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MyEXPENSES

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Expense Type\*

Subsistence Expense

Date Incurred\*

No of days\*

Expense Currency

GBP

Expense Location Country

United Kingdom

Total days subsistence amount (Food)

£

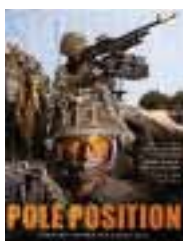
Total nights subsistence amount (Accommodation)

£

DHBS Booking Code



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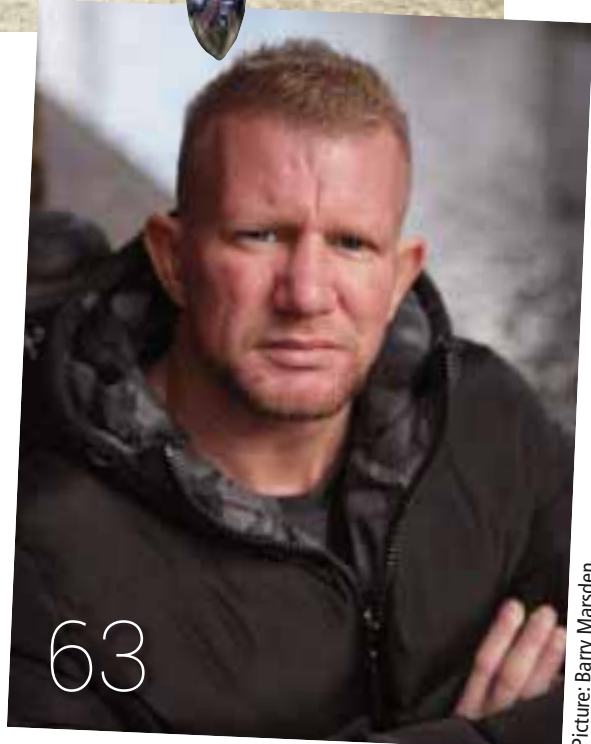
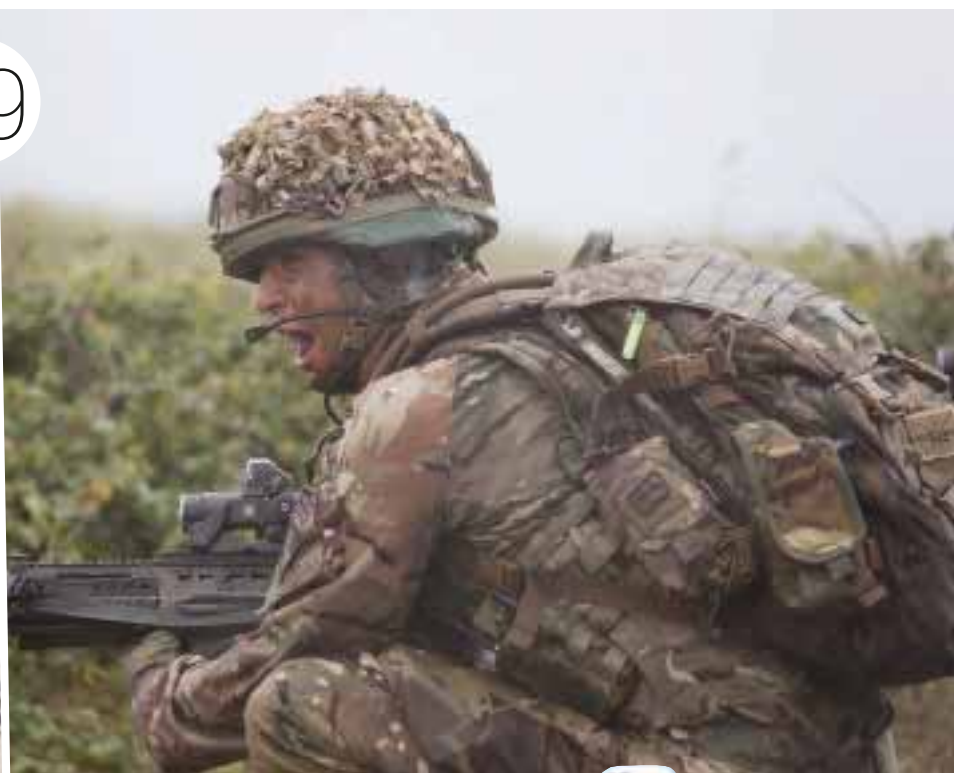
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29



Picture: Barry Marsden

70

## Embracing challenges



THE Army has never been an organisation that stands still.

Stepping forward to meet fresh challenges is ingrained in the Service's core and this issue very much reflects that.

UK personnel are currently deployed in more than 80 countries around the world and another is about to be added to that list in the form of Mali.

A nation ravaged by chronic poverty, with terrorism and conflict on the rise, it will form the backdrop to a demanding tour for the Light Dragoons as they become the first British unit to join the UN's peacekeeping mission in the West African state (page 37).

But, as you would expect, the soldiers are relishing what lies ahead – as are their counterparts in the Royal Yeomanry, who are preparing for a significant milestone of their own.

This winter they will become the first Reserve sub-unit to deploy on Op Cabrit in Poland (page 29).

With the tempo so high you'd be forgiven for thinking that Covid-19 is now a distant memory. That is not the case, and troops are being reminded so as they return from leave this month (page 15).

Such advice will be crucial if the Army is to maintain the fit and healthy force needed for its next challenge.

Richard Long ● Acting Editor

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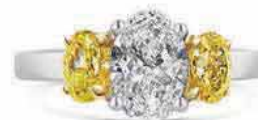
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## Crack team tackles explosive aftermath

Army personnel provide critical help to British nationals and locals in Beirut

**A**N OPERATIONAL liaison and reconnaissance team (OLRT) has been at the centre of a joint Service effort to provide critical humanitarian support following the ammonium nitrate explosion in the port area of Beirut.

The damage caused by the blast, which measured 4.5 on the Richter scale and was felt 150 miles away in Cyprus, is widespread and likely to have long-lasting consequences.

Lebanon was already experiencing a major economic crisis and dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, as well as accommodating more than 1.5 million refugees from neighbouring Syria.

A four-man squad of British personnel was dispatched from Joint Forces Headquarters in Northwood and they managed to establish an operations room in Beirut within 48 hours of the blast.

A Royal Marine specialist in amphibious landings later travelled to bolster the OLRT, while two engineers from 66 Works Group, medical planners and a Reservist officer from the Engineer and Logistic Staff Corps were called forward by the team to provide specialist assistance.

"The British Embassy was put out of action by the explosion so we set up in a temporary embassy in a residential building away from the port," said Lt Col Pat Allen (RLC), head of the OLRT.

"We established an area so embassy staff could conduct some crisis management, account for all their own people and assist any UK nationals

affected by the blast – luckily none were seriously hurt.

"We then worked with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development and various NGOs to help coordinate relief efforts."

During their 12-day stint in the country, the OLRT supported the Lebanese Armed Forces after their barracks in the port area was destroyed (see page 9) and also identified a weakness in the logistic supply chain that was hampering relief efforts.

"Lots of countries were throwing aid at Lebanon and, in one example, a shipment of drugs from another donor nation was damaged by the heat from being left on the side of the airfield for too long," said Lt Col Allen.

"We decided to fly in specialist refrigerators on a Royal Air Force C-17 so these materials could be properly stored – my team helped establish where they should be located and an efficient supply system."

The officer added: "The effort was a truly joint affair, with our maritime, land and air forces cooperating well with civilian agencies – and all the while working in a high-threat environment with mass protests and civilian unrest that sporadically broke out.

"But that's where the OLRT's rigorous training procedures really come to the fore.

"It allows us to do our job and protect the experts we sometimes need to bring with us." ■

“  
Drugs were  
damaged by  
the heat  
”

## SOLDIER

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**ARMY**  
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**SOLDIER – Magazine of the British Army**  
Ordnance Barracks, Government Road,  
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU.

SOLDIER is published by the Ministry of Defence  
and printed by Walstead (Roche) Ltd.  
Print contract managed by CDS.

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# GLOBAL SITREP

## 1. GERMANY

### SNIFFING OUT CORONAVIRUS



GERMAN military sniffer dogs at a training centre in the western town of Ulmen have been taught to detect Covid-19 infections in humans.

Eight animals were coached for a week so they could distinguish between the mucus and saliva of patients infected with coronavirus and perfectly healthy individuals.

The canines, made up of sheep dogs, spaniels and retrievers, achieved a detection rate of 94 per cent from more than 1,000 positive and negative samples presented on a random basis by a machine.

The study was created jointly by the Bundeswehr and the University of Veterinary Medicine Hanover.

"This is just a pilot study at the moment," said Holger Volk, chair of the university's department of small animal medicine. "There's a lot of potential to take this further – to really use these dogs in the field."

The researchers are also looking at how well the dogs can differentiate between samples from Covid-19 patients and those with related illnesses such as flu.

“The IED threat out there is so high”

Light Dragoons get set for Mali – page 37



## 4. CARIBBEAN

## 2. UK

### VIRTUAL GLOBETROTTERS

TROOPS have been limbering up for a virtual global dash to raise charity cash.

Soldiers taking part in the ABF Race the World challenge are collectively tabbing, running, rowing, cycling or swimming the same gruelling mileage as crossing the planet's continents.

Teams are signed up to complete the length of seven, five or three of these huge geographical spaces in a set period of time during September and October.

A healthy competitive spirit is expected during the contest, which is open to Regular and Reserve units, plus training regiments and troops' family members.

Visit [www.soldierscharity.org](http://www.soldierscharity.org) to enter.



## 3. UK

### SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESS

A PROJECT to increase the grazing habitat at MoD Shoeburyness is being expanded following a set of promising trials.

The 7,000-hectare site in Essex is home to numerous rare species of wildlife and the introduction of six goats to grassland there earlier this year is yielding positive results for conservation and sustainable land management.

Matt Elmer from Qinetiq, which operates the facility, said the control measures had proved effective and increased biodiversity.

The largest testing and evaluation range in the UK, MoD Shoeburyness has long been subjected to restricted access and its marshes have subsequently become a haven for protected species.



## 4. CARIBBEAN

### SHELL SCRAPES

SAPPERS have been playing their part in a dual effort to help turtles threatened by plastic pollution – as well as efforts to recycle the waste for future use.

Members of 24 Commando, Royal Engineers – who are serving on RFA Argus – dropped by to help a sanctuary for the endangered amphibians on the island of Curacao.

Following a beach clearance op with colleagues from the vessel, they helped a plastic recycling project move to a new and more spacious building.

The facility has been using the material to manufacture items including facemasks for health professionals.

The RFA Argus is part of a group of ships centred around HMS Medway, which are currently deployed to the region to help with the hurricane season.



## INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

### Brief the team now:



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## 5. CYPRUS

### TOSCA RESERVE CONTRIBUTION REACHES NEW HIGH



PERSONNEL from 6th Battalion, The Rifles will complete an unprecedented

handover from one Reservist battlegroup to another when they deploy on Op Tosca this month.

The 200-strong contingent will relieve their counterparts from 7 Rifles on the long standing UN peacekeeping commitment – a mission that will see them remain in country until March.

Preparations for the tasking were maintained throughout the Covid-19 outbreak and the soldiers completed their pre-deployment training and rehearsal exercise as this issue went to press.

"This is really good for us," said Lt Danai Osmond (RE), a member of the battlegroup. "Because we are both in the Rifles family the handover has worked well so far.

"Morale is very high and we all want to finish our civvy jobs and get started."

Meanwhile, troops from 2nd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment have had their two-year posting as the regional standby battalion in Cyprus extended due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

They had been due to end their tour in the summer but the announcement means 480 soldiers – including 109 families – will remain on the island until the end of 2020.

With the unit's immediate future confirmed, attention has now turned to the day job and troops will shortly be conducting live-firing training up to platoon level.

Exercise Aetos Fury will then test the collective competencies of each company and plans are in place for command post serials using the unit-based virtual trainer.



## 7. LEBANON

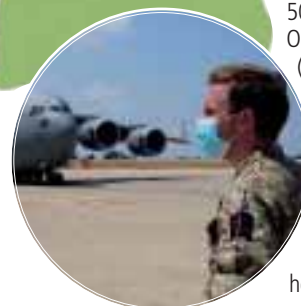
### BEIRUT BLAST BACK-UP

A FIVE-MAN operational liaison and reconnaissance team (OLRT) deployed to Lebanon in the wake of the chemical explosion in Beirut (page 7) provided critical assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces during their 12-day mission.

The local barracks was flattened by the blast so the UK squad called in vital resources from Cyprus.

"The Royal Navy's HMS Enterprise brought in two ISO containers holding a 500-man tented camp," said OLRT leader Lt Col Pat Allen (RLC). "Mercian personnel, including an RLC chef, also arrived to help set up the camp and field kitchens."

The team worked with civilian agencies and Lebanese authorities to help coordinate relief efforts.



## 6. LITHUANIA

### EXERCISING FURIOUSLY

JOINT terminal attack controllers from the Royal Artillery tested their targeting skills alongside multinational counterparts on Exercise Furious Wolf.

The gunners were joined by their equivalents from seven

countries – including Estonia, Denmark, Germany and the United States – on the Kazlu Ruda ranges, where they practised the close air support tactics, techniques and procedures that would be utilised on a Nato operation in a congested and contested environment.

Typhoon aircraft from 6 Squadron, Royal Air Force were among the airframes taking part.







## Talon test passed

■ RESERVIST ground crews learnt how to maintain, refuel and rearm the Apache attack helicopter during Exercise Talon Hydra.

The three-week test saw six soldiers from 6 Regiment, Army Air Corps working on forward arming and refuelling points alongside their Regular counterparts on the Stanford training area in Norfolk.

Air Tpr Paul Roberts, who works as a helicopter pilot in his civilian job, said: "I'm comfortable operating under the rotor disc, but working on military helicopters brings extra complexity."

Picture: Cpl Danny Houghton, RLC

## PERSONNEL SPEAK OUT

■ CALLS to a confidential Army helpline that assists soldiers in dealing with professional and personal issues have rocketed in the past year.

The annual report for the Speak Out service flagged a 74 per cent increase in troops asking for advice during 2019 after several years of static demand.

Although junior soldiers accounted for half of traffic, officers made up around a third of it. Claims of poor treatment by the chain of command and unsatisfactory communication were common grievances.

Military chiefs believe the ballooning uptake is down to the initiative – launched six years ago – now becoming far better known among personnel.

Lt Col Jonathan Buxton (RA) – of the Army Unacceptable Behaviours team behind Speak Out – said the increase in calls was a "step change".

He continued: "It allows soldiers to pick up the phone and speak to somebody who will listen independently and outside the chain of command."

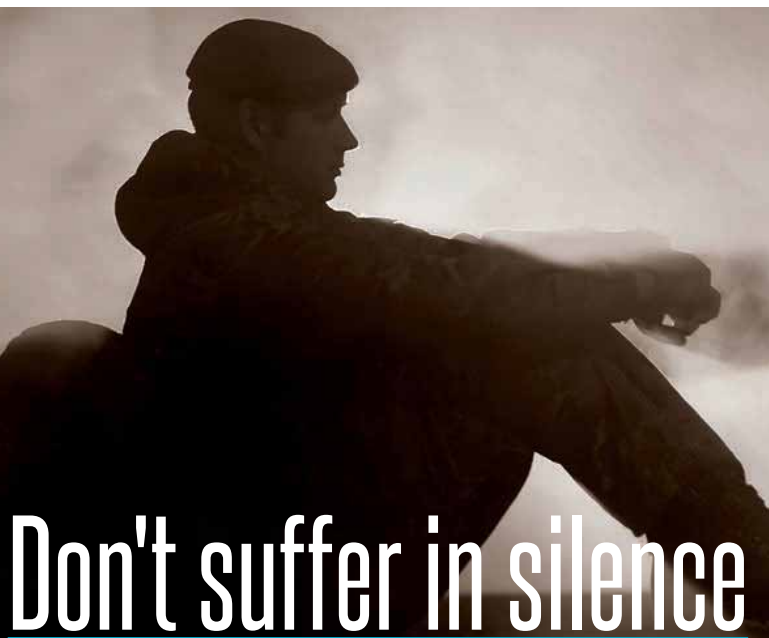
"We are able to give callers guidance to help them resolve any issues themselves, as well as signposting them to other resources available."

