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MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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

All enquiries: Tel: 01252 787107 / 94222 7107

Fax: 01252 787110 / 94222 7110

Email: news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Acting Editor/Sports Editor

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

Editor

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

Assistant Editor

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

Assistant Editor

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

Art Editor

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

Designer

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

Photographer

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

Photographer

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

Managing Editor

Steven Muncy 01252 787095 (7095)
smuncy@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Business Manager

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

Advertising

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

Subscriptions

01252 787107 (7107)
subs@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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ARMY

Future proofing

NEW equipment always arouses plenty of interest among troops but few are as critical as the Virtus personal protection system that is due to arrive in September (page 34).

There are some striking visual changes, especially to the headgear with its reshaped helmet and optional mandible guard.

But it's what you can't see that is, arguably, more interesting. This kit has been designed from the ground up to allow the soldier to be more agile and comfortable yet better protected than ever before.

Not only that, the developers have ensured the system is able to incorporate new innovations that are still on the drawing board.

Perhaps most importantly of all, though, is the fact they have taken heed of the many vital experiences and lessons learnt by the troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Royal Artillery special observers are among the many personnel who served with distinction in those theatres. They are a rare breed who spend days or even weeks at a time hidden in the undergrowth but we managed to catch up with them during training in the Malaysian jungle (page 22) and were lucky enough to obtain a glimpse into their unique world.

We have also visited the Coldstream Guards in Romania on a joint serial with US, Canadian and local forces (page 29) as well as the newly-formed Royal Lancers during their first exercise (page 42).

The work of the British Army really does seem more varied than ever so if you'd like us to report on the activities of your unit please get in touch using the contact details on this page. ■



Steve Muncy • Managing Editor

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"Those troops epitomised the maroon beret"

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Picture: Graeme Main



Survey sheds light on Service life

■ **LESS** than half of personnel are satisfied with Service life according to statistics revealed in the latest Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.

The figure of 47 per cent remains largely unchanged in this key demographic over the past two years but is below the levels observed prior to that.

Overall satisfaction with salaries has dropped by three per cent since the last study, with the rate now standing at 36 per cent, but the Army is the only Service that recorded no significant reduction in satisfaction with basic pay.

The majority of troops remain proud to serve (77 per cent) and 40 per cent regarded their personal morale as being "high". Among officers the figure was at 45 per cent.

According to the study job security and dental and healthcare provision are top factors that impact on intentions to stay but the effect of Service life on family and personal life is again the main influence for those intending to leave.

Data from the survey will be used to support directives such as the New Employment Model and is seen as a key tool in helping decision-makers shape and improve personnel policies.

For a full breakdown of the results see Defence Internal Brief 2015DIB/13

● Home Truths – page 12

Female forum's launch success

Childcare and flexitime high on the list of vital issues

ONE of the stated objectives of the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, is to maximize the potential of the Force's female contingent.

That goal drew a step closer with the staging of the inaugural Army Servicewomen's Network conference at Tidworth last month.

The senior officer opened proceedings with a speech to around 500 personnel of all ranks that touched upon many of the issues facing today's Servicewomen, such as career progression and achieving a proper work/life balance.

He was followed by speakers from industry including Kathryn Nawrockyi, Director of Opportunity Now, the gender equality campaign for business in the community, and Charlotte Sweeney, a renowned specialist in equality and diversity.

Co-chair of the network, Maj Nikki Worsley (RA), said: "It's essential having CGS involved. If you want things like this to work you need senior leadership buy-in because irrespective of how much buzz there is, unless your leadership is behind you, you're not going to make traction with any of the initiatives.

"So, actually it was really fitting that he was here to talk about so many of the issues that would probably come up in the sidelines and the discussions of today, in terms of flexible working, and how he wants to maximise talent.

"Gender agenda is big outside the Army and I think we're all seeing more of it."

In future the network will collaborate with senior staff in order to provide a voice for Servicewomen in relation to policy and professional development opportunities.

It will also provide advice and mentoring – and it is hoped that the staging of an annual conference that will move around the UK will become a major part of its activities.

"We've established that Servicewomen really want this forum," commented Capt Gemma Caswell-Treen (REME), a member of the network's committee.

"The feedback will determine exactly where we go but everything is pointing towards the conference becoming an annual event.

"Some great themes emerged this year, such as childcare, which we expected to see crop up, and flexitime, which we didn't.

"At the heart of this, though, is the fact that Servicewomen want to have the same opportunity for a full career in the Army as their male colleagues.

"We lose lots of females at the ranks of sergeant, captain or major, mainly due to family or other personal issues.

"With that in mind it's about time women had a proper support group like other minorities or religious groups, because we face specific hurdles that males don't."

Armed with ambition: Servicewomen are being encouraged to raise the issues that matter to them



THIS MONTH IN SPORT ...



"There has been a big push for us to get on tracks like this" – cyclists shine in Redbridge

PAGE 77

IN NUMBERS

11,877 respondents in the survey

73 per cent see their immediate superiors as supportive

62 per cent rated the contribution of Reservists as valuable

1 NORTHERN IRELAND RESERVES EXPAND

THE MoD has announced plans to grow Reserve elements of The Royal Irish Regiment at centres in Northern Ireland.

Up to 100 additional posts are to be created in Ballymena, Newtownabbey and Belfast's Sunnyside Street, with a variety of trades catered for.

"We can offer training along with fulfilling roles as infantrymen, chefs, signallers, drivers, mechanics, musicians and medics," said project officer Capt Rocky Mallon (R Irish).

Open days were held in Ballymena and Newtownabbey last month and a similar event has been planned for Sunnyside Street on July 26.



Picture: Cpl Mark Webster, RLC

2 GERMANY ARTILLERY IN ACTION

GUNNERS from 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery have carried out live firing on Sennelager Training Area in Germany.

