

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



**SPINELINE
COMPETITION**
ROMNY, BAR,
CHOP, BUSK

SHOOTING FOR
THE OLYMPICS

WEARABLE
TECH

UKRAINE
UPDATE

CENZUB
SPECIAL

MAN ON A MISSION

Why the Army Sergeant Major could have you in his sights



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Spotlight on...

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Size

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Bed Spaces

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Defensive and heli operations

3 Stone tents/farm complexes

Purpose built C-IED Training Area

CBRN facilities

“

The best full-meal deal training area in the country – offering camps, dry training areas and ranges in close proximity and allowing units to complete all mandatory MATTs training in one location.

OC C Coy, 3 PWRR.

”

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CONTENTS



FEATURES

- 26 **The frozen conflict**
Making a difference in Ukraine
- 33 **Wear and tear**
Gear to transform future soldiering
- 37 **Army Sergeant Major Q&A**
Why he's got an appetite for change
- 43 **Street smart**
Infantry take urban test in France

REGULARS

- 7 **The Informer**
Top stories from across the Service
- 18 **Need to Know**
Essential tips for today's personnel
- 47 **Talkback**
Ruminations from the ranks
- 49 **Bullet Points**
Troops' intelligence assets
- 57 **Reviews**
Music, movies, books and kit to fill your downtime
- 74 **Final Word**
Troops reflect on hopes for 2020

SOLDIERSPORT

- 64 **Shooting**
Personnel aim for Olympic stage
- 67 **Swimming**
Business as normal at corps clash
- 68 **Boxing**
Khan ends year on a high
- 69 **Rugby Union**
Women build towards Forces clash
- 70 **Triathlon**
Matthews makes Ironman debut
- 71 **Sailing**
Offshore team set for new chapter
- 72 **Motorsport**
Service set-up nurtures new talent



26



33



37



69



57



Looking ahead



ATTEMPTING to predict the future is rarely a great idea but one thing we can count on in 2020 is the Army Sergeant

Major pressing home his desire to improve the general awareness of and interest in good leadership.

It's a topic he talked about fervently during a recent visit to our offices (page 37). One particular point he stressed was the readiness of good leaders to accept (respectful) challenge and not equate the quality of advice to the rank of the person providing it.

That was something I witnessed first hand while reporting on The Royal Gurkha Rifles training at Cenzub in France (page 43), where officers and soldiers worked together brilliantly to think on their collective feet, impressing French Army instructors along the way.

This collaborative approach to leadership will surely boost retention and recruitment (page 7) in the future.

After all, teamwork is a two-way street and the more involved people feel in the decision-making process, the more motivated they will stay.

Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

Where to find *Soldier*

► Printed copies

THESE are distributed to every Army site at the start of each month.

► Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

ALONG with news and glimpses behind the scenes at *Soldier*, we publish a link to the latest magazine at www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine and on Twitter (@soldiermagazine).

► Online

DIGITAL versions of current and past editions are available on the Army website at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk. Just click on the "read it now" tab.

► Purchase

IF you're not in the Army you can buy *Soldier* from your high street magazine retailer or directly from us at subs@soldiermagazine.co.uk (£23 for 12 issues in the UK).

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Cue the new campaign

Recruitment drive builds on last year's controversial advertising

THE Army is continuing to aim at the heart of the youth sector with the style and content of its latest recruitment drive.

Called "Belonging 2020: Army Confidence", the lead element is a film fronted by Reservist Tpr Laurie Duncan (HAC) – a 28-year-old actor who starred as Callum Kane in *Hollyoaks*.

It was directed by celebrated Danish cinematographer Nicolai Fuglsig, a recipient of a Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity award for his Sony commercial featuring 250,000 bouncing balls let loose on the largest hill in San Francisco. He is also the man behind the evocative "Mist" recruiting film for the Royal Marines.

Fuglsig's main piece is supported by a series of shorts from 27-year old Billy Boyd Cape, best known for his work with musicians Jakwob and Mr Hudson.

The theme of this year's campaign was inspired by comments from Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, at the RUSI Land Warfare Conference in 2018, when he declared that soldiers' self-confidence is key for a winning Army.

The thread running through the adverts is that the military provides skills for life and develops a self-belief that is the envy of many civilians.

"With the 2020 campaign we want to highlight that a career in the Service not only provides

exciting opportunities, challenges and adventure but it also gives you a lasting confidence that is hard to find in any other profession," Col Nick McKenzie, head of recruiting for the Army, told *Soldier*.

With serving troops considered a vital part of the recruiting effort, an internal brief explaining the new promotion was distributed to all units before Christmas.

Fronted by the Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Gav Paton (page 37), it aimed to galvanise support among existing personnel and sway critics of 2019's "Your Army Needs You" campaign.

It covered the results of last year's push – 80,000 applications were received, a 46 per cent increase on 2018 – and the rationale behind the latest concept, which is based on extensive research.

The data revealed that, among other things, more than half of 16 to 24-year-olds believe a lack of self-confidence holds them back in life, while around two-thirds claim they have no-one they can turn to for help.

Nick Terry, chief marketing officer for Recruiting Group, commented: "Many applicants have previously been in jobs or careers where they did not feel valued, but by joining the Army they develop self-confidence – and we want to show just how valuable this can be."

SOLDIER

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“
It provides
excitement
and adventure
”



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. CALIFORNIA GOING COMMANDO

THE US Marine Corps proved formidable opponents for the Army's Commando-trained personnel as they embarked on a peer-on-peer warfighting test in the deserts of California.

Troops from 24 Commando Regiment, Royal Engineers and 29 Commando Regiment, Royal Artillery bolstered a Royal Marines battlegroup that was partnered with the host's 7th Marine Regiment as they locked horns with 2nd Marine Division.

The vast complex at the Marine Air Ground Combat Training Centre, near the Mexican

border, offered an array of opportunities with Vikings and Jackals deployed on the ground, while the Gunners provided artillery support across the battlefield.

More than 150 actors were also employed to play civilians in the urban areas, giving the exercising troops the chance to deliver humanitarian assistance.

"Operating in the desert has its difficulties," said 40 Cdo spokesman Lt Simon Williams (RN). "Usually synonymous with being dry and hot, the temperatures can fluctuate between 30 degrees Celsius in the daytime, to below freezing at night. This training area tested every commando."

2. ALASKA COLD MOUNTAIN



MEMBERS of the Scots Guards are starting preparations for a gruelling expedition to Alaska's Mount Denali in May. A team of 24 soldiers will take on the peak, which at 6,194m is the highest in North America and the coldest on Earth.

This month they will begin building their fitness and attend winter foundation training in Scotland. Look out for more on Exercise Tartan Glacier in future editions of *Soldier*.



3. LOUISIANA SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

FORT Polk's Joint Readiness Training Centre put troops from 1st Battalion, Scots Guards to the test as part of Exercise Rattlesnake.

The package saw members of Right Flank – along with brand new recruits from F Company – team up with their US counterparts for a variety of offensive and defensive manoeuvres in the swampy woodland of Louisiana.

Mock villages also gave them a chance to practise live firing in an urban setting, including explosive method of entry and shooting through buildings.

As well as providing top notch interoperability training, the visit allowed the battalion's pipes and drums to showcase their musical and ceremonial skills to their hosts and the general public in New Orleans.



Picture: US Army Public Affairs

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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6. ESTONIA 5. GERMANY



THE Irish Guards have begun their six-month stint in Iraq, where they will continue to train security forces in the ongoing mission to defeat Daesh. Predecessors, 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (pictured) have returned home.



Gurkhas excel in French class – page 43

“
They are
defending
their homeland
”

Mercians train Ukrainian
troops for battle – page 26

4. BRUNEI

FOREST SCHOOL

THE latest batch of jungle warfare instructors have been proving their mastery of Borneo's inhospitable rainforest.

To qualify to train others in the close country tropical environment, students must perfect a range of specialist skills, among them jungle-specific tactics and contact drills, survival, riverine operations and live firing.

The final exercise sees them planning and executing a mission deep under the canopy, with limited support and few resources.

Instructor CSGt Chandra Rai (RGR) said the intense seven-week package had an attrition rate of around 20 per cent.

“It is very demanding due to the terrain and weather,” he explained.



“Temperatures can reach above 32 degrees Celsius and the humidity is high, so there is always the risk of injuries.”

The course is run twice a year by the Infantry Battle School's Jungle Warfare Division and is attended by Army and Royal Marine personnel – from junior NCOs up to captain level – as well as international forces.

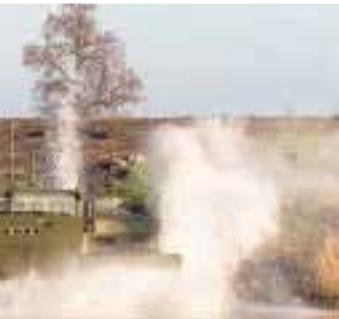
The next serial starts in April.

6. ESTONIA TAKING THE REINS

ESTONIAN troops have been helping The Queen's Royal Hussars bed in as the lead unit of Nato's enhanced forward presence in the country.

Exercise Furious Cavalry saw the whole battlegroup deploy on its first major training package, with their hosts playing the enemy while the British personnel got used to operating in the freezing Baltic environment.

The Estonians also showed members of the unit's A Squadron a new method of tank recovery using logs.



5. GERMANY MAKING A SPLASH

SENNELAGER-based sappers are continuing to develop their specialist water crossing expertise. Seventeen members of 23 Amphibious Engineer Squadron, 75 Engineer Regiment have recently qualified as M3 Rig commanders, pilots or drivers. Further courses will take place over the coming months. To track their progress follow @23_Amph on Twitter.



Ground view

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

Contact Gav on Defence Connect

AHAPPY New Year everyone – I hope that all of you, whether on operations or at home, were able to enjoy the festivities and are ready for another busy 12 months.

I covered a fair bit of ground in 2019 and a lot of my time was taken up with getting out and about, seeing the wider Army and understanding how it functions (page 37).

There are a few things I have identified that I'd like to work on over the course of the next couple of years.

I don't want to set any hares running at this stage as I am still putting these ideas together, so watch this space for more information in the near future.

A number of initiatives that the Service launched last year are now bedding in and will serve us well. We now, for example, have an all-new set of physical

employment standards that draw on the latest scientific thinking to ensure we are fit for current ops.

We are not the only country that has been looking at this area – the US and Australian Armed Forces have too.

At the moment our standards are to assess those employed in ground-close combat jobs.

But you are going to see tailored tests for other Service roles up and running in the coming months.

Needless to say, I will continue to bring your voices to the Army's top table during 2020.

I work closely with the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, and I've forged strong relationships with our other directors. Rest assured, they are listening to you.

I will, hopefully, see you out and about – and make sure you keep me posted on any dramas.



New crop won't let us down

THE type of individual joining the Army might have changed since I set foot in a recruiting office 23 years ago, but having visited troops on operations over Christmas, the quality still shines through.

People who have gone through the Service before might think they had it tougher than the

current crop, but times are always changing. Life is not easier or harder, just different.

Soldiers rise to the challenge with each generation. The troops that I fought with in Afghanistan never left us wanting, and our new breed won't today.

It is a privilege to serve with you.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Q As a kid, what did you think you would be doing in 2020?

A I never in a million years thought I would be the most senior NCO in the Army. I had set my sights on joining the police. Their recruitment people told me to go away and get some life experience – so I took their advice and went to 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry.

There are certainly no regrets because I've had a very full career – every role is a privilege but this job, and being the RSM of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles, are real high points.

Q Any New Year's resolutions?

A I'd like to do a bit more work for good causes – notably ABF The Soldiers' Charity. I ran the London Marathon in 2019 but I am still thinking through what I might do this year.

WARMINSTER GUN THIEF BROUGHT TO JUSTICE

AFIREARMS expert and Combined Cadet Force officer has been sentenced to 36 months in prison for stealing weapons from the Infantry and Small Arms School Corps collection in Warminster.

Peter Laidler, 72, a former Thames Valley police officer from Abingdon in Oxfordshire, took guns and parts between 1998 and 2012, when he worked as the centre's armourer.

Winchester Crown Court heard that he stole an SA80 and two Accuracy International L96 sniper

rifles (pictured), as well as components that he used to make another weapon. One of the guns was sold for £10,000.

He was also found guilty of possession of a prohibited firearm, a Browning Hi-Power semi-automatic pistol.

Laidler's co-defendant, Ministry of Defence Police officer Roger Smith, 61, of Emsworth, Hampshire, admitted receiving stolen goods and was given 200 hours of unpaid work as part of a 12-month Community Order.

Detective Superintendent Raffaele D'Orsi, Deputy Head of MoD Police Crime Command, praised the "tenacious and painstaking" investigation by his team and warned wrong-doers that crime would not be tolerated.





Housing pilot goes live

THIS month sees the launch of the Future Accommodation Model (FAM) pilot at Aldershot Garrison.

If you're based there – or assigned to the town in the next three years – there are new accommodation options, like renting or buying a home with financial support from the MoD.

The choices are single living accommodation, where current charges apply, or Service families accommodation if you are in a long-term established relationship, married or in a civil partnership – and, again, current charges apply.

You can also rent in the private sector, which covers whether you're single or in a relationship. You can live alone, with friends or with family.

Every month you receive £125, plus a payment from the MoD that takes account of how expensive the area is, and how many children you have.

The last option is to purchase a home.

You can choose to buy with support from the MoD, with a monthly payment of £125 put towards your mortgage.

You could also receive associated moving costs and may be eligible for a one-off refund of legal expenses if you're a first-time buyer, plus you can

use Forces Help to Buy.

If you are eligible and already rent a home or own a property more than 50 miles from Aldershot you can get FAM payments too – with cash to put towards your current rent or mortgage.

To be eligible you must be in Regular or full-time Reserve service (full commitment), belong to an authorised unit, have four years of service and be either already based at Aldershot Garrison with 12 months or more left on your posting or assigned there for 12 months beginning on or after January 31, 2020.

For more information email people-famcell-ald@mod.gov.uk or go to Room 123, Floor 1, Wellington House, St Omer Barracks.

There will be a series of briefings throughout this month to help explain more about the new FAM choices.

January 21: 4 Rifles briefing – unit welfare office

January 28: JSHAO briefing – 7 Regt Lecture Theatre, St Omer Barracks

Every Wednesday from **January 8** – 1000-1300 at St Omer Diner

Every Thursday from **January 9** – 1000-1300 at the Connaught Centre

TRAINING CENTRE SET UP FOR ONLINE CONFLICT

■ A NEW section has been created to help the UK military conquer the online space. The Information Warfare Group (IWG) will act as a focal point for digital expertise by bringing together existing departments at the Defence Academy – the Information Capability Branch, Defence Cyber School and Defence Simulation Centre.

With conflict increasingly being waged in the virtual sphere, the IWG will also become a hub for specialist training to ensure personnel have the right skills to operate on the new front line.

SPINE LINE COMPETITION



LAST MONTH'S spine lines would have been recognised by those of you keen on unmanned aerial systems.

Parrot, Matrice, Phantom and Wizard are all names of popular-selling drones.

This month, we have teamed up with the world's leading dash-cam manufacturer, Nextbase (www.nextbase.com), to offer a state-of-the-art camera to a lucky reader.

The 322GW model uses Bluetooth and Wi-Fi technology to automatically send video files to your smartphone.

To be in with a chance of scooping this impressive piece of kit – worth £100 – just tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Answers – including daytime telephone number – to the usual postal address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by January 30.

WIN
a £100
DASH CAM!

SOLDIER SURVEY

WE value our readers and your views and opinions are really important to us. To help us improve the magazine, we would

be grateful if you would complete our eight-question survey. Please scan the QR code below to access the form.



COMPUTER GAMES ADVICE

■ WITH more soldiers than ever playing computer games, Headquarters Regional Command is looking to establish and coordinate the activity across the Army.

E-sports are not recognised by the Army Sports Control Board and as a result no public funds are available for them, although this is now under review.

Teams are advised to follow the policy in **ABN 133/19** and must comply with the values and standards of the British Army.

This is to include, but not limited to, team names, player names, language, gambling and time spent playing.

No personal details are to be released on public gaming channels.

Advice on registering as a team and how to find others to play against can be found on the Army E-sports page on Defence Connect at <https://jive.defencegateway.mod.uk/groups/army-e-sports>

GURKHAS ACE CADRE TEST

■ THE next generation of Royal Gurkha Rifles leaders lived up to their fearsome reputation as they assaulted a mock village in a test of infantry skills and drills.

Following an intense training course, the Nepalese troops put the enemy under contact during the attack at the Caerwent training area.

The 55 aspiring commanders from 1st Battalion also proved their ability to command in a demanding environment as they finished their junior NCO cadre.



HUNT FOR GUN OWNER



■ THE Tank Museum is appealing for information about a First World War German Luger pistol handed in during a police firearms amnesty.

The gun was made in 1911 and is thought to have been taken as a souvenir by a British soldier at Cambrai in November 1917.

When officers noted the connection to the great tank offensive the weapon was donated to the Dorset-based attraction. Staff now want to trace its history and are appealing for any information about it.

An inscription on the leather holster is the only clue. It reads: "Souvenir of the Big Advance at Cambrai November 1917". The words "To Alice from HUD, Jany 21 - 18" also appear.

Anyone with information should email info@tankmuseum.org

MORTGAGE FEE DISCOUNT

■ BRISTOL-based brokers Community Mortgage Company are offering discounted fees to serving personnel and veterans in a bid to raise more than £5,000 a year for SSAFA.

The initiative, which sees the difference in rates donated directly to the charity, was initially introduced for NHS staff but has now been extended to the Armed Forces community. Visit www.community-mortgage.co.uk

“
It was a
tough day
that tested
everyone
”



Picture: Shutterstock

Call for school cash deadline

■ PARENTS of youngsters who are eligible for Service pupil premium payments need to contact their child's headteacher as soon as possible to give their education a cash boost.

Army bosses have confirmed that the deadline for letting schools know is January 16 – and they have urged personnel who believe they meet the criteria to act now.

Service children who have been recorded on any January census since 2015 – in state or free schools plus academies from reception to year 11 – are eligible for the scheme.