"The large proportion of the 2019 calls – some 60 per cent – related to an array of professional issues and we were able to help take troops through the options available."

Broad themes arising from the helpline have been presented to commanding officers, regimental sergeant majors and others dealing with personnel issues.

Call Speak Out on **0306 7704656**.

“Ignoring the situation is not an option”



OFFICERS and soldiers have been urged to keep a close eye on each other's mental wellbeing in a move to spot any problems early on – and provide help if needed.

The Army has stressed that preventing issues from snowballing is a priority while emphasising that nobody should be afraid to ask for assistance. The appeal comes ahead of World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10.

Just over 6,500 people in the UK civilian population took their own lives during 2018 – the last set of published figures.

Col Tim Boughton – from the Army's Op Smart team – said troops should keep an eye on each other and act if colleagues were struggling.

In highlighting the AID model, he explained that personnel should first ask their comrade if they suspected an issue and intervene if they felt there was a problem.

Finally, they needed to disclose if they believed their fellow soldier was at risk – making sure the chain of

command was quickly informed.

Col Boughton emphasised: "Ignoring the situation is not an option at a stage where the person might potentially harm either themselves or others."

"If you are suffering, please do not be afraid of telling someone who can support you. There are also groups, such as the Samaritans and Togetherall, which can help too."

Contact details for a full list of support organisations can be found on pages 58-59.

Elsewhere, a suite of tools promoted under the Op Smart banner could also help.

Col Boughton added: "This initiative provides a through-life set of skills to promote and maintain mental fitness and resilience."

"It begins when a recruit or officer cadet joins the Service and continues throughout their career, as well as their transition to civilian life."

See Defence Gateway, Defence Connect and the Army website for more information.

Picture: Graeme Main

## SOLDIERS AND CELEBS OPEN UP ON CONFIDENCE

■ LOVE Island host Laura Whitmore is among three celebrities to feature alongside serving soldiers in an Army podcast exploring confidence and mental resilience.

The launch followed research that showed 89 per cent of so-called Generation Zers believe self-confidence is important to achieving success in life, but 80 per cent think it's hard to find in today's society.

In the second episode, footballer-turned-pundit Jermaine Jenas addresses imposter syndrome and, in the final instalment, body positivity influencer Cheshire King discusses the negative impact social media can have on confidence.

The Locker podcast is available on all major platforms.





Picture: Graeme Main



# Funding boost for eco vehicle trials

**S**ILENT running could become a feature of Army vehicles in the future if a £7 million trial with electric drivetrains proves successful.

The funding will pay for energy efficient technology that will be used on SV trucks, Foxhound and Jackal 2 armoured prototypes.

The first phase will see the platforms keep their diesel engines but gearboxes and drivetrains will be removed and replaced with generators, batteries and electronics for hybrid operation.

The adoption of green technology is part of a defence-wide move to increase sustainability and reduce carbon emissions. But for troops the benefits will be felt most out on the battlefield, where these systems have the potential to change the way armoured and supply vehicles can move around.

They will be able to use electric

motors to cover ground almost silently as they carry out supply missions or reconnaissance patrols, improving reach, reliability and stealthiness, as well as sustainability.

The cutting-edge components will also allow them to operate more of the latest mounted and dismounted technologies that are due to arrive over the next few years.

Lt Gen Richard Nugee, head of the MoD's climate change and sustainability review, said: "It is great to see the Army testing electric vehicles.

"It shows how seriously we are incorporating sustainability into our operations, while also pushing the boundaries of military innovation."

Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land, NP Aerospace, General Dynamics UK, Supacat and Magtec are creating the prototypes, supporting hundreds of jobs across the UK supply chain until 2024.

“It is great to be testing electric vehicles”



## TOP 50 TRIUMPH

■ THE British Army has been included in *The Times*' Top 50 Employers for Women 2020.

Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, said: "To be included is recognition of the progress we continue to make to ensure that every single person counts."

## RESETTLEMENT REJIG

■ SOLDIERS handed compulsory discharges will now receive a full resettlement package in line with their years served.

Previously, personnel shown the door had their entitlements slashed to the lowest possible level – irrespective of how long they had been in the ranks.

But in a change of policy, the Ministry of Defence said it recognised that those leaving should have every opportunity for a smooth transition to a new career.

Those departing should discuss their circumstances with their chain of command and individual education and resettlement officer. See the Defence Connect learning and development portal for further information.

IN NUMBERS

300

Senior warrant officers and guests will convene online this month to thrash out the issues facing British troops during the regimental sergeant majors' convention



## FOCUSING ON FINANCES

■ A TWO-YEAR research programme to look into financial hardship and food poverty within the military community has been launched.

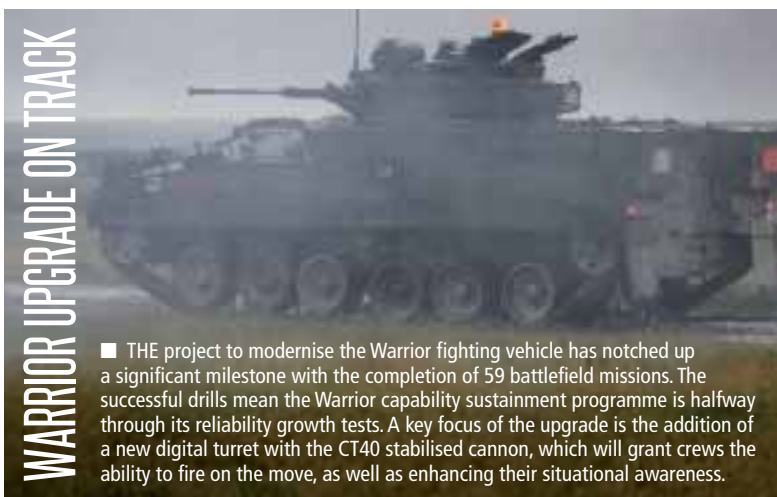
Part-funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, the study will work closely with SSAFA to collect and analyse data from serving personnel, veterans and families of all three Services.

Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory, the charity's chief executive, said: "The evidence base of this research will enable us to plan and allocate future projects and resources even more effectively than before."

WARRIOR UPGRADE ON TRACK

■ THE project to modernise the Warrior fighting vehicle has notched up a significant milestone with the completion of 59 battlefield missions. The successful drills mean the Warrior capability sustainment programme is halfway through its reliability growth tests. A key focus of the upgrade is the addition of a new digital turret with the CT40 stabilised cannon, which will grant crews the ability to fire on the move, as well as enhancing their situational awareness.

Picture: Graeme Main







## ARBORETUM GOES GREEN

■ A NEW green space is opening at the National Memorial Arboretum this month, offering visitors a restorative area in which to gather their thoughts.

The Royal British Legion's Remembrance Glade features symbolic forms and plants, with the main focal point centred around a curved mirror to reflect light and encourage contemplation.

It is situated towards the outer part of the arboretum, next to the poppy fields, where a launch event will take place on September 14.



Picture: Cpl Becky Brown, RLC

## COLLEGE BEATS COVID

■ YOUNG Servicemen and women from Army Foundation College Harrogate notched up a notable victory against Covid-19 – completing their training in spite of the imposed virus lockdown.

The organisation's new commander Lt Col Simon Farebrother (QDG) told 400 personnel recently passing out of the organisation that they had pulled off a "remarkable" feat, despite the challenges, to reach their goal.

The officer said the learning assimilated from teaching their cohort would be applied for future courses, adding that the soldiers had "much to look forward to" in their future careers.

## CARRINGTON CALL

■ UNITS are reminded that they could add some extra silverware to their trophy cabinet by raising cash for the Army's official good cause.

The Carrington Drum trophy is annually presented by ABF The Soldiers' Charity to an outfit that puts on the best fundraising efforts for the organisation. Regular and Reserve regiments are eligible – entries for the 2021 competition close on March 31, with the award presented at the annual ABF reception in June.

The current holders – AFC Harrogate – have taken the trophy home for the past three years. For more details visit [www.soldierscharity.org](http://www.soldierscharity.org)

## ADVENTUROUS TRAINING TAKES OFF



■ BRITISH troops have welcomed the return of adventurous training following the Covid-19 lockdown, with a new gliding course among the activities on offer.

The package was successfully trialled last year but its official roll-out was delayed by the pandemic.

However, introductory courses are now being staged at Upavon for units local to Salisbury Plain.

And according to Lt Col Matt Forde (Rifles), commanding officer Adventurous Training Foundation Centre, competition to secure slots had been fierce.

"We were pleasantly surprised by the demand – we had around 550 applications for 48 places," he said.

"People obviously want to do it. All adventurous training enhances fighting spirit, mental resilience and coping strategies and helps develop a positive mindset.

"But while mountain biking, for example, tests

speed and stamina, gliding stretches you mentally and challenges your capacity to deal with multiple inputs."

As with all training now, the course was adapted to meet stringent coronavirus safety guidelines.

Lt Col Forde explained: "We've had to look at our instructor-student ratios and minimising social interactions. So, we created bubbles, with one trainer and four soldiers per aircraft and inside the glider they wear facemasks."

All adventurous training courses and expeditions are now up and running in the UK, Cyprus and Germany.

Instructor training has also resumed in Bavaria, but a decision on this year's ski season has yet to be made.

"We are putting plans in place to deliver skiing in the new year, but we will have to adapt accordingly as the pandemic progresses," added Lt Col Forde.

Picture: Peter Davies

## Museum reflects on Rescript role

“  
The Army is  
in our DNA  
”

SOLDIERS and officers who deployed during the Covid-19 crisis are being asked to play their part in ensuring history is preserved for future generations.

Bosses at the National Army Museum are asking personnel for any artefacts and memorabilia troops have to build a collection reflecting the Op Rescript era.

Material being sought includes photos, as well as written reflections, diagrams of new equipment, building projects and information leaflets.

The call was made as the museum commissioned war artists Peter Spens

and George Butler (pages 47-50) to join soldiers and record military life at the height of the global pandemic.

Their work – which includes sketches of front-line mobile testing units and recruits training during lockdown – may be shown at a future exhibition.

But Emma Mawdsley, the museum's head of collections, said there was a great deal more to the Service's role in the Covid-19 crisis. She added: "In this country the Army is in our DNA – a huge part of our culture."

"Minutes after arriving at Heathrow, Airport you see pictures of guardsmen in bearskins – soldiers hold a special place in the nation's history and are part of our life today."

"Op Rescript is a prime example of how the Army stepped up to a national emergency – so we would like to see anything soldiers can offer us."

"Even small items, such as military issue facemasks, help to tell the story."

Mawdsley said that the museum would also be seeking candidates to provide interviews about their own part in the Covid-19 period at a later date.

Anyone with material should first email the museum via [info@nam.ac.uk](mailto:info@nam.ac.uk) and give a brief description of the items they are offering.



Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere RLC



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Model shown is a Focus ST-3 5-Door 2.3L Ford EcoBoost 280PS with a 6-Speed Manual Petrol transmission with optional Full LED Headlamps. Fuel economy mpg (l/100km): Combined 35.8 (7.9). CO2 emissions 187g/km.

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





# Ground view

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

**I** AM often reminded of how much the Army has changed in my years of service.

Take Reservists, for example. Having initially been one before I went full-time during the 1990s, I can say from experience that you could then easily identify us from the Regulars – something that is now near-impossible to do.

The quality of our modern cohort shone through during my recent outing with the Royal Yeomanry, who are preparing for an Op Cabrit tour.

This will be the first time a Reserve company has deployed to Poland and the personnel have done a great job in ramping up – despite the ongoing Covid crisis.

Those on the pre-deployment exercise at Cumbria's Warcop training area came from every corner of civvy street – from office workers to employees in Parliament's corridors

of power. They even had a Michelin-starred chef-turned-soldier serving scoff.

All brought huge life experience and a range of different skills. But for me, it was the high standard of soldiering that really stood out.

This is no mean feat when you consider that most have demanding day jobs and freely give their spare time to serve their country. There were a small contingent of Regulars among them, but asking would have been the only way to tell them apart.

Our Reservists continue to do us proud and I have every confidence that they will excel in eastern Europe. They are certainly well prepared thanks to excellent instructors, who have maintained robust standards throughout.

Diversity is truly our greatest strength.

● Reservists at the ready – p29-35



“  
**They came from every corner of civvy street**  
”

## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

**Q** What is your ideal leave activity?

**A** Seeing mum and dad – but the current Covid situation, and their age, means it is impossible

## Lifelong learning path

**A**S SOMEBODY who has just completed a study package in international defence policy and organisation, I'd like to make a plea to leaders – point out your ETS officer to soldiers.

They are an unfailingly professional group and can offer a huge range of different courses in pretty much any subject that you can imagine.

There is a wider point to be made here. With an emphasis on continuous

professional development across the Service, learning is no longer an optional bolt-on.

The new Army leadership and development pathway will mean courses for NCOs and warrant officers being longer, more involved and with extra pre-reading required. Commanders – you must be ready to release soldiers for study.

We need to give troops the space to develop.

## Suggestions sought for gym upgrades

■ A DRIVE is now under way to make the gym “the new bar” for Service personnel wanting to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

Views are being canvassed by the Regional Command Physical Development Branch on how facilities could be improved, whether with better lighting, enhanced kit or a beefed-up sound system.

Money is available for these upgrades and there is appetite and support for the initiative from the highest parts of our Army.

We want to help improve gym facilities for our soldiers so make sure you speak to your PTI with any suggestions you have.







## Virus warning issued ahead of return to work

**T**HE Service's health team are reminding personnel that Covid-19 protection measures will remain in place until such time as an effective vaccine is developed and is readily available.

"With soldiers returning to the workplace after the summer break, it's more important than ever that everybody adheres to the guidelines we have put in place," Lt Col Gareth Moore (RAMC), Defence Specialist Adviser in the Army Health Department, told *Soldier*.

"Maintaining two-metre social distancing and scrupulous attention to hand hygiene remain the most effective methods of preventing the spread of the virus.

"This may even be considered as effective as a vaccination.

"The risk of contracting Covid-19 is ten times greater at one metre than at two metres."

The officer also pointed out how critical it is that high-touch surfaces

are frequently cleaned and that individuals report any potential symptoms immediately for the good of others, as well as themselves.

"The impact of not maintaining these measures is potentially huge," he added.

"The virus is considered infectious 48 hours before symptoms start to develop. You carry the risk of infecting others, including vulnerable individuals, while operations and training packages could be compromised if large numbers or key individuals have to be suspended from work to self-isolate for 14 days."

For further Army-specific guidance on Covid-19 measures read the Project Phoenix force health protection instruction, which is available on the Army Knowledge Exchange and Defence Connect.

The Return to the Workplace brief is available as a narrated version on the former, and as a scripted format on the latter.

“  
The impact  
is potentially  
huge  
”

■ IT PROVED to be a painstaking affair, but the effort was worth it for Maj Chris Brannigan (AGC (SPS)) as he completed his barefoot walk from Land's End to Edinburgh. The officer raised a staggering £620,000 towards a gene therapy for daughter Hasti, who has Cornelia de Lange Syndrome. There is no current cure for the condition.



MISSION COMPLETE

## FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



### Grinding it out

ARMY veteran Adrian Myatt, a former warrant officer in the RLC, was among a six-man team hoping to complete the Challenge 72 fundraising bid as this issue went to press. The test will see them walk 72 miles in under 72 hours while carrying 72lbs in memory of the 72 lives lost in the Grenfell Tower fire. To donate visit [www.challenge72.co.uk](http://www.challenge72.co.uk)



### Fitness steps up

RESERVISTS Pte Tom Warburton (Mercian) and WO2 Dan Mills (Para) – the bestselling author of *Sniper One* – have joined forces to assist Help for Heroes with the launch of its new socially distanced sponsored fitness challenge. Step 2 It asks participants to complete 10,000 steps a day for 30 days. It was devised in response to a forecasted 40 per cent drop in fundraising income due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Register at [www.step2it.helpforheroes.org.uk](http://www.step2it.helpforheroes.org.uk)



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# Virtual fight club is a knockout

Covid pandemic sparks creation of a new video gaming realm to help troops stay sharp

**A**N ONLINE soldier community that has been deploying video games to help keep battlefield skills sharp has started to attract top-level interest.