Exercise Mansergh Dagger was preparing the formation to return to operating the AS90 after a decade employed on 105mm light guns.

The three-week package prepared the unit's gun and fire support crews for future missions by testing them on tactics and operating procedures as well as working and living in armoured vehicles.

British Army Training Unit Suffield

ROMANIAN TEST

Coldstream Guards join multinational partners on Exercise Carpathian Express – pages 29-31

British Army Training and Support Unit Belize

Sierra Leone

Germany

Gibraltar

Cyprus

British Army Training Unit Kenya

3 KENYA QUEST CONTINUES

MORE than 90 soldiers from 30 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 26 Engineer Regiment are deploying to Kenya to continue the expansion of Laikipia Air Base.

Exercise Northern Quest will see the sappers spend three months putting the finishing touches to the Royal Military Police and finance buildings, as well as starting construction on a community centre and armoury.

The troops are taking over from 39 Engineer Regiment as part of a four-year project to develop the station.



The Falkland Islands

“It is rewarding to see the hard work pay off”

4 LATVIA EASTERN ALLIANCE

SOLDIERS from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles deployed to Latvia to train alongside US, Scandinavian and Baltic troops.

Exercise Sabre Strike gave 230 members of the regiment the chance to rehearse skills that they wouldn't normally use as light role personnel, such as working with tanks, armoured vehicles and aircraft from across Nato.

Lt Subas Gurung said: "Every military has its own way of doing things. It is always hectic in the first few days as we get to know each other, but it is rewarding to see the hard work pay off."



Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC

IN NUMBERS:

46,456

The number of soldiers who have deployed on missions and exercises around the globe so far in 2015.



Afghanistan

Brunei

6 IRAQ

BATTLING THE BOMBS

AROUND 60 soldiers from 101 Engineer Regiment (EOD) are in Erbil, Iraq to deliver counter-IED training to Kurdish troops as part of coalition efforts to tackle Isis.

The UK is taking the lead on a countrywide programme to provide instruction and equipment to help reduce the threat from improvised bombs, which are increasingly being favoured by the enemy as they are forced onto the defensive.

The training also includes a protection of civilians element to combat the sexual violence used as a weapon by Isis fighters.



Pictures: Cpl Lee Goddard



7 NEW ZEALAND

GURKHAS ON TOUR

TROOPS of 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles have completed a three-week defence engagement exercise in New Zealand.

As well as completing numerous school and cadet force visits the soldiers from B Company took part in commemorations marking the 100th anniversary of Gallipoli.

A ten-strong contingent from the unit's Pipes and Drums (pictured) also performed at the New Zealand parliament and at the Westpac Stadium.



IN NUMBERS:

2



Weeks touring for the **Great Britain Armed Forces** rugby league team in **Australia**. Read about the trip on **page 86**.



5 ESTONIA

JOINING THE JET SET

A ROYAL Air Force operation in the Eastern European state of Estonia was made possible thanks to an expert team of sappers.

Troops from 20 Works Group, Royal Engineers (Air Support) were tasked with handling the infrastructure at Amari airfield to ensure it was suitable for UK assets and personnel from the RAF's 121 Expeditionary Air Wing.

WO2 Sam Law (RE), commander of the advance party, said "We had to check the airfield geometry and inspect the operating surfaces which is especially important after the Baltic winter."

The RAF was providing Typhoon jets as part of Nato's Baltic air policing mission.



TIGERS TELL TRAVELLERS' TALE

WE recently charted the exploits of **1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland; 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery** and **1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards** in an attempt to find the best travelled unit in the Army.

This month personnel from **2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment** stake their claim.

Having moved from **Woolwich Barracks** to **Cyprus** the formation has seen troops deploy to **Iraq, Belize, Jordan** and the **Falkland Islands**.

Two soldiers are part of the Ride to Recovery team cycling across **America** and battlefield tours to **Gallipoli** and **Sicily** are also in the pipeline.

Can your unit compete? Email us at news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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"YOU REALLY HAVE TO BE AT THE TOP END OF YOUR SKILL SET" - SURVIVING THE JUNGLE, PAGES 22-26



TIDWORTH AIDS RELIEF EFFORT

SOLDIERS based in Tidworth raised more than £18,200 to help those affected by the earthquake in Nepal in April.

Over a period of just two weeks, military personnel from the garrison's units and civilian staff organised a series of fundraising events, including curry lunches, bag packing at Tesco and a charity concert by the Band of the Royal Artillery.

In addition to the money, 60 boxes of bedding and clothing were collected and will be sent to Nepal.

Garrison Commander Col James Denny said: "It was fantastic to see the whole community pulling together to raise this magnificent sum."



Picture: Sgt Rupert Frie, RLC

Reservists take to the Tower

PERSONNEL from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Welsh enjoyed a break from the norm when they performed ceremonial duties at the Tower of London.

The unit became only the second Reserve formation to take on the role of Tower Guard – a tradition that dates back more than 700 years.

As part of the posting troops formed a sentry at the Jewel House and were responsible for the daily march to Byward Tower to collect the Passing of the Word.

Commanding officer Lt Col Rob Manuel said: "This isn't something a Reservist would normally do but as we're now paired with 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards we came up with the idea and put forward the option of taking on a public duty."

"It's taken a lot of hard work and effort to get up to the standards required by the Household Division and the responsibility is taken very seriously and with real dedication."

The Honourable Artillery Company was the first Reserve unit to take on the role.

FEARLESS

FUNDRAISING



Money raised:
£1,200
For:
Blesma

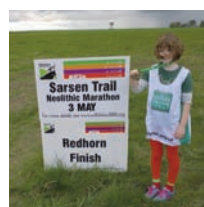
HIGH EARNER

FORMER soldier David Bland organised for himself and a team of ten fundraisers to abseil down the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth. The 80-year-old lost his right eye in a training accident while serving in The Wiltshire Regiment.