The £300 payment – which helps support a child's education during challenging times such as when a loved one is deployed or away on exercise –

is paid directly to schools.

Headteachers can claim the money for youngsters who have a parent enlisted as a Regular, or on full-time Reserve commitment.

A child who has lost their mother or father during their time in the military can also claim – while personnel who have left the Army through injury are entitled to it for up to six years until the end of the pupil's eligibility.

Anyone who has voluntarily quit the Forces, as well as those who have decided to take on the responsibility of having their child educated at home, cannot put their youngster forward for the cash.

Visit the gov.uk website pages for further details.

SIGNALLERS RISE TO THE TOP



■ PERSONNEL from Colchester-based 216 (Parachute) Signal Squadron went head to head in a military skills competition in a bid to be crowned the unit's "Super Tom".

The tasks ranged from map reading and weapon handling to swimming and first aid. Sig Luke Platts claimed the Cpl Steven Dunn Trophy, named in honour of a soldier from the squadron who was killed in Afghanistan.

"It was a tough day that examined our soldiering skills and general knowledge," the 22-year-old said. "To get your brain in gear for a written test about the history of airborne forces when cold, wet and tired was a challenge."

Picture: Sgt Al Laidlow, RE

RIFT Resolutions: Beat the New Year Blues with a Tax Refund.

New Year's resolutions: we all break them - and it hardly ever matters. After all, you're only cheating yourself, right?



If there's one kind of resolution that can make a real-world difference, though, it's the financial kind. Here are a few simple commitments that can make for a much happier, more prosperous 2020.

✓ **Set realistic saving goals and stick to them.**

It doesn't have to be a lot. Just saving £50 a month can be a real boost to your finances over the years and there's plenty of apps to help you stick to your goals.

✓ **Ease up on the plastic.**

Credit cards are some of the most expensive debts you can run up. So make sure you're clearing them each month if you can.

✓ **Think twice about unexpected bonuses.**

When you've got unexpected extra cash, save a chunk of it and enjoy the rest. You'll be better off for it and won't be depriving yourself. If you suddenly start getting more in your take home pay than you're expecting, check your tax code, or even better give us a call and we'll do it for you.

✓ **Keep your receipts.**

If you're buying anything work related – public transport tickets, food, accommodation, etc make sure you keep your receipts so you've got the evidence to claim your expenses back.

✓ **Always check if you're due a tax refund.**

We're finding too many people are still leaving their cash sitting at HMRC because they either don't know they can claim every year or assume they won't be eligible again. When we've checked for them it turns out they were owed money.



'ATTENTION'
Kick off 2020
with a £2,500*
tax refund.

Our promise to those we serve.



Milestone marked

THIS month sees the 20th anniversary of the change in Queen's Regulations regarding the employment of LGB personnel in the Army.

To mark the milestone, key military buildings will be illuminated in pride colours on January 12 – with Wellington Barracks, MoD Main Building and Edinburgh Castle taking centre stage.

And in a further celebration of the role played by LGBT personnel, the Service will take the lead on the Armed Forces' involvement in this year's Pride in London event.



HQ PERSONNEL STEP UP

■ UK-BASED troops serving with Nato have taken on a crucial role in the alliance – leading in the command and control of tens of thousands of sharp-end soldiers.

Members of the HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps from Gloucester will assume their new responsibilities this month – and are expected to hold them for the next two years.

They were signed off for the role late in 2019 following Exercise Arrcade Fusion at RAF St Mawgan, Cornwall, and will now command a total of 120,000 personnel across five divisions.

Unit spokesman Maj Laurence Roche (AGC (ETS)) told *Soldier*: "This new role requires us to be ready to deploy at 20 days' notice within the European theatre of operations."



IN NUMBERS:

45

Veterans and Reservists sitting as MPs

7

Per cent of the Commons made up of ex-personnel



Parliamentary presence

Veterans and Reservists head to the house after election result

A HEALTHY line-up of former military personnel are now serving as MPs across the political spectrum.

Campaign Force, an organisation dedicated to bringing ex-Armed Forces talent to the forefront of democracy, has said that more than 40 members have military experience.

While the Conservatives boast the largest military presence, both Labour and Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party also have representation on the opposition benches.

Newcomers include Tories James Sunderland – formerly of the Royal Logistic Corps and now representing the constituency of Bracknell – and Royal Green Jackets veteran Stuart

Anderson, who has taken the seat for Wolverhampton South West.

Former female personnel are also in the mix, with newcomer Sarah Atherton representing Wrexham and established party colleague Flick Drummond, a Reservist, elected in Meon Valley. Both politicians have seen service with the Intelligence Corps.

Others to be re-elected include the Conservative ex-Royal Artillery Commando officer Jonny Mercer and party chairman James Cleverly, who is a Reservist with the Royal Artillery.

Campaign Force helps bring former troops into service in politics. The organisation delivered two workshops in the past year, addressing some 26 former and current part-time soldiers.

■ A MUCH-loved and courageous officer who lost her battle against cancer has left an "immense legacy" in improving the lives of those with serious illnesses, colleagues have said.

Maj Mandy Islam (RAMC) was remembered for her unfailing dedication and commitment to assisting others after setting up the Chronic Conditions and Disability in Defence network.

She established the initiative – in which volunteers help those with life-changing and limiting conditions as well as assisting carers in their careers – following her diagnosis of myeloma in 2015.

Away from soldiering she was a keen sportswoman, establishing herself in powerboating.

Former instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Col Seb Pollington said: "It is no surprise she generated such an outpouring of respect – her legacy will be immense."

"The Army has lost one of its finest young leaders and defence is deprived of a person of unique ability to drive change and opportunity for those less fortunate."





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THE BIG PICTURE

Salisbury Plain

Drop and fire

EXPLOITING the pace and reach of helicopters to outwit the enemy is a key skill for 7 Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery – part of 16 Air Assault Brigade, the Army's global response force.

The airborne gunners have been maintaining their skill sets in fire and manoeuvre by air with the help of the Royal Air Force, carrying out a battery raid with seven 105mm Light Guns and the soldiers that fire them.

They were lifted between positions by three Chinook and four Puma helicopters.

Picture: Cpl Jamie Hart, RLC



NEED TO
KNOW

EXPERIENCE
CASH
STEPS
NEXT
FITNESS
NUTRITION

Macro Maths

How to calculate your body's
nutritional needs and meet
your fitness goals



► IF you are trying to shed weight or gain muscle, you've probably heard of macronutrients – macros for short.

But calculating how much of your calorie intake should come from each food group can be confusing for those starting out.

Army chef and healthy eating aficionado Sgt Sam Coote (RLC) says the formula is actually quite easy to crack when you follow these five steps...



Work out your basal metabolic rate

This is the **number of calories** required daily to keep your **body functioning** at rest

To do this multiply your body weight in kilograms by 24 (or 22 if you are female)

For example, a **60-kilogram woman** needs **1,320 calories**



Next figure out your physical activity level

This will be somewhere on a scale of 1.1 to 1.8

1.1 is someone who is **very inactive** – they drive to the office, sit at a desk all day and do little after work

1.5 would be someone who **trains around three times a week** and goes for one or two walks

1.8 could be someone who is **training heavily for a specific sporting event, like an Ironman**, or a regimental PTI who walks to work, leads additional fitness sessions per week and also does four to five workouts in his or her own time

Carefully work out where you sit on the scale to get an accurate calorie requirement.



Now multiply the two figures together to get your total daily energy expenditure (TDEE)

A **60-kilogram woman**, who is moderately active (**1.5**) would use **1,980** ($1,320 \times 1.5$) **calories per day**



From here you can adjust your intake to meet your goals

- To **lose weight** you need your **intake to be in deficit**, so you may decide to consume **500 fewer calories** per day
- To **gain weight or muscle** you could **increase your intake by 500 calories**
- To **maintain your current weight** stick to your **TDEE**



Now it's time to work out your macro intake:

Everyone is different in what their body needs to function or perform but if you follow this formula you should see results

- **Protein:** 2 grams per kilogram of body weight should be consumed by soldiers. Each gram of protein contains four calories
- **Fat:** Around 0.9 grams per kilogram of body weight. Each gram of fat contains nine calories
- **Carbohydrates:** All of your remaining calories are allotted to carbs, which have four calories per gram

If our 60-kilogram, **moderately active woman, who currently consumes 1,980 calories**, is looking to maintain her condition she would need around **120g of protein, 54g of fat and 253g of carbs**.

Remember...

– You need to **constantly monitor** your **work commitments, daily tasks** and **activity level** if you want to stay on the right track. Over a period of six to eight weeks you will find what works with your body. If you have been consistent but are not seeing results in this time, try cutting your fat intake or increasing the amount of protein you eat

– **Track your daily calorie intake.** Keep a food diary or download an app to help you



Pull-up

PREP

Make 2020 the year you master the heave with these PTI-approved tips

► WHEN the soldier conditioning review was introduced last year it was welcomed by troops as a better test of all-round ability than the old personal fitness assessment.

However, the pull-up element may still be causing a few headaches for those not used to the notoriously tricky move.

Here, Sgt Yvette Kemp (RAPTC) explains the muscle groups you need to target and shares some exercises to help you on your way.

Her message? Anyone can crack it if they build up slowly.



The **latissimus dorsi** (1) provides the most power during the upward movement towards the bar.

Other muscles involved in the movement include your **rhomboids** (2), **posterior deltoids** (3) and **biceps** (4).

It is important to activate these muscles and engage the core throughout, while maintaining correct shoulder alignment. Remember, everyone has to start somewhere and strengthening these areas will increase your ability to perform a heave.

1 Lat pull downs are a good place to start to train and strengthen the relevant muscle groups. For this move you'll need a cable machine. Choose a weight that is right for you – there should be enough resistance that you are nearing muscular failure by the last repetition, while still maintaining the right form.

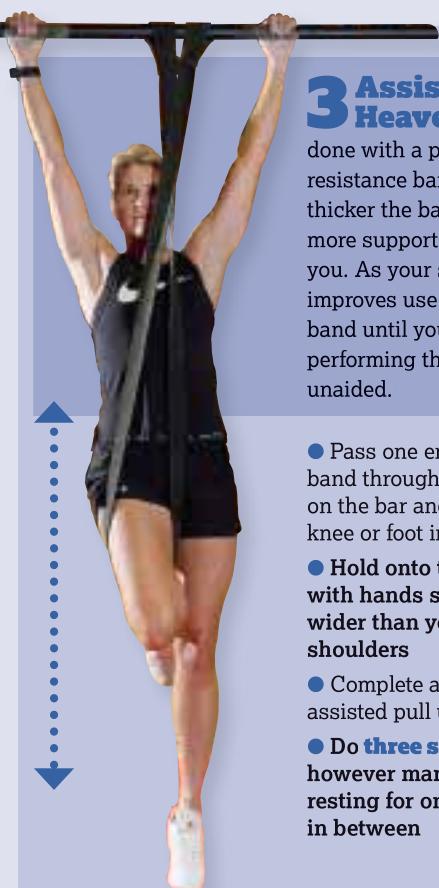


- Using a pronated grip (palms facing down) – grab the bar with your hands wider than shoulder width apart
- Pull down, keeping your arms straight out in front of you
- Next, with your back and arms pull your elbows back so the bar is touching your chest
- Do **three sets of five repetitions**



2 Negative heaves

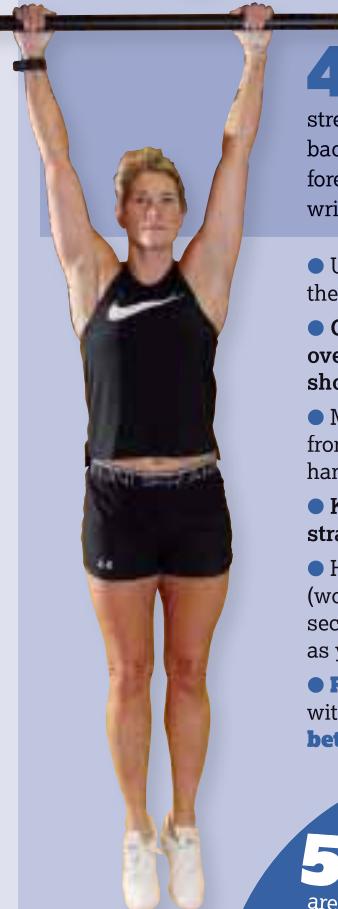
- Jump up ensuring the chest is level with the bar
- Hold the position for three seconds and slowly lower yourself down in a controlled manner
- Do **three sets of five repetitions**



3 Assisted Heaves

can be done with a partner or resistance bands. The thicker the band, the more support it gives you. As your strength improves use a thinner band until you are performing the heaves unaided.

- Pass one end of the band through the other on the bar and place a knee or foot in the loop
- Hold onto the bar with hands slightly wider than your shoulders
- Complete a controlled assisted pull up
- Do **three sets** of however many you can, resting for one-minute in between



4 Dead Hangs

are a great way to strengthen the upper back, shoulders, core, forearms, hands and wrist flexors.

- Use a step to reach the bar
- Grip the bar with an over hand grip, arms shoulder width apart
- Move your feet away from the step so you are hanging from the bar
- Keep your arms straight and relax
- Hang for 30 seconds (work your way up to 45 seconds then one minute as you get stronger)
- Repeat three times with a minute rest in between

5 Now practise It's very easy to avoid doing exercises we aren't good at. At the end of every PT session jump on the bar and do as many heaves as you can (assisted or unassisted). Use it or lose it!

Water baby

If you're looking for a new hobby in 2020, you could do a lot worse than taking to the wet stuff

► IT'S no secret that swimming is a great form of all-round exercise. And it's also a good place to start if your New Year's resolution includes getting into better shape – no matter what your ability.

As well as boosting your mood, taking a dip can keep bodyweight under control and tone you up. And it doesn't have to be limited to visits to the garrison sport centre. From sailing and surfing to water skiing and wakeboarding, the Army has a plethora of opportunities for wannabe water babies. Visit the Army Sport Control Board website for more information at www.armysportcontrolboard.com

Here are some tips for getting started...

Nervous around water?

Lessons for beginners focus on building confidence in the water so try one of these first up.

Think local

Your garrison sport centre is the best place to begin, where you can find information on different classes. Most local pools offer adult-only beginner lessons.

Go and watch

If you're unsure about joining a club, ask to go and watch a class. Or have a chat with one of the instructors. This will give you an opportunity to ask questions.

Take the kids

Swimming is a great way for families to have fun, so try doing this.

Call a mate

Going with a friend can be a great motivator, and will encourage you to swim even when you're not keen. Try to partner up with someone of a similar ability.

Get outdoors

Once you are a competent swimmer, open water swimming in rivers, lakes or pools can be great fun as long as you take the right precautions. Avoid doing it alone, and check the weather, water temperature, tides, entry and exit points and cleanliness first.

Tips from
www.nhs.uk/live-well

Job Hunting

the **3** best places to look



► RETIRED Naval officer Michael Sykes knows a thing or two about finding success in civvy street – after he left the Forces he worked as an interviewer and recruiter before setting up his own business and later writing a book on what civilian workplaces have taught him.

Here, the author offers his advice on the most useful places for ex-soldiers to go when hunting for the right job vacancy.



3 Newspapers

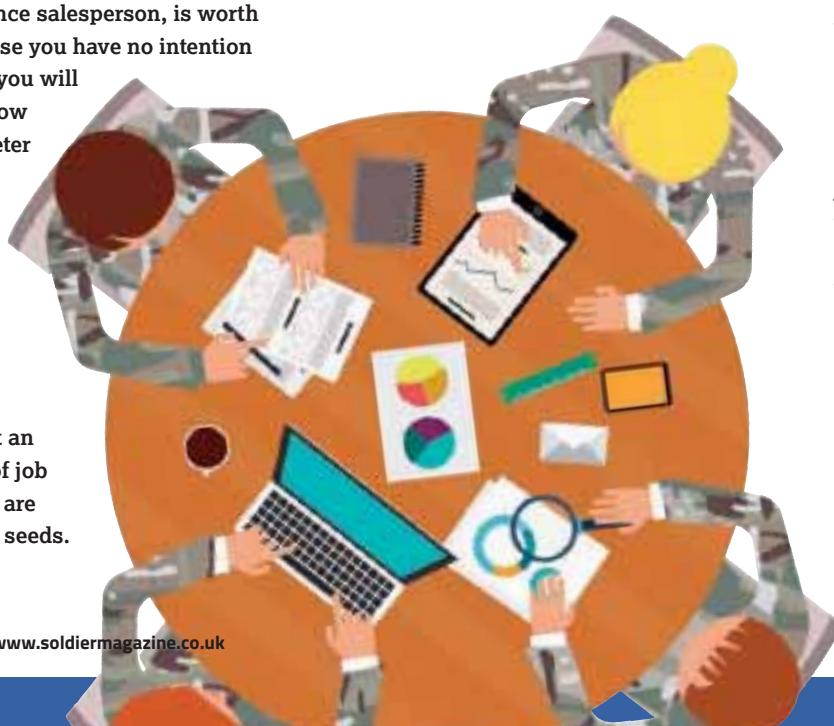
If you are determined to live in a particular location, start looking in local newspapers. If you don't live there yet, contact the title and ask which days are best for job adverts, and pay to have them posted to you or ask for their online details. Beware that most jobs in local papers will usually be trade-type roles and, if they are general management, lower paid salaries with local companies. Also, it is likely that local people will be quicker than you to apply, and will usually be better networked. My advice is unless you are really determined to live in a particular location, don't depend too much on local papers. Large national companies invariably advertise their jobs in national newspapers. Broadsheets are the best. Visit your local library or mess and get to the know the appointments sections of these publications.

1 Your own contacts

Though you may not realise it, you will have amassed a network of contacts over the years. Yours could include ex-Service colleagues now in business, family, friends of the family, social acquaintances and civilians you met when serving. While you may not think that your mate Peter, who is an insurance salesperson, is worth contacting because you have no intention of doing his job, you will be surprised at how many contacts Peter has. So have a short CV to give to friends when you explain you are looking for work, and a convenient way to contact you. Don't expect an immediate rush of job offers – what you are doing is planting seeds.

