director Strategy Army Headquarters** in April 2015.

Brig Giles Hill, currently Deputy Commanding General Interoperability 82nd United States Airborne Division, to be appointed **General Officer Commanding 1st (UK) Division** in the rank of major general in succession to Maj Gen James Chiswell in April 2015.

CAREERS

Career Transition Partnership **logistics, construction, utilities and built environment sector event** on March 26, 1130-1600 at Manchester Metropolitan University. To make a booking contact Steve Strefford via sstrefford@ctp.org.uk

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

COMPETITIONS

Spine line winners: Graham Drew, Marlborough Barracks, Southam; Matty Lewin, Poole, Dorset; 2nd Lt Malcolm Jones, Calbourne, Isle of Wight.

He Who Dares DVD: L Matthews, Basildon, Essex; C Plum, Wadebridge, Cornwall; J Matthews, Dallas, Morayshire; Sharon Jackson, Army Reserve Centre, Kempston; Capt Christopher Lucas, Rusholme, Manchester.

DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity:
0845 241 4820

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

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

Armed Forces Humanist Association:
www.armedforcesthumanists.org.uk

Armed Forces Muslim Association:

Chaplain 020 7414 3252;
www.afma.org.uk

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

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

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

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

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

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

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

Forcesline:
UK – 0800 731 4880; Germany – 0800 1827 395; Cyprus – 080 91065; Falklands – #6111; from operational theatres – Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) – 0044 1980 630854

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01722 436575

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group):

www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

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

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency:
0808 1914 218 (from the UK);
0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTELLIGENCE

The following Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs

and Defence Information Notices can be found online at www.armynet.mod.uk

ABN 018/15: Army Reserve occupational health assessments

ABN 017/15: Regular Army leavers' visits to Army Reserve units

ABN 016/15: Army Reserve jobs list

ABN 015/15: Grand Military Gold Cup 2015

ABN 014/15: QARANC enlistment changes

ABN 013/15: Versatile engagement update

ABN 012/15: Army basing Salisbury Plain Training Area public consultation

ABN 011/15: Guidance for commanding officers dealing with serious criminal investigations

ABN 010/15: Army welfare review

ABN 009/15: Armed Forces Covenant report 2014

DIN 2015DIN01-039: Defence Fire & Rescue Service fire officers and brigade managers 2014 pay award

DIN 2015DIN01-038: Revision of cost of living addition salary

DIN 2015DIN01-037: NHS agenda for change: performance appraisal and development reports and performance-related pay

DIN 2015DIN01-036: Additional duties commitment – removal of 42-month aggregated service restriction

DIN 2015DIN01-035: Late-entry commissioning in the Army Air Corps

DIN 2015DIN01-033: Nursing officer transfer scheme

DIN 2015DIN01-032: 57th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes

DIN 2015DIN01-031: Parliamentary candidature

DIN 2015DIN01-030: Logistics Branch commissioned warrant officers scheme

DIN 2015DIN01-029: The Services Cotswold Centre

DIN 2015DIN01-027: Exit interview requirements for voluntary outflow leavers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68

DIRECTORY CONTINUED

DIN 2015DIN01-026: Healthcare provision for British Forces in British Army Training Unit Kenya – directory of local health services and medical screening advice

DIN 2015DIN01-025: JSP 477 *Community Development, Youth and Play Work* – archived

DIN 2015DIN01-024: JSP 770 *Tri-Service Operational and Non-Operational Welfare Policy Update – Supervision Ratios for Community Development, Youth and Play Work*

DIN 2015DIN01-023: UK Special Forces units briefing course dates, selection course dates and medical standards

DIN 2015DIN02-001: Government security classification policy: industrial security implementation guidance and clarification

DIN 2015DIN03-003: Ministry of Defence strategic policy for materiel and personnel exploitation

DIN 2015DIN03-002: Tactical air traffic control recruitment policy

DIN 2015DIN03-001: Integrated action

DIN 2015DIN04-025: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – inclusion of Nikon Eclipse E200 microscope within medical modules

DIN 2015DIN04-024: Declaration of

obsolete ground support equipment

DIN 2015DIN04-023: Obsolete declaration of general-purpose test and measurement equipment

DIN 2015DIN04-022: Approval process for holding industry events

DIN 2015DIN04-021: Air defence and electronic warfare systems delivery team formation

DIN 2015DIN04-020: Weapon equipment – declaration of obsolete/obsolescent status

DIN 2015DIN04-019: Sight unit small arms – declaration of out of service, C1, 1240-99-173-0701

DIN 2015DIN04-018: Declaration of obsolete – Delfin

DIN 2015DIN04-017: Management of morphine auto-injectors and training devices

DIN 2015DIN04-016: Declaration of obsolete – base power supply unit and gate guardian

DIN 2015DIN04-014: Declaration of obsolete – Tx1M Forbear system

DIN 2015DIN04-013: Declaration of obsolete – fuze setter, hand, No 4 (cased) Mk 1

DIN 2015DIN04-012: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2015DIN04-011: Charge demolition user filled L1A1 – linear – 8kg charge demolition user filled L1A1 – conical – 12kg

DIN 2015DIN04-010: Charge demolition slab PE8 L22A1

DIN 2015DIN04-009: Declaration of obsolescence – SEER

DIN 2015DIN04-008: Declaration of ALC obsolete equipment

DIN 2015DIN04-007: Declaration of ALC obsolete equipment

DIN 2015DIN04-006: Declaration of ALC obsolete equipment

DIN 2015DIN04-005: Declaration of ALC obsolete equipment

DIN 2015DIN04-004: Declaration of obsolete/obsolescent general purpose test and measurement equipment – air data test set

DIN 2015DIN05-004: Transfer of the movement and transport safety website to a new server

DIN 2015DIN05-003: Records management – reduction in the 30-year rule

DIN 2015DIN06-004: JSP 433 *MoD Diving Safety Policy*

DIN 2015DIN07-022: Part-time postgraduate masters' level studies at Cranfield University

DIN 2015DIN07-021: Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2015, Oct 16-25

DIN 2015DIN07-020: Authority for Army orienteering, addendum, Ex Dynamic Runner

DIN 2015DIN07-015: Adventurous

Training Group Army course and concentration schedule 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN07-014: Joint information activities group training provision 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN07-010: Advanced diving weeks at Joint Service Sub Aqua Dive Centre

DIN 2015DIN07-009: Joint Counter Terrorist Training and Advisory Team Op Verditer visitors' course

DIN 2015DIN07-008: Exercise Medsail 2015

DIN 2015DIN07-007: Helicopter load slinging equipment inspector course

DIN 2015DIN07-006: Joint operations planning course – FY 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN07-004: Warfare training group courses 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN08-002: Insurance arrangements for charging activities (income generation and repayment)

DIN 2015DIN10-010: British Army motorsports event – Spring Foil 2015

DIN 2015DIN10-009: Army Rifle Association target shooting courses 2015

DIN 2015DIN10-008: Army golf skills training weeks

DIN 2015DIN10-007: Combined Services Chess Championships 2015

NO. 880

HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU ?

WIN
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EXTRACTED from our archive, here is the first ever HOAY competition as it appeared in 1956. Ten details have been changed in these two illustrations by the former *Soldier* cartoonist Frank Finch.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 880, Soldier,**

Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by March 31, 2015.