Money raised:
£451
For:
Gurkha Welfare Trust

WALKING TALL

NINE-year-old Jenny Allen, daughter of Maj Stu Allen (AGC (ETS)), walked 11 miles of the Sarsen Trail in Wiltshire in under four hours.



Money raised:
£3,000
For:
Gurkha Welfare Trust

CONQUERING BEN NEVIS

A TEAM of climbers from Caen Squadron at 2 Army Training Regiment, Pirbright scaled Ben Nevis seven times in three days – achieving a total height greater than Mount Everest. Donations can still be made at www.justgiving.com/teams/caen

Money raised:
£5,361
For:
Combat Stress



HQ SOLDIERS TAKE TO THE SADDLE

PERSONNEL based at Army Headquarters in Andover rowed and cycled the distance from London to Kathmandu in a four-day challenge.

Using five watt bikes and one rowing machine, more than 200 soldiers took turns to tackle the

4,650 miles before going on to complete a total of 5,683 miles.



"AFTER THE FIRST ROUND THE DOUBTS FELL BY THE WAYSIDE" - BOXERS PACK A PUNCH, PAGE 85



MEDICS PASS THE TEST

■ DOCTORS, nurses and health workers from 11 NHS Trusts demonstrated their skills in an Army environment as part of Exercise Medical Challenge.

The competition, which saw a tented field hospital set up in Newcastle's Nuns Moor Park, attracted more than 200 medical and support staff from organisations across the region.

As part of the challenge they dealt with a variety of casualties including a mine strike scenario and a boat rescue on the River Tyne.

The event was aimed at highlighting the role of the Reserve Forces among NHS staff and university students.

"The exercise was really interesting," said Kelsey Buchanan, leader of a team from the Royal Victoria Infirmary Dental School. "A lot of the students are interested in joining the Reserves. It is the whole package of travelling to different places in the world and putting their skills to the test."

Pictures: Sgt Si Longworth, RLC



MOBILITY MISSION

■ A DISABLED veteran has completed an epic journey from John O'Groats to Land's End on a mobility scooter in a world-beating time.

Moving at a top speed of 8mph, former corporal Andy McIntosh finished the 1,000-mile trip in 16 days and eight hours, more than a week faster than the previous record.

The 42-year-old, who has a vascular condition that has affected his movement, took on the challenge to raise money for military charities that have supported him including

Poppy Scotland, SSAFA, ABF The Soldiers' Charity, Erskine and Soldiers off the Streets.

Despite his efforts, Mr McIntosh is still short of his fundraising target. To boost his cash total text Tosh72 followed by the "£" symbol and the amount you wish to donate to 70070.



A personal view from Catherine Spencer, chief executive at the Army Families Federation...



Picture: Shutterstock

And the survey says

SINCE the general election there have been some changes to the team of ministers at the MoD.

Most significantly for families is the arrival of Mark Lancaster as the new Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans.

I'd like to publicly thank his predecessor Anna Soubry for her valuable work in this area. She fought passionately on our behalf on a number of discreet yet important issues and was outspoken on the need to protect military expenditure.

After an initial meeting with Mr Lancaster it appears we can expect more of the same. As a Reservist he has an intuitive understanding of the difficulties arising from Service life and I was hugely encouraged that from day one he has asked to be involved in the detail so he can really get to grips with his portfolio.

I am confident that Army families will get fair representation from him and that he will work to ensure our community is not disadvantaged.

I am writing this from Bangladesh during a short visit to my husband and ahead of our next posting.

I have been immediately struck by the high regard the country has for its military.

For them there is no need for a covenant to safeguard basic rights. The reverence in which personnel are held is recognised by the government via tangible support and indeed privilege in many areas.

While this model is not entirely appropriate for the UK, it is not surprising the military is still deemed as one of the pre-eminent careers on offer and continues to attract the brightest and best of Bangladeshi society to serve.

If the British Army wishes to attain a similar level of appeal, it will have to start addressing the issues highlighted in the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.

The level of discontent across the board remains uncomfortably high with all ranks consistently articulating they feel undervalued.

As always pay remains high on the list for dissatisfied soldiers and we believe the case for improvement is becoming overwhelming.

Troops are significantly worse off and they are becoming increasingly vocal about it. When you also look at the reasons soldiers are leaving, impact on family remains at the top but is now closely followed by opportunities outside the Army.

As the economic recovery continues and further pressure on the MoD budget is applied, it is the job of our new minister to ensure soldiers and their families are taken into consideration during the search for the bottom line.

Otherwise any savings may become all too easy to realise as our personnel vote with their feet.

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Credit Facility Fee (inc. in monthly payments)	£0.00
Purchase Fee (included in monthly payments)	£0.00
Initial Payment	£301.84
34 Monthly Payments	£301.84
Final Payment	£20,464.00
Total Amount Payable	£36,778.40
Duration of Agreement	36 months
Representative APR%	6.9% APR
Interest Rate (Fixed)	6.72%

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Representative example Range Rover Sport Diesel 3.0 SDV6 (306) HSE Dynamic 5 Door Auto

On the Road Price	£60,476.00
Customer Deposit	£14,700.00
Total Amount of Credit	£45,776.00
Credit Facility Fee (inc. in monthly payments)	£0.00
Purchase Fee (included in monthly payments)	£0.00
Initial Payment	£451.41
34 Monthly Payments	£451.41
Final Payment	£38,495.00
Total Amount Payable	£68,994.35
Duration of Agreement	36 months
Representative APR%	6.9% APR
Interest Rate (Fixed)	6.73%

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*The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation.

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"THIS IS ALL ABOUT GETTING INSTRUCTORS TO START THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX"

- A NEW APPROACH TO TRAINING, PAGES 39-40

AID EFFORT HONOURED

■ A NEW honour to recognise the efforts of soldiers in stemming the spread of Ebola has been announced by the prime minister.