2 Online

There are many websites in the business of matching jobs to people...the list seems endless. Look at as many as possible initially, then find the ones you think are most applicable to you. Certain government organisations such as the Civil Service and the NHS also have very good job websites.



For more job-hunting wisdom from Michael, check out his book – *Leaving the Armed Forces and Getting a Job* – available in paperback for £9.99



Borrowed time

Thinking of taking out a new loan or credit card? Consider the following before committing to the spend...

Do you need to do it?

If you're someone who buys things on impulse, give yourself a cooling-off period of two days before committing. You may change your mind.

Can you finance it another way?

Could you wait until you can afford to buy the item without borrowing? If you don't need it today, seriously consider this option. Saving up costs far less and you could even find it has been reduced in the sale later on. If it's something urgent, could you get it by swapping with someone, buying it second-hand or looking on a freebie website?

Can you afford to pay everything back?

Remember that it's not just the amount itself you must repay, but any interest too. And even interest-free credit cards carry time limits. Plan how much you can clear each month, and with credit cards make sure it isn't just the minimum repayment. Be realistic when planning this too – could you still make the payments if your rent or mortgage went up, or your pay was cut?

Are you doing it the best way?

Make sure you choose the right type of credit for your situation. Shop around and compare deals, looking at the APR, how much needs to be repaid in total and any penalties for late payments. Not all offers are safe, and if you have a poor credit rating the temptation to use payday loan companies may be great. But these are expensive and should be avoided for anything more than a few days.

If you are struggling with money, you can contact the government's free and impartial Money Advice Service at www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk. They have specially trained advisers who can chat online, by phone or face-to-face to help sort out your problems. Don't forget you can also talk to the chain of command or your unit welfare officer if you have any issues.



The emotions will never

This soldier planned a career side by side with his brother. Then tragedy struck in Iraq...

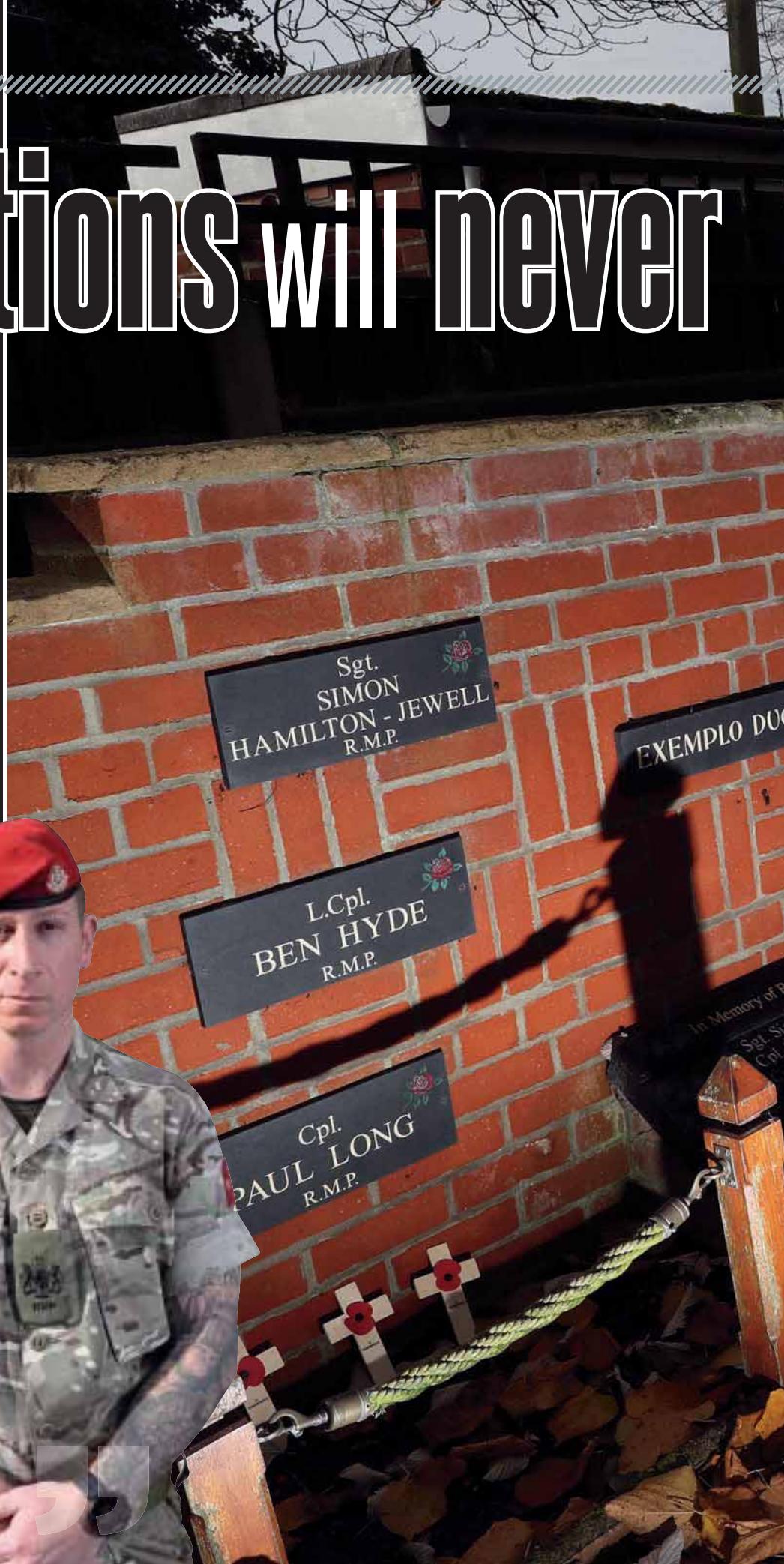
► A POSTING to a new unit to assume the role of its senior soldier would represent a career highlight for many.

But for WO1 Jon Miller (pictured below right, AGC (RMP)) the move was bittersweet as accepting the position at Colchester-based 156 Provost Company would see him setting foot in the realm of his late brother, Cpl Simon Miller (pictured far right).

The 21-year-old was one of six Royal Military Policemen from the company who were killed during an attack by an Iraqi mob on the Majar al-Kabir police station, in the country's south-east region, on June 24, 2003.

The incident made headlines around the world and left a family devastated by the loss of a Serviceman who "loved the military life" and was "green through and through".

Here, WO1 Miller tells *Soldier* how his younger sibling inspired him to pursue a career in uniform and reflects on the journey that followed...



leave



When I was at school I had aspirations of becoming a civvy policeman in Northumbria.

Simon joined the Army in 1999 and decided on the RMP. He was posted to Colchester and I went to see him a few times.

I remember him pulling up in a police car with all the kit on and thinking 'I want some of this'. I needed to get out and do something with my life and seeing him ignited a desire to pursue military policing as a career option.

I was doing my phase two training in Chichester in 2003 and was supposed to be passing out of there on June 26.

I was getting changed for a parade rehearsal and I saw seven missed calls from my dad. Earlier in the day I'd heard about a helicopter crash involving some RMPs so, when I called him back, I thought that's what he wanted to talk about.

But that's when he broke the news. I was in total shock and didn't know what to do.

I was immediately sent home on compassionate leave so missed the passing out parade.

I surrounded myself with my friends and tried to support my parents as best as I could. But everything was still so very raw.

I remember wanting to get to my unit so I could crack on with things. A lot of people were asking if I would leave but my parents never put that pressure on me.

In a way, it made me even more driven to succeed.

Simon and his colleagues found themselves in a difficult predicament and they could not get out of it.

It took me a long time to read the coroner's report about the injuries. I think not having that information in my head at the time really helped me.

I went on to serve on Op Herrick 3 and 17 and also deployed to Kuwait on Op Telic 13.

The first deployment was particularly tough for my parents.

It was only two years after Simon's death but, at that time, Afghanistan was not such a kinetic place and that reassured them.

However, Telic brought back some raw memories.

I was posted to Germany and then to Donnington with 174 Pro Coy and

have been in this job since April last year. When I took it I thought there was a perception that I'm only here because my brother was and that it was not on merit.

It was wrong to think that and nobody has said anything, but it has always been the devil on my shoulder.

I've just done 17 years in the Service and have promoted relatively quickly to WO1. In the back of my mind there was the thought that perhaps the Army and RMP had deliberately done that, but I would like to think I have worked my backside off.

I probably needed to come here so I could prove to myself that it would not be an issue.

I'm not constantly thinking this was Simon's unit but there is a strong connection to him.

There is a memorial garden here which features his name so there is a constant reminder, but I like that.

I did my grieving in the early days but when the anniversary of his death comes around, and when we lay wreaths on Remembrance Day, those emotions come to the fore. They will never leave, and I don't want them to.

I still think about him today and he was my best mate. I have his picture in my office and that fills me with a sense of pride.

But if it had not been for seeing him in his full military police uniform I may never have joined the Army.

From the outset my aim was to have a full career and reach the rank of WO1 and I'm now looking to set new goals for the time I have left.



The FROZEN

On Europe's eastern border Ukrainian troops remain locked in a bloody war with Russian-backed separatists. *Soldier* meets the British personnel training them for battle

IN bleak scrubland outside of Novohrad-Volyn'ski, members of the Ukrainian Army's 30 Mechanised Brigade listen intently as British instructors teach counter-IED drills.

The first snow dusts the grass and the mercury dips to -7 degrees Celsius, but despite the biting cold the students remain focused on the morning's lesson.

Some 500 miles to the east their comrades face a sixth winter on the front line of a brutal attritional battle against Russian-backed forces, with both sides now literally entrenched in a First World War-style stalemate.

Since the 2014 invasion of Crimea and the Donetsk Basin (Donbas for short), around 13,000 Ukrainian personnel have died, and though diplomatic efforts to negotiate a solution are ongoing, every week still sees an average of three soldiers killed.

So, the knowledge these troops gain during this ground sign awareness serial could very well save lives when they return to the fighting.

The package is being delivered by 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment – the fourth time this year that its members have deployed on the training mission referred to as Operation Orbital.

Currently on his third stint in the country, instructor Sgt Graham Strong describes the dangers facing his Ukrainian counterparts in the Joint Force Operations area, as the conflict zone is known.

"It's the most heavily mined region in the world," he explains.

"They'll lay tripwires and different devices together to make booby traps so if someone interferes with it, it goes off.

"We've been taking them through basic counter-IED practices and ground sign awareness to help prevent this.

"Chatting to some of the guys on this course, they say if they'd known and understood this kind of thing before, it could have helped an awful lot and they're looking forward to getting back and teaching their lads stuff to use in the future, so I would like to think we are helping."

One student, whose name we are withholding for security reasons, is among those grateful for the opportunity to expand his existing skills.

The 38-year-old does not want to disclose his role but says that much of his work relies on his ability to read the ground in front of him.

"Because of what I do I encounter a lot of Soviet Union-era mines and explosive devices," he adds.

"From their work in Syria and Afghanistan the British instructors have a lot of experience with similar mechanisms, so it's very useful that we are now sharing our approach.

"This course drew my attention to

some of the smaller details of counter-IED techniques. I'm now more thorough.

"As soon as I get the chance to use these skills I will. I'll train my section up too because I believe it's important for them to know it."

A short distance away, fire and manoeuvre practice and combat medical first aid lessons are taking place. It's all part of a six-week train-the-trainer package covering infantry basics.

The UK instructors hail from all ranks – a confidence booster for the 1 Mercian privates involved, but with the Ukrainian military looking to develop its NCO cadre it is also a practical demonstration of the faith the British Army places in its junior personnel.

For their part the Ukrainian troops are a diverse cohort, from young volunteers of 18 or 19, to battle-worn career soldiers who fought in the Soviet-Afghan war of the 1980s.

What unites them is a shared determination to protect their country from what has become an increasingly aggressive neighbour.

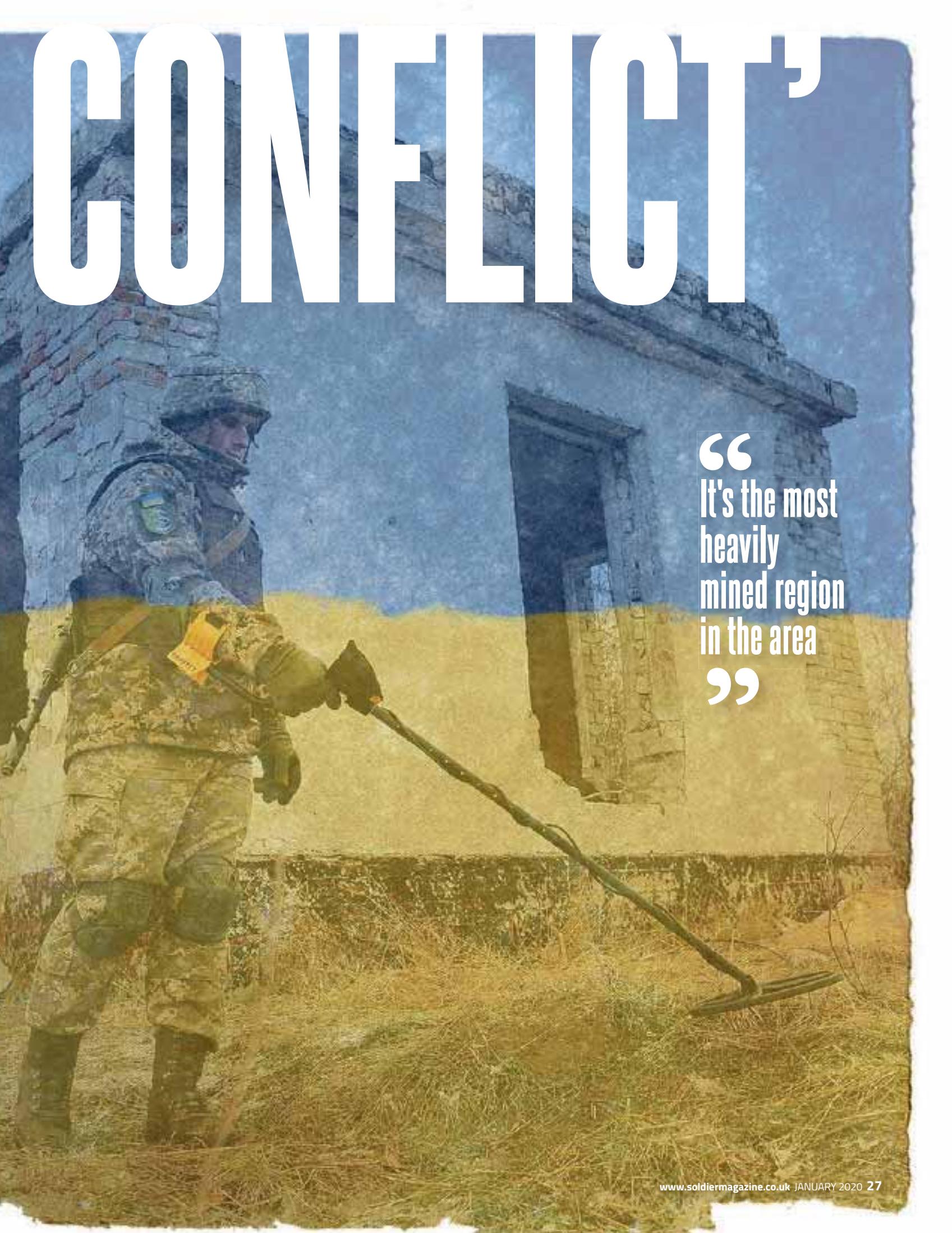
It is a fact not lost on the British mentors. The week before *Soldier*'s visit, a senior Ukrainian officer, who was known to the training team, was killed at the front.

"These guys are defending their homeland," says WO2 Darren Street.

"None of my generation in the Army have had to do that – it's always been overseas operations for us, but the Ukrainians are on the eastern front protecting their own borders.

"They are taking casualties weekly, at all ranks, and that hits home and encourages our guys to work to the best of their ability and teach them as much as they possibly can." ➤

CONFLICT



“
It's the most
heavily
mined region
in the area
”

→ But a sense of purpose is not the only thing the British soldiers get from a stint out here.

The teaching itself is a two-way street.

With thousands of troops deployed as part of Nato's enhanced forward presence in the Baltics and northeast Europe, there is much for coalition personnel to learn from a partner that has current operational experience against a Russian-backed foe.

"We get a lot from them," agrees 2Lt Lewis Davies (pictured below, Mercian).

"It's not reported much in the news, but we are hearing straight from these guys about something that's affecting a large chunk of Eastern Europe.

"It sounds like a horrendous situation and it's great to be able to tailor the training scenarios accordingly.

"But it also helps us think about our own tactics and doctrine and how we could apply these lessons in a similar situation in the future."

Laboratory conditions

THE trenches in Donbas may resemble the Western Front of the First World War but in all other respects the conflict is a case study of asymmetric warfare that has informed so much of British soldiers' training in recent years.

A cross-border incursion by a state-backed separatist force into the territory of a poorly resourced but determined neighbour; millions of displaced civilians; conventional weapons deployed alongside cunning adaptations.

In the struggle to gain an edge on this complex battlefield both sides have become inventive with off-the-shelf technology, which makes the conflict hugely interesting to military analysts.

"It is really a testbed for hybrid warfare," explains Orbital's deputy commander, Lt Col Monty Woolley (RL).

"Russia supports and sponsors groups, including its own troops and special forces to conduct a proxy war, one that is non-attributable to Moscow, although we know it is.

"So, there are lots of innovative things that you wouldn't find in normal conflict or under the Geneva convention, like modified →



“
**These guys
are defending
their
homeland**
”



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IN NUMBERS

64

age of the oldest Ukrainian soldier trained this year by Op Orbital teams

SEVEN

countries involved in training the troops:
Britain, Denmark, Canada, the United States, Sweden, Lithuania and Poland

1.4m

number of people who have fled the Crimea and Donbas regions since the invasion in 2014, with thousands more leaving every month

17,500

Ukrainian personnel trained by UK teams in the past five years

→ UAVs and ammunition.

"The doctrine wonks in the UK love to look at this stuff because that's what conflict will be like in the future."