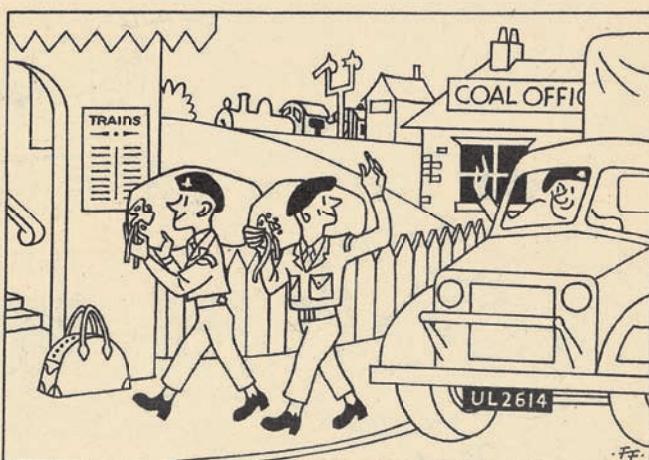
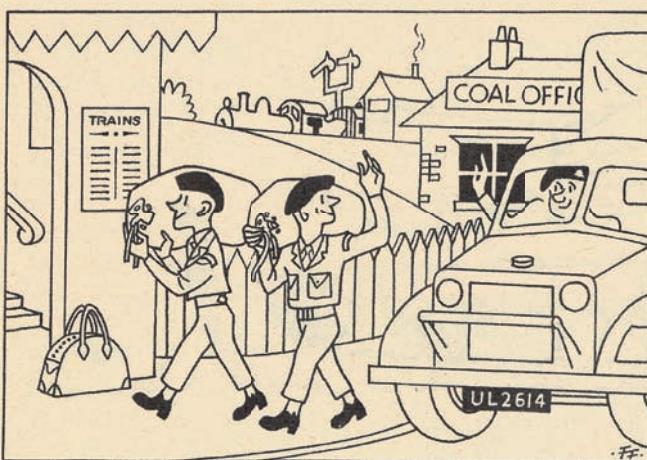
A photocopy is acceptable but only one entry per person may be submitted.

First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win £100; the second and third

will receive £25 gift vouchers.

The results will be announced in the May issue. Usual rules apply.

January's winner: Kornelia Patrickson, Marlborough Lines, Andover. **Runners up:** Christine Topham, RM Poole, Dorset and Kath Malinowski, Trenchard Lines, Upavon.



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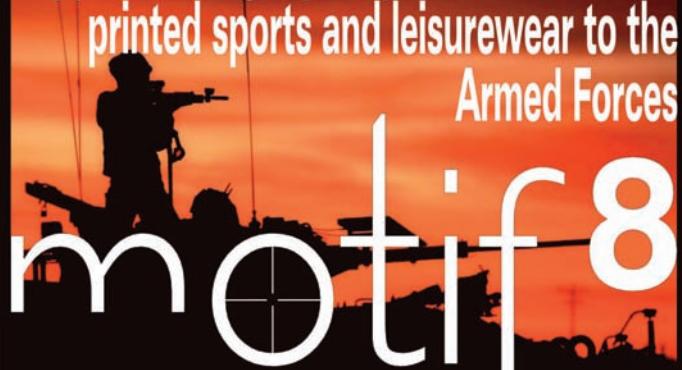
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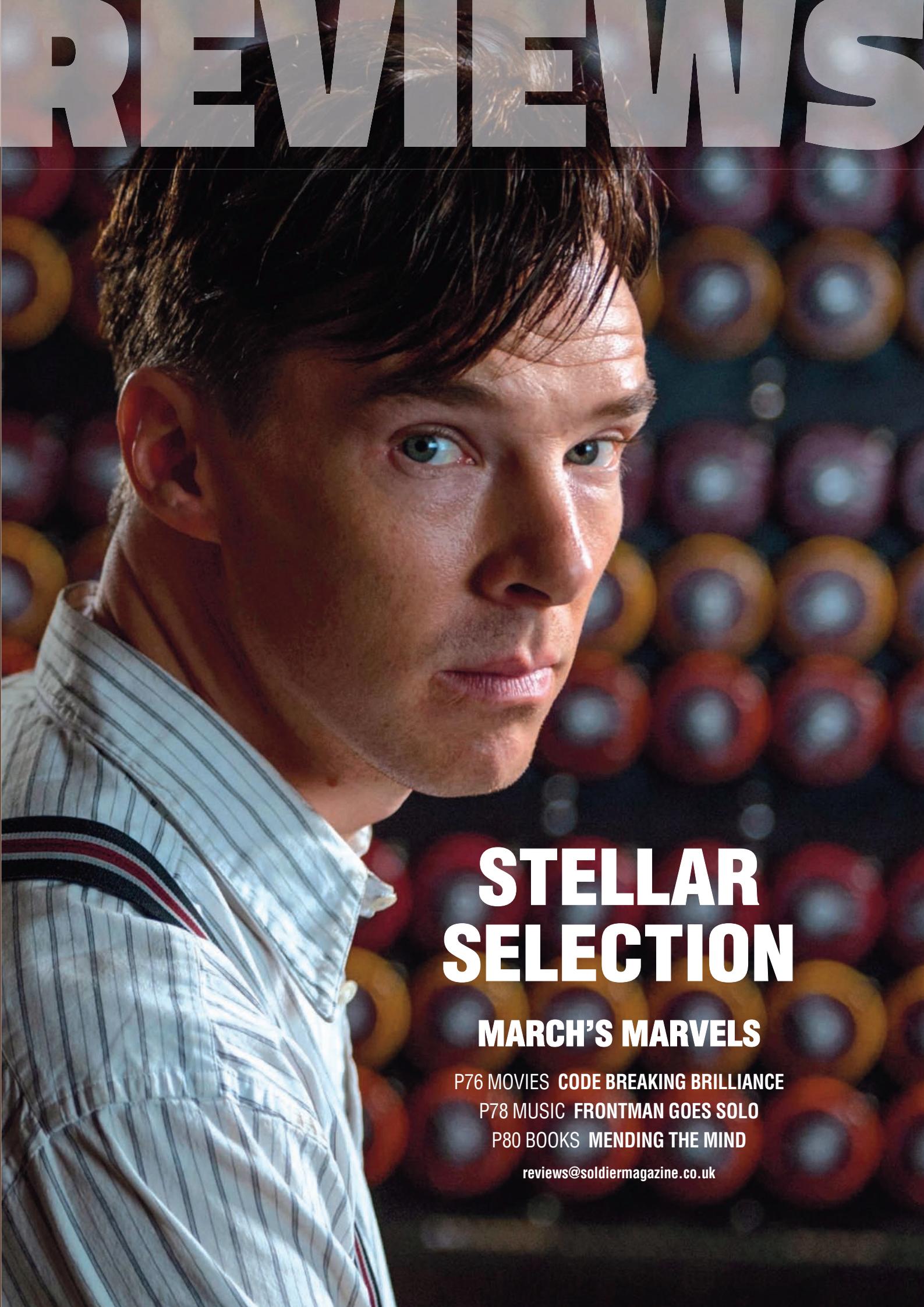
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MARCH'S MARVELS

P76 MOVIES **CODE BREAKING BRILLIANCE**

P78 MUSIC **FRONTMAN GOES SOLO**

P80 BOOKS **MENDING THE MIND**

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MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH:
THE IMITATION GAME

CUMBERBATCH CRACKS IT

THE TRAGIC TALE OF ALAN TURING

Review: Joe Clapson

IN portraying cryptanalyst Alan Turing, the unsung hero of the Second World War, Benedict Cumberbatch delivers a masterful and career-defining performance.

Based on the Cambridge genius who fathered the modern computer – known as the Turing machine – and who led the way in cracking secret Nazi ciphers, *The Imitation Game* highlights a key reason behind Germany's defeat but also the shameful treatment of one of the UK's great men.

The film spans the key periods of Turing's life, from his teenage years when he was bullied at boarding school and the triumph of his undercover work on the revolutionary Bombe machine to his personal decline after being convicted under the law of the day for being gay.

In managing to mark the treachery of Turing's prosecutors while maintaining an energetic pace Graham Moore makes a hugely impressive screenwriting debut.

Cumberbatch (*Sherlock*) brings intense dynamism to his role and Keira Knightley (*Pirates of the Caribbean*) puts in a decent shift as Joan Clarke, the only woman in the top-secret unit.

Watching the pair consider marriage as Turing attempts to conceal his homosexuality is completely engaging and all the more emotional given that the story is based on real events.

The tense action, which is essentially watching Turing think as he tinkers with his machine, erupts when he finishes building his proto-computer geared to break Hitler's Enigma codes, that change every 24 hours.

Of course, guns and explosions will always have their place in war films but aided by Cumberbatch on fire this movie is proof that a boffin playing with numbers can also get the blood pumping.

In both *Star Trek Into Darkness* and *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* this actor has shown that he can hold his own on the big screen but here, as a hyper-intelligent self-aware saviour of men, he is in his element.