The Ebola medal will be awarded to military and civilian personnel who supported the UK government's response to the crisis in West Africa.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said: "It is right that we acknowledge those brave men and women for their selfless service in the region."



WATERLOO MEMORIAL

■ THE first war memorial in the UK to commemorate the Servicemen who fell at the Battle of Waterloo has been unveiled at the London train station that shares its name.

It marks 200 years since the Duke of Wellington's Allied forces took on the army of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The centrepiece of the monument is a solid bronze replica of the reverse of the Waterloo Campaign Medal, which was the first military award in history to be handed to every soldier present at the battle regardless of rank.

The ceremony was one of a number of events held last month to mark the bicentenary of the offensive.

THE ONLY WAY IS ESSEX

■ A NEW online portal that will act as a one-stop-shop for Service veterans in Essex has been unveiled.

The tool features a variety of practical information in areas including employment, education and training, housing, finance and health and welfare.

Visit www.thevptree.co.uk



FALLEN HONOURED

■ THE Bastion Memorial was unveiled last month bearing the names of all 453 UK personnel who died in Afghanistan.

A congregation of 3,500 people, including Prime Minister David Cameron and Prince Harry, bereaved families, veterans and serving personnel gathered at the National Memorial Arboretum to honour the fallen.

The new structure is based on the Bastion Memorial Wall in Helmand province, which was deconstructed in 2014 following the end of combat operations.

It features several elements from the original structure including brass plaques and the cross made of shell casings.

Picture: SAC Rich Dudley, RAF

Fitters test their mettle

PERSONNEL from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers pitted their wits against one another in a major test of their trade and professional skills.

Exercise Griffin Spanner welcomed more than 100 troops from across the UK and Germany for the event, which was staged at the Swynnerton Training Area in Staffordshire and the Nesscliff Training Area in Shropshire.

Fitter sections were assessed in a variety of stands including battle

preparation, repair and recovery and equipment support in a potential chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear environment.

The team from 3 Royal Horse Artillery's Light Aid Detachment took the top prize for Regular personnel, while 129 Field Company, 104 Battalion, REME were the champion Reserve section.

The drills formed Force Troops Command's annual special-to-arm training confirmation exercise.

IN MOVIES...



"Even capable actors cannot save the plot"



PAGES 68-69



GOOD DRILLS

LUCKY DEVILS AVOID DISASTER

A QUICK-thinking duo from The Parachute Regiment's free fall display team, The Red Devils, narrowly averted disaster after becoming tangled up in mid-air. Cpl Mike French was performing a formation stunt at the Whitehaven Air Show in Cumbria when his canopy wrapped around comrade,

Cpl Wayne Shorthouse. Despite the drama the pair managed to land safely in the harbour waters. "We just focused on the job in hand," a relieved Cpl French said afterwards.



INTERIOR designer Ruth Hammond lent her expertise to a project to renovate the run-down bar at Blandford Camp. Ssgt Keith Evans (R Signals) called for her help as part of his efforts to make the facility more appealing to young trainees. Working on a limited budget they transformed the existing furniture, introduced new colours and added new carpet tiles.



BAR GETS DESIGNER MAKEOVER

"THERE IS TOO MUCH RELIANCE ON GPS DEVICES" - ORIENTEER SPEAKS OUT, PAGES 32-33



Picture: Steve Dock



Britain boosts Nato pledge

THE UK is increasing its contribution to Nato's rapid reaction force in response to Russian "sabre rattling", the Defence Secretary has said.

Speaking on the BBC's *Andrew Marr Show* Michael Fallon stated that an additional battlegroup of 1,000 soldiers would be sent to the formation for a further three years after 2018.

Under previously announced plans 1,000 troops are already slated to deploy next year, followed by 3,000 in 2017, when Britain takes over as lead nation for the high-readiness force.

"It's very important we send Vladimir Putin this message that we are determined in our commitment to the collective defence of Nato," commented the minister.

"He's clearly building up his conventional forces, he's modernising his nuclear weapons.

"So it is sabre rattling and that's why we have to continue to offer Nato more reassurance."

While he refused to confirm whether Britain would maintain the Nato target of spending two per cent of GDP on defence he said the government would do what was necessary to keep the country safe.

"We already have three very strong commitments in our manifesto to go on increasing spending on equipment, to go on replacing the four ballistic submarines, and not to cut the Army further," he added.

● **Romanian Rendezvous –**
pages 29-31

Call to arms:
Packages such as Exercise Carpathian Express will become more commonplace



...An Army teddy bear

LAST month's spine lines clues would have been a piece of cake for *Storage Hunters* fans.

(Brandon and Lori) Bernier, (Jesse) McClure, (Papa) Bear and (James and Dustin) Taylor are all characters in the US show.

This month, courtesy of toy company British Teddies (www.britishteddies.com), we are offering ten readers their own British Army bear worth £29.95.

With a choice of beret colours (green, khaki, red or dark blue), this could make the perfect gift for a small child ahead of an overseas deployment.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these furry friends, tell us what links the clues on the side of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by July 31.

AMERICANS LET DEADLY BUG LOOSE

A US Army base in Utah inadvertently sent live anthrax samples to 51 laboratories around America and abroad, the Pentagon has admitted. The Dugway Proving Ground is one of a number of facilities that for the past decade have distributed supposedly

inactive pathogens to help develop counter-measures to biological weapons. An investigation is underway.



Picture: Shutterstock

A LEARNER driver made the mistake of pulling out in front of a column of Challenger 2 tanks when on the road in the Lippe district of Germany. The 18-year-old saw the front end of her Toyota Yaris crushed by one of the armoured beasts but she was completely unharmed as the driver managed to swerve the vehicle at the last minute. The car sustained more than £8,000 of damage but the tank was left totally unscathed.



Picture: Polizei Lippe

BAD DRILLS

IMAGINE THE PHONE CALL TO THE INSURERS...