Players in the tri-Service UK Fight Club have turned to wargaming titles as a way of engaging each other online and practising manoeuvres that could be used on real-life exercises.

Now, having picked up some 300 members in the last six months alone, the initiative's leaders have briefed top brass – including Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith – on the project's potential.

UK Fight Club administrator Capt Oli Elliott (pictured right, Mercian) revealed that the initial concept had grown from a training analysis project at Army HQ.

But the Covid pandemic had provided added impetus – with remote working giving soldiers the space to set up imaginative battlefield serials.

Capt Elliott added: "We've been using a number of titles, such as *Combat Mission: Shock Force 2*, to play out several different scenarios.

"The participants fight through the campaign before using an online forum to discuss what they did, as well as how they could improve in future."

While the Army has used games to train soldiers in the past – with the *Operation Flashpoint* engine providing the basis for PC-based convoy simulations during Telic and Herrick – Capt Elliott said the latest tech opened

up new possibilities.

He pointed out that the ability for troops to remotely convene, debrief a situation and discuss alternative tactics had significant potential.

With some members putting together their own custom-built scenarios mimicking real-life situations, the format allowed for experience to easily be shared.

Capt Elliott added: "The successful nights we have organised so far have improved soldiers' tactical thinking and analysis skills.

"There have been quite a number of people at unit level joining us since the Covid pandemic started and this has helped the community to expand very quickly."

The officer continued: "The UK Fight Club is also currently involved in several projects – including working with partners to improve the realism of the software engines.

"We are planning to host contests between different units to put the tactical abilities of one outfit against another, which will be interesting."

Personnel who would like to sign up should first follow the community on Twitter at the handle @UKFightClub1 – and enquire with the administrators.

"Whether you are a private hoping to gain tactical knowledge before a junior NCO course, or a lieutenant colonel looking for an easy option to test your ability to command a battlegroup, please get in touch," Capt Elliott said.



“They have improved soldiers’ skills”



LAST month's clues would have been a cinch for keen historians who know their commanders from the Second World War's Far East theatre. This month, we have teamed up with TomTom

([www.tomtom.com](http://www.tomtom.com)) to offer you the chance to win a GO Camper camping-specific satnav.

"Staycations" are becoming more popular as travel restrictions, unnecessarily long journeys and expensive accommodation lead to Brits swapping the Costa Del Sol for Cornwall.

Navigation expert TomTom and ACSi, Europe's leading campsite expert, have released a collection of more than 9,000 points of interest to help holidaymakers plan their next trip.

To have a chance of winning simply tell us what links the clues on the spine of this month's magazine. Answers – including daytime phone number – to [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) by September 30.

**WIN**

TomTom sat nav worth £379

SPINE LINE COMPETITION

## Sir Tom goes to college

CAPTAIN Sir Tom Moore met junior soldiers and received his rank slides at the Army Foundation College in his new role as Honorary Colonel.

The centenarian visited the Harrogate site and saw some of the basic training and vocational tuition that the institution provides.

He said: "It is a real honour to have been made Honorary Colonel and I am just so pleased I was able to visit the college.

"The skills I learnt in the Army benefitted me throughout my life and it was wonderful watching the training in action and speaking with the soldiers just starting out – I wish them all well."



Picture: Cpl Becky Brown, RLC

## GOING DOKO

■ INSTRUCTORS from ATR Pirbright hosted their very own Doko challenge on the training ground's infamous Concrete Hill and raised more than £3,000 for an NHS charity.

Based on the traditional Gurkha recruitment race, 20 permanent staff took part in the early morning challenge that involved teams of five carrying a 20kg traditional woven Nepalese basket over a distance of five kilometres with a target time of under one hour.

Event organiser Cpl Dikendra Gurung (RLC) decided to replicate the tests that aspiring young Gurkhas face in Nepal in order to raise money for the NHS.

He said: "The Doko challenge is hard work. The demands it puts on you to complete it as fast as you can in order to be selected are enormous – I compared that to what the NHS has faced over the last few months in dealing with Covid-19."



Picture: Cpl Rob Kane, RLC

## DEFENCE MASTERS

■ PERSONNEL equipping themselves with the skills to deal with emerging threats are set to benefit with a new course from the Defence Academy.

In partnership with King's College London, the organisation has launched a MSc study programme that focuses on defence innovation.

Part of an initiative to modernise joint professional military education, the course will equip students with problem solving abilities and experience to deal with a range of scenarios.

## PARENTS' MILESTONE

■ AN INITIATIVE dedicated to those raising children has just added its 3,000th member – and is continuing to grow.

The popular Army Parents' Network, based around a closed Facebook group, aims to give those looking after youngsters support, help and advice.

It also offers some handy hints on day-to-day issues.

Search for the group on the social networking site for more information.



Picture: The Tank Museum

## Online event off with a bang

THE world's first live-streamed Tankfest attracted one million viewers and raised more than £80,000 after the original event was cancelled because of Covid-19.

Due to take place in Bovington, the armoured extravaganza was expected to attract 25,000 tank enthusiasts but was instead transformed into a ground-breaking three-hour fundraiser that allowed fans to watch blazing tracked battles from home.

Footage of the world's biggest display of historic armour was

recreated into live shows for the virtual showcase and featured The Tank Museum's Vickers Medium, Crusader and Tortoise vehicles.

"It was a quick turnaround and we called in other museums in Belgium, Holland, Austria, America and Canada to help," explained curator David Willey.

"It led to a successful international collaboration and highlights included America's M1 Abrams firing its gun.

"Footage from previous years was used but we also had new angles filmed from inside the vehicles."

“  
We don't  
want to  
deter people  
”



## Catterick safety campaign launched

■ THE Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has launched a hard-hitting safety campaign to prevent serious accidents on the training area at Catterick.

Entitled "The Training Estate Isn't", it is the first phase of a wider effort to warn users of the dangers of accessing such sites when it is not safe to do so.

It comes after research revealed that the Catterick area has a high number of incursions, particularly by military personnel and their families, with hundreds of near misses recorded during a six-month period.

A near miss is counted when unauthorised users come within 200 metres of a live exercise.

The DIO adopts a range of measures to keep users of the training estate safe including flags, digital signage and employing wardens. But these are often ignored.

Brig Jonathan Bartholomew, head of DIO's overseas and training region, said: "The Catterick training area offers some beautiful footpaths and bridleways and we don't want to deter people from accessing them.

"But we want you, your families and the local community to use them responsibly. The military trains every day, so only visit the training area where and when it is safe to do so.

"Just because you can't see or hear a live exercise doesn't mean that it isn't taking place."



# LEVEL PEAKS

## FORCE MULTIPLIER



# NEED TO

# WALK

EXPERIENCE / HEALTH / CASH / FITNESS / KITBAG



## ‘Without the Army I’d be dead’

As a teenager Sgt Rhys Rutledge (WG) served time for dealing drugs. Now he’s helping vulnerable youngsters choose a different path

“I WAS selling drugs at the age of 15 and by the time I was 19 I was in prison for possession of Class A substances with intent to supply.

Although it was purely a business arrangement for me at the time – I wasn’t a user – at school there were a couple of older guys that I looked up to and I wanted what they had; street cred, money and popularity.

Despite this, I left with good grades and went on to college, where my network got bigger and the business just grew and grew.

By the time I got caught, I was dealing in really large quantities.

But it wasn’t until I got out of prison – after serving half of my 16-month sentence – that things began to really spiral out of control.

Because I still owed money to the dealers, I was forced to sell more gear to pay them off – I was tens of thousands of pounds in debt and by this stage I had started taking drugs myself.

It was awful – the dealers were

taunting and terrorising me and my loved ones and at my lowest point I even contemplated suicide.

My family were distraught because they couldn’t help me and the situation I had got myself in was out of control.

I had reached rock bottom. I needed some structure in my life, so I begged my mother to take me to the Army recruitment office and they took a chance on me.

The instructors saw me as a challenge and throughout my basic training they broke me down and rebuilt me.

Enlisting in the military really turned my life around because it gave me the discipline and structure I had desperately been needing.

Within six weeks of joining 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, I deployed to Kenya and over the next few years I was sent to Afghanistan, the Falklands, Romania, Germany and Belize, as well as taking part in ceremonial duties in London, guarding the Queen.

But it was only during a recent





## Profile:

**Name:** Sgt Rhys Rutledge,  
1st Battalion, Welsh Guards

**Age:** 34

**Hometown:** Rhos-on-Sea,  
North Wales

**Military service:**  
2009-present

deployment to Afghanistan on Op Toral that I started to really think about how far I had come – I had promoted to sergeant by this stage and my life had turned out really well.

The bed space I was in reminded me of my prison cell and I began to wonder what had happened to those I knew inside and decided that I wanted to try and help other young people who found themselves in situations like I had.

I thought that by going into prisons and speaking to those who think everyone has given up on them I could show them there is hope.

With help from the police, prison services and Life Maps – a military engagement team youth initiative – I set up a scheme called Defeat Don't Repeat (DDR).

The pilot was a five-day residential programme, run at Longmoor Training Area for 13 children who had been specially selected from London schools.

The course now comprises low-level military training and challenges that promote teamwork and discipline including assault courses, casevac scenarios and drill. It also teaches them first aid skills like applying tourniquets and first-field dressings – basically how to save a life if they see someone who has been attacked in the street.

They are given the chance to talk about topics that youngsters are faced with today, such as racism, religion and gang culture.

It's all designed to take them out of their comfort zone, build up their confidence and inspire them, while helping them realise there is more to life than the gangs, drugs and knife crime they might be caught up in.

At the end they are presented with a certificate. It doesn't sound like much, but these are kids that have never been listened to or told 'well done', so it means a lot to them.

Unfortunately, because of the recent pandemic we've had to delay the next course but I'm hoping it will be able to go ahead soon and in the future I would like to roll out DDR so that other units can get involved.

If I hadn't joined the Army I would be dead now or serving a very, very long prison sentence, so this is my way of giving something back to society, as well as saying sorry for my past and for what I put my family through.



● To follow Sgt Rutledge's project search **"Defeat Don't Repeat"** on Facebook.



# Admin

**5** silly niggles that can ruin your day on exercise – and how to avoid them

▶ THE Covid-19 pandemic saw much of the Army's training activities mothballed, but now the loosening of restrictions is heralding a welcome return to the field for many soldiers.

Whether you are new to the Service, or just a bit rusty after months of lockdown, check out this advice from Army medic Cpl Peter Day (RAMC) about the common – and preventable – issues he treats on exercise...



## 1. Blisters

Some people suffer from these more than others, but they are very common, especially if you're doing a lot of tabbing. The key thing in terms of prevention is to keep your feet clean and dry. You need to find out what else works for you. Some people swear by two pairs of socks, others use tape. It's a personal preference

# nightmares



## To pop or not to pop?

Cpl Day says...

**“Resist the temptation to pop a blister and don't stick tape directly on top as this will rip the skin, leaving you open to infection.**

**If it's too late and it's a large one speak to your medic, who can clean and dress it properly. It's a small issue but it could get you taken off the exercise, so don't just soldier on”**



## 5. Headaches

People often come to me complaining of headaches and most of the time it's just that they haven't eaten or drunk enough. Have some ibuprofen and paracetamol with you in your kit, but don't just take it for the sake of it, and make sure you take on food and water first. You might not get much sleep on exercise, but try and rest when you can

## 4. Aches and pains

Injuries are more likely to kick in when you're cold and tired, especially if you have a pre-existing problem. Making sure you use the correct technique when lifting kit and equipment will help avoid pulling a muscle. If an issue does crop up you may need to rest the limb for a couple of days, so don't struggle on, tell your chain of command

## 3. Chafing

This is highly uncomfortable and usually affects your inner thighs and the skin under your webbing. Making sure your kit fits well is the first step towards prevention, and don't go commando. Vaseline will help to reduce the friction when you're moving around but it's best not to apply it while you are resting. Instead, wear loose clothing and let the area air. Nappy rash creams are also soothing – but ensure you choose the breathable kind

## 2. Twisted ankles

These are another common occurrence, so watch your footing and wear the correct boots for the training you are doing. You need sturdy ones with proper support, not the kind you would wear around camp

## ► HEALTH

Most of these things come down to being well prepared. The other point I always make to people is the importance of wearing the proper kit. Issued equipment works – that's why it's issued. Stuff you buy elsewhere may look ally, but it might not do the job as well.

The bottom line is you don't want to go man down because it will have a knock-on effect on the people around you. Make sure your admin is squared away.

## And don't forget...

**Social distancing can't always be maintained in the field, so it's vitally important to follow the force health protection measures put in place by your unit to prevent the spread of Covid-19.**

### These include:

- **Being rigorous with hygiene** – wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water whenever you get the chance. Where this isn't possible, use hand sanitiser often. Avoid touching your face if you can and sneeze or cough into your elbow or a tissue
- **Cleaning high-touch surfaces**, such as steering wheels and door handles regularly and/or in between individual users
- **Sticking within your team** – “cohorting” may be used to prevent unnecessary contact between different groups of personnel, so keep your distance from anyone you don't work with closely
- **Sleeves policy** – you can wear your sleeves up if you have ready access to soap and water, otherwise keep them down and wash your clothes at the earliest opportunity

# Quick wins



How to **save**  
**£4,300** per  
year without  
really trying

## DRINKS ON THE GO

That daily cappuccino on the way to work might only cost you £2.50, but over a year that adds up to a whopping **£587.50**. Get yourself an insulated mug or flask and bring your own coffee instead. The same goes for water – swapping the bottled kind (costing an average of 65p per litre) for tap water (0.1p per litre) – could cut your spending by another **£474** if you drink the recommended two litres per day

## GROCERY SHOPPING

According to Love Food Hate Waste, the average family throws away almost £60 worth of food that was bought but not eaten every month – that's around **£720** a year. Even if you're single, it's easy to get lured into buying more than you need and if you go shopping twice a week, spending a tenner extra each time, it adds up to more than **£1,000** per year. Throw plastic bags into the equation and that's another £10 gone. To avoid some of these pitfalls, plan your weekly menu carefully, make a shopping list and stick to it. Bring that bag for life too

## PHONE BILLS

● **HANG ON TO YOUR OLD HANDSET.** Contracts for the latest iPhone can top an eye-watering £90 a month, but you can find SIM-only deals for less than a tenner. That's a difference of more than **£1,000** a year

● **TARGET YOUR TARIFF.** Most people pay for more minutes, texts and data than they use. According to the Competition and Markets Authority, seven out of ten customers could save **£222** a year by switching to a tariff that better suits their needs. Make a note of when your current plan is due to end so you know when you can switch without potential fees. Ring your provider and tell them you want to leave. Get through to the retention or disconnections department – they have the power. Chances are they'll offer you a better deal on your package, handset or both

► **LOOK after the pennies and the pounds look after themselves as the old saying goes.**

That's certainly the mantra of the folks from the Money Advice Service ([moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://moneyadvice.service.org.uk)).

The website has loads of handy information on budgeting, borrowing, pensions, insurance and more, as well as a free savings calculator and financial health check.

We've selected some of their top tips for cutting down on unnecessary spending. Best of all? They involve minimal effort – it's win win...