As Turing assuredly persuades Winston Churchill to put him in charge of his perceived inferiors, despite their mathematical prowess, it is difficult to imagine anyone else in the role.

The efforts of Bletchley Park's brains to out-think their German opposition has been covered before in *Enigma*, which was entertaining, but this is simply in a different league because of its attention to detail and social focus.

Viewers are shown how the police exposed Turing as gay before charging him and then chemically castrating him with an injection of female hormones.

With such treatment brought to the fore the movie begs viewers to question what else has been lost to prejudice and to ask whether this sort of persecution is still going on in other areas.

Under the direction of Morten Tyldum (*Headhunters*) the feature is a damning critique of so-called civilised society.

The UK and the Allies benefited from the brilliance of Turing before the lawmakers destroyed his life.

This marvellous movie finally puts that disgusting treatment of a wartime legend on the main stage. ■

VERDICT: Cumberbatch revels in the role of a great Briton who was destroyed by his own country ★★★★★



THINK LIKE A MAN TOO out now

THINGS would have been easier to follow if I had seen *Think Like A Man* because this is its sequel. Nevertheless, when a group of couples reunite in Las Vegas for a wedding a series of compromising situations threaten to derail the big event and the survival of everyone's love affairs. The humour is low-brow with tasteless jokes about skin colour and body odour but it does have some tender moments.

Phil Tiffany, ex-RLC

VERDICT: Mildly funny but its predecessor should be viewed first ★★★★★



BEYOND out now

NOT one to watch if you are looking for something similar to *Independence Day* – you don't see any aliens and only get fleeting glances of an alien ship on the skyline. The film concentrates far too much on the stormy relationship between the main characters, Cole and Maya, which is a problem if you are a sci-fi fan. The acting is strong but this low-budget movie becomes confusing towards the end.

July Mobsby, civvy

VERDICT: Starts promisingly but ends with a whimper ★★★★★



THE OVERNIGHTERS out now

DIRECTOR Jesse Moss depicts the lives of people chasing high salaries during the North Dakota oil boom. Due to the struggle to find affordable housing the local pastor allows more than a thousand different people to stay in his church during a two-year period. The award-winning movie shows the grit and persistence of those looking for a big break while highlighting that chasing dreams can lead to hardship.

Cpl Nick Reader, Rifles

VERDICT: A poignant portrait of modern-day dream-chasers ★★★★★



DRONES out now

A PAIR of American military personnel are at loggerheads when tasked with taking out a terrorist with a single push of a button. With time running out the airmen begin to question the motives behind the ordered attack. The film raises moral dilemmas, ones that did not exist when fighting enemies of the past, about the use of unmanned modern technology and how we combat al-Qaeda.

Phil Tiffany, ex-RLC

VERDICT: A movie for thinkers rather than fans of action visuals ★★★★★



GUTSHOT out now

IT is not always a bad thing to have action legend Steven Seagal back on the big screen but this depiction of the world of high-stakes poker is not his finest moment. Seagal and Vinnie Jones play supporting roles to Jack Eads' lead card pro, Jack. It's an underworld gambling saga with a *Lock Stock* feel to it. While not completely gripping the film is entertaining as the main man dices with death against a loan shark.

Sophia Lorenti, civvy

VERDICT: Seagal takes a back seat in a mediocre offering ★★★★★

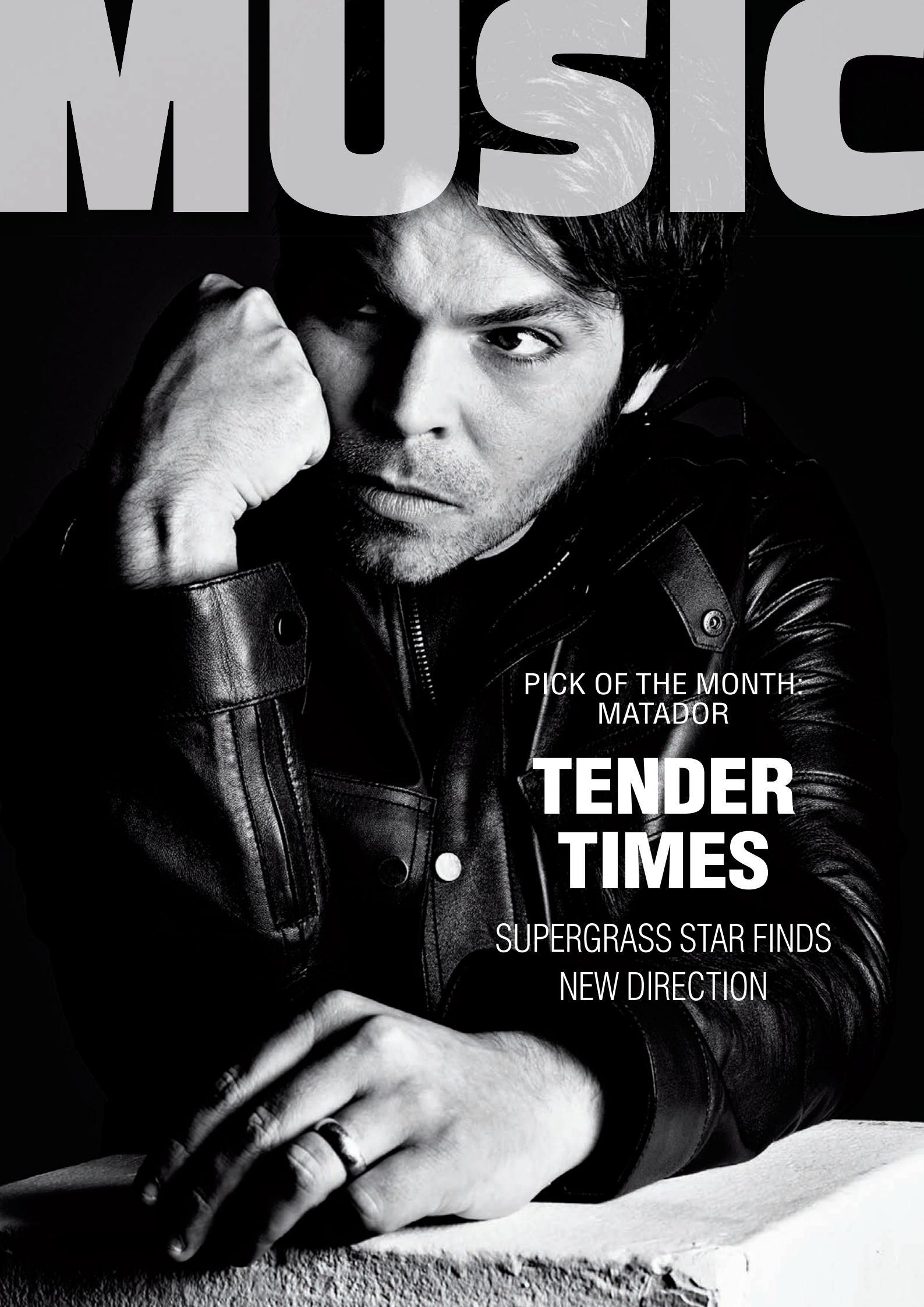


WIN... UNITED WE FALL

MANCHESTER United's class of 1992, which included the likes of Scholes, Giggs and Beckham, is known as one of the best ever. However, this mockumentary shows five arrogant overpaid players from the club who failed spectacularly. *Soldier* has teamed up with Metrodome Distribution to offer copies of the DVD to five lucky readers. To be in with a chance of winning just tell us what shirt number Giggs wore under Sir Alex Ferguson. Send your answers to the usual postal address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH:
MATADOR

TENDER TIMES

SUPERGRASS STAR FINDS
NEW DIRECTION

Review: Richard Long

IT'S been almost two decades since a fresh-faced Gaz Coombes burst onto the scene as the frontman of Supergrass.

The youthful exuberance that flowed through debut single *Alright* paved the way for an impressive career that spawned six top-20 albums for a band that more than held its own in the highly competitive alternative genre.

But, as the saying goes, all good things must come to an end and it was rather sad to see the three-piece head in separate directions in 2010, when they quoted the familiar excuse of "musical differences" as the reason behind their demise.