“BEING HERE SENDS A MESSAGE THAT NATO IS UNIFIED AND WELL TRAINED”
– MULTINATIONAL LESSONS, PAGES 29-31



APACHE TOPS THE BILL

■ **DISPLAYS** from Apache attack helicopters and the Red Devils parachute team will be among the many highlights at this year's 16 Air Assault Brigade and Colchester Garrison Show.

Staged at Abbey Field on Saturday, July 4 the event also includes the Paras' ten endurance challenge and athletics competitions for local school children.

Collections will be made to support the relief effort in Nepal following the recent earthquakes in the country. For more information visit the show's page on Facebook.



Picture: Graeme Main

Medics really were marvels

Study details major improvements in battlefield survival rates



TEACHERS TAKE SHAPE

■ A GOVERNMENT-funded scheme to train former Armed Forces personnel as primary and secondary school teachers has been expanded by administrators at the University of Brighton.

Under previous eligibility criteria Service leavers could not apply if they had left the Armed Forces more than two years ago.

But as the original contract with the MoD resettlement provider has now ended the university has extended the limit to five years.

Ex-soldiers can apply to join the two-year, employment-based programme that leads to an honours degree with qualified teacher status.

The initiative is delivered through a consortium of universities across the country and includes pathways for those who wish to become specialist subject teachers at secondary schools as well as those who would like to forge a career in primary schools.

Visit www.brighton.ac.uk and search "troops to teachers".

Keep an eye out for a full feature on the scheme in future issues of *Soldier*.

Helping hands: Medical Emergency Response Teams were crucial to the care effort in Afghanistan

IN the January issue of *Soldier* we reported on the huge strides that were made in trauma care during the Op Herrick and Op Telic years.

Now, a new study published by the MoD has revealed exactly how many lives were saved by the advances in medical science during this period.

Casualty statistics were regularly reported throughout the campaigns but a partnership between Royal Navy surgeons and the University of Birmingham has shown how survival rates improved between 2003 and 2012.

During the course of the decade an estimated 265 personnel overcame injuries that would have been fatal at the start of the conflict in Iraq.

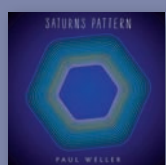
"While both we and our American colleagues always

believed that survival rates had improved, this is the first time it has been demonstrated scientifically," said the study's primary author, Sg Lt Cdr Jowan Penn-Barwell.

"It is important to recognise that this work highlights the efforts of thousands of people from the patrol medics out on the ground to the vast range of surgeons, physicians, nurses, therapists and scientists in both the Defence Medical Services and the NHS, and most importantly the sacrifice of the 2,792 casualties, including the 608 who died in-service during this decade."

The research has been described as the most detailed analysis of combat casualties ever released either side of the Atlantic and has been published in the *Journal of Trauma*.

IN MUSIC...



"This album will guarantee a new following"

★★★★

PAGES 70-71

IN NUMBERS

38

Casualties from 2003 to 2012 survived injuries classified by the NHS as "unsurvivable"

572

Wounded troops in the same period lived despite the NHS classifying their injuries as "life-threatening"

3/4 Of combat casualties were due to explosive weapons – which is consistent with most major wars of the last century

"THIS HAS BEEN A MAJOR GOAL OF OURS FOR A LONG TIME" - COURT STARS CLAIM WIN, PAGE 89



Picture: SSgt Tom Robinson, RLC



DEVICE DEFUSED

■ ARMY bomb disposal experts worked through the night to stabilise and defuse an unexploded Second World War device found near Wembley Stadium.

Troops from 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps and 33 Engineer Regiment were called to the scene and completed the task in time for the recent Football League play-off finals to be staged at the venue.



Picture: Sgt Rupert Fiere, RLC

Service maintains Ebola fight

THE British Army has reaffirmed its commitment to the fight against Ebola following the anniversary of the first case of the deadly virus being reported.

Brig Andrew Hughes, commander of 11th Infantry Brigade, recently returned from Sierra Leone having been in charge of the UK's efforts since January but with more than 250 personnel still committed to the cause the good work is set to continue.

"When I arrived we were seeing in excess of 350 new cases of Ebola each week," the senior officer said.

"But by the end we were having days when there was nothing reported and we were down to single figures for a week.

"That's an enormous achievement. With the falling numbers individual cases are now much easier to locate and we are now tantalisingly close to eradicating the disease."

During their time in Africa Army medics have trained more than 4,000 local healthcare workers on how to protect themselves from Ebola, while personnel from the Royal Engineers turned six patches of jungle into medical facilities in just eight weeks.

Brig Charlie Herbert, the operation's new commander, added: "My priority is to continue the excellent work that has gone before me and to get us to zero cases of Ebola a week."

Turning the tide:
Personnel have played a key role in tackling the Ebola outbreak



SAPPERS' NEW NAME

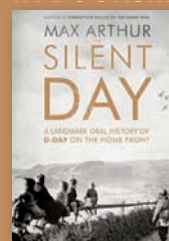
■ SUFFOLK'S sappers have been renamed as 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment in recognition of their current role within the Army's Airborne Forces.

A parade was held at the unit's home at Rock Barracks in Woodbridge last month to officially mark the change.

"Our new name reflects the proud airborne heritage of our three parachute squadrons and is fundamental to consolidating the regiment's identity and ingrain the right ethos in our soldiers," said commanding officer Lt Col John Clark.

The formation was previously known as 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault).

IN BOOKS...



"I found myself smiling one minute and aghast the next"

★★★★★

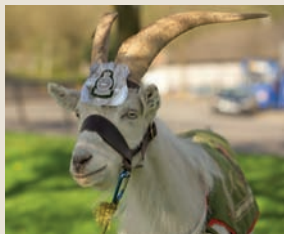
PAGES 72-73

Tributes paid to mascot Taffy

PERSONNEL from The Royal Welsh are mourning the death of regimental goat LCpl Gwillam Jenkins, also known as Taffy.