Today the lines between war and peace are becoming increasingly blurred. States no longer have to rely on brute force to achieve their strategic aims – cyber and information warfare can be used to undermine an opponent economically, politically and militarily.

It is in this grey area where Ukraine finds itself and keen-eyed British troops will be watching developments on Europe's eastern fringe with interest. ■



Ukraine and Russia – the story so far

In February 2014, following months of violent protests over the suspension of EU association talks, the pro-Russian regime is ousted in favour of a Western-leaning interim government

Within weeks Russia formally annexes Crimea and pro-Russian separatists invade the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Over the coming months convoys of Russian military vehicles are observed crossing into the region

In July, 298 people are killed when a Malaysian Airlines flight is shot down over Ukrainian airspace

In February 2015, France, Germany and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe attempt to broker a ceasefire by tabling plans to return disputed regions to Ukrainian control and holding local elections. The deal helps to de-escalate the fighting but fails to stop it completely and negotiations continue today



Formally established in 2015, Op Orbital will turn five years old next month and has recently been extended for another three years to March 2023



ORBITAL THE NEXT CHAPTER

With a diplomatic solution yet to be found, the British training mission is now set to last until at least March 2023

SINCE 2015, negotiations to break the Ukraine-Russia impasse have focused on agreeing a roadmap for the withdrawal of military forces and the staging of free and fair elections in separatist regions.

Despite a notional ceasefire, both sides continue to trade small arms and artillery fire.

Mediation efforts have been led by France and Germany under the so-called Normandy format. Shortly before this issue went to press, Putin and Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky met and agreed to stop fighting by the end of 2019.

However, while Ukrainians are war weary, many are vehemently against any form of compromise with Russia.

Meanwhile, Moscow knows that its neighbour will be unable to pursue its goal of EU membership as long as its border remains disputed.

And in a sign that Britain certainly expects its services to be required for the next few years, the MoD confirmed in November that Op Orbital would be extended to 2023.

At the mission's Kiev-based headquarters, staff are now planning how to expand the training to include a broader range of capabilities.

More than 17,500 Ukrainian personnel have attended UK-led packages so far, ranging from courses on basic infantry

tactics for several hundred soldiers at a time, to smaller bespoke serials focusing on corps-level planning, logistics or policing.

"We've been training the troops for several years and that's had a real impact in terms of saving lives on the ground," says the operation's commander, Col Mike Waymouth.

"But there is a point at which this conflict is not moving anywhere significant. Some people call it a frozen conflict, which underplays the fact that it is quite bloody, but the way we have to take them now is towards Nato standards.

"So, we're stepping it up a level into the higher end capabilities, the big moving parts, including in the joint space – maritime and air, as well as land – and making sure their procedures are Nato compliant."

With a shaky economy and a military fighting a war on two fronts – in Donbas and the Black Sea – Ukraine faces an uphill battle.

But Col Waymouth (pictured below) believes the UK's ongoing efforts to help the country are justified.

"Our troops come over and are hugely welcomed – you can imagine it would feel very lonely as a Ukrainian soldier after a five-year war with Russian-backed forces and to get a professional military organisation to lean in and help must be very reassuring," he adds.

"That makes all of this feel worthwhile."



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WEAR AND TEAR

A host of new innovations are proving their potential to prevent injuries and bolster operational effectiveness



“
The equipment exhibited certainly had the potential to improve life for soldiers
”



Report: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Peter Davies

KEPPING soldiers fighting fit is critical in the current battlespace – where an uncertain environment and rapidly evolving threats mean personnel must be able to deploy at short notice.

As well as operating in a traditional warfighting role, commanders need to be able to square up to the realities of cyber conflict, the spread of misinformation and a host of other tactics that a foe could utilise as they move to mobilise their campaign.

Faced with this reality, every soldier counts – whether they are an infantryman engaging the enemy on the ground or a specialist fighting threats online. With such high stakes, the Army can ill-afford losses through preventable muscular skeletal injuries, noise or climate extremes.

Now the Service has called on civilian business and academic institutions to

assist in reducing the risks from these common injuries with a new generation of wearable technology. And the latest thinking was presented in a showcase of innovation at Perham Down, Wiltshire.

The results are certainly promising.

The latest stage in a competition launched under the cross-government Defence and Security Accelerator (Dasa) – a team that brings organisations together to rapidly solve issues facing front-line professionals – the research has produced everything from apps to help identify hearing loss to smart boot insoles that pick up on posture.

“We’ve had around ten stakeholders involved,” revealed Katy Violet, from Dasa, who has been helping to lead on the project.

“It has been great to get the tech out to troops and hear their input – and we are now looking ahead to moving on with the

IN NUMBERS

19

Per cent of
troops medically
downgraded

initiative this year.

“The event at Perham Down was a great opportunity, both for visitors to see the innovations produced so far, as well as meeting the teams involved in developing them.”

The kit on offer certainly holds promise in cutting the numbers of common injuries. With latest figures showing nearly 20 per cent of troops medically downgraded, senior officers are now committed to a goal of ensuring 90 per cent of personnel are fit to deploy on operations.

“The equipment exhibited definitely had the potential to improve life for soldiers,” said Maj Ali Beard (RE), whose 22 Engineer Regiment sappers hosted the demonstration day.

“It is great to see that the Army is also bringing on board the latest thinking in science – we are now coming into line with some of the best practice in elite sports.

“Personnel are critical to achieving operational effectiveness – we need to look after them.”

Maj Beard – who is the OC of 52 Armoured Engineer Squadron – said he is looking forward to seeing how the technology is developed in the future and his troops were equally enthusiastic.

“The Army is moving in the right direction with health and fitness,” said Spr Taegan Frazer. “I’ve only been serving two years, but I am impressed.

Colleague Spr Richard Trump shared the sentiment. “We have the right approach – all of the different programmes we saw during the demonstration day were really good,” he said.

Soldier asked troops for their top kit picks from the event...



Sole Survivors

Smart boots detect bad posture

Cpl Blake Munsey says:

A smart insole that fits in either boots or trainers and has sensors on it is a really clever idea. The tech finds pressure points on your feet and you can see how you might avoid injury by looking at the data.

It seemed the technology was at quite an early stage, so it didn't fit in any footwear, so there is a way to go yet. But the potential was nonetheless there for all to see.

There were some really good ideas at the demonstration day – wearable tech is definitely the future. It was impressive to see such a range of different products on offer.



Hear and Now

Cpl Garry Jardine-Mcewen says:

There was a product to help prevent hearing loss that looked good. It worked by incorporating sensors into common bits of kit you put in your ears, such as comms earpieces – they highlight when noise is presenting a risk.

It looked a really clever idea – I've heard that hearing loss is one of the most common reasons that people are medically downgraded, so any way of preventing it has to be good.

I think it's great that the Army is looking at all of these different ways of helping to keep you healthy – we're really moving forward with how we look at fitness too.

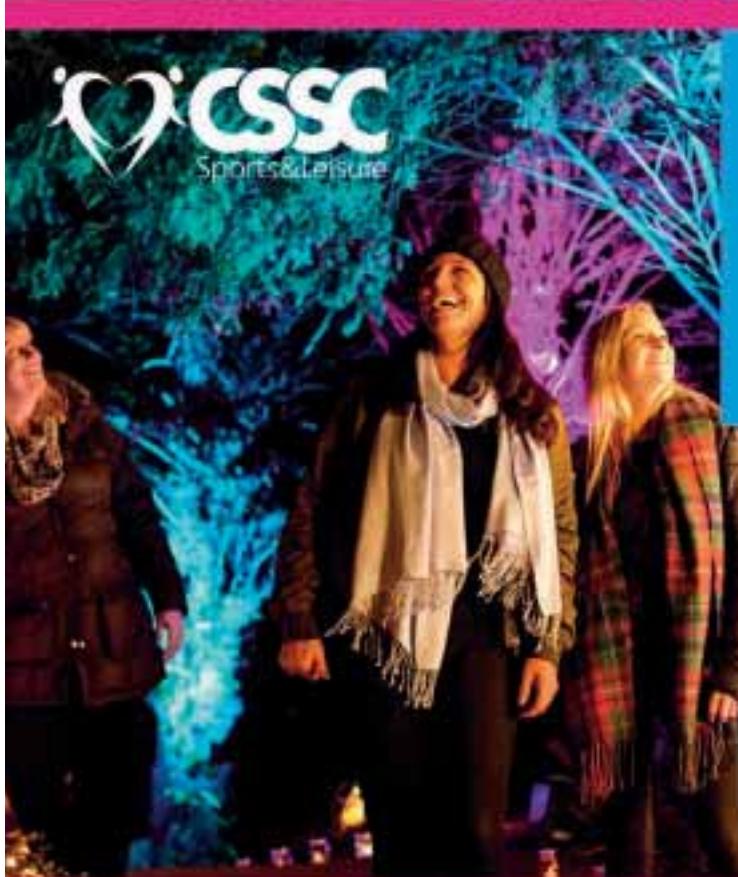
Vest Test

Spr Billy Everett-Norman says: A vibrating undergarment was an interesting development.

Basically, this is a piece of clothing that you wear under your work kit and it is fitted with sensors. If you are exercising and make a move that could hurt you, it buzzes to let you know.

I can see this being a really useful product for troops who are recovering from injury. It could assist with helping them to exercise more effectively and get them out of bad habits.





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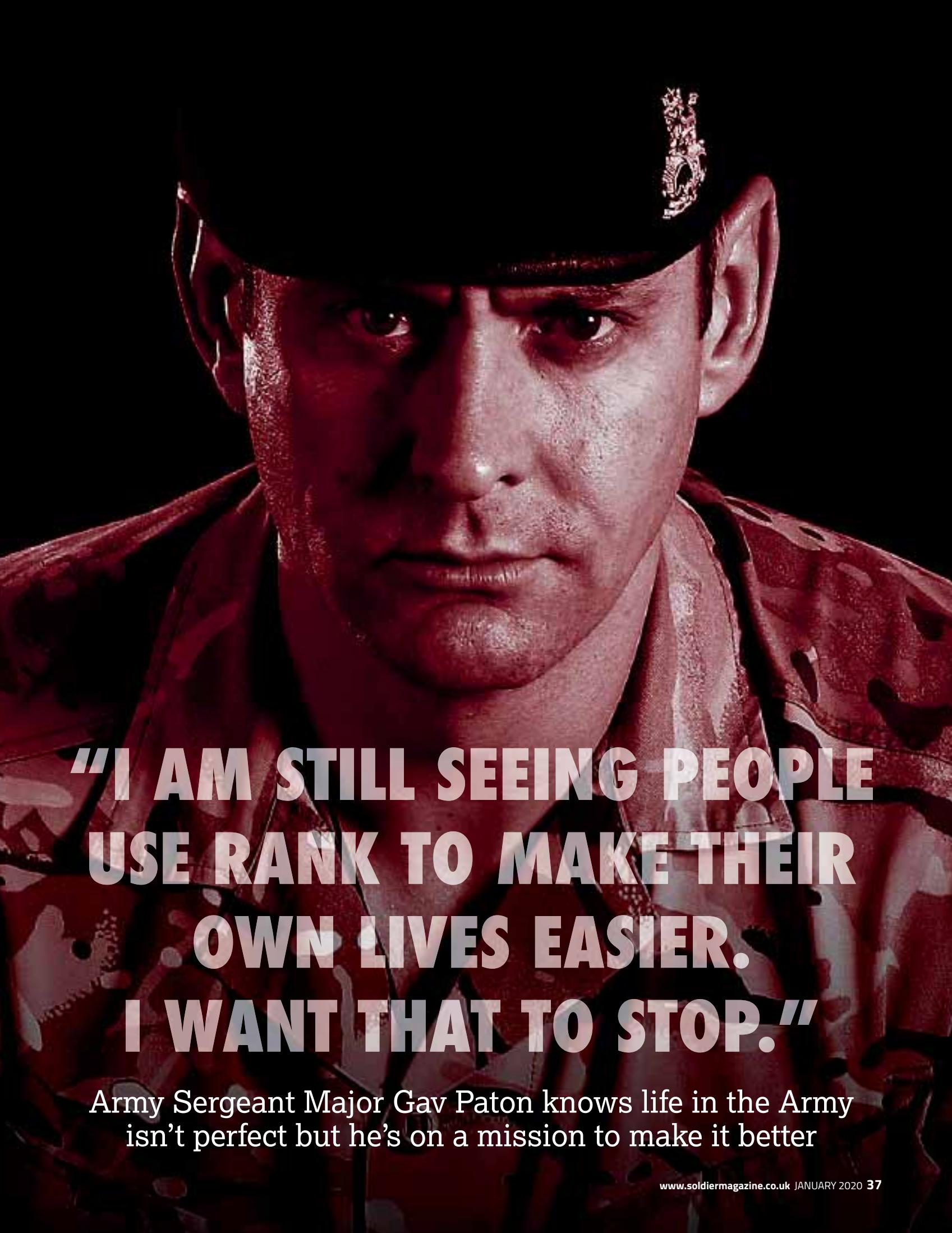
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ARMY
BE THE BEST



**“I AM STILL SEEING PEOPLE
USE RANK TO MAKE THEIR
OWN LIVES EASIER.
I WANT THAT TO STOP.”**

Army Sergeant Major Gav Paton knows life in the Army isn't perfect but he's on a mission to make it better



How much time do you actually spend out there talking to soldiers?

Probably five days out of seven. I often visit the cadets and Reserve units at weekends. In the last couple of weeks I've been training with 29 Commando Regiment, Royal Artillery and went out to Norway and Sweden to see the ski camps for the Royal Engineers and Infantry. I can't ski but it was great meeting the teams, seeing the organisation and our soldiers out there.

My job is to measure the temperature of the Army and to translate and carry messages up and down the chain of command. I don't need to be working in the strategic space, that's the chief of the general staff's domain. I report directly to CGS but I meet with the assistant and deputy chiefs of staff every two weeks and feed in issues I think they need to know about. I am very lucky to have access to all of the two-star generals, they give me their time whenever I need it. It's humbling and a demonstration of their commitment to serve our soldiers.

The idea is to fix things under CGS' radar so he's not presented with problems all the time. I engage with policy at its conception and throughout its development

because they are a certain rank they don't have to do that PT, or don't need to speak to you, or because you are lower down the chain your opinion doesn't count.

Ordering someone to go and get you a brew, stuff like that, is just not cool. I want this to change because it bleeds into everything – behaviour on operations, in camp and even when off work.

If you are in a position of authority it's your duty and obligation to look after and serve your soldiers.

What are the biggest obstacles facing the Service now?

Our challenge culture is an area that concerns me. I want our personnel to feel comfortable with being challenged, regardless of rank. There is a section in the back of the Army Leadership Doctrine booklet called 'The Ten Diseases of Leadership' and that's something I'd like everyone to familiarise themselves with.

If you are an open, agile and intelligent leader then you will welcome respectful challenge from everybody – good ideas don't come with position. It creates a very healthy learning environment, fostering innovation and experimentation.

“I WENT TO GUANTANAMO BAY AND THE US PRESIDENT’S NUCLEAR WAR BUNKER”

to ensure that by the time it hits CGS for a decision it has soldiers' fingerprints all over it.

How do you communicate down the chain?

Face-to-face when possible, on Twitter, Defence Connect and my column in this magazine is important to me.

The number of personnel who come up to me and say I do or don't agree with what you said in *Soldier* is incredible. In December I mentioned improving the offer regarding accommodation, which was flying pretty close to the sun because people don't like talking about it.

However, it's my job to talk without a filter. We all need to know what should be done to make life better for our serving soldiers.

What did you see in 2019 that needs to change to make life better for soldiers this year?

I want people to use their rank to do more for others. I am still seeing individuals use it to make their own lives easier. I want that to stop.

If you hold a rank of any description you have an opportunity to do more for your soldiers. Unfortunately, I see people saying and doing things which are contrary to that and not putting their people first.

They focus on themselves, or their attitude is that

If you attribute the value of advice to the level of rank then people won't offer opinions and ideas.

The other area of concern for me is who shows our young commanders what good looks like with regards to discipline and our leadership code. The senior leaders in the battalions should be doing that but they need to be shown how to do it too, so that's something I'm getting after right now.

We need similar leadership, values and discipline training across the Service so, regardless of where you are, you receive a very similar experience. Centralised, cap badge-agnostic education is the key.

What stood out for you as a positive in 2019?

The implementation of Op Smart was fantastic. The fact that it is promoting the notion it's okay to not be okay and you don't have to have a stiff upper lip, that it's acceptable to speak to somebody, will do nothing but benefit our soldiers.

If our people are too afraid to speak to their chain of command when they're not being spoken to, led or treated properly then they will sit on the problem and eventually, when they progress up the ranks, treat others how they were treated.

That's a cycle we need to break if we are to grow as an organisation and keep and attract good people.

FACT FILE

Age: 40

Born: Redruth, Cornwall

Joined British Army: 1997

Served in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Iraq (two tours) and Afghanistan (two tours)

Regimental Sergeant Major of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles from 2015 until 2016

International military student at US Army Sergeant Major Academy from 2016 to 2017

Field Army Sergeant Major from 2017 until 2018

Army Sergeant Major since January 2019



GAV ON...

Social media

"Using social media is not a crime but what you put on there can be criminal. I encourage people to use it – but only post what you'd be happy for your mum to see.