Coombes returned two years later with solo offering *Here Come the Bombs*, which he admitted was an attempt to create some distance from the Supergrass era.

The change in direction drew critical acclaim and the star is hoping to build on those foundations with follow-up effort *Matador*, a record that feels more serene than its predecessor.

"In a way I think I forced the issue at times and put too many ideas on that first album," Coombes explained.

"This time around I was more relaxed, more direct in my approach – but at the same time I didn't want it to sound like anything that I'd done before."

Fans of the artist's former band should not approach this expecting the catalogue of fun-filled anthems that have gone before. This is a far darker experience.

Self-doubt, personal loss and a drug-induced tour psychosis underpin many of the tracks but they are emotions that have helped the creative process.

"There's definitely a tenderness, darkness and uncertainty to the songs," Coombes said. "But I think there's a resilience and a confidence about being vulnerable, even though that sounds contradictory."

In another break from tradition the album sessions proved to be an entirely solo experience, with the performer playing all the instruments himself while incorporating an array of synthesisers.

Matador ticks all the boxes Coombes hoped for with its raw and dark sound. The once-trademark catchy melodies are in short supply but it is not overwhelmingly sombre and the balance is expertly judged.

Bursts of gospel offer welcome illumination at key stages and the experimental musicianship bears more than a passing resemblance to Thom Yorke's *Eraser*.

Detroit, *The Girl Who Fell to Earth* and *20/20* all build to an impressive crescendo and while these tracks are about as far removed from the Supergrass back catalogue as you could possibly get they are enjoyable all the same.

The life experiences gained in 20 years offer incredible scope for maturity and Coombes has embraced the passage of time to become a credible solo artist who is not afraid to push the boundaries. ■

VERDICT: A change in direction that has delivered superb results ★★★★★

Review: Richard Long

The Mindsweep by Enter Shikari

PREVIOUS

efforts from these Hertfordshire boys have forced clumsy political waffle on metalcore. That said, **Enter Shikari** are unique but whether they deserve sympathy for that alone isn't clearly answered by *The Mindsweep*. It's business as usual and their bouncy, childish naivety has finally fused pop and metal into a palatable whole, attested by the brilliant anthem *The Last Garrison* and the spooky *Anaesthetist* (about the privatisation of the NHS). *Myopia* deserves an honourable mention too.

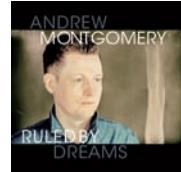


LCpl Lindsay Whyte, Int Corps

VERDICT: Mediocrity – but more maturely executed than before ★★★★★

Ruled by Dreams by Andrew Montgomery

WITH a unique voice that seems split between choirboy and soul star, **Andrew Montgomery** made waves in the Britpop era as frontman of



Geneva – scoring no less than four top-40 singles. Following the group's decline, and almost a decade of silence, he has returned with his debut solo album. It certainly isn't what you'd expect and it all seems mildly familiar. His voice sounds like a slightly toned down **Jimmy Somerville** singing everything from sombre to very upbeat modern pop. It's well produced and well put together – not bad at all.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

VERDICT: A voice with a familiar tinge – well worth a listen ★★★★★

The Pale Emperor by Marilyn Manson

THIS record treats you to filthy (but not heavy) blues-rock, whining sincerity and trademark jungle drums. The songs are underwhelming and generic, sitting awkwardly alongside **Marilyn Manson's** deafening persona. The gentler feel to the music is a trap, set to make the lyrics seem cutting and tortuously introspective. It works. But with music written entirely by film composer **Tyler Bates** this possesses power not depth. Criminally well-produced, it is alas boring and risk averse.



LCpl Lindsay Whyte, Int Corps

VERDICT: Originality? Manson declines – albeit gracefully ★★★★★

Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance by Belle and Sebastian

THIS is **Belle and Sebastian's** ninth album, which made me think why have I never heard of them before? The record tries to hark back to the early 1980s with synthesisers, drums and vague vocals – but they're not **The Human League**. *Allie* attempts to make a statement about modern life in the UK but only made me hit fast forward, while *The Cat With the Cream* was a slow-motion car crash. The one highlight was *Enter Sylvia Plath* but even this higher tempo offering could not save the day. Avoid at all costs.



LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

VERDICT: About as impressive as a second-rate student band ★★★★★

The Scene Between by The Go! Team

AFTER an absence of more than four years **The Go! Team** make their long-awaited return with *The Scene Between*. This is



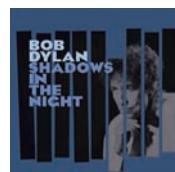
markedly different to what has gone before as melodies and a more relaxed sound replace the hip-hop vibe and screeching guitars found on earlier offerings. In another change, frontman **Ian Parton** wrote, performed and produced the songs himself with vocal contributions submitted from aspiring artists via an outreach programme. *Waking the Jetstream* and *The Art of Getting By* are highlights of a strong fourth album.

Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: A change in direction pays off on this low-key offering ★★★★★

Shadows in the Night by Bob Dylan

NOT being one to rest on his laurels, **Bob Dylan** delved into the world of legendary crooner **Frank Sinatra** for the inspiration for his latest album. While the thought of reworking tracks from the 1950s may raise eyebrows among his loyal fans the end result proves to be a surprising success. The artist's unique vocals transform the songs into something far more than simple cover versions, with *Why Try to Change Me Now* and *Autumn Leaves* faring particularly well. Definitely worth checking out.



Richard Long, Soldier

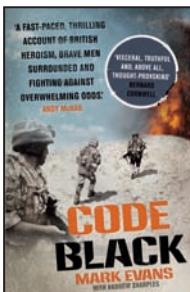
VERDICT: Sinatra's songbook sparkles in Dylan's hands ★★★★★

BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH:
CODE BLACK

THE WAR WITHIN

EX-OFFICER REVEALS STRUGGLE TO PUT HIS
EXPERIENCES OF COMBAT BEHIND HIM



Code Black by Mark Evans is out now, priced £18.99

Interview: Becky Clark

FOR the thousands of British troops who fought in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014, the physical war with the Taliban is over.

But for some, the mental struggle against the repercussions of combat continues.

Former captain Mark Evans knows first hand how quickly life can unravel when post-traumatic stress disorder takes hold.

The now 37-year-old deployed as the leader of an operational mentoring and liaison team in 2008, a summer that saw UK personnel engaged in bloody fighting across Helmand province.

His new book, *Code Black*, details how he and his comrades spent weeks under virtual siege from the enemy in Nad-e Ali, as well as his subsequent battle to deal with his experiences after his return.

"There are two reasons why I thought it was important to tell the story," the ex-Coldstream Guard told *Soldier*.

"One was the chance to thank the guys who were there. It's a testament to what they achieved, particularly because it wasn't really reported or widely known about when we got back.

"The second was the mental health side of it. I've had some pretty interesting experiences with PTSD over the last few years.

"Luckily I had the support I needed through family and friends and the correct medical care.

"So the book is for people who have the condition but more so for those around them who don't know what to do or how they're feeling."

When Evans talks of his "interesting experiences" he is putting it mildly.

Back on the streets of London ordinary sites and sounds prompted terrifying flashbacks.

A burka-clad tourist became a potential suicide bomber; the whir of a police helicopter became the Apache that mistakenly targeted the officer and his men during a friendly-fire incident.

Turning to alcohol to blot out the visions, he was eventually admitted to The Priory and, at his lowest ebb, contemplated suicide.

"Sometimes you get drunk or have moments where the anger or other emotions escape in an extreme fashion, like a kettle coming to the boil and letting off steam," Evans commented.

"There are also issues like shame and guilt.

"We're soldiers. We're strong and as a junior commander especially you're taught that your job is to look after other people so part of you doesn't want to admit you're injured.

"Being able to write about these things has helped me."

Thanks to a combination of therapy, yoga and the support of those close to him, six years on things are looking up for this ex-Serviceman.

So does he think more should be done to assist others with PTSD?

"You can always do more," he said. "The MoD has a responsibility to its soldiers but it also has a war-fighting role and it was never meant to be a mental health recovery organisation.