The mascot was a regular fixture at freedom parades and also appeared at the London Olympics in 2012.

He met the current prime minister, members of the royal family and led the Welsh rugby union team out on to the



pitch at the Millennium Stadium.

"More accustomed to celebrities than anyone else in the regiment,

he lived a very pleasant and high-profile life," said adjutant Capt Ben Phillips.

Over the summer troops will help round up the goat herd on the Great Orme, near

Llandudno, and a new kid will be selected and adopted into the unit.

TICKETS FOR TROOPS

SERVICE personnel are being offered a 40 per cent discount on cinema tickets courtesy of the Rewards for Forces scheme.

The initiative also extends to Reservists, MoD civil servants, veterans and Army widows/widowers and applies to more than 380 cinemas across the country.

For more details and to sign up visit www.rewardsforforces.co.uk



Picture: Shutterstock



“HOPEFULLY I CAN GET A GAME SO I CAN SHOW WHAT I’M MADE OF”

– LEAGUE STAR EYES WORLD CUP, PAGES 78-79



BUTCHER’S BREAKFAST

■ A BUTCHER served up a free “heroes breakfast” in Aldershot for 284 troops and their families based in the town.

Paul Turner, of A Turner and Sons, held the morning meal at the military hockey pitches to welcome home personnel who have recently returned from deployments across the world.

The event also served as a fundraiser for Help for Heroes with donations being made by attendees.

Mr Turner said: “This is a celebration of our Armed Forces; it is a small token to show our appreciation of what they do.”



RETURN TO ASHFORD

■ OFFICERS, soldiers and Service veterans from the Intelligence Corps paraded through the streets of Ashford to exercise their honorary freedom of the borough.

The formation has a long-standing association with the town that dates back to 1966, when Templar Barracks became its depot and spiritual home.

But when the Channel Tunnel rail link was built through the site in 1997 personnel moved from Kent to Chicksands in Bedfordshire.

“Many of us on parade have very fond memories of Ashford,” said Col Jon Murray, Intelligence Corps Colonel.



Check-in time:
Personnel look for clues on-board the grounded Tri-Star

Stansted’s sapper support

“Only a very small number had conducted an aircraft search”

SEARCH specialists from 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) have been adapting to their role in the post-Herrick era during a training package at Stansted Airport.

Exercise Dragon’s Flight saw sappers from 58 Field Squadron conduct an intricate search of a Tri-Star aircraft while working alongside personnel from partnering agencies including 1st Military Working Dog Regiment and Special Branch.

The task was part of an ongoing effort to introduce troops to the varying demands of contingency operations while exposing them to an unfamiliar and testing environment.

“While much of the squadron has operational experience of Afghanistan only a very small number had conducted an aircraft search and skill fade occurs quickly in such specialist

tasks,” said Lt Reece Frankland.

The teams had to work in confined spaces on the airframe, with detailed searches required in each compartment. Sniffer dogs were also on hand to help identify any unexpected objects.

Spr Joshua Martindale said: “Having not long returned from Op Herrick 20 there was a real difference from searching compounds with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force to searching an aircraft but the basic principles remain the same.

“I had to search not only the passenger cabin but the cargo holds and engineering compartments that lie beneath.

“Some of the spaces were very tight and the devices well concealed behind panels which made it difficult for the EOD operator to gain access and carry out an action.”

Gurkha service honoured

THE Queen and other members of the royal family attended a special pageant to mark 200 years of Gurkha service to the British Crown.

The event at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in London also included a minute’s silence to honour the victims of the recent earthquakes in Nepal.

An audience of 1,650 watched on as the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas played music and troops and their family members performed cultural displays and re-enactments.

The spectacle chronicled the service carried out by the soldiers with narrations from Dan Snow and Joanna Lumley.





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THE BIG PICTURE

> OL PEJETA CONSERVANCY, KENYA

WARRIOR BATSMEN

MAASAI warriors swapped their spears for bats to take on Royal Engineers based at British Army Training Unit Kenya in a charity cricket match. The Last Male Standing Cup was held to raise awareness for rhino conservation. Picture: Tony Karumba



JUNGLE BROTHERS

Undercover
operators
master
Malaysian
rainforest
during joint
exercise



Eye to eye: Gnr Rhys Branton (RA) during a joint patrol with Malaysian troops

Report: Becky Clark
Pictures: Graeme Main

INFILTRATING deep into enemy territory and observing the opposition's every move while remaining completely hidden demands a particular kind of resilience, even on a good day.

But add deadly flora and fauna into the mix, temperatures of more than 40 degrees Celsius and humidity pushing 90 per cent and the challenges increase tenfold, as the Army's small cohort of surveillance specialists recently discovered during a joint training package in Malaysia.

Exercise Lateo Helang saw members of 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery, Royal Artillery and its sister Reserve unit, 1 Special Observation Post Squadron, Honourable Artillery Company honing their craft in the inhospitable jungle of Kuala Pilah, east of Kuala Lumpur.

Together, these highly trained personnel provide the Service with a crucial surveillance and target acquisition (STA) patrols capability, a role in which they have proved themselves time and again in recent conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

But with the shift towards contingency operations heralding potential short-notice missions in less familiar parts of the world, the pressure is on to be at home in any terrain – including the tropics.

And as Capt Tim O'Neill (RA) explained, mastering the jungle posed some unique difficulties.

"The first thing we had to overcome were the climatic factors – the intense heat and humidity," commented the troop commander.

"Moving with any weight on is extremely slow and the distances we can cover are much shorter than I expected – about one kilometre per day.

"Navigation is challenging because there's no reliance on visual markers like on open ground. The mapping we're working with is quite old and it's based on the top of the tree canopy, so significant features underneath don't necessarily show up.