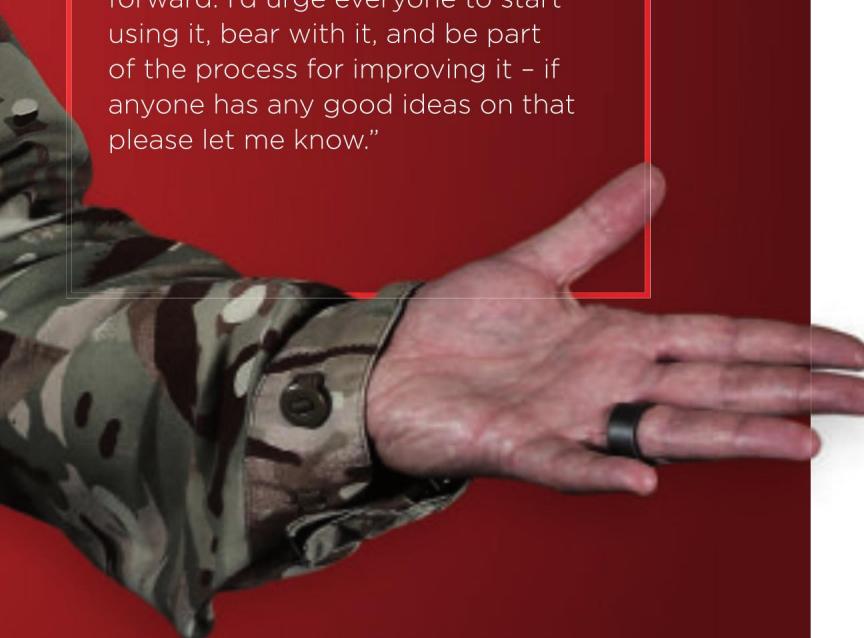
What our troops do every day is incredible and the public should see that but make sure you play by the rules of the digital playbook and know the policy.

We all need to know how to use it properly and it should reinforce our Army brand and reputation."

Defence Connect

"I am using it actively. It's clunky and not perfect but we need to invest in it. Defence Connect allows us to post or talk about orders, notices and other information that are restricted to Modnet.

Twitter can't carry conversations on sensitive topics so it's a massive step forward. I'd urge everyone to start using it, bear with it, and be part of the process for improving it – if anyone has any good ideas on that please let me know."



Speaking of which, what do you think of the Army's latest recruiting campaign (page 7)?

It's entirely different from anything else I've seen. This is all about how the Army builds a different type of confidence. The one-minute advert will get people talking, and the small ten-second videos are fantastic and will leave you wanting more.

How would you define that confidence?

The Army creates an atmosphere where you are allowed to make a decision and stick with it and if it fails you know you'll be supported.

There's a real blame culture out in society at the moment and people really fear making mistakes. But in the Army it's how we learn. It helps produce long-term, deep-rooted confidence in the team around you, and I don't know where else you get that.

I played a lot of rugby as a kid but I didn't experience anything like being in the Service.

What do you say to critics of the recent recruitment campaigns?

The relationship with Capita has had its highs and lows and it's currently on a high.

We are enjoying a five-year peak with recruitment and what has been achieved over the past 12 months is nothing short of incredible.

There's been a massive effort from commander home command, our people, and from Capita.

There were lots of complaints last year saying the 2019 campaign didn't show enough shooting and explosions but we have a responsibility to parents and the gatekeepers of people we want to recruit to show them they can trust us with their sons and daughters.

They need to know they are able to do something great for the country and for themselves and that soldiering isn't just about being on the front line. This campaign does a great job showing the broad spectrum of roles we have. It's also important to remember that the people who've been complaining about these campaigns are often already serving and we're not targeting them.

Do these campaigns attract the right sort of people?

I believe they do, yes. We are certainly not lowering our standards.

Critics used to talk about the PlayStation generation in derogatory fashion, but I served as a platoon commander on Herrick 11 in Sangin with colleagues who came from that group and they were bloody heroic every day. It's all about unlocking people's potential.

Now critics point to the snowflake generation, but these youngsters simply haven't had the time or opportunity to prove themselves yet. Are they different from those who were joining a decade ago? Yes. Is combat different from ten years ago? Yes.

In ten years' time will it have changed again? Yes. It will probably be far more technical but we will never replace our soldiers – they are our greatest weapon system and most valuable resource.





“MY SEVEN MONTHS IN SANGIN AS A PLATOON COMMANDER ON HERRICK 11 COULDN’T BE TOPPED”

How did the Army unlock your potential?

As a young soldier I was average but parts of my career then shaped and changed me.

Until I was a corporal I didn't know I was going to stay in the Army. I was in a support company for 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry and told my commanders I wanted to move to a rifle company. That went down really badly – they simply told me it wasn't going to happen. Back then they didn't give you reasons. My head dropped, my performance wasn't great – I even had a D3 on my appraisal report.

I nearly left the Army to join the police.

However, the Officer Commanding A Company, Maj Ben Lampard, took a punt on me and pulled me across. I could then see a career opening up in front of me and was far happier in my work – that changed everything.

Incidentally, I bumped into Ben Lampard on a train recently and it was lovely to say thank you to him.

My experience shows how important it is to manage careers properly. Maybe I was a bit naive as a young corporal and couldn't see the bigger picture. But I now appreciate that everyone is fighting their own battle and you need to get under the individual's skin to find out how to get the most out of them.

So initiatives like Programme Castle resonate with you then?

I sit on the board of that project and I know how important it is that we carefully manage individuals, but it is difficult because the Army's priorities might not match those of the person concerned.

As best as it can, the Service should try to satisfy all soldiers' aspirations and provide lots of opportunities otherwise we're in danger of losing good people. Castle is incredibly important in the long term because we haven't changed our career structures since 1959, yet society has changed so much.

I recently read that civilians between the ages of 20 and 30 can expect to have up to ten different jobs. Why can't we do that in the Army? Why can't a gunner train as a paramedic?

Why can't we see a huge jobs database and have the info we need to plot our next career move – and not be constricted by our cap badge? Castle is getting after all that but it's a very complex task.

If you were joining the Army now, would you opt for the same type of career?

For me, there's nothing better than commanding soldiers on operations. My seven months in Sangin as a platoon commander on Herrick 11 and a company sergeant major on Herrick 16 were just incredible and nothing could top that experience.

If I was joining up now I might be tempted to look at flying helicopters at some stage. I've flown a Wildcat simulator and loved it.

I recently flew in an Army helicopter where the whole crew were NCOs, which says a lot about how we now empower and trust our people.

Away from ops, what have been the most interesting experiences the Army has given you?

I went to Australia and New Zealand last year to attend sergeant major conventions – I never thought I'd visit these amazing countries.

In 2016 I became the first British soldier since the 1980s to attend the year-long US Army's Sergeant Major Academy course in El Paso, Texas. I came away with 600 American friends and 55 international contacts from 38 countries, most of whom are now in influential positions in their militaries, so I have a personal network that's unbelievable really.

I've also drunk champagne at Number 10 with then prime minister David Cameron after our unit won the Millies' best battalion award for Herrick 16, rubbed shoulders with royalty in Buckingham Palace and was given the opportunity to be a trustee for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. I also went to Guantanamo Bay and the US president's nuclear war bunker in Nebraska while representing the UK on a US Defence Department course.

I'd have never done any of that as a civvy. I've been very lucky and hope there's loads more to come. ■

STREET SMART

How a shared urban training experience is enhancing French-British cooperation

WITH joint operations and integration of allied military forces increasingly common around the world, the ability to work effectively with foreign troops is of paramount importance.

A recent example of this is the conflict in Mali, where British personnel and aerial assets provided the French armed forces with support as they attempted to create sustainable peace in the country.

More personnel are scheduled to deploy to Gao in Eastern Mali this year as part of a commitment to support the UN peacekeeping operation to stabilise the Sahel region.

Consequently, exercises such as Gaulish Eagle have become more relevant than ever before.

The package saw 16 Air Assault Brigade personnel from 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles and 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment, along with a fire support team from 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, working with French instructors and counterparts.

Together, they honed their skills at the →

Report: Steve Munney Pictures: Peter Davies



→ Centre d'Entrainement aux Actions en Zone Urbaine (Cenzub) in north east France – the largest and most complex urban warfare training facility in Europe.

"We are incredibly close military partners with the French now," Maj Oliver Pope (RGR), tells *Soldier*.

"We've already worked with their forces this year, on exercises Swift Response and Falcon Amarante so it's important to keep that rhythm up.

"One day we might be on each other's flanks facing a common adversary so we must know how the other operates and be able to build up trust between us."

Exercises at Cenzub are a tangible example of the Franco-British cooperation forged under the Lancaster House agreement, which celebrates its tenth birthday this year.

Thanks to this accord, British units are invited to train at the centre every year to share skills, knowledge and strengthen bi-lateral relations and combined defence capabilities.

"The model here is quite different from the UK, where commanders tend to design and deliver their own packages," says Maj Pope.

"This is effectively a set course that the whole company is attending, delivered by French instructors, and at the end of this we get signed off as competent according to the French military standard for urban operations."

Cenzub is a unique site and superior to anything found in the UK, comprising two main training locations – Beauséjour, a rural village, and Jeoffrécourt, a one-kilometre square town with a market place, train station,



“Urban warfare skills are exceptionally important”

canal, residential housing, an industrial area and tower blocks. The centre also includes an urban live-shooting complex.

"This is by far the best facility of its type I've used since joining the Army and we've been getting a lot of integration tasks done with the Infantry," says Spr Andrew Miller (RE).

"We've been practising demolition work, using charges against buildings when they need doors or walls blowing down.

"We've also been constructing road blocks and house defences, learning how to funnel the enemy by



using obstacles on stairwells or doorways to make them go where you want them to go.

"It's been really varied so far and it's great to get hands-on in this environment."

Around 400 soldiers and civilians are employed at Cenzub, with opposing forces available to provide a realistic touch.

These are structured as a mixed company kitted out with engineers, infantry and platforms such as VAB personnel carriers, VBL reconnaissance vehicles and even AMX-30 tanks.

They can play the role of a regular combat unit, militia or civilian refugees, depending on the particular requirements of the package.

Many of these assets were employed during Gaulish

Eagle, during which the British troops used standard French Army weapons, including the Giat Famas assault rifle and AT4 CS anti-tank device, as well as their tactical engagement simulation system.

"It's been easy to adjust as the French rifle is the same calibre as the SA80," says LBdr Chris Matthews (RHA).

"The magazine is smaller at 25 rounds and there is a three round burst option, which I thought only existed in video games."

Rfn Chhiring Lama (RGR) adds: "The Famas is light and pretty accurate but I find it cumbersome to use because of its slightly bulky profile – I prefer the SA80."

The French Army's heavy use of armour in urban operations was one noted



point of contrast.

"It has been really interesting to see how they employ armoured vehicles and tanks," says Rfn Dibethang Rai (RGR).

"We have been doing offense and defence tactics and as a light role unit we are learning more about using the platforms for assaults and as cover.

"The French use them a lot and they have provided some advice on how to protect ourselves as we move through the streets."

This difference in procedures is a result of the structures within each army,

according to Maj Pope.

"They have armoured vehicles in almost every unit and don't have light role infantry in the same way the British Army does," the officer explains.

"They are a much more mechanised force so they use the vehicles' weapons for fire support, to create entry points in buildings or rapidly flank in and out to move troops or casualties around – options that aren't always readily available to us.

"The strength we have is that we can be covert – if the town is surrounded by dense woodlands we can move

through it stealthily."

The way the hosts use layers of defence also revealed some intriguing tactical disparities.

"When defending a town, French forward troops lure the enemy into a zone to kill them," says Capt Imbahadur Ghale (RGR).

"But we usually use our perimeter forces to collect information about the enemy and then we inform our chain of command who can decide whether to draw them in for an attack or assault them outside of the town."

Once they were thoroughly familiarised with these new tactics the unit conducted a field exercise with 1st Parachute Chasseur Regiment, a regular partner of 16 Air Assault Brigade.

"Overall, the French instructors were very happy with the standard we showed," says Lt Henry Parker (RGR).

"This is the first time some of the boys had operated in an urban environment so in the early practice stages we wanted them to make some mistakes and as a result we've identified a few things to work on.

"One example the instructors pointed out was taking into account the potential aerial threat from assets like drones.

"It's a new challenge for many of the troops, but that's why we're here.

"Urban warfare skills are exceptionally important nowadays and will become more vital in the future.

"I think the investment we are starting to show in this area is really positive, and being able to share resources like this is a great example of working together with the French to achieve our aims." ■

Cenzub IN NUMBERS

2004

The year Cenzub was created

6,000

Area in hectares of the whole camp

5,000

The number of inhabitants the town of Jeoffrécourt was built for

400

Soldiers and civilians employed at the site

63

Houses in the training village of Beausejour



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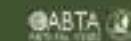
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LETTERS



Medical move regs need fixing

I AM looking to move from my current Service family accommodation (SFA) to a new property for medical reasons.

I know this can take time because suitable housing has to be found and then specialised teams must install any adaptations that are required.

While this process is going on it is difficult to provide a move-in date.

The trouble with that is you have to apply to the pay and allowances casework and complaints cell (PACCC) to get the removals arranged.

Furthermore, you have to allow the PACCC at least 30 days to review and respond to your request due to their high workload – and you can't confirm a move-in date for the removals until the work is done, which slows everything right down.

Is there any way the process can start without all this bureaucracy? Could entitlements be provisionally approved if you have confirmation from your administration office that you are due to move? – **Name and address supplied**

Col Jim Taylor, Assistant Head of Personnel Policy, Army Headquarters, responds: It is concerning to hear that you have encountered difficulties obtaining relocation allowances to fund an authorised move into suitably adapted accommodation.

There are several instances where

a mid-assignment relocation is supported as a move for Service reasons. Examples include situations where the SFA occupied cannot be adapted or needs to be vacant for upgrade works. Changes in entitlement such as family size or promotion are also supported.

Once a requirement to move is determined, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation provides a letter confirming that it is for Service reasons in accordance with JSP 752, paragraph 12.0413a.

This is the only requirement for initiating a move at public expense.

In situations where a mid-assignment move is not directed, but where it is considered there are compelling welfare, medical or compassionate reasons, a case supported by the unit can be submitted to the PACCC for a decision – see JSP 752, paragraph 12.0413b.

All supporting evidence must accompany the casework including an offer and acceptance of an alternative property.

However, a moving date is not required. For cases seeking urgent consideration, this can be annotated by the authorising officer at the time of submission, noting that the majority of PACCC casework should be completed in 14 days.

“I know it can take time”

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.

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LEAVE ON THE LINE

● I AM in the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) and work 12-hour shifts, four days on and four days off, including weekends and nights.

When it comes to taking leave, if you take four days off, for some mad reason they take six days off your entitlement.

So our 38 days of annual leave is, in reality, about 25 days.

The police and fire service work a similar four-on, four-off rota and they do not have extra days taken off their leave allowance.

The MPGS never used to do this either, but it is now policy and I think it's completely wrong. — **Name and address supplied**

WO1 John O'Connor, MPGS
Sergeant Major, Provost Marshal (Army) Headquarters, replies:
MPGS leave entitlement has evolved over the years.

After the introduction of JPA and policy changes, soldiers now receive the same entitlement as other Regular personnel, in accordance with JSP 760.

Following a tri-Service review of MPGS leave and conditions of service, it was concluded that, as shift workers, leave requests are to cover from the completion of a duty period to the start of a subsequent set of duties – so a 12-day block containing one four-day “on-duty” spell in the middle.

In each four-day “off-duty” period one day is always considered a working day for training and accounted for as such.

This means when personnel book four days’ leave a total of six days is deducted from the individual’s allowance.

Further details can be found at [MPGS SOI 004](#), the newly published [MPGS handbook](#) and [AGAI 043 – part 9](#).



“
I pay for my own jab every year
”

Lead with a jab to knock out flu

SHOULD the Army offer the flu jab to employees in open plan offices and those that need to take mandatory fitness assessments?

Compared with the significant amounts of money spent on medical facilities and rehabilitation, the relatively small funding for flu jabs would be more than worthwhile.

I pay for my own every year from a high street pharmacy for £10 a time, but I suspect the loss of manpower and efficiency that flu-induced absences cost the Army amount to a lot more than this per person every year.

We spend a lot of effort trying to improve efficiency and productivity in other areas so why aren’t we doing the same here? — **Name and address supplied**

Lt Col Ollie Quantic, SO1 Public Health and Health Protection, Army Headquarters, replies: As you rightly point out, influenza is a serious illness that affects a significant number of people every year, primarily in winter.

It isn’t the same as the common cold and is caused by a different group of viruses where the symptoms tend to start more suddenly, be more severe and last longer.

Therefore, a “touch of flu” is usually a common cold as the symptoms of influenza will lay a

person low for a week or longer.

The Defence Medical Services record very few cases of influenza but do see many incidents of influenza-like illness (ILI) which provides related data.

Analysis suggests the MoD would have to vaccinate 241 personnel to prevent each single case of ILI.

This works out at around £1,205 to prevent each affliction, of which a sizeable proportion were probably not true influenza.

People shouldn’t be discouraged from having the vaccine because it offers a degree of personal protection, as well as helping the population by potentially decreasing the amount of circulating virus.

The Defence Public Health Unit consistently reviews the evidence regarding ILI, comparing findings with national data and taking guidance on influenza vaccination into account.

This year the decision was taken to follow official advice and continue to offer vaccinations to phase one and two trainees in shared accommodation, in line with previous years. This will be reviewed in 2020.

The best way to prevent catching or spreading flu is to have scrupulous hand hygiene, ensure that surfaces are cleaned regularly, and encourage those who are ill to avoid work.



CAREERS

A four-year engineering degree apprenticeship scheme at Goldman Sachs is open to Army leavers. There are no fees as participants work part-time at the global investment bank while also studying at Queen Mary University of London. There is then the opportunity to transition into a full-time role at the end of the programme. Applications for the course, beginning in autumn 2020, must be submitted by February 9. For details visit www.goldmansachs.com/careers/students/programs/emea/engineering-apprentices

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

Service leavers interested in working in the network cable and data centre sectors can now use enhanced learning credits to access more courses. The funding can be spent on programmes delivered by CNet Training, which offers packages from a level-three BTEC in certified network cable installation up to a level-seven masters degree in data centre leadership and management. The BTEC has been specially tailored for Forces personnel and includes a two-week industry placement. Visit www.cnet-training.com

The **Recruit for Spouses** coaching programme supports Army partners as they get back into employment. To apply contact coaching@recruitforspouses.co.uk

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

RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity has underlined its commitment to providing job and training opportunities for Service leavers by becoming a lead partner of The Royal British Legion. Replacing the RBL's civvy street initiative, the move will see the organisation handle all employment support and grant enquiries, with a 120-strong team operating in Scotland, Wales and the regions of England. They will provide help with finding the

right job, as well as how to secure funding for education and training. Visit www.rfea.org.uk for further details.