"One area that could maybe be improved is the transition from military to civilian life but that's complicated too because veterans might not seek help or be diagnosed until years later.

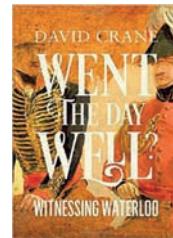
"I hope the book gets the message out that people shouldn't be afraid, if they know someone who might have PTSD, to do something."

"Speak out, talk to the person in question or to a doctor but do something." ■

Interview: Becky Clark

Went the Day Well?

by David Crane



THE subtitle of this book, "Witnessing Waterloo", is a misnomer as it contains no first-hand accounts of the battle. Instead it is a confused patchwork of sociological commentary and biographical details of individuals, interspersed with vignettes concerning the clash. But in too many instances there is no discernible link and the reader is left mystified as to why the material was included. As a result there is no thread to follow and this detracts significantly from the content.

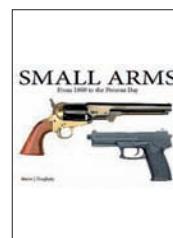
George Robey, ex-GH

VERDICT: The author's novel approach does not come off



Small Arms

by Martin Dougherty



MANY of the world's most famous, infamous and lesser known weapons are detailed in this encyclopaedia of all things small arms – from the early days of industrial manufacturing all the way to the modern battlefield. The book is packed with photographs and fantastic diagrams, with cutaway sections to show moving parts and mechanisms. Whether you're a newcomer to the field or a firearms guru, there's certainly something you can learn from this title.

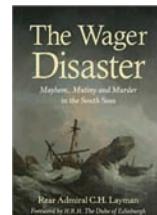
LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

VERDICT: Essential for any self-respecting military bookshelf



The Wager Disaster

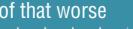
by RAdm C H Layman



THIS tale of disaster on the high seas cemented my status as a lifelong landlubber. Scurvy, drowning, starvation, marooning and murder were just some of the perils awaiting the crew of HMS *Wager* when she sank off Cape Horn in 1741. Drawing on accounts from survivors and newly discovered archeological evidence, the author sheds new light on the mutiny and its aftermath. It's an incredible story of endurance as well as a grim reminder of human nature in life or death situations.

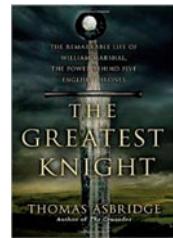
Becky Clark, Soldier

VERDICT: Fascinating proof that worse things do happen at sea



The Greatest Knight

by Thomas Asbridge



BUT for the discovery of an obscure Norman-French manuscript, William Marshal would have remained a faceless baron associated with the Magna Carta. Instead, thanks to *L'Histoire de Guillaume Le Mareschal* he's hailed as England's greatest knight. Thomas Asbridge uses this document as the foundation for his book. While it's often thin on details of his life, the title's strength is the way the author weaves a forensic knowledge of medieval England into the narrative.

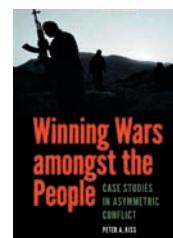
Doug Jackson, historical novelist

VERDICT: Shines a fascinating spotlight on the medieval world



Winning Wars Amongst the People

by Peter A Kiss



THIS book addresses the fluid nature of asymmetric warfare by analysing so-called fourth-generation conflicts in the Punjab, Rhodesia, Kosovo and France. The author coherently explains the basic principles of counter-insurgency operations, providing examples of strategic failures and tactical successes, before expertly linking his case studies into a framework for effective counter-insurgency doctrine. It comes highly recommended.

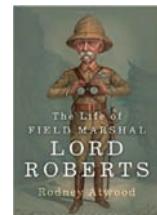
Pte Matt Wong, Londons

VERDICT: A useful text book for scholars of asymmetric conflict



The Life of Lord Roberts

by Rodney Atwood



DETAILED a career that spanned the Victorian and Edwardian empires, this biography of Lord Roberts reveals how he was ahead of his time as a strategist and tactician. He did much to drive improvements in pay, conditions and equipment but was often divisive in a time where patronage was fundamental to advancement. For me the author is at his best describing how Roberts shaped the Army that entered the First World War – the senior officers of the era were his protégés.

Lt Col Andy Gladen, RE

VERDICT: A compelling insight into a hugely influential figure





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SOLDIERSPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long

Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Off-road appeal: The Royal Logistic Corps enduro team has started preparations for this year's British championship. Read more about the squad's quest for new members on pages 84-85...





WHILE sports such as football, boxing and rugby union have traditionally enjoyed top billing in Service circles it appears the tide may be turning in some quarters.

The Royal Logistic Corps has offered significant backing to its enduro team in recent times and with an increasing number of personnel testing themselves in the adrenaline-fuelled pursuit the investment is paying off.

Manager SSgt Marc Jenkins has been the driving force behind the growth and under the senior NCO's guidance the outfit has expanded from just two riders in 2008 to a team of nine.

“For some of the guys it will be a baptism of fire but it is great experience for them as riders”

The group returned to action at a two-day training camp in Hullavington last month and with the opening round of the British Enduro Championship looming on the horizon their preparations are now in full swing.

Despite seeing numbers rise Jenkins is on the hunt for even more talent and believes there could be some hidden gems in the corps' ranks.

“The team is getting stronger but there are isolated units where people are still riding on an individual basis,” he told *SoldierSport*.

“It's important they realise we are here. The RLC is the biggest corps and we want to tap into some of that talent.

“We are up to nine riders and the numbers are growing every year.

“We have to operate around the lads' work schedules, tours and exercises but they usually get released.

“The majority of our members already have an interest in motorcycles. They may not have raced before but with a bit of training we can bring them on.

“As the corps team we can supply the bikes and riding kit – all they have to do is make a small contribution at the start of the season.”

With training now well underway Jenkins is looking forward to the resumption of competitive action – which





includes a keenly contested Army showdown.

He added: "From April onwards there will be a round in the British Enduro Championship pretty much every month.

"For some of the guys it will certainly be a baptism of fire but it is great experience for them as riders.

"Sgt Kalem Hicks was Army champion in 2013 and competes in the expert class. We are hoping he can achieve a top-ten finish.

"The lads train on sports afternoons and we have kept ourselves busy over the winter. This training camp is all about blowing the cobwebs away."

LCpl Richard Penfold has

been involved with the squad for four years and is expecting another challenging season in the national series.

"Even in the event's lowest level you are up against some really good riders," he said.

"It is a tough challenge; it is the top-ranked competition in the country.

"These guys go off to the world championships and do well there, which proves how high the standard is.

"It is awesome. As soldiers we go away on tour but when we come back we get to go to contests like this, where we are up against some of the best riders in the world.

"You cannot beat it."

Penfold competed in trials

races as a youngster but it was the opportunities available within the Service that saw him switch disciplines.

"When I joined the Army I realised enduro was the way forward," he explained.

"It is a mix of everything; trials is all about obstacles and you get that with this, along with the speed of motocross.

"Everyone in the RLC team gets along and we are all here for the same reason – we love riding bikes." ■

For more information on how to get involved with the RLC team contact SSgt Jenkins on military 94355 8389.

IN NUMBERS

6

Rounds for the RLC in this season's British Enduro Championship



RIDING RESERVE



» **RESERVIST Pte Ben Brodrick** is one of the newcomers to the fold and having hailed from a background in motocross he has been keen to develop a new skill set.

The 26-year-old, who works as a joiner on civvy street, made the crossover after learning about the RLC set-up and is now looking forward to a busy year on the bike.

"I wanted to get involved in enduro so I came down for a trial and was offered a place on the team," the soldier explained.

"The runs are a lot longer compared to motocross. You have to be fit for both but this is more challenging and you need a lot of skill."

"We have a good set-up and the guys have helped me with my technique. I'm looking to get to all the training camps and hopefully I can push for a podium finish in the races."