"Instead, it's all done on bearings and pacing.

"You count your steps in your head. On the flat I know it takes me seven paces to cover ten metres but in the jungle that could be as high as 13, depending on how steep it is."

Whereas in the UK the man at the front of the patrol would potentially remain in the lead for hours at a time, the painstaking method of advance through the rainforest requires such high levels of concentration that personnel switch roles much more frequently.

"It's very tiring," confessed LBdr Tom Mawle (RA).

"You have to stay switched on all the time so out here you have two scouts.

"The guy in front has to find the easiest route through the jungle until the next nav check. The second man is watching his back and relaying messages.

"It's all done by hand signals – no talking, no radios – in order to remain covert.

"You might only go 20 paces then stop and check.

"If you keep looking down and not ahead you can end up in the situation where there's no way through and you might have to backtrack.

"You just have to trust your compass and your feet."

Although UK personnel are no strangers to operating in tough jungle terrain – as anyone who has been on exercise in Brunei and Belize will attest to – the Malaysian bush proved particularly unwelcoming.

Unlike in more heavily used training areas, the vegetation in the Kuala Pilah region is virtually untouched and anyone venturing inside faces a tangled maze of vines, roots, deadfall and rocks.

"It's virgin territory – we're having to fight our way through an environment that British soldiers haven't been to since the early 50s," said jungle warfare instructor SSgt Christopher O'Connor (RA).

"Brunei has been used by the military for so long it's almost like being back in Brecon – the paths are clear and everyone knows where everything is.

"But out here the forest is pristine. It's also hotter and more humid so it's very uncomfortable."

Fortunately for the gunners, personnel from the Malaysian Army were keen to share their local knowledge of the terrain.

Travelling light and perfectly at ease under the canopy, the country's Pathfinder Company carry minimum rations and water, relying instead on what they can find to help sustain them.

According to LBdr Jamie Pratt (RA) their expertise had won the unanimous respect of the UK Servicemen.

Forest firefight:

The British gunners used the Malaysians' M4 carbine, a lightweight weapon ideally suited to jungle warfare



“All you can do is trust your compass and your feet”

There are two soldiers hiding in the undergrowth – can you spot them?



HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

The motto of the special observers is “Lateo”, meaning “we remain hidden”. Here, 4/73 Battery personnel reveal just how difficult that task is...

STA PATROLS FACT FILE:

» The capability is delivered jointly by Regular formation 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery, RA and Reservists from 1 Special Observation Post Squadron, HAC

» The high-risk role focuses on the **find**, **understand** and **finish** functions – locating and establishing static covert surveillance on the enemy, gathering intelligence for the chain of command and, if required, calling in joint fires to take out the position

» The special observers form part of 1st Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Brigade, which was set up in September 2014

» Personnel operate in teams of **six**, which must be able to operate alone and at range for up to seven days

» To become fully qualified members undergo a total of **47 weeks** training, including a **13-week** selection course which has a pass rate of less than **15 per cent**

● 4/73 Battery and 1 Squadron HAC are recruiting for the next STA patrols course starting on August 30. If you think you've got what it takes and want to know more read 2015DIN07-030



“This is probably one of the hardest environments to do any form of soldiering in but you really have to be at the top end of your skill set when you're trying to establish the covert observation posts.

There's a whole load of other considerations, such as the heat, insects and animal life.

Plus, while we train in counter-surveillance, as aliens in the environment there are signs that we leave behind that we would miss but which stand out quite strongly for people who know the terrain so it's not as easy to hide.”

SSgt Christopher O'Connor



“Remaining covert on a macro level – so, moving into the general area undetected – is relatively easy in this environment.

But staying hidden up close within 300 metres of the enemy will be very difficult. The jungle lends itself to concealment but our inability to move through it quietly is the biggest risk.”

Capt Tim O'Neill



“Normally you would plan missions based on the reach of the optics you're using but because of the density of vegetation in the jungle that is not possible.

The patrols need to be unusually close to the enemy target. Another challenge to maintaining a covert signature is that we have to operate in the daytime in the rainforest.

We would usually only move at night but here that's not possible because of the noise you create and the hazard to the soldier.”

Maj Jamie Linsdell

“We’ll be walking around soaked in sweat drinking six litres of water a day, eating our 24-hour ration packs and still feeling hungry,” said the 31-year-old.

“They don’t seem to drink much, hardly sweat and just breeze through the undergrowth pushing aside things that we get snagged on all the time.

“They know exactly what to look for and say the jungle is like a free supermarket – they pick things up to eat and we don’t even know it’s there.

“There are some really dangerous caterpillars and we’ll walk past and not notice, even if it’s right next to our heads, but they’ll say ‘watch out’.”

Part of the exercise’s introductory phase included a survival class taught by members of 8th Ranger Regiment, the Malaysian Army’s jungle specialists.

“They showed us how to make a fire and build shelters without any military kit, as well as how to trap animals using materials from the forest,” continued LBdr Pratt.

“We also learnt about what herbs and plants you can live off, such as a thin type of tree that you cut and the water just comes out ready to drink or aloe vera for stings and a fruit that produces a sappy glue that you can use to heal cuts.”

Having rehearsed joint patrols and armed with a better understanding of the environment, the troops embarked on a gruelling seven-day final exercise that included an infiltration deep into the dense bush and static covert surveillance tasks on a specially constructed “enemy” camp.

With personnel at high readiness to deploy on missions around the world, battery commander, Maj Jamie Linsdell (RA), said such demanding serials were a vital part of training.

“We should be able to operate in any climate and any environment so I’ve been looking for opportunities to test the patrols in various conditions and the jungle adds a great deal of complexity,” he commented.

“It has to be arduous and everything is geared up towards operating in small, isolated teams and, above all, limiting the risk of troops being compromised.”