An eight-week forestry course is available to those transitioning out of the military. The Royal Forestry Society certificate in arboriculture and forestry is the first land-based skills programme to be approved by the Career Transition Partnership. Visit www.ctp.org.uk/preferred-suppliers for details.

COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Keith Fisher, Normany Barracks.

Checkpoint Charlie: David Clarkson, Chippenham, Wiltshire; Blair Thomson, Buckley Barracks, Chippenham; Lisa Telford, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire.

Arabia with Levison Wood DVD: Leslie Newport, Oxford; G Karan, Rhyl, Denbighshire; Frank Johnstone, Hallow; Jane Marriott, Harrogate, N Yorkshire.

DIARY

Army Diversity Ally Awareness Days. Volunteers are sought to become Army Diversity Allies. Their role is to offer support to Service personnel through a visible commitment to calling out unacceptable behaviours and promoting inclusion. The awareness days are open to all ranks. All attendees must be volunteers.

January 16: Aldershot

March 18: Catterick

More dates to be announced. For information contact Maj John Rendall on Defence Connect or email ArmyPers-Pol-Diversity@mod.gov.uk

DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 020 7901 8900; www.soldierscharity.org

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

Armed Forces Christian Union: 01793 783123; www.afcu.org.uk

Armed Forces Muslim Association: Chaplain 020 7414 3252; www.afma.org.uk

Armed Services Advice Project: 0808 800 1007; www.adviceasap.org.uk

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society: www.armybirding.org.uk

Army Welfare Service: 01904 882053; www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support

Big White Wall: www.bigwhitewall.com

Blesma, The Limbless Veterans: 020 8590 1124; www.blesma.org

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

Care After Combat: www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership: 020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk

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

Defence Humanists: www.defencehumanists.org.uk

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

Family Escort Service: 020 7463 9249

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

Forcesline: UK – 0800 731 4880; Germany – 0800 1827 395; Cyprus – 080 91065; www.spaces.org.uk

Falklands – #6111; from operational theatres – Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) – 0044 1980 630854

Forces Pension Society: 020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome: www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround: www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01252 787574

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group): www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

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

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

Regular Forces' Employment Assn: 0121 236 0058; www.rfea.org.uk

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

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

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

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

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

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

Continued on page 50

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

Stoll:
020 7385 2110;
info@stoll.org.uk;
www.stoll.org.uk

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

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

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

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

Troop Aid:
0121 711 7215 or 07734 384260

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

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

WRVS Services Welfare:
02920 232 668

ROADSHOWS

The Army Engagement Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. Call 01276 412880 or email your name and address to rc-aeg-mailbox@mod.gov.uk with the event you are interested in attending.

January 16: Bristol

January 23: Teeside

January 28: Barking and Dagenham

January 30: Ealing



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 can contact him on 07961 606766.

Twenty Twenty Productions are making **All That Glitters** – a new television show that will search for Britain's most brilliant jeweller – and would like to include someone who has a connection to the military. Would you like an item of jewellery specially designed and made to celebrate a momentous occasion in your family's life, or is there someone you know who deserves something gorgeous and unique? Maybe you have an event coming up and only something spectacular will do. If you would like the opportunity to commission a bespoke item made

by one of the talented jewellers, get in touch. Email your name, contact number and a brief description of the item of jewellery you would like to clients@twentytwenty.tv

The Advance Study – a research programme into the long-term health of military personnel injured in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014 – is looking for new participants. Those who were under 50 when they deployed are asked to get in touch on 01509 251500 ext 3408. The team wants to hear from anyone medically evacuated by air directly to a UK hospital, as well as those not injured and may provide a match in age, rank and role to one of this cohort. Taking part involves six separate day visits to DMRC Stanford Hall, Loughborough for a health MOT over 20 years. Travel and accommodation costs are reimbursed, and you'll receive £100 per visit as a thank you. Visit www.advancestudydmrc.org.uk for more information.

JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU? No. 938

TEN details have been changed in this picture from a pass out parade at 2 Army Training Regiment Pirbright, Surrey. Circle all the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 938, Soldier, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot,**

Hampshire GU11 2DU with your full contact details, including email address, by no later than January 30.

A photocopy is acceptable but only one entry per person may be submitted.

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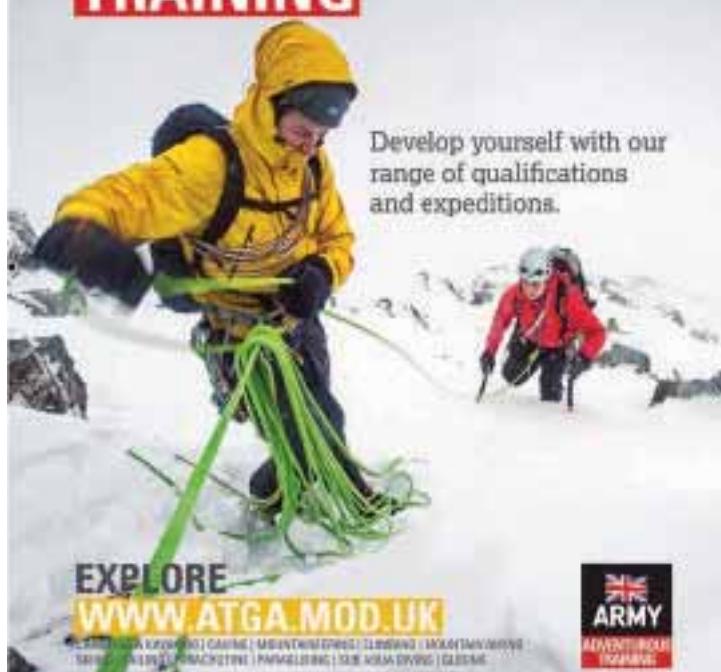
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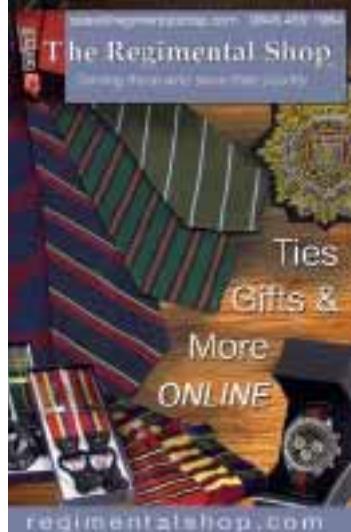
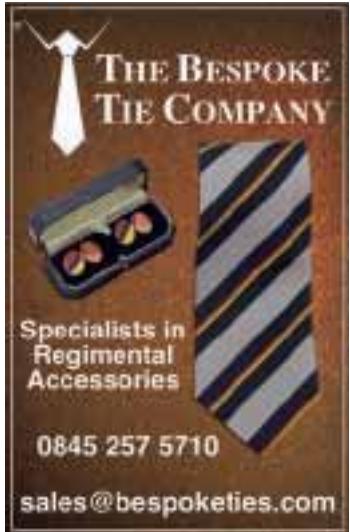
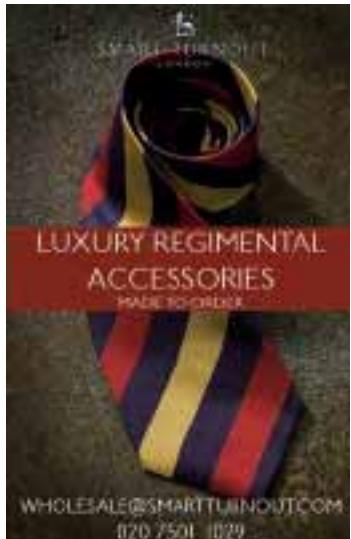
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REVIEWS

MUSIC

TERRA 3808

Metal artist builds on growing momentum with debut album

"THESE days it seems to be more about streams on Spotify," industrial star Cpl Matt Hart (CAMUS) tells *Soldier* as he discusses his latest musical venture.

"Albums are not really seen as the done thing anymore."

But with three successful EPs already to his name this was an avenue the Serviceman was determined to explore, and when a broken leg from a skiing accident saw him sidelined from work he suddenly found himself with a platform to swiftly move the project forward.

"I write quite quickly and have a lot of creativity going on," he adds. "I was sat on the couch and



P59

MOVIES

P61

BOOKS

P62

TOP GEAR

MUSIC



» wrote the whole album in the space of six weeks.

"It is a continuation of the *Chaos Rising* EPs and includes themes based around science fiction and a post-apocalyptic wasteland.

"It also relates to current times and the political landscape we are in."

Entitled *Terra 3808*, the record also boasts a fresh production process – an effort contributed by fellow soldier LCpl Adi Calef (CAMUS), who plays alongside Hart in the Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra.

He was sent individual vocal, guitar, drum and instrumental tracks and was charged with mixing the components together to form the final songs, and the end result has drawn impressive feedback from the artist.

"The production levels are now far superior," Hart explains. "In the past I was doing that all myself but this is a real step up, which is what I've been aiming for all the way along."

As principle viola and cello players in the day job the duo are long-term collaborators – a relationship that extended to the live band **DNA**, in which they covered tracks from the likes of **The Prodigy** and **Darude**.

And while Hart admits the industrial scene is relatively niche he believes it is an arena in which his musical talents can flourish.

"It is a tiny sub-genre of metal and will never reach the mainstream," the Serviceman says. "But I've put a lot into this and have got something in return. I'm not going to make a profit but the album has been well received, it has been picked up by a few media outlets and the sales have been decent."

"To have a professional-looking CD at the end of it all makes the process completely worthwhile."

With the momentum continuing to build Hart already has summer festival appearances on his radar, and he has hinted that fresh material will arrive later in the year.

"I'm always writing music," he adds. "I will probably release a couple of singles in the coming months and I'm also looking at a few remixes."

"I might even do another album, but at present I'm riding on the wave of *Terra 3808*."

Visit www.matthart.bandcamp.com to listen to music and for details on upcoming shows.

INTERVIEW: RICHARD HART, SOLDIER

MUSIC RELEASES

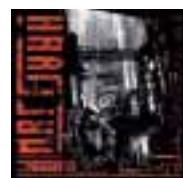


Who
by The Who

WITH The Who releasing their first album of new music for over a decade you have

to ask yourself why. The answer is simple, because they still have it. While it's not going to blow away your stacked Marshall amps, *Who* is still a decent record with **Roger Daltrey's** iconic vocals ably backed up with power chord guitars that can only come from the genius that is **Pete Townsend**. None of the songs form the standout anthems you'd expect to hear at the start of a *CSI* episode, but the first half is a solid rock offering. Nothing better sums up the record than *Hero Ground Zero*, which harks back to the band's pomp. You even get Townsend singing on *I'll be Back*, which is when, unfortunately, the release tails off. Overall it is good, but not great enough to go rushing out to buy before it sells out.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



Everyday Life
by Coldplay

SOFT rock giants **Coldplay** return with their first offering since 2015's upbeat release,

A Head Full of Dreams. This time round the band appear to be adopting a more considered approach and frontman **Chris Martin** has already announced they will not be touring on the back of their latest efforts in a bid to help the environment. The change in direction is reflected in a double-album that tackles themes such as gun control, racism, police brutality and climate change, among others. But fans should not fear an altogether heavy-going listen as *Everyday Life* boasts a healthy dose of the trademark sounds and lyrics that have made the band mainstream favourites for two decades. Interesting diversions can be found on the likes of *Broken* and *When I Need A Friend*, but anthems such as *Orphans* and *Arabesque* will prove firm favourites if, and when, they return to the stage.

Richard Long, Soldier



PICK OF THE MONTH:

1917

Sam Mendes' Great War epic impresses on a grand scale

► THIS is a military movie unlike any I have ever seen before.

It is well worth an outing to the cinema and, if you're anything like me, you'll be buying it the day it's released on DVD because you'll be wanting to see the special features, which will hopefully explain how they have apparently filmed the entire thing with one shot.

Directed by **Sam Mendes** (*Skyfall, Spectre, American Beauty*), *1917* tells quite a simple story, but the execution is next level.

It starts with two lance jacks relaxing in B Echelon, when LCpl Blake (**Dean Charles Chapman** – Tommen Baratheon in *Game Of Thrones*) is told to get a "volunteer" – which anyone who's done time in the military knows is never a good sign – and head to see the commanding officer (**Colin Firth**).

Blake's friend LCpl Schofield (**George MacKay**) goes with him and the pair receive orders to travel across no-man's-land and deliver a message to Col Mackenzie (**Benedict Cumberbatch**), warning him not to advance on the retreating Germans as they are in fact planning an ambush from the newly formed Hindenburg Line.

The duo's success or failure will decide the fate of 1,600 British soldiers, including Blake's own brother.

Along the way they must overcome many

challenges and they meet other troops (**Mark Strong, Andrew Scott** and **Richard Madden** among them), who provide assistance where they can.

The scale of the production is truly stunning, from the vast expanse of no-man's-land to the trench systems that go on and on, and can only really be appreciated by someone who has had to dig in in real life. Even then, the sheer length of them is hard to believe.

The physical magnitude of the movie, the focus on the two men on such a short timescale and the immediacy of the action give *1917* an incredibly realistic feel that you believe you're moving through it alongside the soldiers on their daunting mission.

I can't recommend this highly enough. It is nothing short of a must watch and will undoubtedly feature heavily in the Oscars and other awards this year. ■

VERDICT:

Simply epic – watch it as soon as you can

★★★★★

REVIEW: SGT ADAM JACKSON, PARA

Q&A

Behind the scenes

Paul Bidiss (ex-Para), military adviser to *1917*, explains how he brought the trenches to life

► You've worked on projects like *War and Peace*, *Jason Bourne* and *Strike Back*, but how much more of a challenge did *1917* present?

I've done a continuous shot before, so I understand how hard they are and how meticulous you have to be, but not on this scale. With 500 extras all having to play their part and be on point from the moment they shout action, that's quite a daunting task. Retakes cost a lot of money.

► How did you prepare the extras?

People always tell casting agencies they have previous military experience, even if they don't. But I like to have veterans in positions of authority within the rank structure, so for *1917* I had ex-full screws, lance jacks or sergeants playing those roles because it didn't take much for them to actually be the part. All the guys who had never held a rifle before were looking to them to make sure they were doing everything correctly, just like they would have done back in the day and still do even now. So, I had a battalion of men, broken down into companies, platoons and sections and I was the commanding officer.

● What about making sure their military drills were convincing?

We set up a bootcamp to train them in weapons handling, bayonet safety and tactics. We taught some drill – that was important for instilling the military ethos and getting that synchronisation. They had a history lesson in which I explained the equipment to them, so they knew which pouch was for ammo and which was for their water bottle. And if their weapon, webbing and helmet weren't always to hand I would make them do a little forfeit, like some press-ups or a short run.



● How did Dean Charles Chapman and George MacKay (pictured) take to it?

They took it really seriously and asked lots of questions. I put them through their paces, dashing around so they got used to the equipment. I taught them the importance of foot care, how to tape and powder their feet and put fresh socks on like the men would have done in 1917, but also so that they didn't suffer during the long shoots. Another thing they learnt was checking their pouches – that's something that is done even today, and it was a lesson from The Somme. The pouches weren't doing up properly, so they were losing rounds, but they didn't find out until they were halfway across no-man's-land. So, they devised a drill that soldiers would check their pouches before moving. It's those little belt and braces things that military advisers bring to the party.

● Do you worry about people critiquing the historical accuracy?

I did a lot of research into the training manuals of the day and the tactics.

You try and get things as close to reality as you can but you're always going to get spotters. What they don't understand, though, is that it's a film, not a documentary. I'm sure they'll be someone saying, "I couldn't help but notice..." but it's like, "crack on mate – go and make your own film".

● Where was it filmed?

The first section was shot in Bovington, but the majority – the big trench scenes – were produced on Salisbury Plain Training Area.

● What kind of reaction have you got from people who have seen the movie?

I've been totally gobsmacked. All I've heard is positive reviews from the press. We watched a cast and crew screening and it was just the dog's bollocks. When you hear veterans who have seen it raving about it you know you've done a good job and that's what's important. All of us wanted to make sure we were honouring the men of that era by getting it spot on.

● What's next?

I'm working on a few projects – it's brilliant. I'm never short of work. And I'm actually getting guys who are on their resettlement involved now too. A couple were extras on 1917.

● Any advice for Service-leavers who want to get involved in the film industry?

I always say people should start as I did, as an extra, so they can understand the chain of command. There's a structure – the logistics, all the departments, the set, the catering – it's like a military operation. But there is also an etiquette. You can't go in with a sergeant major attitude – you'd be sacked on the spot. So, I tell guys they have to have some experience on set at the lowest end of the ranks. It's a hard industry to get into but it's also hard to get out of – I have no plans to stop yet.

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, SOLDIER

DVD/DIGITAL RELEASES



Downton Abbey

Out now

LOVEABLE toffs, the Crawley family, and their trusty servants are back for another helping of sentimental, but oh-so-soothing stately splendour. The news that a royal visit is in the offing sends Downton's residents – upstairs and downstairs – into a flurry of activity and intrigue. The highpoints usually involve a withering bon mot from **Maggie Smith**; the low point is probably the rushed sub-plot about Thomas's homosexuality. As in the TV series, the portrayal of benevolent lords and their contented serfs glosses over the realities of the class system in the 1920s, but it's all too easy to put that to one side while you indulge in the cosy, mindless fluff of it all.

Becky Clark, Soldier

Blinded by the Light

Out now

AN OCCASIONALLY schmaltzy, teen-angst pseudo musical that would not be my normal choice, but I'm glad I stuck with it. Javed is a British-Pakistani teenager with pretensions of becoming a writer and to break away from 1987 Luton – a town of few jobs, dodgy 80s haircuts and overt racism. Introduced to **Bruce Springsteen** by a college friend, Javed makes sense of his dreary suburban existence through his lyrics, stifled by his traditional father and the realities of mass unemployment. And if that doesn't cheer you up, a **Rob Brydon** cameo and a surreal lip-synching scene in a local market might just. We now live in more enlightened times. The contrasts and comparisons with contemporary Britain are deliberate and provocative and it would be naive to think the UK is now free of prejudice. However, even if you're not a Springsteen fan fear not, this is near history with honesty and self-belief.