## TRAVEL

### ● FIND CHEAP FUEL

Think supermarket, not service station when it comes to filling up. Taking the time to find lower cost petrol and diesel may only shave pennies off on each individual visit, but [PetrolPrices.com](http://PetrolPrices.com) estimates it could add up to a saving of around **£230** per year. Visit the website or download the app for free

### ● GET YOURSELF A RAILCARD

The Forces Railcard costs £21 and entitles you to a third off most train journeys. It's worth having, even if you aren't a frequent traveller. For example, if you make just four off-peak return trips from Andover to London, you could save around **£50**, which more than covers the fee for the card

### ● THINK AHEAD

Booking well in advance can save you up to 61 per cent, but even buying the ticket the day before could knock a few quid off the price. Check the cut-off for your local train company – typically it's either 1800 or midnight the previous day. Familiarise yourself with off-peak and super off-peak timings to drive the cost down further





# Master stroke

With pools now open for business after lockdown, Army swimming coach Garry Mitchell (ex-REME) offers advice on how to improve your form in the water



● **Get a coach;** or find a club where you can receive some form of training. That way you will make more constructive use of your time in the pool. The tendency for a lot of people who swim on their own is to do what they are comfortable with, which means they do not vary their programme enough or incorporate the right elements to see results

● **Realistically, you should look to change your routine every six weeks** to avoid that comfort zone

● Instead of just jumping in and swimming 1,000 metres, **break your routine down.** Try to swim slightly faster and then take a rest. Ten sets of 100 metres is far more productive than a straight 1,000-metre plod

● **Look to get some observational feedback** or ask someone to video you under and above the water if possible. There are plenty of websites that promote swimming and it is important to compare what you are doing to something meaningful. A lot of the time people think they have changed elements of their technique when, in fact, they haven't

● **Check out 'Off the Blocks'**, a free online programme from British Swimming. Here you will find lots of advice, videos and coaching points that will really help you improve

For more updates from the sport join the British Army Swimming Union Facebook group or follow @ **britisharmyswim** on Twitter

# Shooting STAR

## IN NUMBERS

**2,000**

Number of weapons  
in the collection

**3,000**

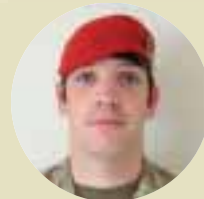
Visitors per year

**4,000**

Weapon loans  
per year to units  
deploying



Need to swot up on foreign weaponry? Here's why the Small Arms School Corps collection should be your first port of call



▶ WHEN Sgt Joel Coleman (pictured above, AGC (RMP)) was selected to take part in the US Military Police Competitive Challenge, he found himself in a bit of a bind.

He felt honoured to be representing the British Army in the prestigious contest, a test of policing and soldiering skills held annually at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri.

But it was a step into the unknown; this was the first time ever that a non-US team had been invited to participate so there were no British personnel who could provide an insight into what to expect – and the weapons systems they'd be using would be US Army standard issue.

"We couldn't afford to let the side down, yet we were guinea pigs, basically," explained Sgt Coleman.

"We had been invited to take part to see if it worked for both sides, but we knew little of the M4 carbine or the M17 pistol.

"Good workmen can't blame their tools though, so I gave the Small Arms School Corps (SASC) a call to see if they could help us out."

They could. Together with teammate Cpl Jordan Main, he spent the day at the SASC's collection at Warminster, a magical menagerie of metalware containing some 2,000 firearms up to 40mm calibre.

Some of the pieces are incredibly rare, including the Tinker's Mortar of 1688 – the earliest form of grenade launcher and one of only two in the world (the other is in the Tower of London armoury) – plus Napoleon Bonaparte's duelling pistols.

Also housed there are American Civil War muskets, Anglo-Zulu War rifles, the iconic Thompson sub-machine gun used by American gangsters in the 1920s and just about every variant of the ubiquitous AK-47.

There's no firing range but anyone can pick up, feel the weapons and receive a detailed brief.

"The collection is amazing and as we've moved away from ops in Afghanistan and Iraq the clientele here are mainly dealing with deployments on short-term training teams," explained one





If you  
would like  
to visit the  
SASC collection  
telephone mil:  
94381 2496

of the instructors, WO2 Alan Grierson (pictured below, SASC).

"Depending on the country they are going to determines what weapon system they need training on.

"Nine times out of ten STTTs will be doing tactics and training with the host nation's forces so they need to be au fait with operating their rifles and hand guns. Safety is vital."

He added: "Troops can come here by appointment, but if it's a whole unit or lots of personnel deploying we'll take the weapons to them."

Being just a team of two, Sgt Coleman and Cpl Main spent the day at the facility with an instructor providing a tour of the museum. They also received a thorough brief on the weapons they were specifically interested in, as well as some familiarisation training and handling tests.

"I had used the C8 – our equivalent of the M4 – in the past but was still surprised by the differences to the SA80 rifle," Sgt Coleman recalled.

"All the buttons are in a different place, so it can take a little while to get used to – the M4's magazine release switch is where the SA80's safety is, for example, which can potentially catch you out.

"The M4's light weight also surprised me and the fact you don't have to get your hand off its grip to change modes from safe to single shot to fully automatic – it can all be done with your thumb still on the grip, which you can't do on the SA80."

The pair acquitted themselves well in last September's contest, eventually finishing halfway through a field containing 15 elite American military police teams.

"The US Army seemed to enjoy us being there and I think we're hoping to make competing in the contest a regular thing once the world returns to normal," added the NCO.

"Getting hands on and understanding the way the American weapons worked was vital for us."

Sgt Coleman was aware of the SASC's collections through his current unit, 2 Military Intelligence (Exploitation) Battalion.

"We use it for regular courses and pre-deployment training to give our people a base level understanding of the weapons we might encounter on the job," he explained.

"We are an unusual, specialist unit responsible for gathering forensic evidence from an incident wherever it occurs around the world and feeding intelligence back to commanders.

"As a result, we need to keep our knowledge up on all sorts of weapons, what country they come from, how they work and know when they are safe or not.

"Thankfully for us, the expertise they've got at the SASC collection is ridiculously good – our unit had a 45-minute brief just on the AK-47 and its variants.

"I don't think there's a lot of awareness around the Army of this resource and the expertise available.

"Anyone serving can – and probably should – request a visit."

## DID YOU KNOW?

The collection itself is funded by a charitable trust, with a group of mainly former Service personnel serving on the board. Some have even donated their own weapons.

Regular users include soldiers deploying on Operations Shader and Tosca, STTTs, specialised infantry, special forces, ITDU and DSTL staff, as well as civilian police.



Pictures: Graeme Main





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# RESERVISTS AT THE READY

Royal Yeomanry leads vital operational deployment to Poland »





Words: Georgina Coupe/Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main, Cpl Simon Watson, RLC

“We have a cyber analyst and a mental health nurse deploying with us”

**T**HE next rotation of British troops to bolster the Nato battlegroup in Poland will be a historic one.

For the first time ever a complete Reserve sub-unit, augmented by a number of Regular Army personnel, will deploy on Operation Cabrit.

For the Royal Yeomanry (RY), it is an important milestone and one that confirms the quality and commitment of its personnel, says the regiment's honorary colonel, Maj Gen Simon Brooks-Ward.

“I’m really proud of them and there’s no doubt they’ve surprised a few people,” he added.

“When the Reserve is asked to step up people aren’t always sure they will be able to meet the requirement – that enough individuals will actually volunteer.

“But the RY have stumped up nearly double the number of troops they were expected to provide and that has raised a few eyebrows, in a good way.”

The Reservists’ mission will be as critical as any that the British Army has undertaken since the withdrawal of operational units from Afghanistan.

Nato has strengthened its presence in eastern Europe with four multinational battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland that are led by the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the United States respectively. Their presence makes it clear that an attack on one Nato member will be considered an attack on the whole alliance.

The RY will be filling a gap in the organisation’s enhanced forward presence that has been filled in recent years by its paired Regular outfit, 1st The Queen’s Dragoon Guards (QDG).

The two units together form the light cavalry reconnaissance component of 7th Infantry Brigade.

Last year, nine RY personnel were called upon to support the QDG in Poland and, in 2018, three officers and 11 soldiers were deployed. The former worked in a liaison role with the US Army’s 2nd Cavalry Regiment, while the latter were mobilised as integrated crews and in key light cavalry positions.

However, in 2020, the make-up of Regulars and Reservists has been switched around. Now, almost 100 Royal Yeomanry troops will form the bulk of the UK’s contribution to the 1,200-strong American-led formation in Poland, along with around 40 personnel from their paired unit.

OC Maj Ben Matthews (QDG, pictured right) firmly believes his hybrid squadron will be instrumental in overcoming some of the challenges that undoubtedly lie ahead during the winter deployment.

He also has high hopes they will perform to the same standard of their predecessors, who were the first and only Reserve regiment to be awarded the battle honour Iraq 2003.

“The Reserves bring cognitive diversity to the organisation and we’ve created a really interesting team here,” he explains.

“As the eyes and ears of the US battlegroup in Poland not all problems we come across will have standard solutions, so ”





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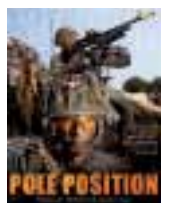
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## IN NUMBERS

**32**

Armoured  
platforms

**68**

Vehicles in the fleet

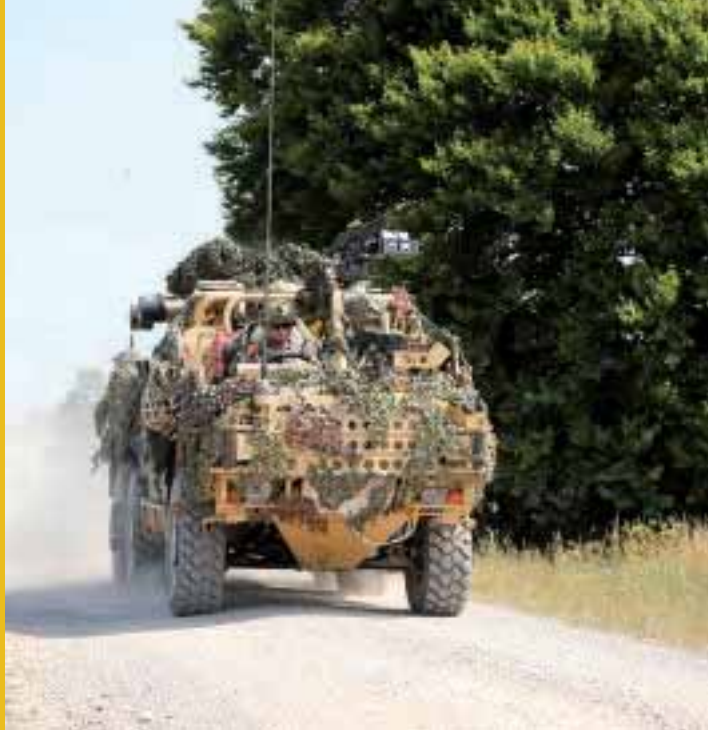
**80**

Reserves, rising to  
90 by the end of  
the tour

**54**

Regulars, dropping  
to 44





## “Operating the Jackal – an open-topped vehicle – in extreme cold weather is a challenge in itself”

» being able to use professional civilian expertise will be really useful to us.

“For example, we have a cyber analyst and a mental health nurse deploying and sometimes they are a better source of knowledge than other Regular soldiers.”

With freezing temperatures expected during Eastern Europe’s long, cold winter months, the reconnaissance troops will conduct Arctic warfare training in-country before the official handover of command takes place on October 19.

“Operating the Jackal – an open-topped vehicle – in extreme cold weather is a challenge in itself and after 15 minutes of driving at speeds of 25kph the crew will need to jump off and complete warm-up drills,” he adds.

“And of course, there is the additional issue of Covid-19 and preparing for the possibility of a second wave. These factors will slow down the plan, but it just means that we have to be more methodical and ensure we mitigate the risks as best we can.”

Despite initial delays in the delivery of some training caused by the pandemic, the Reservists have worked hard to catch up and are now firmly back on track for a deployment that will see them provide a reconnaissance and scouting capability to the Nato deterrent in the Baltic States.

It’s essential the light cavalry mounted regiment are as competent and confident driving and operating specialist equipment at night as they are in daytime, and a round-the-clock training package has ensured they are as well trained as their Regular counterparts.

After completing a programme on the Combined Arms Tactical Trainer, the mobilised troops moved onto Salisbury Plain. Here, they began a tactical phase that saw them carry out both mounted and dismounted urban attacks, cross country and rural training, obstacle crossings, fieldcraft and other essential reconnaissance-specific lessons ahead of a final confirmation exercise this month. »









» Troop leader Lt Courtenay Hallwood (pictured below, RY) mobilised in May and will be responsible for a 12-man section during her first operational tour.

"I'm a civilian management consultant and joined the Reserves three years ago – it's great because I have the best of both worlds," she explains.

"I'm particularly looking forward to the Arctic warfare training and operating in such a different environment, although there will obviously be challenges in making sure everyone is safe and that we don't suffer from any cold climate injuries.

"I've got a combined squad of Reservists, some who have completed tours before and others who are ex-Regulars, so we have a good range of experience.

"But, ultimately, everyone has volunteered and chosen to be here, and it shows.

"The teams really are outstanding, and I'm pleased with the way we have integrated."

As one of only five females to deploy she is keen to dispel any myths that women aren't capable of the physical aspects such a challenging job entails.

"Carrying half of your bodyweight sucks and I put a lot of pressure on myself to train hard in order to meet the standard, but if I can do it, I think anyone can," she said.

"I'm really proud and excited to be part of the deployment and to see how other nations operate and work with them."

Alongside its incredible speed and agility, the Jackal comes equipped with a substantial amount of firepower and the crews have been trained comprehensively on a wide range of weapon systems. These include the Javelin, heavy machine gun, grenade machine gun, general-purpose machine gun and the sharpshooter rifle.

Maj Matthews explains that while Op Cabrit is not expected to be kinetic in the same way that his previous tours of Afghanistan were – when British troops were engaged with fighting an active enemy – it is important they are ready to respond immediately to any threat or aggression against them, or the area they are tasked to protect.

"While we are there, we will be working with a multinational brigade that includes Romanian air defence and Croatian artillery units, as well as the American and Polish armies," he concludes.

"And at the end of the six months I want them to come back as the best light cavalry squadron in the Service. They will be a well-trained winter recce formation.

"There won't be many, if any, in the rest of the British Army that will have had that amount of training and experience." ■



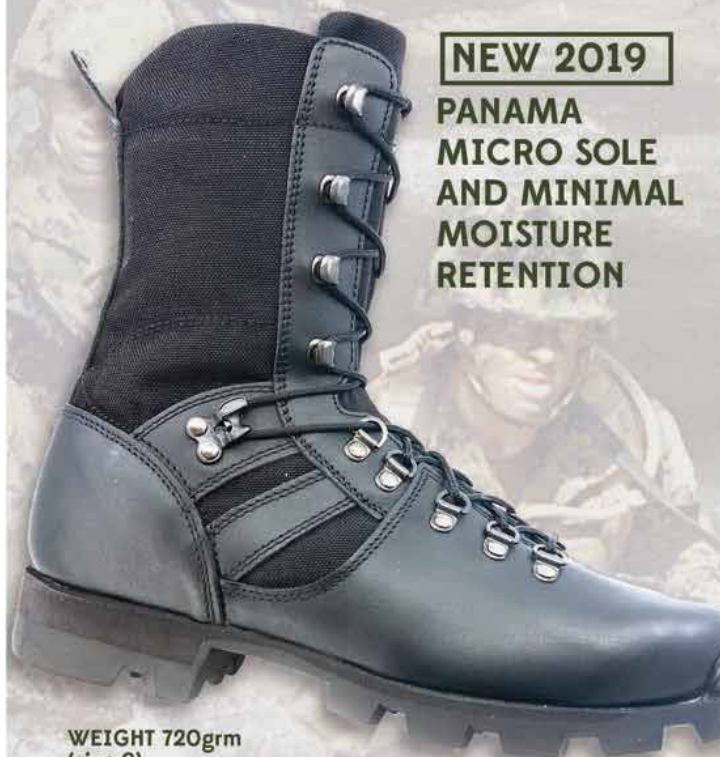


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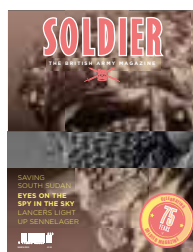
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# MISSION

## to Mali

Training ramps up as troops prepare for new African adventure »





“WE ARE in an excellent place and this is one of the best-prepared operations I have ever seen,” Maj Johnny Black tells *Soldier* as he looks ahead to the Army’s first deployment on the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali.

As officer commanding A Squadron, Light Dragoons, he will play a pivotal role in the long-range reconnaissance task group that will bolster the efforts of the 15,000 multinational personnel who are striving to stabilise a country ravaged by chronic poverty, instability and gender inequality.