RUGBY UNION

UP NEXT: THE ARMY FACE LONDON WELSH ON MARCH 11 (1500 KICK-OFF) IN ALDERSHOT

Game brief

Date: January 28, 2015

Competition: Army v Cambridge

Venue: Army Rugby Stadium

Army

Gill	Austin	Dowding
1	2	3
Bilton	Ball	
29	5	
Jones	Koroiyadi	Mundy
6	8	7
Chennel	Prasad	
9	10	
Nacamavuto	O'Reilly	
12	13	
Sema	Naulago	
11	Balekinasiga	14
15		

Coach's comment



There were six players from last season's Army-Navy fixture in the team so we had a number of young lads involved tonight.

Connor O'Reilly was excellent at centre and the likes of Jack Prasad and Darrell Ball did really well; it was a good blend of youth and experience.

We have set ourselves two goals for this season – to retain the Inter-Services title and then the Defence

World Cup. It is a tough challenge and we have got a lot of work to do.

I'm still looking to recruit players in certain areas but we have the nucleus of a very good squad.



Capt Andy Sanger (RE)



Returning Reds stun students

2015 opening match

Army 62
Cambridge University 10

HEAD coach Capt Andy Sanger (RE) started his second stint in charge of the Army rugby union team with a thumping victory over Cambridge University.

Five tries in the opening 30 minutes formed the bedrock for a commanding 62-10 win as the Reds' attack proved too hot to handle on a freezing night in Aldershot.

The jinking runs and blistering pace of Fijian quartet Pte Jack Prasad (Scots), LCpl Pecevi Nacamavuto (RE), Pte Sivi Naulago and LCpl Bale

Balekinasiga (both Yorks) left the students' defence in tatters and if it had not been for a subdued spell in the second period the scoreline could have been far greater.

Balekinasiga started the rout in the fourth minute as he rounded off a scintillating break from inside the soldiers' 22 and Naulago crossed moments later as he ran clear following a slick passing move.

Nacamavuto danced through a limp Cambridge rearguard and offloaded to Gnr Pete Austin (RA) for the third try and the duo then combined to create a second score for Naulago.

Prasad inflicted further damage as he skipped through the lines to present Nacamavuto with a simple opportunity before Sgt Darrell

Ball (RE) crashed to the line as the one-way traffic continued.

Cambridge stopped the rot as wing Simon Davis ghosted home on the left flank but normal service was resumed shortly after the interval as Lt Will Jones (R Welsh) cut through the opposition to touch down under the posts.

With the game seemingly won the Servicemen suffered an intensity drop and they had to wait 20 minutes for their next score – which was rounded-off by the outstanding Pte Connor O'Reilly (Para).

Jacob Poulton surged to the line to give the visitors a deserved second try before replacement OCdt Sam Richardson and winger LCpl Sam Sema (RE) extended the lead late on to cap a superb night for the Army. ■

Match in numbers

5

Conversions kicked by Army fly half Pte Jack Prasad (Scots)



4

Tries from the Reds' new-look back three



Years of Service
rugby for Sgt
Darrell Ball (RE)

12



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LPA-OY-11-005

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SI Transition SOLFX™ Half Jacket XLJ

LPA-OY-11-008

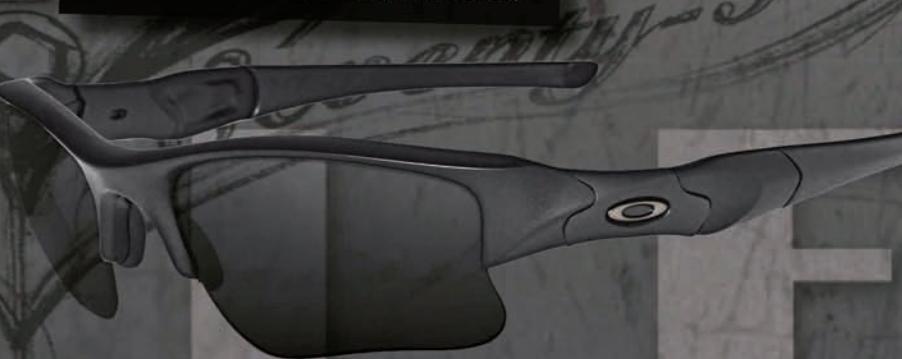
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Brown seeks breakthrough bout

BOXING prospect Gnr Robert Brown (RA) is facing a busy spell inside the ring and out as he battles for honours on two fronts.

The middleweight is forging a career in the sport's professional ranks and is pushing for an increase in competitive action as he chases his dream of becoming European champion.

However, the 26-year-old has had to balance his personal ambitions with his mission to guide the 32 Regiment boxing squad to glory in this month's Royal Artillery Championships.

As coach, Brown runs daily training sessions for the team before heading to the gym in the evening to perfect the skills he needs to thrive as an up-and-coming contender.

Victory in his first fight gave the gunner the perfect start but he is aware that tougher challenges are to come if he is to achieve his goal.

"It is hard work," Brown told *SoldierSport*. "I need to win



“
My opponents are now a lot harder and I've had to change the way I fight
”

fights if I'm going to climb up the rankings.

"I've told my manager I want to be out more and hopefully I can get some bouts organised. I defeated a guy called Kieron Gray on my debut and won all four rounds but it wasn't easy, he was a tough opponent.

"I would like to challenge for a British title and then push for a Commonwealth or European belt. I would love to make a name for myself."

Boxing is a family tradition for the Serviceman, whose father George served in the now disbanded 50 Missile Regiment, Royal Artillery and is a former champion in three weight categories.

Brown enjoyed a short spell with the Army team in 2010 before returning to his unit to concentrate on his career.

A Herrick tour followed in 2012 and he then became involved in coaching. But the fighter caught the eye during a sparring session at the Contender Gym in Trowbridge and an offer to turn

professional soon followed.

"It was something I had always thought about but I didn't know how to go about it," he said.

"This is totally different; my opponents are now a lot harder and I've had to change the way I fight.

"Coming from an amateur background means I've only had to make a few tweaks; I already had the skills but I just needed to adapt."

His immediate focus is on the corps showdown and the team's quest for success.

"We want to improve on last season's performance," the coach said.

"The CO and RSM are really supportive. We've had money for new kit and have been given time off to train."

"Gnr Jack Robinson won the heavyweight category last year and Gnr Brett Westwood is a real prospect at welterweight. We want to get as many guys as possible pushing for the Army individual championships that follow." ■

Game brief

Date: February 17, 2015

Competition: Army v England U20s

Venue: Army Rugby Stadium

Army

Batley	Metters	Dawson
1	2	3
Haigh	Gattlin	
4	5	
Mills	Binskin-Barnes	McGlade
6	8	7
Leonard	Robinson	
9	10	
Mitchelson	Dodd	
12	13	
Dainton	Roberts	Mullen
11	15	14

Captain's comment

The Under-20s change their line-up on a regular basis so we were not sure what we would be up against.

They gave us a tough physical game which is what we needed going into the Inter-Services.

It is an absolute honour to test ourselves against an England international team and the intensity of the match is great experience for our players.



Cpl Jane Leonard (RE)



Reds succumb to young guns

Friendly fixture

Army 10
England Under-20s 25

THE Army women were left to reflect on what might have been after they slipped to a 25-10 defeat against England Under-20s in front of a packed crowd in Aldershot.

Having recorded four consecutive wins this season the Reds headed into the game in fine form and were more than a match for their rivals in a hard-fought affair.

But the error count proved costly for the soldiers as they failed to fully capitalise on some promising positions,

although their performance suggested that another Inter-Services title is well within their grasp.

After some full-blooded early exchanges it was the hosts who opened the scoring in the 19th minute.

The Army forwards forced a succession of penalties and the mounting pressure finally took its toll as Cpl Jade Mullen (AGC) touched down in the corner.

However, the lead did not last long as the visitors' pack flexed their muscles to create the perfect platform for Rachel Lund to ghost home under the posts.

Sarah Nicholas kicked the extras to edge her side ahead and the fly half slotted a penalty on the half-hour mark to extend the advantage further.

The setback failed to

deter the Servicewomen and former England international Cpl Jane Leonard (RE) provided the spark for their second try.

The scrum half collected the ball at the back of a strong forward surge and broke through the England lines before feeding Sgt Amy Robinson (AGC (RMP)) for a simple score.

Nicholas kicked a second penalty and Olivia Jones delivered a further blow when she crossed for a converted try.