Maj Neil Johnson, AAC



Oil in the Blood

Out now

LIFELONG enthusiast **Gareth Maxwell** spent three years travelling the world, with a film crew in tow, looking into what makes a motorcyclist. His documentary examines the culture, mentality, fascination and passion people have for motorcycles, with more than 300 riders – from manufacturers and event organisers to journalists and racers – interviewed in the process. Custom and retro-style bikes have really helped to boost sales in recent years, with top brands such as Ducati, BMW and Triumph finding a new audience, and this release expertly captures this constantly evolving part of the industry. Roberts says this is not a film about motorcycles, it's about motorcycle people and I completely agree with his thinking. It is a great documentary, packed full of enthusiasm and passion, and is well worth a watch – even if you aren't a motorcyclist.

Sgt Richard Spencer-Fleet, REME

BOOKS



PICK OF THE MONTH:

FIGHTING WITH PRIDE

Officer reflects on the path of progress

TWENTY years since the ban on homosexuality in the Armed Forces was lifted, a new book has been published that brings together the stories of ten LGBTQ personnel who have served since the Second World War.

Among the accounts included in *Fighting with Pride* is that of Maj Mike Brigham (pictured above) of 2nd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment.

The company commander of A (Grenadier) Company has been openly gay since joining the Army in 2005 and is the first to admit that his journey has been smooth in comparison to colleagues who served in less enlightened times.

People like former sergeant Darren Ford (ex-RMP) who was forced to resign from a promising career after he was outed by a boyfriend, or Elaine Chambers (ex-QARANC) whose consensual encounter with a fellow nurse resulted in a witch hunt and the threat of a criminal conviction for sexual assault.

"A lot of the other stories come from a time when the ban was still firmly in place," explains Maj Brigham.

"They are not uplifting, but mine was seen as a positive tale about how you can now have a good career, regardless of your sexuality.

"Not only does that illustrate how far we've come, but their sacrifice and hardship have enabled people like me not to have to fight

anymore and definitely changed the Armed Forces for the better."

The lifting of the ban on January 12, 2000 may have ushered in a more progressive era but prejudice did not disappear overnight.

One of those battling tooth and nail for true equality in the years that followed was the book's editor and contributor, Lt Cdr Craig Jones (RN), who lobbied defence chiefs for tangible change, such as the right of LGBTQ personnel to attend Pride in London.

Now that such events are commonplace, what other changes does Maj Brigham think need to happen to promote further acceptance?

"I don't actually believe we need to do anything," he continues.

"The younger generation genuinely doesn't care – I've tried to explain this to senior officers who still assume there is a problem.

"This might not be a popular opinion, but I think sometimes we make too much of an issue or try and be too PC, which could lead to enmity among our straight allies.

"Fundamentally, the Army is a great employer and we are very privileged that we have policies and procedures in place to protect us."

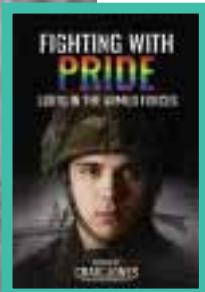
From the vantage point of 2020 it seems bizarre that not so long ago homosexuality was seen as a threat to military cohesion, punishable with public disgrace, dismissal and even prison.

Or that someone like Maj Brigham would not have been trusted to lead troops, much less been able to live in a married quarter with his husband.

Fortunately, today's personnel seem more concerned with their comrades' ability to do their jobs than their sexual orientation.

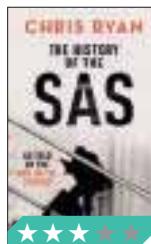
But this book is a poignant tribute to previous generations who paid dearly for such progress.

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, SOLDIER



● *Fighting with Pride*, published by Pen and Sword Military, is available now and priced £25

BOOK RELEASES



The History of the SAS

by Chris Ryan



Relentless

by Dean Stott



Relentless

by Dean Stott



WITH the author being an ex-sapper, this book was naturally going to grab my interest and it did not disappoint.

Following a different format to the usual titles on covert operations and elite soldiering, it focuses instead on Stott adjusting to a new path after the Army. Clever and interesting from the start, he manages to get the balance between arrogance, professionalism and competence just right. I was fully engaged throughout as the story vividly brought to life the world of security contracting, with all of the ups and downs that entails. Overall, I thought it was an open and honest account of one man's incredible journey.

Capt Andrew McEwen, RE

Selvatica Tactical Mid GTX

Upper: AKU Air8000 + Welded Pu Film

Lining: Gore-Tex extended comfort

Men's weight: 460g

Colours: Coyote or black

Size range in UK: 6–13

RRP: £159.90

www.aku.it

PICK OF THE MONTH:

SELVATICA TACTICAL MID GTX BOOTS

Lightweight footwear from AKU gets *Soldier* treatment

► LIKE all of our kit, boots have changed dramatically since I was issued my first pair of combat highs back in 1993.

Back then, they were big, clumpy, leather and rubber things that went halfway up your shins.

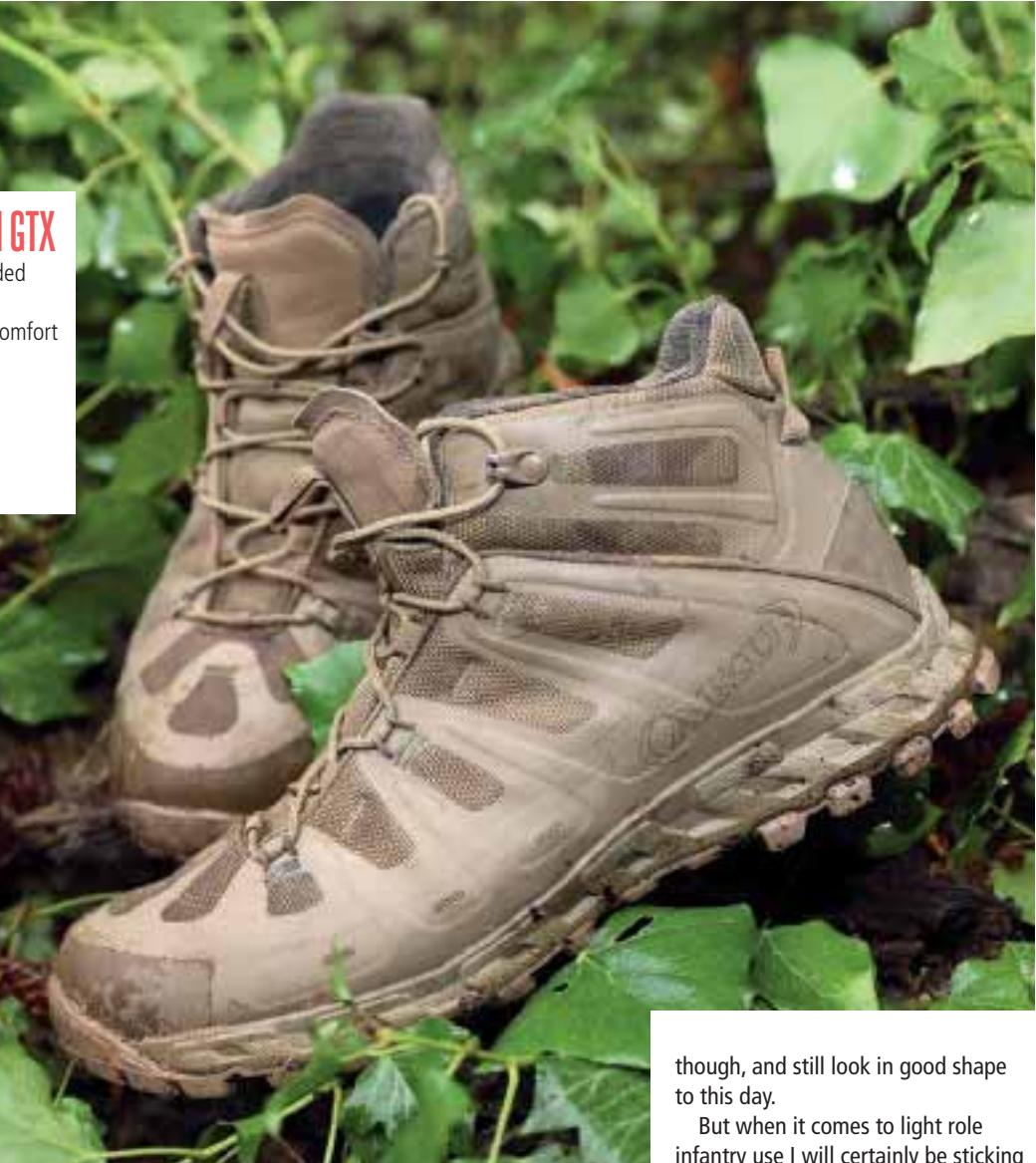
However, today military footwear seems to have evolved into super-light "combat trainers".

While AKU's Selvaticas certainly don't pretend to be up to the same job as the Italian manufacturer's Pilgrims – one of the Army's high liability combat boots – they do claim to be "capable and confident" over diverse terrain.

"A serious boot for fast hiking and trekking in comfort," boasts the marketing blurb.

They certainly look very smart and cool out of the box and, like a lot of new boots, their synthetic exterior doesn't need any polishing.

And they were much admired by some of my green-eyed compatriots



when I took them out and about.

At 460 grams, I found them light and comfortable and good for tabbing straight away – no breaking-in needed.

Around camp and for driving green fleet vehicles, these would be an excellent choice.

However, I soon found the limitations of this footwear when I took them for a serious test across the "babies' heads" of Longmoor and waist-deep down one of the training area's marshy rivers.

Here, I found their low-cut ankles lacked the support I needed for rough terrain and, like most Gore-Tex-lined boots, they filled up with muck and stayed full.

They cleaned up easily enough,

though, and still look in good shape to this day.

But when it comes to light role infantry use I will certainly be sticking to my issued Altbergs.

I donned the AKUs again for my recent role fitness tests. And being so light, they performed very well on the two-kilometre run.

At around £160, these boots are not exactly cheap. But it is fair to say they do what they claim.

However, with excellent issue alternatives now available, it seems difficult for Service personnel to justify the extra spend for what is essentially an inferior item of footwear to AKU's Pilgrim boot, or the good old Altbergs.

I would be seriously tempted to save the pennies and just don those for any outdoor activities coming my way in future. ■

VERDICT:

Decent boots but not impressive enough to fork out for
★★★★★

REVIEW: CSGT COLIN TESTER, PWRR

SOLDIER SPORT



KK MEDICAL MARVEL

THEY may have dominated last season but the Army Medical Services women's team were pushed all the way in the defence of their Inter-Corps swimming crown. Read about their narrow victory, as well as a more comprehensive win for the Infantry men's team, on page 67...



SHOOTERS SHARPEN FOCUS WITH TARGET IN SIGHT

GIVEN the fact accuracy with a weapon system is a critical part of the day job, soldiers appear to be the perfect fit for the sport of target shooting.

The Army acknowledged this in 2015 when, in partnership with GB Shooting, it launched the Troops to Target initiative in a bid to push personnel to the Olympic stage.

A sign of its success was witnessed at the 2018 Commonwealth Games as three team members were selected to represent their countries in pistol and rifle disciplines.

While this formed an impressive milestone the set-up did not rest on its laurels and, instead, introduced a raft of changes in order to build on the rate of progress.

And that could pay dividends in the coming months as Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) and Spr Michael Bamsey (RE) are in contention to qualify for this

summer's Tokyo Olympics.

"Over the past couple of years we have improved the way we do business," OC Maj Ady Kyle (SASC), told *SoldierSport*.

"We realised we were not going in the right direction, so we now have heads of discipline for pistol and rifle.

"We are still pushing for guys to earn Tokyo quota places. There is an outside chance for Sam and Michael and our main focus between now and May is on helping them achieve that.

"But we also have to promote the programme. We recently ran an identification day to look at some of the raw talent we have.

"At some point people like Sam will move on and we will have to bring the next generation through to fight for those quota places."

Troops to Target personnel are embroiled in a full-time programme at their Bisley base.

In a typical week they will face four days of training, as well as



**"IT IS
THE
SPORT'S
PUREST
FORM"**

an admin day, but their efforts are not solely focused on the ranges.

They also have support from experts in areas such as strength and conditioning, nutrition, mindfulness, physiotherapy and psychology – all of which could make a crucial difference in competitions that are decided by the narrowest of margins.

"It is a massive element," WO1 Zoe Chasemore (AGC (SPS)), head of the rifle discipline, explained. "This has been part of our development over the past 12 months. That support has been running in the background for a while but now everyone is working more collaboratively.

"They all speak to each other and we have group meetings to see how we can help people. It is a good move."

As a former Troops to Target athlete, Chasemore is fully aware of the pressures that come with the sport.

She was recently selected for

UK Coaching's high performance programme and is now imparting her wisdom on the Army's up-and-coming stars.

"If anyone is interested in shooting and has aspirations of becoming an Olympic athlete they should come and have a go," she added.

"You do not have to have experience in shooting clubs. Your background in Service shooting will hold you in good stead so don't write yourself off."

One of those to accept the challenge is Cpl Stephen Mitchell (REME, pictured below left).

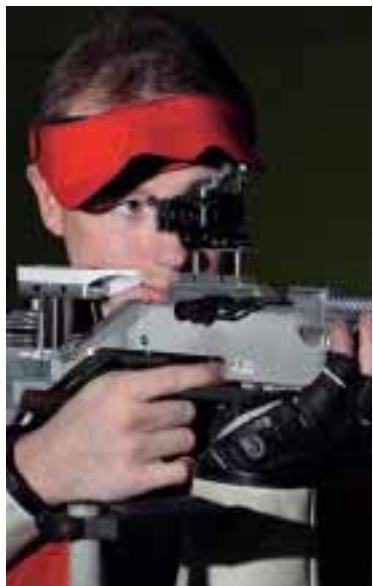
Despite not having a background in the sport, he impressed at a talent identification day and is now forging a career in the prone, three-position and ten-metre air rifle disciplines.

"I hadn't even done much Service shooting," he explained. "I came back from the Falklands and got on some courses – smallbore rifle was one of those.

"It is a technical sport. I'm an electronic technician by trade so I'm minded that way. Everything has to be perfect and it is the purest form of shooting.

"This is completely different to the day job and is something I didn't even know the Army had, but I've coped with the transition.

"My immediate aim is the British air rifle competition in February and I would like to medal at that. I look at the short term and long-term goals, such as the 2024 Olympics, will sort themselves out." ■



SHOOTING IN NUMBERS

PISTOL SHOOTERS ON THE TROOPS TO TARGET INITIATIVE

2

ATHLETES INVOLVED WITH THE RIFLE DISCIPLINE

6

YEARS SINCE THE SCHEME WAS LAUNCHED

5

POINT WINNING MARGIN FOR SPR MICHAEL BAMSEY AT THE RECENT SURREY AIRGUN OPEN

2.5

FOLLOWERS ON THE BRITISH ARMY SHOOTING FACEBOOK PAGE

697



GOWIN SET FOR FINAL PUSH

A BRONZE medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games represented a career high for pistol shooter Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) and he is now hoping to go one step further by securing a place at this summer's Olympics.

The soldier came close to achieving his aim at last year's European Championships but has admitted his hopes are slim with just one qualifying event remaining.

However, Gowin (pictured) remains pragmatic in his approach and, should he miss out, he will adjust his sights to the 2024 Games in Paris.

"It is not the be-all and end-all, but I want to push for Tokyo," the marksman told *SoldierSport*. "Skill-wise I feel like a real professional and have achieved some big scores. However, I need the experience that comes from years in the sport.

"I came so close at the European Championships. I was in fifth place after the first

day and moved up to fourth.

"I had done loads of training in perfect light but when they put shades over the targets it had a real impact.

"I dropped from fourth to 15th in four or five shots and you cannot get away with that at this level."

Teammate Spr Michael Bamsey (RE) is also in contention for a Games place and, like Gowin, will target 2024 should he miss out this time round.

"I'm not 100 per cent confident but I would say I'm 70 per cent," he explained. "It is still early in the season and there's work to be done.

"However, I have a solid plan in place to ensure I have the best shot at it.

"You cannot argue against the benefits that full-time training offers. The support we get in areas such as strength and conditioning is more than anyone else gets in the country. It can only help in the long run." ■



WALK ON THE WILD SIDE!

Get your boots on and raise money for blind veterans across the UK on one of our ten mile walks. To find out more, visit blindveterans.org.uk/march



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss



MARCH!
FOR VETERANS



FAMILIAR FACES CLAIM POOL TITLES

T WAS business as usual at this season's Inter-Corps Swimming Championships as the Infantry and Army Medical Services retained their respective pool titles.

A scintillating display across a busy afternoon of action saw the Infantry top the standings in the men's competition, where consistent scoring in a host of finals saw them post a total of 132 points.

Their nearest rivals, the Royal Engineers, finished on 124.

However, the women's competition proved to be a much tighter affair. Having dominated in 2019 the AMS found themselves tied with the Royal Logistic Corps on 133 points after 13 finals – meaning the title was decided on the results from the 200-metre individual medley.

Here, the medics claimed 11 points compared to the loggies' ten as the silverware was secured by the narrowest of margins.

And it proved to be the same outcome in the relay competition as the two squads again finished

with the same scores.

But, as the AMS edged the 4x50-metre medley it was they who were left to celebrate another corps double.

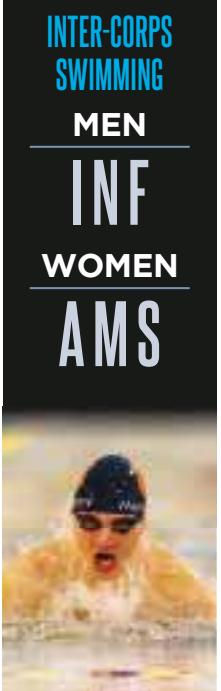
The men's competition was more straightforward as maximum points from three of the four races saw the Infantry claim the title in style.

In terms of individual achievements, Cpl Jack Newton (AGC) was among the standout performers as he set new records in the men's 50-metre and 100-metre breaststroke.