With terrorism and conflict also on the rise, coupled with the fact this is one of the world’s most vulnerable regions to the effects of climate change, the 250-strong British contingent will face a considerable test when they arrive in Africa.

“The area we are going to in the north east is a historic route for a variety of different trafficking, including illegal drugs from South America – everything you can imagine goes through there”

But no stone has been left unturned during the lead-in and a two-week exercise on Salisbury Plain saw the troops put a confident tick in the box as preparations stepped up a level.

The task group is a cross-cap badge affair, with A Squadron offering reconnaissance expertise from their Jackal vehicles and B Company, of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, forming the infantry element. Medics, mechanics, UAV pilots and EOD operators are among the strong and varied supporting cast.

“Our timelines have changed quite a bit,” Maj Black, who has completed two Herrick tours in a 13-year Service career, explains. “We were initially warned off about this in October last year – so our training effectively started then.

“But Salisbury Plain was the first time that everything really came together.

“We were looking at logistics chains in terms of moving over long distances; our standard operating procedures at a lower, tactical level; and how we could use existing doctrine and make it fit for purpose.

“It was also a chance to get to know the faces in the task group. “We conducted a range of mini missions, such as cordon and search operations and civil engagement tasks to extract human information, and did a variety of medical training and counter-IED drills. We were also able to integrate all our different assets – from surveillance to electronic warfare.”

The formation will embark on a full mission rehearsal exercise in the coming weeks before attention turns to performing the non-combat role for real when their six-month tour starts in December.

Selection for the task adds a further feather in the cap for the Light Dragoons, who were the first Army unit to deploy on Op Cabrit in Poland.

“In terms of retention, this is a massive positive and everyone is very excited to be going,” the officer adds.

“People join the Army for a variety of reasons, but one of the main ones is to soldier. Deploying on operations is soldiering – and this is very much that.

“Our job will be to push out and understand the human terrain, give feeds to the UN and make assessments on the security situation for people in areas that are difficult to reach.

“It is a new tour and it will be a different role working with the UN, but it is one we are looking forward to.”

And while being excited by what lies ahead, the soldiers are also fully aware of the complicated backdrop they will find themselves in.

Maj Black explains: “It is complex in the fact there are a variety of different actors in play, and there is also significant violence that ebbs and flows.

“There are two extremist organisations who follow the ideologies of Isis and Al-Qaeda and on top of that everyone is trying to make a living.

“The area we are going to in the north east is a historic route for a variety of different trafficking, including illegal drugs from South America – everything you can imagine goes through there.

“We will be operating remotely and will be self-sufficient with our vehicles. Physically, it will be very hard, but I think we will relish that.

“There are lots of hostile places in the world and this is one of those. The environment means it will be demanding, the temperatures will be very high, and it is very dry outside the rainy season.

“Professionally, this is a fantastic opportunity – it will be both challenging and rewarding.”

A challenge certainly awaits personnel from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who will be responsible for ensuring an impressive fleet of vehicles that includes Jackal, Foxhound, Mastiff and Ridgeback remain up and running – as well as carrying out recoveries should the platforms break down in the field.

Their expertise will also be required on essential equipment such as generators for the task group’s field surgical hospital, water carrier packs, lighting towers and fuel supply systems.

“It is going to be a good tour,” says SSgt Martin Potter (REME), the artificer in charge of the fitting section on the ground.

“It has been quite difficult to get to this point. The vehicles need to be at the theatre-ready standard and, while we’ve been working towards that, we’ve also had to train. ”





## IN NUMBERS

**11,644**

multinational troops  
deployed on the  
operation...

With a further

**1,452**

formed police units  
involved

**1,568**

civilians engaged in  
the mission

Chad is  
the biggest military  
contributor, with

**1,447**

soldiers in country



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## Mission brief:

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was established in April 2013

Its aim is to support political processes in the country and carry out a number of security-related tasks

A further resolution was passed in June 2014 (it has been renewed every year since), when the UN's Security Council decided the mission should focus on ensuring security, stabilisation and the protection of civilians, as well as supporting political dialogue and reconciliation, assisting the re-establishment of state authority and the promotion of human rights



» “I’ve done Herrick and Telic tours in the past, but this is a new concept and is more of a peacekeeping role.

“The training has been full-on, but it needs to be as this is the first deployment.

“For me, it is a huge honour as I will be the first artificer on the ground. Now it is about getting the younger guys in the right mindset and we are eager to get out there.

“This is something we’ve been looking at for a year, but we didn’t really know much about the type of missions we might face until we got on Salisbury Plain.

“Mali will be completely different to Iraq and Afghanistan; we are not kicking doors in – it is about hearts and minds.”

The deployment also represents something different for the Royal Anglians, who returned from Cyprus last year and are still familiarising themselves with their light mechanised role.

The exercise on Salisbury Plain gave the soldiers an opportunity to boost their experience levels, while gaining greater insight into what lies ahead.

“For a lot of the junior lads it was great to get that,” explains LCpl Sam Holding. “One of the big things we worked on was the ability to identify vulnerable areas.

“The IED threat out there is so high and we were getting smashed on those drills. That will really help us when it comes to picking what routes to take.

“Because we are deploying as a long-range reconnaissance force, we will be covering a lot of miles and there will be lengthy periods when we are just sat in a vehicle. For two of the last five days on exercise we were doing road moves.

“We did lots of shoot and scoot drills and there would be random civilians pressuring the guys on the gate. Every single one of them had a weapon, but you cannot just assume they are enemy forces.

“We are not massively out of our comfort zones in the recce role. It is not our main job and we are going to support the Light Dragoons, who are all over it.”

LCpl Holding joined the Service in 2014 and Mali represents the 23-year-old’s first major deployment.

And it’s an opportunity that means he has become the envy of his colleagues.

“I’ve had lads from across the Army messaging me to say how jealous they are,” he adds. “It has become the big tour that everyone wants.

“I think I was a little naive when I first heard we were going – it was only when I went to the all ranks briefing and got out on exercise that it became real.

“People are nervous, but excited at the same time – this is what we sign up to do.”

With their final rehearsal looming this new-look task group is almost set for departure.

And while it may have been a long time coming, Mali will represent the operational itch that needs scratching for many of today’s personnel. ■





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# BLITZ SPIRIT

Dealing with the Luftwaffe's ghosts, 80 years on...

**E**VEN for a child with a vivid imagination the sight must have been unfathomable – a mesmerising, mechanical cloud approaching London's East End. Naive instincts informed eight-year-old David Caswell that the aircraft in this droning swarm were British. A child's reasoning suggested that the less-capable Nazi aggressor could never put on such a brazen show of force.

As he squinted into the autumn blue he could see traces of smaller aeroplanes – potentially fighters – darting in and out of the main formation as the aerial armada dulled the light in an awe-inspiring, man-made solar eclipse.

"This was actually the first time we'd seen the Luftwaffe up close, massed as if the skies were its own airfield," Caswell (pictured right) says as he recalls the attack of that 1940 September day. "And then they started dropping bombs. »



Words: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Graeme Main, 11 EOD and Search Regiment, Imperial War Museum (IWM C 5424)





Picture: Soldier archive



» “You could feel the blast waves from explosions and the anti-aircraft guns were firing – the noise was terrible,” he adds. “My mum and I headed to the shelter, which just about fitted in the garden of our house at Prugel Street, Plaistow.

“I don’t remember there being any air raid warning before the attack – the Germans came back twice during the day and then kept bombing into the night.”

As the ordnance detonated, shattering the London docks and communities built around them, other German devices plummeting to earth failed to detonate.

It was a pattern that would continue throughout the years of conflict.

While most unexploded bombs were rapidly dealt with, others are still at large – a grim Second World War legacy resonating dangerously into the present day.

Even now, the modern-day experts charged with making the ordnance safe admit being shocked by the destructive power that was levelled against civilians.

SSgt Dick Gage (pictured right, RLC) – whose job involves making air drop ordnance safe – points to a single 250kg bomb found in Kingston as a recent case in point.

The object’s degraded state required a controlled explosion on the building site near the university where it had been unearthed by a digger driver. Thousands of residents living in and around the area had to be evacuated as a result.

Troops worked for a day-and-a-half on the tasking. The device was stabilised and a ballistic cover







Picture: © IWM H 130220 and H 91464

containing 300 tonnes of sand built. Even then, the bomb still blew out windows within the safety cordon and its detonation was heard six miles away.

“This was just one device, so you can imagine the impact raids must have had on people with little protection,” SSgt Gage, who serves in Aldershot as part of 11 EOD and Search Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, tells *Soldier*.

“Being attacked with ordnance of such destructive power must have been horrific – it is hard to think of what people living under bombing experienced.”

The grim statistics of the era are testament to the human cost. The first daylight raid on London – witnessed by the young David Caswell – claimed 300 civilian lives.



## IN NUMBERS

The Blitz

# 43,500

Number of civilian deaths



Picture: © IWM H 34958

In all, some 16 British cities were targeted between September 1940 and into the first half of the following year in a period dubbed by journalists of the era as The Blitz. In all, the raids killed 43,500 people and injured tens of thousands more.

Today, specialists from 11 Regiment's 621 EOD Squadron – where SSgt Gage is a senior NCO – deal with Second World War ordnance as part of their core business.

Organised at four sites – with troops at Aldershot, Shorncliffe and Colchester, as well as the HQ at RAF Northolt – the squadron is well placed to take on the Luftwaffe's legacy.

“There are a fair few different types and sizes of German bombs,” SSgt Gage points out. “They range from devices such as incendiaries, which were obviously designed to start fires, to much larger 250kg and 500kg weapons.” **»**





” “We carry a wide range of equipment – including some resources dating from the wartime era,” he adds. “In particular, we have a shelf full of books including a 1940s American document – effectively a Haynes manual for bombs.

“Obviously, much of the ordnance we are faced with can be in quite poor condition – and this can make dealing with some weapons quite a challenge.”

A typical kitbag for the EOD teams includes electronic stethoscopes to listen to the mechanism of the explosives, electromagnets that can halt clockwork components and even hand drills used to make fuses safe.

The ideal aim is to make the device stable enough to be moved and disposed of elsewhere. But if this is not possible, a sand barrier – known as mitigation – can be constructed, allowing it to be safely detonated on location.

Although there are charts of areas from the 1939-45 era showing where unexploded bombs are believed to have been dropped, SSgt Gage adds that the sheer scale of the attacks mean that many devices remained unrecorded.

With the foundations of construction projects being dug deep into the earth, building sites are a common area for ordnance to be found, he continues.

“The number of times we can be summoned by the police to deal with them varies,” he says. “Sometimes there is nothing and then you have a couple in short order.”

While each task presents a unique challenge for the teams charged with keeping the public safe, it is a role in which they take great professional pride.

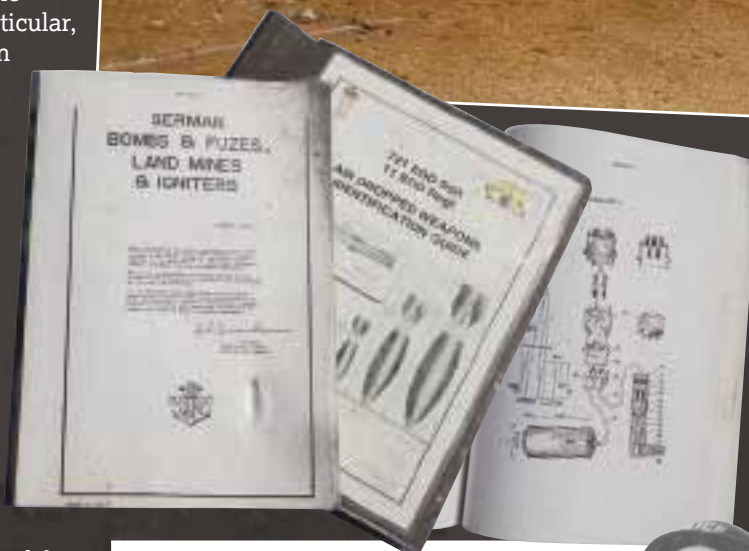
Their job also opens up links to the past – and a reminder of the sacrifices of a generation who lived through a conflict that continues to define the modern world.

“The fact weapons are still being found tells us something about the scale of the war,” SSgt Gage concludes, “It is not lost on our teams that our work has a tangible link to history, and events that happened all those years ago.” ■

## Did you know?

The ability to make safe air drop munitions is just one of the unique abilities falling under 29 EOD and Search Group – of which 11 Regiment is a part.

The umbrella outfit provides all of the British Army’s bomb disposal, as well as some specialist search and military working dog, capabilities.

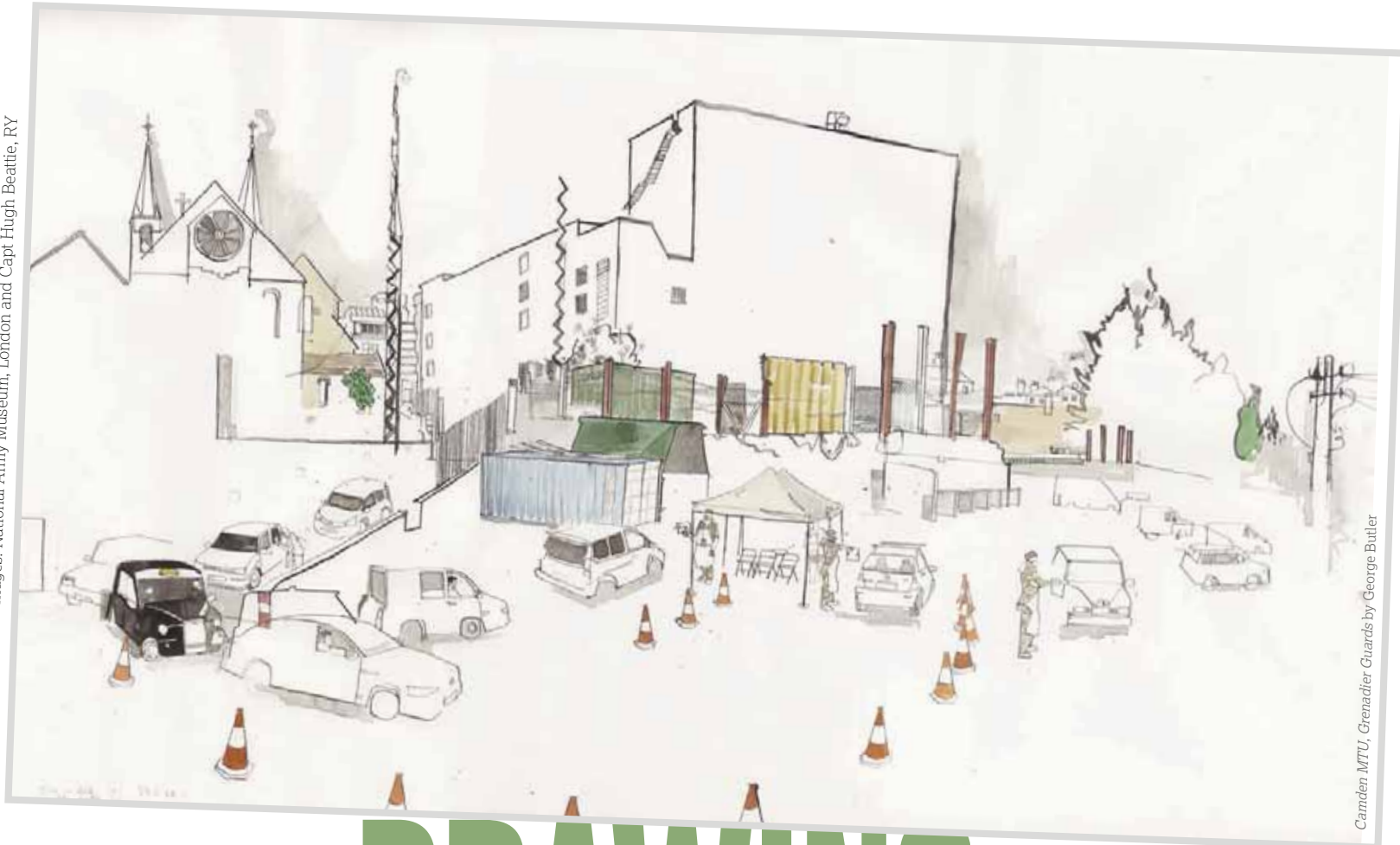


## Recording the bombing

The huge scale of the Luftwaffe attacks on London during The Blitz is shown on an interactive online map produced by the National Archives in Kew.