Amy Cokayne sealed the contest when she sprinted clear but the Army fought until the final whistle.

Cpl Carrie Roberts (REME) and Lt Leah Thomson (AGC (RMP)) threatened with strong runs that were thwarted by last-ditch tackles. ■





Pictures: Welsh Rugby Union

Rowland's dream debut

As far as international debuts go there is nothing more daunting than taking on the reigning world champions in the first match for your country.

But that was the prospect facing Capt Gemma Rowland (RA) as she lined-up for Wales in the opening fixture of this year's Six Nations campaign.

The officer was brought into the squad on the back of an inspired display for the Combined Services against Cardiff Blues in November and she made a dream start as the side recorded a 13-0 win over England.

Rowland was in the thick of the action a week later as Wales trounced Scotland 39-3 and she is now hoping to cement her place in the team for the rest of the tournament.

"It was a huge first game," the centre told *SoldierSport*. "A lot of my friends play in the English Premiership so I knew

it was going to be tough.

"Wales were the total underdogs and to come out with a win shows how much we believed in ourselves. No matter how hard you train you have to have belief and confidence.

"You are always going to be nervous, especially for the first game of the Six Nations. The buzz was phenomenal and when the national anthems played the adrenalin really started flowing."

Rowland coped well with the step up but said there was one main difference compared to the Service game.

"The physicality was the

major thing," she added. "When you represent the Army it is a high level but the international game is full of players who are the best they can be.

"It is pure muscle and the tackles were like running into a brick wall.

"We were buzzing at full-time, there were tears of pure joy. The build-up was so big and as soon as that final whistle went it felt like a huge release.

"It has been an absolute whirlwind and my feet have not touched the ground.

"I didn't think the call-up would happen so soon.

"To be named in the extended squad ahead of the tournament was a great achievement in itself; to get a start was amazing." ■



“It has been an absolute whirlwind”

SPORT SHORTS



Army's high five

Inter-Services Under-23 football

Army 5
Royal Navy 0

» THE Army Under-23s made the perfect start to their 2015 Inter-Services campaign as they thrashed the Royal Navy 5-0 in Aldershot.

An own goal from Mne Marcus Ryan broke the deadlock after a cagey opening spell before a quick-fire double from Spr Steve Currie (RE) gave the Reds a commanding 3-0 lead at the break.

Senior Service striker AET Danny Brookwell squandered two excellent opportunities shortly after the interval and he was made to pay as further strikes from Pte Sean Wooley (RLC) and Pte Aidan Kirby (Yorks) sealed the rout.



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#ArmyNavyRugby



Hodgkinson sets the pace

MORE than 550 athletes took to the start line for the annual Army Cross Country Championships.

Freezing temperatures at Sandhurst failed to deter the runners and some impressive times were posted as the soldiers hit top form ahead of this season's Inter-Services.

Cpl Dani Hodgkinson (QARANC, pictured) dominated the women's race and surged to the line in a time of 25min 52sec - finishing ahead of Lt Lauren Hall (REME) and Capt Elysia Ridley (RLC).

"I could not have asked for better conditions," she told *SoldierSport*. "I started off in the pack; sometimes it can be quite slow when you are not sure of the course.

"But I naturally picked up the pace and once I got a lead I cracked on."

Maj Ady Whitwam (RLC) followed up his success from last season with victory in the men's race as he crossed the line in 30min 43sec.

LCpl Quinton Kearns (RLC) was second with LCpl Alexander Miller (IG) third.

"I'm really pleased with that run," Whitwam said afterwards. "There was a degree of expectation and the pressure was on me to repeat my performance from last year.

"I've clocked up some hard miles over the winter and this win is a result of that training."

Athletes from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst also enjoyed a successful afternoon as they scooped the major units and women's trophies with P Company, The Parachute Regiment winning the minor units.

Keith Donkin (ex-RAPTC), secretary of the Army Athletics Association, said the success of the event should lead to a strong showing at the upcoming Inter-Services race and marathon championships.

"I'm over the moon," he added. "We have some good newcomers in the junior and senior teams so we are looking strong."

"Dani is a fantastic athlete. I knew she was in good form and it was the same with Ady - I expected them to win." ■



MONTH in sport

March's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services Netball

WHEN: Wednesday, March 4 to Friday, March 6

WHERE: HMS Nelson, Portsmouth

COMMENTS: With two international players in their midst the Army will take to the court as strong favourites following their tournament success in 2014



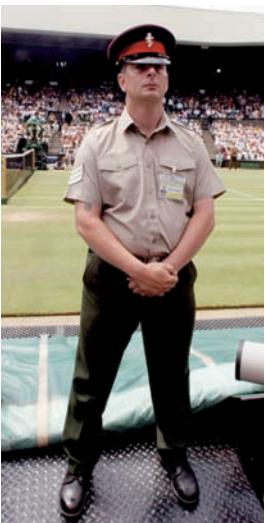
WHAT: Inter-Services Hockey

WHEN: Tuesday, March 10 to Wednesday, March 11

WHERE: HMS Temeraire, Portsmouth

COMMENTS: The Army men won their first title in five years at the 2014 tournament, while a 10-0 win over the Royal Navy steered the women to glory

STEWARD SEARCH



» VOLUNTEERS are being sought to act as Service stewards at this summer's Wimbledon tennis championships.

The event runs from June 29 to July 12 and any non-commissioned personnel interested in taking part must be available for the full two-week period, as well as the competition's reserve day of Monday, July 13 should the matches overrun.

Soldiers will be required to commence work, in uniform, from 0930 every morning until the close of play but a shift pattern will be in operation to ensure individuals are not on duty for the whole day.

Those performing the role will be required to take annual leave to cover their time at the tournament but the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club will offer a daily rate for food and accommodation.

Full details can be found in [2015DIN01-014](#) and the deadline for applications is Friday, April 17.

For more information call WO1 Andrew Franklin (REME) on 94394 8207 or email armywimbledon2015@gmail.com



WHAT: Inter-Services Football

WHEN: Wednesday, March 18 and Wednesday, March 25

WHERE: Aldershot Military Stadium and Portsmouth

COMMENTS: Breaking the dominance of the Royal Air Force is the aim for the men and the women will be looking to retain their title from last year

SPORT SHORTS



Surf schedule

► NEWQUAY will host the annual Army Surf Championships from April 13 to 17.

The event marks the start of a busy month for the athletes, who will be competing in the Combined Services from April 18 to 19 ahead of a tour to Portugal. A beginners' week is also planned for September.

For more details search for the Army Surfing page on DII.

IN NUMBERS

250

Players at the Army Squash Championships. Sgt Dean Boys (RLC) won the open title and Lt Rosie Hamilton (RE) took the women's crown



Signallers shine

► FOOTBALLERS from 22 Signal Regiment lifted the Army Super Cup following a 2-0 victory over 71 Engineer Regiment.

The match pitted the winners of last season's Challenge Cup with the Reserve champions and it was the Regular personnel who triumphed.

"The team played well against strong opponents," said winning skipper Cpl Kevin Cameron.

Gunners' Nordic gains

INSPIRED form from LBdr Lee Jackson fired 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery to glory at the Army Nordic Ski Championships in Germany.

The Olympian showcased his skills in the resort of Ruhpolding to finish first in the men's ten-kilometre biathlon sprint and the 15-kilometre cross-country race.

Up-and-coming skier Gnr Vinny Fountain (pictured) also produced some encouraging displays and their efforts steered the unit to victory in the team sprint and team cross-country as they took the overall title.

Jackson was also part of the Royal Artillery squad that claimed the Inter-Corps prize and helped the Army win Inter-Services honours.

The women's competition was a happy hunting ground for the Royal Artillery squad, who won the biathlon sprint and finished second in the cross-country and cross-country relay.

On an individual basis, Cpl Nerys Jones (AGC) was the athlete to beat as she won the seven-and-a-half-kilometre sprint and the 12.5-kilometre biathlon.

"Going into the competition we were confident we had a good shot at winning the championships," gunners team captain Lt Jennifer Price told *SoldierSport*.

"Lee Jackson helped strengthen the men's squad and they managed to knock 1 Logistic Support Regiment (1 LSR) off the top spot.