And Pte Lucy-Anne Doncaster (AMS) clocked 34.61sec to win the women's 50-metre backstroke in record time.

"This was a really well supported event with a huge turnout across the cap badges," Army pool swimming team manager Lt Col Katie Hislop (RE) told *SoldierSport*.

"A number of Army swimmers were in action, but we were also able to identify some good young talent coming through, which is great for me as manager." ■



GAME BRIEF

COMPETITION: Inter-Corps Water Polo Championships

VENUE: Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre

MEN: Royal Signals

MIKE GIBSON TROPHY: Royal Engineers

WOMEN: Army Medical Services



THE sport of water polo showcased its continuing growth at a keenly contested Inter-Corps Championships.

Five teams went head-to-head in the men's league one competition, with the Royal Signals claiming the overall title.

A further five sides were in action in the Mike Gibson Trophy – league two – and it was the Royal Engineers who topped the table, achieving promotion to the main draw next season.

The Army Medical Services were triumphant in the women's contest, which featured a guest Royal Air Force team.

"It was a really good event," organiser WO2 Emma Argue (REME) told *SoldierSport*.

"Because we now have a split in the men's leagues it means the games are far more competitive."

"League one is full of good teams who play hard matches. The Mike Gibson Trophy allows players to play against those of a similar standard, which helps to grow the sport."



SPORT SHORTS



Archers narrowly miss out

THE Army suffered a slender defeat to the Royal Air Force at this season's Inter-Services Indoor Archery Championships.

Staged as part of the national indoor competition, the event saw the soldiers testing themselves against some of the country's top professionals – with more than 450 athletes in action on the day.

It proved to be a welcome test for the set-up, which has been actively growing over the past year.

"It was a great performance and a very close result," said team captain SSgt Craig Cherrie (RLC). Anyone interested in getting involved should email craig.cherrie702@mod.gov.uk



Duo deliver in cup win

GOALS from Spr Dan Stoneman (RE, pictured) and LCpl Ryan Paddock (R Signals) proved decisive as the UK Armed Forces' footballers defeated their Dutch rivals 2-1 to claim a fourth successive Kentish Cup title.

The Servicemen started their campaign with a 4-1 win over the French – meaning a draw in their final game would be enough to lift the trophy.

Stoneman gave them the perfect start when he scored in the second minute and Paddock put victory in sight when he converted from a corner.



KHAN SHINES IN BOXERS' HOME SHOW

THE Army boxing team ended 2019 on a high as they secured the bragging rights at a keenly contested home round-robin tournament in Aldershot.

Fighters from Belgium, London and the Southern Counties tested themselves against the Service's finest during three days of action and it was the host's record of five wins from nine bouts that saw them emerge victorious.

The impressive Cpl Shamim Khan (RLC, pictured) led the charge with back-to-back triumphs, while LCpl Pete Love (R Anglian) celebrated a successful debut at middleweight.

Stepping up from welterweight for the first time, the soldier claimed two successes from three fights. Rfn Sid

Driscoll (Rifles) was the other victor.

"If you are a matchmaker, you want to come away with a lot of close bouts and that is what we had," head coach Sgt James Allen (REME) told *SoldierSport*.

"It would have been nice if the other teams had provided a few more fighters but we had three days of really good boxing, which was ideal as we headed into the Christmas break."

The squad will return to the gym this month as preparations for the Inter-Services step up a gear.

"We are heading into our training camp phase," Allen added. "We will be linking up with Wales and the Belgians are keen to do something as well."

"It's all about making sure we have the right people at the right weight."

**"IT IS A
STEP UP
FROM
ARMY
RUGBY"**



RUGBY union referee Capt Nikki Donnell (QARANC) has been named on the panel of officials for this season's Women's Six Nations.

The officer will take the whistle when Wales play France at Cardiff Arms Park on February 23 and will act as an assistant referee in three further fixtures.

"It is a privilege to have the opportunity," O'Donnell, who also officiated in last year's tournament, told *SoldierSport*.

"It is a fantastic competition and I'm learning as I go."

"It is a step up from Army rugby. International matches are always that little bit different, the intensity is higher compared to the military game and the players have a particular style of play."

O'Donnell was shortlisted for the sports official prize at last year's Army Sports Awards and refereed her first international contest during the 2018/19 season.



REDS TRIUMPH IN POLICE PRESENCE

WOMEN'S
RUGBY UNION
ARMY

22

BRITISH
POLICE

6



HEAD coach Maj Gemma Stonebridge-Smith (AGC (ETS)) is looking forward to international tests against Germany and Sweden in the coming weeks as the Army women plot an Inter-Services revenge mission.

Having dominated the competition since its inception, the Reds saw their stranglehold broken last season with defeat to the Royal Air Force and they will be looking to reaffirm their position of strength when the action gets underway in April.

As part of their preparations, the soldiers host the touring Germans on January 18, while Sweden will form the opposition on February 12.

More than 50 new players attended a trials period at the start of the campaign and glimpses of the new-look senior squad's potential were witnessed in a 22-6 win over the British Police.

Rugby league convert Gnr Abby Eatock (RA) impressed

with two tries from fullback, while Bdr Beth Dainton (RA) capped a commanding display when some sharp footwork saw her power through the opposition defence to score.

The Servicewomen completed a satisfying afternoon's work as replacement LCpl Angela Carr (RLC) reached the line following a storming run from Cpl Chelsey Snead (REME).

"We are still in the build part of the season," Stonebridge-Smith told *SoldierSport*. "It is about setting a platform and, in parts of this game, we showed what we wanted to do.

"We now need to be more consistent and do that over the course of 80 minutes.

"I was really pleased with our efforts in defence, however, there are still things we can work on.

"We played against Sweden last season, while our A team faced the Germans, and we will use those matches to really test ourselves." ■



TWICKENHAM CALL

HISTORY will be made at Twickenham this season when the Army women lock horns with their Royal Navy rivals on the hallowed turf for the first time.

The iconic venue has played host to the men's fixture since 1920 and the women have had ambitions of sharing the grand stage since their Inter-Services competition was launched in 2003.

Reds skipper Sgt Jade Mullen (AGC (SPS), pictured above) has welcomed the move and said it has offered extra motivation in the team's bid to regain the Forces title they relinquished in 2019.

"To play at Twickenham is an absolute honour," she told *SoldierSport*. "This is something we have been working towards for almost 20 years.

"There's always been the question of 'why should we be in the background?' and, finally, we are getting the same platform as the men."

The fixtures will be played on Saturday, May 2, with the men at 1400 and women at 1630.

Tickets go on sale on Monday, January 13. For more details visit www.armynavymatch.org.uk





HALL'S TOUR DEBUT

SHOWJUMPER LCpl Holly Hall (RLC) produced a strong display on the international stage by starring at the Mediterranean Equestrian Tour event.

Competing in the bronze CSI1* category, the soldier enjoyed a terrific opening weekend as she claimed top spot on her horse WKD San Remo in the 1.10-metre class. The result followed a second-place finish in a field of 70 international riders.

Hall then progressed to the 1.20-metre classes for the following weekends, where she added second- and third-place medals to her haul.

"It was an amazing opportunity for both me and my horse to compete on an international circuit event against professionals," she said.

"We've gained a lot of experience from this event."

Elsewhere, the Royal Artillery Equestrian Centre at Thorney Island won the prestigious Horse and Hound dialog club of the year award for 2019.

It offers free lessons to personnel wanting to sample the sport and runs a summer camp for blind veterans, while also working with amputees.



MATTHEWS MAKES STRATEGIC MOVE



**"IT
WAS A
STACKED
FIELD"**

TRIATHLON star Capt Katrina Matthews (RAMC) capped a sensational 12 months of athletic achievement by finishing fourth in her first full Ironman race.

A nominee in the rising star category at last year's Army Sports Awards, the officer made her debut at the Western Australia Ironman event in Busselton, where she clocked a time of 8hr 53min 58sec following a 2.4-mile swim, 112 miles on the bike and a marathon – her first-ever as a runner.

Matthews' effort represented the second fastest debut time, as well as the tenth fastest overall, by a female British athlete over the distance.

"The three athletes ahead of me all beat the course record,"

she told *SoldierSport*.

"It was a stacked field and I managed to overtake an Olympian and a top-30 finisher at the World Championships on the run.

"I think the result was down to good execution of a detailed race strategy, along with some intensive training."

Matthews' result formed the culmination of a stellar year.

After gaining her professional licence in May the Servicewoman was victorious at the 2019 European Middle-Distance Championships and went on to finish in 16th place at the World Championships.

She also helped the Army women's team to success at the Inter-Services Triathlon Championships in Wales. ■

- LEEDS-based outfit Oulton Raiders will form the Army's opposition in the opening round of rugby league's Challenge Cup.

The Reds will be hoping to go one step further than in 2019, when they suffered a narrow 18-16 defeat to Bentley, and will have home advantage for the tie, which will be played on the weekend of January 11 and 12.

For more information on the fixture follow [@ArmyRugbyLeague](#) on Twitter.



MONTH IN SPORT

January's key fixtures...


WHAT: Army

 Women v Essex
– Southern
Counties Cup

WHEN:

January 15

WHERE:

 Aldershot Military
Stadium

NEED TO

KNOW: The Reds started their campaign with a 2-2 draw against Middlesex and will be looking for their first win as the Inter-Services looms


WHAT: Exercise Lion's Challenge
– Army Alpine Championships

WHEN: January 21 to 31

WHERE: Serre Chevalier, France

NEED TO KNOW: This contest follows hot on the heels of the divisional championships and the top performers will go on to represent the Army at Inter-Services level


WHAT: Army
Individual Squash
Championships

WHEN: January
21 to 23

WHERE:
Winchester
Racquets and
Fitness

**NEED TO
KNOW:** More

than 120 players took to the court for last season's showdown, with a new-look men's draw proving popular. Who will boss the court in 2020?

OFFSHORE IN NUMBERS

RORC RACES
COMPLETED
BY THE TEAM
IN 2019

5

PERSONNEL
COMPETED AT
THE HIGHEST
LEVEL OF
EUROPEAN
OFFSHORE
SAILING LAST
SEASON

70

YACHTS ON
THE START
LINE FOR
THE FASTNET
RACE

390

SERVICE
BOATS
INVOLVED IN
THE BATTLE
FOR THE
CULDROSE
TROPHY

10

SUCCESSFUL
SEASONS FOR
THE SET-UP'S
OUTGOING
X-41 VESSEL

3



OFFSHORE'S NEW CHAPTER

THE Army offshore sailing team is looking forward to an exciting campaign in 2020 as its talented crew takes to the water in a new boat.

A Sun Fast 3600 yacht will form the platform for the squad's entry into the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) Championship, as well as the Round Ireland Race, and those charged with running the Service sport are encouraging personnel of all ranks and experience – Regular and Reserve – to get involved.

Having won the RORC title in 2018, the soldiers failed to hit the same highs last season as a number of mid-pack finishes saw them claim ninth place in the overall IRC class two standings.

Their inshore efforts proved to be equally challenging, with results in the IRC Nationals and Cowes Week falling way below expectations.

However, the sailors prime

focus was the biannual Fastnet Race and they duly delivered – sealing top spot in the Services category and lifting the Culdrose Trophy.

They also finished in the IRC 2 top three.

Speaking afterwards, skipper Maj Phil Caswell (REME) said it was one of the toughest races he had ever competed in, with the crew pushing themselves and the boat to the limit of endurance.

The event proved to be a fitting finale for the set-up's outgoing X-41 yacht, which proved it remained a force to be reckoned with in its last major race.

The new boat, which will be called Fujitsu British Soldier, will make its debut at the RORC Easter Challenge, with the Round Ireland Race taking place in June.

For more information on the opportunities available, and to apply for a place on the team, visit www.sailarmy.co.uk ■



Picture: Jon Elsey



GEARED FOR GRID GAINS

SPORTS CAR RACERS TARGET PODIUM PUSH FOLLOWING HIGH OCTANE YEAR FOR NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT

FOLLOWING a successful track campaign last season, the Army sports car racing team is targeting a move up the field as it returns to action in 2020.

The drivers secured second place in a highly competitive Armed Forces Race Challenge – losing out to the Royal Air Force by just 30 points – and saw three members included in the top-12 standings after four challenging rounds.

But it is the performances of the set-up's emerging stars that offered real hope for the future.

Sgt Ro Barrett (RE) and SSgt Douglas Inglis (RLC) secured an Army one-two in the novice championship and, with the soldiers claiming four further places in the top ten, their bid for success in the coming months looks strong.

They have also blazed a trail by welcoming their first female driver to the fold in the form of Pte Alice Bancroft (RLC).

"These novices will go into the main draw for next season," team director Maj Farard Darver (RLC) told *SoldierSport*.

"We have grown so much and in the race at Snetterton we had 15 cars that were solely from the Army. We have all ranks covered, from Alice racing in a Peugeot 206 through to Brig Dan Reeve in an Aston Martin.

"We have been trying to move people upwards and it was a fantastic year – it is important that we now maintain that rate of growth.

"I think our success stems from a couple of factors. There has been a change in mentality in those who have perhaps shut themselves in a room to play on their PlayStations – people are

now getting back into sport.

"Also, soldiers and cars are a given. But now they know we are here, so instead of spending their money on road cars, they can get into racing relatively cheaply and do it properly."

Further success was witnessed at the season-ending Birkett Rally, where the Army finished fourth in a field of 70 civilian and military teams.

They were also victorious in the event's Class B standings and won the Inter-Services title.

To help its development, the team has purchased its own car – the aforementioned Peugeot 206 – to give those without the financial means to compete a place on the grid.

"I had it for the last two rounds of the season," Bancroft explained. "I've been quite lucky really.

"I joined at the start of the year and did a few race days as part of the service and pit team – I then got offered the car and was so grateful.

"I'm the first female to be involved in any of the Service teams and that shows this is not just a man's sport."

Bancroft finished 21st and 17th in the two races that formed her Donington debut and the soldier then tasted further action at Snetterton.

She added: "I'd never been there before, not even as a spectator, and it was only my second time in the car.

"While it didn't go as well as Donington I enjoyed every minute of it.

"Racing is so different to the track days I have done in the past. It is wheel-to-wheel and you're wary of what other cars are doing as you don't want to ruin their hopes in the



championships.

"This is something I've always wanted to do and not having my own car was preventing me from doing that.

"I felt a bit of pressure coming into the team. There were a lot of eyes on me; racing is hard anyway and having that pressure adds to the difficulty.

"But this experience has taught me a lot. I didn't know much about the mechanical side of things and, while I definitely want to pursue driving, it is important I have that knowledge as well."

Darver (pictured left) added: "That Peugeot is there for anyone wanting to try this.

"But if you are a petrol head and have a car to take to track days, why not come and do some racing with us?

"This is a sport where consistency of lap times is the key, so anyone can take part. It removes the concept of chequebook racing.

"We are competing at tracks like Brands Hatch, Donington and Silverstone – I would not be able to afford to race my car at these venues if it was not for the Army.

"Moving forward we have ambitions to race at Le Mans in 2022, with personnel from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in the pits, the Royal Signals on comms and the Royal Logistic Corps helping in areas such as transportation and food.

"We are using that STEM knowledge and transferring it to sports car racing." ■

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Final Word



I'm looking forward to the travel opportunities. We go to Exercise Askari Storm in Kenya first for dems work and bridge building, then we're on to Cyprus for a construction package before another stint on Askari Storm.

Spr Andrew Miller, RE



We are moving to Brunei to replace 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, and it will be my first time to that country so it should be a good experience – except perhaps dealing with the humidity.

Rfn Aman Thapa, RGR



I will be doing P Company and am really looking forward to gaining my wings. I've heard it's very hard but it's a matter of professional pride for me to pass the test.

Rfn Sudesh Kulung Rai, RGR



Heading out to Estonia with my battery from March until September. Op Cabrit seems to be a pretty interesting mission and it'll be my first experience of this type of deployment.

LBdr Chris Matthews, RHA



From a rugby union perspective, we want to win back the Inter-Services trophy. Career-wise, I'm looking forward to deploying on Exercise Defender Europe, where I will support my unit in the best way possible.

Cpl Chelsey Snead, REME

Playing against the Royal Navy at Twickenham is going to be an amazing experience. We have got so many personnel who are representing the Army in different sports and that match will be a great platform for rugby union and the women's game.

Sgt Beverley Gilbert, RAMC



2020 Vision

We asked Service personnel what their hopes and aspirations are for the year ahead

I want to make full use of every opportunity so that I fulfil my potential. My first goal is to pass the all-arms physical training instructor course this month – I'm feeling confident about it.

Spr Jim Carey, RE



GET BACK IN ACTION FASTER

What is the most effective way to help injured personnel get back to productive and pain-free fitness? Massage and physiotherapy are often time-consuming and expensive. So portable personal treatment is now seen as the viable, affordable alternative.

Level Peaks Associates has teamed up with leading-edge personal treatment specialists Theragun as their exclusive UK military partner.

Theragun is a next-gen massaging tool, ergonomically designed and lightweight, delivering up to sixty pounds of force at up to forty percussions per second. Theraguns are hand-held, packable, rechargeable, and can be used both pre-exercise as part of a warm-up and incorporated into a post-workout recovery programme.

Think of it as an on-demand, hand-held massage therapist, effectively and efficiently helping to relieve pain, enhance athletic performance and accelerate recovery.

The Theragun 2020 range is available now from their exclusive UK partner and importer, Level Peaks Associates. For more information, email: info@levelpeaks.com

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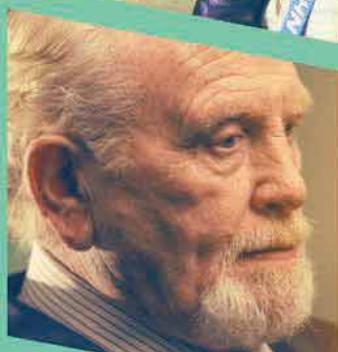
SOPHIE
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JOSS
STONE

JAMES
COSMO

STEPHEN
AND FRY



A MARTHA PINSON FILM

TOMORROW

EVERY DAY IS A GIFT