Visit [www.bombsight.org](http://www.bombsight.org) to find the location and type of every device dropped on the capital between September 1940 and May of the following year.





Camden MTU, Grenadier Guards by George Butler

# DRAWING FIRE

War artists sketch troops at the Covid sharp end

**G**EORGE Butler was familiar with trouble long before the coronavirus pandemic erupted – in the recent past the illustrator had sketched scenes in Syria and Afghanistan.

There, at the cutting edge of history, the Kingston University graduate had captured the last days of Op Herrick and the aftermath of Islamic State's defeat.

But his latest assignment – which followed a commission from the National Army Museum – saw him on home soil and the front line of a new kind of war. »





» Amid escalating cases of Covid-19 and the military mobilisation to help deal with the crisis, he embedded with troops and began to draw their story.

“At the pandemic's height I remember watching an online meeting,” Butler (pictured above) recalled. “NHS professionals were explaining their personal protective equipment requirements to military officers assigned to deliver them.



MTU Defence Academy, Shrivernham by George Butler



The Swab Queue by Capt Hugh Beattie, RY





Move the PPE by Capt Hugh Beattie, RY



Indian Army Memorial Room, Sandhurst by George Butler

“It was so strange seeing this large mix of people in different uniforms – some just faces on the computer and others physically in the room – all working together.”

With Armed Forces personnel deployed across the UK, Butler and fellow artist Peter Spens (pictured far left) were commissioned by the Chelsea-based museum to record the unfolding story.

A veteran painter of operations, Reservist Capt Hugh Beattie (pictured above, RY) was also cleared to capture the Rescript drama as resident artist with 77 Brigade. »



» Butler – whose uncle Ed is a retired brigadier and ex-Task Force Helmand commander – admitted feeling the hand of history on him as he visited the likes of mobile testing sites.

He continued: “There was a strange feeling in all this being so close to home.

“It was extraordinary to see how the soldiers adapted to their new roles, and I’m sure they will do it again should we have another Covid spike in the future.”

Capt Beattie, who has served in the Reserves for nearly three decades and produced his first operational illustrations from Bosnia, was equally enthusiastic.

“I have always enjoyed painting subjects that reflect the glory of achievement, and seeing the personnel on Op Rescript was case in point,” he said.

“It is great to be able to put the Army and NHS onto canvas in this way – recording people who are doing great things for their country, as well as themselves.”

While photography has long been the medium of choice to tell the story of the Armed Forces on ops, illustrators have been important record keepers in the most modern conflicts.

Senior staff at the National Army Museum wanted to preserve the military’s involvement in the Covid-19 era in the same way as an overseas deployment.

“Essentially we wanted to capture something of what the troops were doing day-to-day at the height of the outbreak,” said spokeswoman Claire Blackshaw.

“We commissioned around April time – near the beginning of the pandemic

and the UK national lockdown – with the work taking several weeks or more.”

Aldershot-based Army arts boss Lt Col Wendy Faux (pictured below, RA) managed the project on the ground, producing a programme for illustrators at several different prime locations.

With the streets hauntingly quiet, sketchbooks captured a Service adapting to keep its own core business functioning while backing key workers.

“It is definitely a period that needed reflecting in artwork,” Lt Col Faux said.

“We moved between the different units involved in providing military aid to the civil authorities, as well as seeing some of the Service’s day-to-day work.”

Highlights had included soldiers from the Corps of Army Music playing virtually and bayonet training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, she added.

The end results of the project are certainly special – and the National Army Museum has hinted that the work from the Covid period might be fully exhibited at a later date.

But above all, it is a unique record of troops once again proving their versatility.

Captured on canvas, the story is uniquely preserved for future generations. ■



The Spread by Capt Hugh Beattie, RA

## A call to arts

SOLDIERS are being encouraged to pick up a pencil or paintbrush and try their hand at putting down their own personal slice of modern military history on paper.

Army arts boss Lt Col Wendy Faux (RA) said she is on the search for troops with a flair for translating Forces life onto canvas and wants them to come forward with their work.

As previously reported, a competition has been running for artistic personnel where the top prize is having their work performed at the 2021 Edinburgh Fringe. But Lt Col Faux stressed that she was keen for more of the Army’s artistic talents to be recognised. Send work to [armyandthearts@gmail.com](mailto:armyandthearts@gmail.com)



Picture: Jessica Mund



# MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

How do you shape better commanding officers? Ask their troops...

**W**HEN Lt Col Hal Moore and his men came under ferocious contact in a remote part of Vietnam, it was the calming words of his senior soldier that made the difference.

In the confusion, with rounds zipping past, the commanding officer of the US 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment was caught off guard, physically exposed and mentally isolated. But the familiar hand of Command Sergeant Major Basil Plumley on his shoulder literally pulled him back to reality.

"I was on the radio, trying to hear a transmission when he shouted – 'Sir, if you don't find some cover, you are going to go down'," the officer recalled of the battle at Ia Drang highlands in 1965. "He then added – 'and if you go down, we all go down'."

Admitting the NCO was "right as usual", Moore snapped back to his senses, regained the initiative and successfully directed the fight at the advancing enemy. Understanding the value of his subordinate's words had served him well.

The Ia Drang lesson remains salient across the pond some five decades later. In an environment where threats can range from cyber attacks to full-on conventional conflict, the British Army is keenly aware that lives depend on commanding officers leading with confidence while being unafraid to take advice. »

Words: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Graeme Main, US Army, Georgina Coupe





» “It is important in this role that you are ready to listen to others,” Lt Col Jim Hadfield, the CO of Wiltshire-based 5th Battalion, The Rifles, emphasises.

“My job is all about making decisions as well as talking to people – and I’ve found the more I communicate, the easier those decisions then become.”

Together with his counterparts, Lt Col Hadfield has been through the Commanding Officers’ Designate Course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

The package encompasses a nine-day syllabus – although this has seen some adjustment by the organising General Staff Centre. The first four days of the course due this month will be conducted online in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Sessions in the virtual and physical spheres include training team experts giving advice on developing personnel, plus guidance on disciplinary procedures from representatives of the Army Legal Service.

Media ops professionals pass on their experience of dealing with journalists, as well as how fake news can disrupt business, while padres give a pastoral perspective.

But an initial psychological assessment to help COs understand their leadership style and personality is also now being piloted as part of the programme.

And after six months or so in their new posts, it is envisaged that their subordinates will additionally be asked for their view on the boss in a so-called “180 degree” assessment. There will then be further coaching and assistance available to help refine leadership styles.

Dr Joanna Harvey, principal occupational psychologist at Army HQ, says the exercise could form part of the officers’ wider career development package. But a decision had not yet

## IN NUMBERS

### Army Commanding Officers’ Designate Course

**2**

Number of weeks training



**150**

COs going through per year

**3**

Courses per year





been taken on the form it might take longer term.

"As a CO, it is important you recognise that your approach to the role can have a huge impact on those under your command," she adds. "As you rely on quite a small group of people in your inner circle it can also be quite a lonely place.

"The officers have been very positive about the pilot – it has given them the chance to play to their strengths and address weaknesses along the way."

The 180 degree assessment, carried out after the new COs have taken up their role, will see a dozen-or-so soldiers answering a few standard questions.

Results will then be analysed – and factors such as obvious personal grievances identified – before they are distilled into a report produced for the newly appointed leader.

"We will be able to tell whether the responses from the soldiers are a one-off, or seem to form part of a wider pattern and suggest a way forward," says Dr Harvey.

"We're planning to have the pilot over two courses and see

where we go from there – it might be beneficial for other leaders, such as senior soldiers, in the future."

Army Sergeant Major WO1 Gav Paton (bottom left) – who also speaks on the COs course – believes commanders who better understand themselves are more effective.

"A commanding officer can be very much a god-like figure to their subordinates – personnel only see them personally when they've done something either good or very bad," the career infantryman quips with a smile. »





# Plumley of Alamein

» “But out of sight the CO is always looking out for their welfare – just as the troops want them to succeed,” he adds. “As a regimental sergeant major my CO always valued what I said when I put the soldiers’ perspective to them.

“The relationship was very good – even when what I had to say was uncomfortable.”

Lt Col Hadfield – who commissioned into 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry in 2003 and has experience in Iraq and Afghanistan – also stresses that the quality of the relationship between the leader and troops is critical to success.

“In particular, I have known my RSM for 17 years and there is a huge amount of trust between us,” he says. “But getting out and meeting all your personnel is important – soldiers don’t care what you know until they know you care.”

These are wise words. As Plumley showed during the battle in Vietnam five decades ago, the strong backing of subordinates can mean the difference between success and failure. With a greater understanding of their own leadership style, COs can be adaptable to face any situation that arises.

This preparation is important – in a multi-faceted role of huge responsibility, where life and limb can be on the line, commanding officers will often face a baptism of fire. ■

## PROFILE:

### HAL MOORE

**REMEMBERED** for his role in one of the first conventional clashes between opposing sides in the Vietnam conflict – Hal Moore, pictured below left, had a rich military career.

Having graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point in June 1945 he served in Korea before commanding 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment.

His leadership during the clash at Ia Drang – during which American troops were heavily outnumbered – earned him the Distinguished Service Cross.

Moore’s later service saw him undertake senior roles, including military liaison to the assistant secretary for international affairs, before retiring as a lieutenant general in 1977.

The officer, who died at the age of 94 in 2017, recalled his Vietnam exploits in his biography *We were Soldiers Once...and Young*, with newspaper correspondent Joseph Galloway.





# ROLLING BACK THE YEARS

Historic vehicle preserved as  
exciting new era looms

WITH the Household Cavalry Regiment recently taking delivery of the state-of-the-art Ares vehicle, its soldiers will be armed with a world-beating asset as they set about performing their reconnaissance role.

But this does not mean the past should be forgotten and a dedicated team has been working on an important project to restore a platform that was first used by the unit when it moved from horseback to a mechanised role in the 1930s – the Daimler Armoured Car (DAC).

"With the advancement of new vehicles moving



forward at such an alarming rate, it's easy to forget where we came from," explains recce vehicle commander and lead restorer LCoH Harry Day (pictured below, LG).

The renovation – which was completed in less than a month – was a labour of love for Day and his team of ten, some of who completed a similar restoration of a Dingo scout car three years ago.

Breaking the vehicle down into sections allowed them to strip original paintwork back to bare metal, replace rusted nuts and bolts and repair damaged bodywork.

A week-long preparation and re-painting process followed before it was meticulously reassembled.

"This DAC has been in the regiment for at least 40 years and was in a sorry



state," LCoH Day continues.

"It was used as a range target before it was repurposed as a gate guard."

Hailed as one of the finest pieces of machinery produced for Britain during the Second World War, the DAC was capable of driving as fast backwards as it was forward and featured an additional rear driving position.

Independent suspension on each wheel ensured it was ideal for tackling difficult cross-country terrain in its primary role as a reconnaissance vehicle in Europe and both the Middle and Far Eastern theatres.

"As reconnaissance soldiers we got where we are today and learnt our trade because of machines like this," LCoH Day adds.

"And with our recent move from Windsor Barracks to

Bulford, it seemed even more important to ensure we keep the Life Guards' history alive through the preservation of vehicles used by our predecessors." ■



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**Main armament:** 2 pounder QF

**Additional:** 1x 9.92mm Besa MG (Co-axial) 1x Bren .303 LMG

**In-service:** 1941-1960





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I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO FLATTEN THE CURVE ON MY 'MIFFED OFF' GRAPH FOR PAYING RENT DURING LOCKDOWN!



## Hitting the roof over housing charge

**W**HY have Service personnel continued to pay accommodation fees throughout the Covid-19 pandemic?

The government's direction was clear from the start – stay at home.

Almost immediately the chain of command took the sensible approach to protect the force and directed the majority of us to work from home where it was possible and practical.

Simultaneously, get you home allowance mileage payments were brought to a halt.

That was completely understandable as journeys were not to be made to and from soldiers' residences.

What is difficult to fathom, though, is why Service accommodation payments were not stopped at that time as well.

Many are feeling frustrated that there was an immediate suspension of a relevant allowance but not this charge.

Can you help me understand this apparent inconsistency so I can accurately inform those who are equally miffed?

– Capt Jerome Davis, RA

**Lt Col Bill Bowen, Head of Accommodation, Personnel Policy, responds:** Thank you for raising a very pertinent issue and I am pleased to offer some good news.

A waiver of accommodation charges due to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic has been agreed.

It is a complex topic that sits outside of the current accommodation policy.

The refund will apply only to those ordered to work from home in accordance with Service business continuity plans and were required to vacate single living accommodation or substitute Service single accommodation, but who continued to pay a housing charge throughout the lockdown period.

They will need to have had JPA updated in order to correctly record their location and status and should seek the refund via their unit human resources staff.

Units have been recently informed of the waiver by the MoD's head of people accommodation policy.

The repayment of these charges to eligible personnel will take place through JPA in accordance with the existing process for doing so.

They will be made for the period of March 23, 2020 through to August 31, 2020. Not all soldiers will qualify so it is important individuals contact their relevant unit staff to determine their eligibility.

If units are affected by local lockdowns beyond August 31, 2020, and there is a similar requirement for personnel with Service housing to work from home, an updated instruction will be issued.

“Many are feeling frustrated”

# Talkback

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

✉ [mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk)  
🐦 [@soldiermagazine](https://twitter.com/soldiermagazine)



# BULLET POINTS

Bite-sized data to keep you in the know



## CAREERS

**UK Armed Forces Rugby Football Club** is looking for a communications officer. To apply go to: [www.ukafrfc.co.uk/advert-communications-officer](http://www.ukafrfc.co.uk/advert-communications-officer)

**Army Communications** is recruiting two Reserve SO1s and three SO2s with experience in media, comms, marketing, PR or journalism. The roles encompass exciting opportunities to support or lead projects in campaigns, news, media ops, internal and digital comms. Look out for the job specs on **MS web**.