"We've had two guys training with the biathlon national development squad and have done as much work as we can outside the day job."

The Army Alpine Ski Championships had a familiar feel as 1 LSR were again crowned Inter-Unit champions. Star skier SSgt Dougie MacPherson (RLC) took the men's title with Gnr Vicky Inman (RA) securing the women's prize. ■



Pictures: Capt James Silson, RA



Picture: SSgt Mark Nesbit, RLC

The magic of Meribel

THE slopes of Meribel, in France, again welcomed the military's finest skiers and snowboarders for the annual Inter-Services Snow Sports Championships.

With the competition proving as keenly contested as ever the honours were evenly spread between all three Forces at the end of the week-long extravaganza.

In the snowboard disciplines the Army won the men's and women's parallel slalom competitions, along with the women's snowboard cross.

And in the skiing the soldiers secured top spot in the women's super giant slalom, the men's and women's giant slalom and the men's slalom.

Afghans join global elite

WHEN the Afghanistan cricket team lock horns with England at the World Cup this month it will mark a significant milestone for Maj Andrew Banks (AGC (RMP)).

After being posted to the British Embassy in Kabul in 2002 the officer spent his spare time sourcing kit and equipment to help develop the sport in the country.

Approaches were made to English first-class counties, as well as the Marylebone Cricket Club and various manufacturers, and a supply chain was created to ship the items.

The Serviceman sought the support of former president Hamid Karzai and with the government on-board the Afghan cricket scene rapidly expanded.

In 2009 they qualified for the Twenty20 World Cup and are now testing themselves against the game's greats once again.

"I would describe myself as a cricket nut," Banks told *SoldierSport*. "I read about the Afghans playing the sport before I left and I followed up on that once I was in Kabul.

"I managed to get hold of the guys who were running the game. They had the basic infrastructure but did not have any kit."

The officer also had blazers and ties created and with the kit procured attention turned to performances on the pitch.

"In 2006 I helped organise their first tour to the UK and by 2007 they were quickly moving through the ICC divisions," he added.

"They were beating Jersey and Namibia, who are seasoned cricketing minnows.

"They are not in the same league as Australia or South Africa, and will not be until a first-class scene is established in Afghanistan, but teams like Zimbabwe and Bangladesh will have to be aware." ■



Guards go off-road



» THE Infantry enduro team battled knee-deep mud and freezing conditions as they competed in the Royal Air Force Ardura event in Bagshot, Surrey.

Riders Sgt Paul Simons, CSgt Dean Hughes and Sgt David Scarf – who all serve in the Welsh Guards – were up against a field of 150 military rivals but all three managed to finish in the top five of their class.

The squad only formed in November 2012 but with the Welsh Guards relocating to Pirbright the trio are able to train on a regular basis at a nearby off-road track.

SPORT SHORTS



» NEW Army rugby league coach Sgt Jack Horner (RLC) made a losing start to his spell in charge as the Reds suffered a 20-8 defeat to the Wath Brow Hornets in the first round of the Challenge Cup.



League lessons

» ASPIRING rugby league coaches are being invited to Larkhill in May for two seminars covering various aspects of the game.

A level-two coaching programme focusing on the skills and techniques needed to run training sessions will be held from May 18 to 21 and a workshop on kicking strategies has been scheduled for May 21.

For more details contact Maj Brett Bader (RA) on 07810 503533 or email 540bader@armymail.mod.uk

SPORT SHORTS



Artists at work

THE Army Martial Arts Association has announced two diary dates for this month.

Combermere Barracks in Windsor will be the setting for the 2015 kendo course from March 16 to 20 and the same venue will host the organisation's annual Open Championship on March 21.

The competition categories include karate, ITF and WTF tae kwon do, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, weapons, open kata and kendo. For more details on both events email mathew.frost252@mod.uk or call military 94879 2652.



Called to court

THE Service's volleyball stars are preparing for two challenging fixtures in the 2015 season.

Players will take to the court for the Inter-Unit finals at the Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre on Wednesday, April 15.

And the Army will host the keenly contested Crown Services tournament at the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford on Saturday, May 9 and Sunday, May 10.

For more details call Maj Steve Black (RE) on military 95471 5349.

→ Team of the month

Army Telemark Team



TELEMARK skiing has profited from a successful season on the slopes that included a record number of entries at the Army championships and a strong showing at Inter-Services level.

The campaign started in the Austrian resort of Rauris, where more than 140 military skiers took part in Exercise Telemark Titan – a package that featured five days of intense training followed by a variety of competitions.

Fast courses provided the ideal backdrop for hard fought sprint and classic races, with OCdt Rob Houston and OCdt Dominique Symons (both Exeter UOTC) crowned overall Army champions.

The development sprint – an event designed to challenge less experienced athletes – offered victories for Capt Fran Bullock (RE)

and CSgt Alan Baker of the Royal Marines.

OCdt Olivia Dubec (Exeter UOTC) and Capt Joe Wooldridge (3 RHA) secured the open novice awards for those who had not competed in telemark prior to this season.

Personnel faced a gruelling test on the final day as they took to the start line for the punishing mountain race, which was eventually won by LCpl Dean Gillon (RE).

With the competition complete the action switched to the slopes of Meribel in France – home of the discipline's Inter-Services showdown.

The Army team – skippered by Maj Martin Chohan (RLC) – endured a tough battle with their rivals and the honours were even across all four races before the soldiers secured a crucial advantage in the final event.

On an individual front, Maj Chippy White (RE) dominated the giant slalom, sprint and classic events as he finished his competitive career in style.

For more information on taking part in Exercise Telemark Titan 2016 and the indoor events planned for later this year email telemark@awsa.org.uk



Inter-Services Telemark Championships – Meribel, France, February 1-6
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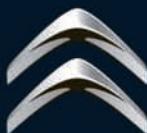
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Final word

In the US desert we asked exercising members of the Army Air Corps what they think the future holds for the prized Apache helicopter...



Capt Joe Nelson

Contingency operations will see the Apache employed in more diverse roles. Everybody got used to doing the same thing day in, day out on Operation Herrick so now we need to be ready for all sorts of missions. There is no defined enemy but they will be well equipped so we must become a lot tougher and quicker in our thinking – it's going to be a difficult challenge.



Cpl Carl Cox

I think the Apache will live long because it proved itself in Afghanistan and Iraq and there will always be a need for the close support for ground troops that it provides. Its weapons and surveillance systems are excellent so as long as we're heading to war zones we'll need it.



LCpl Claire Mason (RAMC)

As a medic my role will change depending on what the Apache does. Hopefully the training will continue without reductions to hours, though. It all depends on what missions come in and that keeps things interesting. A part of me would like to be back on operations in Afghanistan because that's where I'd be doing my job more.



WO1 Clare O'Neill

The British Army is moving forward in a fast and furious way, and our base at Wattisham will feel the brunt of it because Apache is going to be seen in many more places. We don't know exactly where we'll be going but there's no doubt that we'll be involved.



SSgt Al Mason

In future we will need to employ our weapons more diversely against more technologically advanced enemies. We just don't know where the next conflict will be so that's why we are preparing for all potential scenarios. Apache has many functions and we train in hot and cold weather environments, proving that it is more than capable in any theatre. It's almost inevitable the asset will be called upon for the next operational deployment.



A/Sgt Anthony Highlands

Our job will depend a lot on the technological upgrades that come through, which could make the aircraft a significant Istar asset as well as an attack helicopter. But regardless of the enemy the Apache will always be there to provide an aggressive overwatch for ground troops.



Air Tpr Tim Woodhead

We will remain a vital asset for the Army and the helicopter will be used whenever it can be because it is so effective. The Apache gives the Service the ability to carry out missions like nothing else. It's a very impressive bit of kit that is loaded with the best weapons. It is a privilege to work on it and I'll be glad to keep it for many years to come.



Air Tpr Chris Foulkes

Now we are out of Afghanistan we will go back to working alongside the mechanised brigades rather than being called out, so we'll operate within a formation. It will mean many new exercises and much more joint training with 16 Air Assault Brigade. We've been used to working around operations so this will be a bit of a change for us, which is good.

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