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

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

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

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



## SEARCHLINE

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

**Jacqui Ritchie, general manager at St John's Wood Care Centre, 48 Boundary Road, London** is trying to find more information about the building's former life as an Army barracks. The centre celebrates its 20th anniversary in October and is keen to invite veterans to the celebration. Anyone with memories to share should email [stjohnswoodmanager@bondcare.co.uk](mailto:stjohnswoodmanager@bondcare.co.uk)

**Retired Royal Air Force Serviceman Andrew Clark** is a collector of British military tokens used in Iraq and Afghanistan and is seeking examples of pre-2007 issues to boost his collection. If you have any items of interest email [amcpapermoneyman@aol.com](mailto:amcpapermoneyman@aol.com)

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

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

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



## DIRECTORY

**ABF The Soldiers' Charity:**  
020 7901 8900;  
[www.soldierscharity.org](http://www.soldierscharity.org)

**Armed Forces Buddhist Society:**  
Chaplain 020 7414 3411;  
[www.afbs-uk.org](http://www.afbs-uk.org)

**Armed Forces Christian Union:**  
01793 783123;  
[www.afcu.org.uk](http://www.afcu.org.uk)

**Armed Forces Muslim Association:**  
Chaplain 020 7414 3252;  
[www.afma.org.uk](http://www.afma.org.uk)

**Armed Services Advice Project:**

0808 800 1007;  
[www.adviceasap.org.uk](http://www.adviceasap.org.uk)

**Army Families Federation:**  
01264 382324;  
mil 94391 2324;  
[www.aff.org.uk](http://www.aff.org.uk)

**Army LGBT Forum:**  
[www.armylgbt.org.uk](http://www.armylgbt.org.uk);  
[chair@armylgbt.org.uk](mailto:chair@armylgbt.org.uk)

**Army Libraries:**  
01252 340094

**Army Ornithological Society:**  
[www.armybirding.org.uk](http://www.armybirding.org.uk)

**Army Welfare Service:**  
01904 882053;  
[www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support](http://www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support)

**Big White Wall, now Togetherall:**  
[www.togetherall.com](http://www.togetherall.com)

**Blesma, The Limbless Veterans:**  
020 8590 1124;  
[www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)

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

**Care After Combat:**  
[www.careaftercombat.org](http://www.careaftercombat.org)

**Career Transition Partnership:**  
020 7469 6661

**Children's Education Advisory Service:**  
01980 618244;  
[dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk](mailto:dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk)

**Combat Stress:**  
24-hour Mental Health Helpline for service personnel and their families  
0800 323 4444;  
[www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)

**Defence Humanists:**  
[www.defencehumanists.org.uk](http://www.defencehumanists.org.uk)

**Erskine:**  
0141 814 4569;  
[www.erskine.org.uk](http://www.erskine.org.uk)

**Family Escort Service:**  
020 7463 9249

**Felix Fund – the bomb disposal charity:**  
07713 752901;  
[www.felixfund.org.uk](http://www.felixfund.org.uk)

**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  
[www.forcespensiosocietys.org](http://www.forcespensiosocietys.org)

**Help for Heroes:**  
0845 673 1760 or  
01980 846 459;  
[www.helpforheroes.org.uk](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk)

**Heroes Welcome:**  
[www.heroeswelcome.co.uk](http://www.heroeswelcome.co.uk)

**HighGround:**  
[www.highground-uk.org.uk](http://www.highground-uk.org.uk)  
07951 495 272

**Joint Service Housing Advice Office:**  
01252 787574

**Medal Office:**  
94561 3600 or  
0141 224 3600

**Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group):**  
[www.mutual-support.org.uk](http://www.mutual-support.org.uk)

**National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office:**  
24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853;  
[www.ngvfa.org.uk](http://www.ngvfa.org.uk)

**Poppyscotland:**  
0131 557 2782;  
[www.poppyscotland.org.uk](http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk)

**Regular Forces' Employment Association:**  
0121 236 0058;  
[www.rfea.org.uk](http://www.rfea.org.uk)

**Remount:** 01451 850 341;  
[www.remount.net](http://www.remount.net)

**Royal British Legion:**  
0808 802 8080;  
[www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)

**Royal British Legion Scotland:**  
0131 550 1583;  
[www.legionscotland.org.uk](http://www.legionscotland.org.uk)

**RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre:**  
01622 795900;  
[www.rbli.co.uk](http://www.rbli.co.uk)

**Scottish Veterans' Residences:**  
0131 556 0091;  
[www.svronline.org](http://www.svronline.org)



**Single Persons Accommodation  
Centre for the Ex-Services:**  
01748 833797;  
[www.spaces.org.uk](http://www.spaces.org.uk)

**SSAFA:** 0845 1300 975;  
[www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk)

**Stoll:**  
020 7385 2110;  
[www.stoll.org.uk](http://www.stoll.org.uk)

**The Not Forgotten Association:**  
020 7730 2400;  
[www.nfassociation.org](http://www.nfassociation.org)

**The Poppy Factory:**  
020 8940 3305;  
[www.poppyfactory.org](http://www.poppyfactory.org)

**The Royal Star and Garter Homes:**  
020 8481 7676;  
[www.starandgarter.org](http://www.starandgarter.org)

**The Veterans Charity:**  
01753 653772;  
[info@veteranscharity.org.uk](mailto:info@veteranscharity.org.uk)

**Troop Aid:**  
0121 711 7215 or 07734 384260;  
[troopaid@icloud.com](mailto:troopaid@icloud.com);

[www.troopaid.info](http://www.troopaid.info)

**uk4u Thanks!:**  
01798 812081;  
[www.uk4u.org](http://www.uk4u.org)

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

**WRVS Services Welfare:**  
02920 232 668



## ROADSHOWS

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

**The Army Engagement Team** roadshows – enquires to [rc-aeg-mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:rc-aeg-mailbox@mod.gov.uk)

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TEN details have been changed in this picture of a soldier from the Royal Yeomanry on pre-deployment training for Op Cabrit on Salisbury Plain.

Circle all the differences in the left image and send the panel to HOAY 942, *Soldier*, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU with your full contact details, including email address, by no later than September 30.

A photocopy is acceptable but only one entry per person may be submitted. The first correct entry drawn after the closing date will win a self-drive boating experience courtesy of GoBoat ([www.goboat.co.uk](http://www.goboat.co.uk)).

Nautical skills are not necessary as training will be offered on arrival and you'll be given a route map to help you navigate your way.

A friendly crew will meet you by the kiosk to give you your instructions at a safe distance and provide life jackets for babies and buoyancy aids for children.

GoBoat is currently limiting group sizes to two households/bubbles per boat; or four individuals from different households. All changes are in accordance with the government's workplace guidelines.

Choose from two departure points – Paddington, cruising along the Regent's Canal through Regent's Park and past London Zoo; or from Kingston, along the River Thames and on to Hampton Court Palace.

The winners' names will be published in the November issue. All the usual rules apply.





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# REVIEWS

## BOOKS

### SURVIVING HELL

**Ex-para relives being banged up abroad**

➤ NICK Dunn appreciates the simple things in life. Making a brew with a kettle; doing laundry in a washing machine; having a bath.

It is nearly three years since he and five other British veterans – the so-called Chennai Six – were released from prison in India, but even now, these basic necessities still seem like total luxuries to the former paratrooper.

Their nightmare started in 2013 while working in security aboard the anti-piracy ship MV Seaman Guard Ohio, which customs officials claimed had strayed into Indian waters and was carrying improperly declared firearms.

Despite clear evidence to the contrary, they and their crewmates – three Ukrainians, 14 Estonians and 12 Indians – were jailed, enduring filthy conditions alongside convicted murderers and rapists as they waited in vain for the wheels of justice to turn.



Picture: Barry Marsden

**P66**

MUSIC

**P68**

GAMES

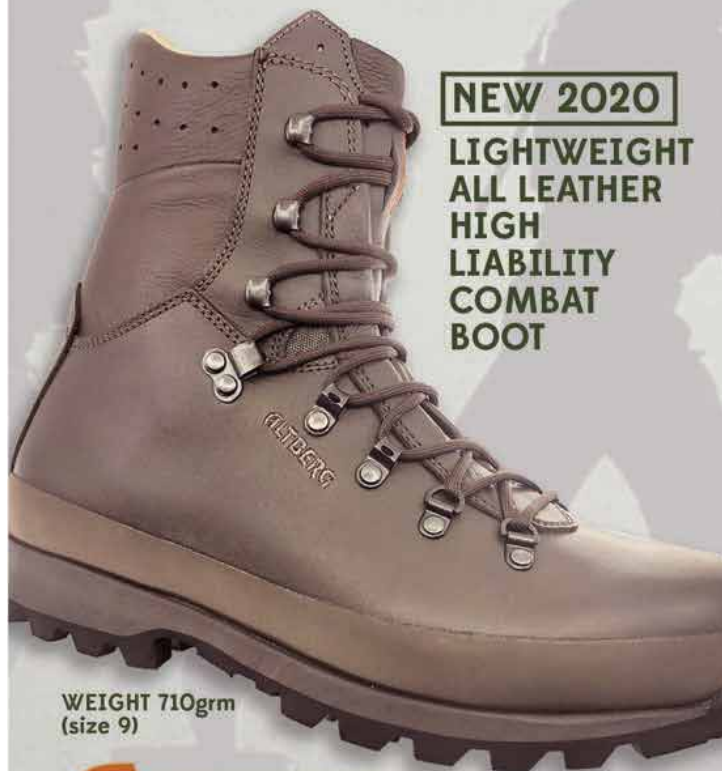


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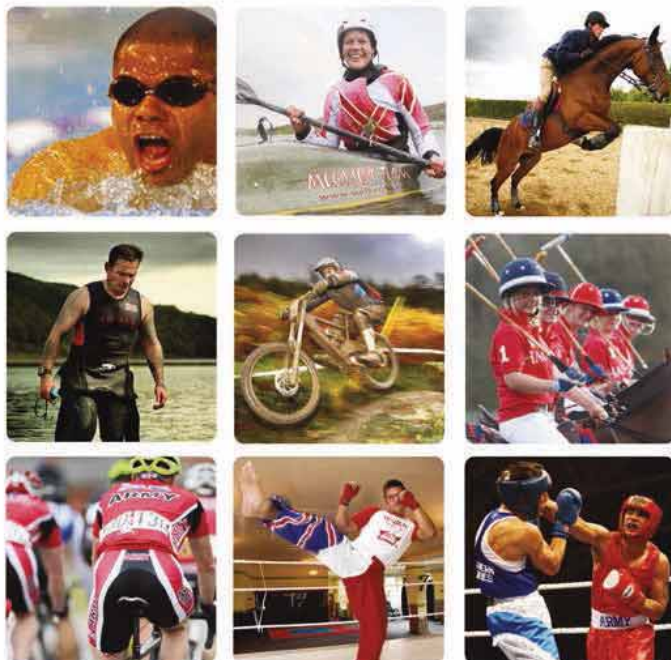


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» The terrifying series of events is revealed in Dunn's account of their captivity, *Surviving Hell*, out in paperback this month.

But talking to *Soldier* from his home in Northumberland, he admits he is still struggling to come to terms with the mental after-effects.

"It still feels raw," he admits. "I sometimes ask myself if I'm having memories of a previous life.

"I'll be having a good day, and then something small sets me off and I just go..." he gestures downwards with his hand. "The cracks have been opening up recently."

It is difficult to see how anyone could come away from such an experience unscathed.

Dunn spent three birthdays and Christmas in prison. Conditions were dire, with cramped, cockroach-infested cells, meagre rations, open sewers and the threat of violence never far away.

He and his fellow prisoners had their convictions quashed, then reinstated. Meanwhile, hurtful conspiracy theories spread about their guilt. Having served in Afghanistan and Iraq prior to leaving the Armed Forces in 2010, the 34-year-old credits his ethos as a paratrooper for getting him through the ordeal.

"If I'd gone into that situation without military training I'd have curled up in the corner of that prison cell and cried," he continues.

"I did that anyway, but I wiped my tears, dusted myself off and thought, 'right, let's address this situation. Here's my bedspace, my area on the floor – I'll make it my home'.



Picture: Newcastle Chronicle



● *Surviving Hell*, by Nick Dunn, is published by Mirror Books and released as a paperback on September 17, priced £8.99

"I'm very proud to have served and it helped me deal with it."

Dunn also made a silent promise to make it back to his family. His mum had suffered an aneurysm shortly after his arrest, and his sister Lisa, whose own recollections are woven into the book, had put her life on hold to raise funds and awareness of the prisoners' plight.

"If anyone should get a medal, it's my sister," he says. "All I had to cope with was being in prison, missing my family, getting into a routine, moving closer to the end of the tunnel where the light was shining bright.

"My sister had to do so much more than that – all while worrying about me as well as my mum's health problems.

"How she's still standing is beyond me. She kept me going. I wanted to throw the towel in so many times."

Finally, in November 2017, the Chennai appeal court acquitted the men and a month later Dunn was able to return to his life.

He gets emotional when describing the moment he emerged, blinking, from the arrivals' hall to a wall of photographers and the waiting





## BOOKS



arms of his family.

"It was phenomenal," he recalls.

"How I didn't break my sister in two, I don't know – it was like two magnets snapping tightly together."

Now, he takes every day as it comes. He continues to work in the security sector and says the gym is his happy place, "except on leg days".

During lockdown, he allowed himself a wry smile when he saw people complaining about boredom on social media.

"I had to bite my lip a few times," he admits. "I'd have loved to be in prison with everything I've got now."

"We take so much for granted. When I put a kettle on, I appreciate how quick it is because in prison we had to sit and wait for the stove to bubble up every single time."

"Everyone's had their struggles, but I hope people appreciate things a bit more in life when all this comes to an end."

And the process of writing the book has also proved cathartic.

"It's helped me get things off my chest," he says. "I still feel immense anger, but I'm not letting it take over."

"You have to look for the positives. I believe this is my life test. Someone said, 'right Nick, we're going to see how tough you really are'."

"And I overcame it. I had to go through so many walls, so many setbacks, but every day is a new opportunity."

"Sometimes you don't know what you're capable of." ■

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*

# WIN >>

● *Soldier* has teamed up with Mirror

Books to give away a copy of *Surviving Hell*.

To be in with a chance of winning tell us which Indian state the city of Chennai is in. Send your answer to [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) or on a postcard to the usual address by September 30.



## BOOK RELEASES



**Sicily '43**  
by James Holland

OPERATION Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943, is far from a forgotten chapter in the chronology of the Second World War. However, it

is too often regarded as a minor stepping stone before the Normandy landings. This refreshing new history of the Allies' first venture onto mainland Europe really challenges the established view and goes a long way toward explaining the true significance of the mission. As ever with James Holland, an engaging narrative guides the reader effortlessly from the strategic level, down through the operational conduct of the campaign to the soldier fighting his own personal war. I highly recommend this book.

**Mike Peters, ex-AAC**



**Otto Eckhart's Ordeal**  
by Niall Edworthy

RARELY does a title make me laugh out loud, but this one did just that. Very loosely based on actual events, the tale

has Otto, a shy, reticent young man taking on the mighty Heinrich Himmler, who tasks him to find the Holy Grail because of a book he has written. He is sent off to the south of France to bring it back – no excuses. Meanwhile, the Nazis are flexing their power and have just opened Dachau Camp, where Otto's father has been sent. The question is, can he find the Grail, rescue his father and get the girl (Himmler's secretary)? It's well worth reading this funny and well-written offering to find out.

**Andy Kay, ex-RS**

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PICK OF THE MONTH:

## OPEN UP YOUR HEAD

**Indie wannabes find middle of the road on debut offering**

➤ IN A market awash with British indie bands, you need something very special to stand out from the crowd.

Do **Sea Girls** have it? The answer is a resounding "meh, sort of".

With endorsements from the *NME* and Annie Mac and promising something so hot I'd be blistered, I was a little let down by this run of the mill, almost bland indie rock. That said, there hasn't really been anything to blow your socks off since **Oasis** split up.

But this isn't an album that's totally devoid of promise.

Opener *Transplant* sets the scene for what follows in the sense that it's almost there,





although not quite. The guitars are solid, but the vocals are just too weak – so much so that the song lacks that bit of excitement needed to take it from a half-decent offering to one you want to hear again.

Put simply, it's not the best start. However, don't let that get you down as the following tracks pick up.

The synthesiser guitar mash-ups certainly show promise, especially on *Violet*, but they are undermined by dull and dreary tracks such as *You Over Anyone*, which tries to bring pianos into the mix like a modern day incarnation of **John Lennon** – but without the **Beatles'** polish.

Where the album is rekindled is in its successful heavier diversions.

*All I Want to Hear You Say* has all the elements required for a crowd-pleasing singalong festival anthem as its loud and quiet moments intermingle with some pretty impressive guitar work not seen since Glastonbury went all commercial.

*Shake This Feeling* is the undoubted highlight thanks to its rapid bass intro, intricate guitar picking, classic drum rolls and husky, haunting vocals.

Although **Sea Girls** showed real potential in parts of *Open Up Your Head*, I can only hope their live shows (in the not too distant future) will bring a little more atmosphere and entertainment. This collection alone, albeit with some decent interludes, is a bit of a let down to say the least. ■



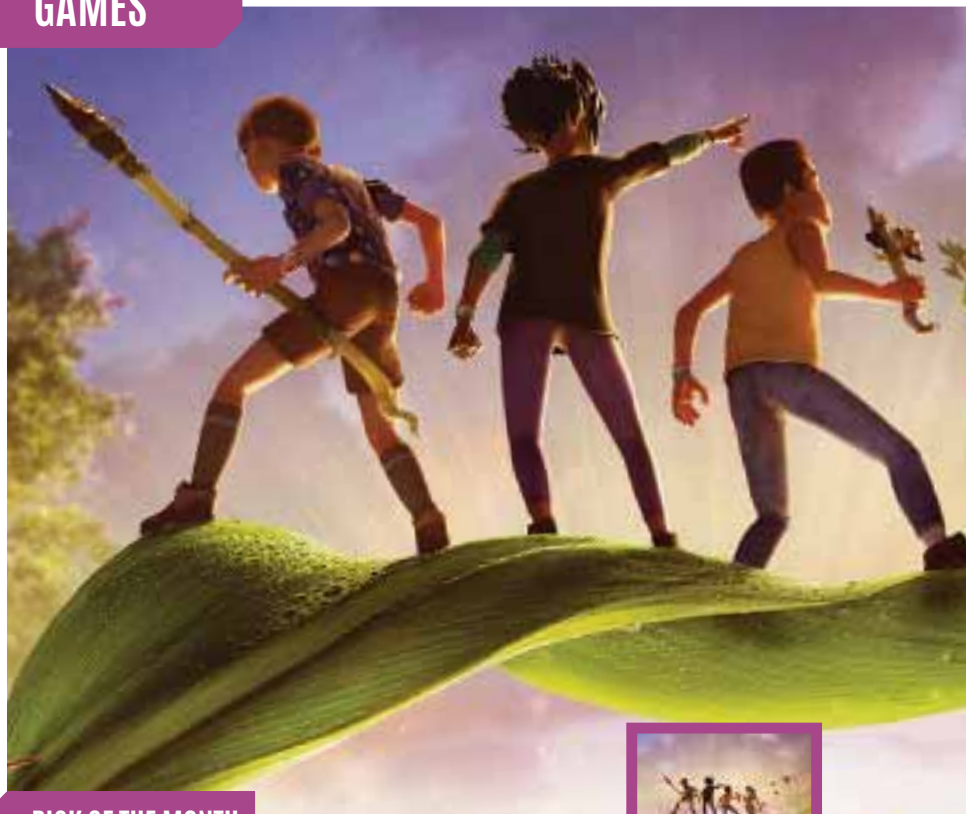
#### VERDICT:

Not without merit, but more effort needed next time round

★★★★★

REVIEW: CPL SCOTT ROBERTS, RIFLES





## PICK OF THE MONTH:

## GROUNDED

## Back yard survival tests the mettle

▶ WITH insects tearing each other to shreds, weeds choking everything in sight and a host of other grim acts being played out, gardens are truly life-and-death environments.

Now imagine being part of this chaos while reduced to the size of an ant and you have the concept of *Grounded*—a survival challenge that pits players against the horrors of a domestic ecosystem.

As seen in movies such as *Honey I Shrunk the Kids*, the backyard rapidly becomes a nightmarish jungle of epic proportions when humans revert to a pint-sized state.

With common-or-garden bugs by the bucketload, staying alive in this game means finding weapons, as well as a decent intake of food and water to avoid keeling over.

It might be an unusual proposition, but the demo *Soldier* sampled for the title which is due out next year suggests developer Obsidian Entertainment is doing a fine job.

*Grounded* is a visual treat. God-like rays stream through the foliage, the water appears convincing, and the graphical fidelity of the setting, and everything within, looks superb.

Although there were occasions when the



Xbox One struggled to maintain a seamless environment, with objects suddenly disappearing and reappearing, we hope these glitches will be ironed out.

Gameplay is solid too. There is plenty to do against the immersive backdrop, whether it is making weapons and traps, gathering supplies or simply trekking around. While players are always active, however, they are not overburdened to the point of exhaustion. In short, there is plenty of time to enjoy the action.

In addition, adventurers have the option of tackling the back garden either solo, or with up to three miniature comrades in a cooperative multiplayer mode, which adds to the fun.

All in all, *Grounded* looks the part, is fun to play and it would appear that there is plenty in it to keep you coming back for more. We await the finished garden nightmare with interest. ■

## VERDICT:

An unusual offering that holds great promise

★★★★★

REVIEW: DAVID MCDUGALL, CIVVY

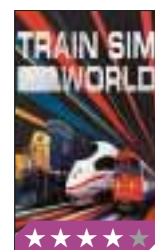
## GAMES RELEASES

Skully  
For Switch

WITH a nod to 1980s' classics *Marble Madness* and *Wizball*, this odd platformer casts players as an animated, voodoo-esque skull charged with bringing

peace to a warring island. Long disconnected heads can do little else but roll about — so gamers initially have nothing but dexterity to guide them around their mythical world. As the plot unfolds, however, magic provides different physical forms and new abilities. *Skully* is a polished offering that will please fans of the genre. The island is stunningly drawn, while a beautifully rendered musical score is the icing on the cake.

Cliff Caswell, *Soldier*

Train Sim World 2  
for PC, Xbox One and PS4

MICROSOFT'S original *Train Simulator* was used as an instruction tool by a Royal Logistic Corps rail squadron — and realism is

the watchword on this offering for enthusiasts. *Train Sim World 2* expands the popular first game with new scenarios, rolling stock and tasks including — if you are so inclined — a shift in a tube cab on the Piccadilly Line. The late-build demo that *Soldier* was shown was graphically stunning with playability to match the looks. The title's inclusion on the console manifest also suggests that it has more mass appeal than might be expected.

Cliff Caswell, *Soldier*



# SOLDIER SPORT



## « BACK IN THE GROOVE

HAVING been given the green light to return to the wicket, the Army men's team made the most of their shortened season. The Reds won four out of five matches played and are already planning ahead for 2021. Read more about their successful run on page 73...





# GOLFERS SALVAGE SEASON WITH COURSE RETURN

**W**ITH the Army Sport Control Board giving golf the go-ahead to resume after lockdown, the Service's players have been quick to take to the tee.

The Intelligence Corps, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Royal Logistic Corps were among the formations to stage summer championships within days of the announcement being made, and with more tournaments to follow in the coming weeks personnel are making up for lost time.

Those returning to the course had to adhere to the obvious social distancing guidelines, while observing subtle rule changes such as leaving flags in the holes, avoiding the raking of bunkers and not sharing buggies, but the new format worked well.

More than 20 golfers descended on Pine Ridge Golf Club in Surrey for the Intelligence Corps' first tournament back

on the fairways and it was Cpl Ben Ware (pictured far right) who topped the standings to be crowned champion golfer.

"We already had the venue in mind, as well as a provisional date, and as soon as the guidance was released we had five days to get everything together," competition organiser Sgt Jacob Timson (pictured above) told *SoldierSport*.

"The main feeling was one of relief – that we were finally able to get out and play some competitive golf.

"At the same time we had to be careful and set an example; this was a military event at a public course so we had to do everything by the book.

"Because we've been able to play outside the Army at our own clubs for a few weeks, coupled with the fact some people have been working reduced hours, we had a lot of golfers in good form.

"As a corps, we had more than



**"THE  
MAIN  
FEELING  
WAS  
ONE OF  
RELIEF"**

300 personnel involved in Op Rescript so golf has offered some welcome respite.

"Speaking from personal experience, sport is one of the main reasons to stay in the Army and over the last ten years the benefits have been recognised more and more.

"It is great to be playing again."

The Intelligence Corps, runners up in the plate competition at the 2018 Army Championships, return to the course for their autumn meet next month and hope to be challenging for silverware again next season.

"We cannot compete with the likes of the Royal Artillery and Royal Logistic Corps," Timson added. "But we are quite strong for a small corps."

The sense of relief stemming from the resumption of play was also felt by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who saw 60 personnel head out for the 36-hole format of



their summer championships at Tidworth Garrison Golf Club.

The contest welcomed golfers of all ability levels and ranks, with Sgt Josh Macinnes named as the gross winner and WO1 Carl Appleby taking the stableford honours.

"To get back out and swing the clubs was a euphoric moment," WO1 Carl Wray, secretary of REME Golf, said.

"It is a chance to salvage what is left of the season.

"We thought we might not have any golf this year so to get this tournament in was a real bonus for us.

"It is a huge boost for morale. The Army Sport Control Board could not have done more to facilitate this and make it work.

"The Corps Championships will follow in September and we already have 70 entries. After that, we will be hoping for a full season next year."

That sentiment has been echoed by the wider golf fraternity given the fact a host of key fixtures in the 2020 schedule have been cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Inter-Services Championships, which were due to be held at Saunton Golf Club later this month, have been scrapped, as has the Army Matchplay and Stableford Championships and the Inter-Regional and Inter-Corps Championships. ■



## TIME TRIAL IN NUMBERS

AVERAGE  
SPEED,  
IN MPH,  
CLOCKED BY  
MATTHEWS  
ON THE DAY

**25.5**

WINNING  
MARGIN, IN  
MINUTES,  
OVER HER  
NEAREST  
RIVAL

**6**

ATHLETES  
COMPLETED  
THE  
WOMEN'S  
SENIOR RACE

**16**

FEMALE  
TRIATHLON  
ATHLETES  
JOINING THE  
OFFICER IN  
THE FIELD

**4**

POTENTIAL  
IRONMAN  
EVENTS  
LINED UP  
FOR THE  
COMING  
MONTHS  
- COVID  
PERMITTING

**3**



## TIME TRIAL TEST TICKED OFF

**T**RIATHLON star Capt Katrina Matthews (RAMC) showcased her talent on two wheels as she claimed a maiden win in cycling's National 100-mile Time Trial Championships.

Having seen her international season curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, the officer used the Wiltshire event as way of preparing for a potential return to ironman action in the coming months.

A time of 3hr 55min 22sec saw the 29-year-old dominate the field and she told *SoldierSport* she was surprised by the emphatic manner of her victory.

"I was not expecting to win," she added.

"A good result would have been to finish on the podium, but I just performed really well on the day.

"It was convincing. Last year there was only eight seconds between first and second

place, however, this was a decent margin.

"Time trial is all about working on the roads, putting the power down on the hills and being aerodynamic.

"These were proper British country roads with lots of turns and roundabouts, so to clock a sub four-hour time is a real achievement."

While Matthews admitted the race offered a welcome break from her primary sport, she insisted the victory will have benefits down the line.

"This was almost a test event for my ironman competitions, where the cycle stage is 20 kilometres longer," she explained.

"It was nice to find where my limit is and to be able to push really hard knowing I didn't have to do a run on the back of it.

"There were some good lessons I can hopefully take forward to my next race." ■



# CABRIT TOUR HELPS NEW DISCIPLINE TAKE FLIGHT

**D**ISC golf has become the latest pursuit to land on the Army's sporting landscape thanks to the efforts of a rapidly expanding player base in Wiltshire.

Played with flying discs instead of clubs and balls, participants throw the discs at targets using rules similar to those followed in traditional golf.

More than 30 soldiers from Bulford, Tidworth and Larkhill are testing their aim on a weekly basis and those at the helm are looking to capitalise on the growing momentum.

An application for recognition from the Army Sport Control Board is expected in 2021 and hopes are high for future Inter-Unit, Inter-Corps and, eventually, Inter-Services competitions.

"It is such a cheap sport," WO2 Gareth King (Int Corps), interim chairman of the Army Disc Golf Association, told *SoldierSport*.

"A set of discs costs less than

£30 and it is really accessible. It can also be played recreationally and competitively.

"It is early days and the priority now is to advertise what we're doing to see who else is out there. I know there are lots of people who have played in the past, or others that want to try it.

"This is great exercise and you can just turn up at a course and start throwing a disc around. It is pretty addictive and from there you can look at competing in events around the country."

Personnel already have access to the sport on Army bases, with ATR Pirbright and Gibraltar Barracks, Minley, boasting courses of their own.

Op Cabrit has formed another proving ground, with soldiers able to sharpen their skills on camp in Estonia.

"I first got involved when I deployed in 2017," King added. "There is a course on site, so the guys were playing quite a bit.



**"IT IS  
EARLY  
DAYS"**

And it has been the same for all the battalions rolling through.

"However, when I came back and started to look for places to play there were not many courses in the area. But Amesbury has since built one and a lot of soldiers are now heading down.

"I am sure personnel must be playing in the other Services as well. It might be a case of us leading the way and the aim is to have unit- and corps-level competitions, as well as an Army representative team.

"It is growing rapidly."

For more information on how to get involved join the Army Disc Golf Facebook group. ■



● LAUNCH Disc Golf has shown its support to the Army by offering personnel discounted three- and five-piece starter kits. Scan this code and enter 'ARMYDISC3' or 'ARMYDISC5'. Visit [www.launchdiscgolf.co.uk](http://www.launchdiscgolf.co.uk)





GAME OFF: THE INTER-CORPS TWENTY20 COMPETITION PLANNED FOR SEPTEMBER 8 TO 10 HAS BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

**CRICKET**



## REDS MAKE MOST OF SHORT SEASON



**"IT WAS GREAT TO GET THE LADS BACK"**

**S**KIPPER Cpl Jay Boynton (REME) said it "felt like we'd never been away" as he led the Army men's cricket team in their first matches since lockdown restrictions were lifted.

The Reds made up for lost time with five fixtures in the space of eight days, a run that produced four wins as the players quickly adapted to cricket in a Covid era.

Cpl Varun Bali (AGC) top scored with 34 and Boynton claimed figures of 3-13 as the soldiers downed Oxford University by 22 runs in the opening match of their Twenty20 double-header in Aldershot, a result that was followed by an 11-run victory in the afternoon.

A change of format brought further success a week later as a century stand between Cfn Liam Fletcher (REME) and Pte Tade Carmichael (RLC) paved the way for a 117-run triumph over the Fire Service in their 40-over showdown.

The latter top scored with 65 as the hosts closed their innings on 271-9. Paceman

Fus Marlon Simon (R Welsh, pictured left) then led the charge with the ball, posting 3-26 as the military outfit claimed a convincing win.

The Twenty20 action resumed a day later as the Army triumphed over the Free Foresters, before losing to the same opponent, in another double-header.

"We wanted an unbeaten Covid season and only lost that final game in the last over," Boynton told *SoldierSport*. "But it was great to get the lads back together."

"Some have been away supporting the NHS on Op Rescript and this has been a good way to relieve some of that pressure."

"It has been a disappointing year for everyone, but we have got to maintain a positive frame of mind in the hope that things will get back to normal next season."

"These matches have been an opportunity to cement the team for then and we have been looking for performances from the players coming into the squad." ■

## SPORT SHORTS



### Molinaro's mammoth run

**E**NDURANCE athlete and former officer Carla Molinaro has smashed the women's world record for the fastest time running from Lands' End to John O'Groats.

The 36-year-old, who is in the process of joining the Army Reserve, completed the punishing route in 12 days, 30 minutes and 14 seconds – an effort that was more than ten-and-a-half hours quicker than the previous best.

"She averaged 73 miles a day for 12 days, with just four hours' sleep each night," said sports masseuse Capt Elysia Harrison (RLC). "When she reached the end it was pure emotion."



### Plans in place for kick-off

**T**HE Army Football Association has published plans for the resumption of the 2019/20 season following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The proposals must be signed-off by the Army Sport Control Board and Army Headquarters but, if approved, the remaining fixtures in the Challenge, Minor Units and Reserve Cups will all be completed this month.

The Massey Trophy and Edwards Challenge Cup finals will also be contested, while approval is being sought for the resumption of this year's Inter-Services campaign.

Follow [@Armyfa1888](https://twitter.com/Armyfa1888) for updates.

# Final Word



I'm looking forward to working with other Nato countries. I have ambitions to promote up the ranks so this tour could be a really important experience.

Tpr Shaun Mason



It's an experience you can't get on civvy street. I joined the Army to get out in the field; I'm a gunner on a Jackal, which will certainly be a massive change from my day job as a political lobbyist in Westminster.

Tpr Ewen Dymott



We are all sub-unit based at the moment but will be working as a larger group drawn from our various squadrons out in Poland. It will be interesting to see how we gel together as a bigger team.

LCpl Patrick Cleary



**I haven't spent much time on Jackals yet as I've only just done my commander's course, so I'm hoping to get more experience with the platform. Deployments like this are what every Reservist dreams of.**

Cpl Chris Fisher



The winter training package with the Royal Marines and the ice dive will be challenging, but I can't wait to do it.

Tpr James Taylor

To mobilise, which is the reason I joined. And for us to be able to deploy as a whole Reservist unit is the most exciting aspect of it for me. In fact, my wife and I have delayed starting a family just so I could go on tour.

Cpl James Mashiter



## Great expectations

We asked Reservists from the Royal Yeomanry what they were most looking forward to about deploying to Poland on Op Cabrit

Putting all our training and skills to good use – and getting away from my mundane civvy life. What's the point of having all these skills and not using them?

LCpl Matthew Prentice





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