Reflecting on the importance of the role, he continued: “The ability to pick up on atmospherics in the target area and to offer a first line of analysis to what they see gives a commander more options, while having a human being at the end of a radio means they can react like a UAV cannot.

“It offers a different dimension and complements other forms of ISTAR.

“It’s a very niche capability but having a man in the loop on the ground out at range has demonstrated its value time and again.”

Whether that ground is urban, desert or jungle, the Army can be sure that the dedicated few who ply this trade are at the top of their game. ■



Far Eastern allies

Historic links ease integration



Familiar ground: The British Army’s jungle warfare tactics date back to the Malayan Emergency

● **EXERCISE** Lateo Helang was the first bilateral training package of its kind between British and Malaysian forces since the 1970s, and despite hailing from opposite sides of the globe, the troops taking part quickly found they had much in common.

Maj Jon Chorley, Officer Commanding 1 Special Observation Post Squadron, HAC said the similarities in tactics had their origins in the Malayan Emergency of 1948-60.

“Our contact drills and jungle standard operating procedures were first developed out here,” he explained.

“When the doctrine for STA patrols was first written in the 1970s they looked at where else small, isolated teams had done long range missions and that place was the rainforest.

“The Malaysians’ jungle training school was also originally British so

their methods have come from the same ancestor. We share similar DNA.”

As assistant head of the MoD’s International Policy and Plans branch in his civilian role, Maj Chorley oversees the department’s interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

Having helped set the package up he was pleased that it had proved mutually beneficial.

“The whole idea of the exercise is for both sides to learn from each other and it has turned out to be a natural fit,” he added.

Although part of the challenge of any international exercise is the language barrier, the HAC had an ace up their collective sleeve in the form of Malaysian national Sgt Izzy Zakaria.

The Reservist lived in the UK for many years before joining up in 2003.

Explaining how he had been putting his fluency in both languages to good use the 35-year-old said: “I’ve predominantly been trying to interpret some of our doctrine into basic terms for the fighting soldier on the ground.

“There’s a lot of commonality. The Malaysians may have tweaked their methods here and there, depending on their environment, but largely our tactics are the same.”

It may be decades since the two nations worked together this closely but with historic links rekindled, the Malaysian jungle could play host to more British troops before too long. ■

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ALSO AVAILABLE IN MOST SHOPS AND PRI'S IN CAMPS

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

AFTER building a strong reputation as vehicle-mounted operators in Afghanistan the Coldstream Guards have returned their focus to "fighting light and at night".

In Kabul the battalion's guardsmen became accustomed to patrolling in Foxhound trucks but their task now is to work quickly and on foot so they can reach the places their wheeled and tracked assets can't.

The Windsor-based troops recently deployed en masse to the wilds of Romania to put their light role soldiering skills to the test as part of a Nato training mission involving personnel from the host nation, the USA and Canada.

Operating with not much more than their webbing and weapons the aim of Exercise Carpathian Express was to test the allies' ability to soldier together while learning from each other in the process.

Capt Doug Evans (Cldm Gds) said: "There are always complexities in working with other countries due to people having different ways of doing things but that's the beauty of these exercises; it means we can learn about each other before a live operation happens.

"This is the first time we have done proper tabbing for a while and the boys certainly felt it, which makes getting onto different terrain across Europe worthwhile."

The three-week deployment to a rugged proving ground covered in dense woodland and populated by bears and wolves also served as a definite departure from the style of training needed for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"It was the first time for a long while that we moved into an empty field and built a working base from nothing in a couple of days," explained Capt Evans. »



Romanian RENDEZVOUS

Multinational troops learn from each other on the exercise ground



‘This is the first time we have done proper tabbing for a while’

» “It’s important to have the ability to move everything we need rather than just fly into somewhere like Camp Bastion in Afghanistan.

“It prepares us to be ready to go anywhere in the world and not rely on large forward operating bases.”

Out on the vast rolling ground a pair of US Blackhawk helicopters lifted 25 British soldiers into position in preparation for an attack on a hidden mock enemy.

Sweating in the heat the troops advanced at speed over grassland and through thick wooded areas before being faced by a wall of sound offered up by an

AK47-laden opposition.

Resting on the brow of a hill before moving into the undergrowth, Gdsm Kebba Senghore, commented: “I’ve learnt a lot about how to work with the US and Canadian armies and it was great to get lifted by Blackhawks – it’s the first time I’ve done that.

“You never know what might happen in the future so this is a good opportunity for us to work together in different environments and with different cultures.”

The aim for the two attacking sections was to return as much fire as possible as soon as the first crack of an enemy rifle could be heard.

At the same time as destroying the opposition the guardsmen needed to move forward methodically over the undulating landscape while evacuating any casualties and reorganising troops according to the changing threats.

Joint effort: Troops from 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards operate with US, Canadian and local forces in the expanses of Romania

“The purpose of training out here is to work with other nations and to get to grips with a climate that alternates from being boiling hot to freezing cold very quickly,” said Gdsm Dean Barrass (pictured below left).

“It was also my first chance to use the N-Law anti-tank weapon, which I used to take out an armoured vehicle from the top of the tree line – I was asked to do it and I was happy to give it a go.”

In a training scenario that saw 1,200 multinational personnel – including 180 from the Coldstream Guards – operating side-by-side, the overarching purpose was for the participating armies to understand the methods of the different forces.

“The Romanians can learn from the way we operate light and at night and we can learn useful lessons from their mechanised side and how to use



the terrain to our advantage," said commanding officer Lt Col Toby Till.

Giving a Romanian perspective, 1st Lt Marius Cutchan (pictured right), from the nation's 81st Mechanised Brigade, said: "This is the first time I have worked with the British and I have been impressed.

"They are very aggressive and everyone is very disciplined.

"The Romanian Army makes a lot of dismounted patrols and we also pride ourselves on our physical condition so they are the aspects that other nations might take something from."

Aside from the mutual benefits of the exercise there was an intentional political dimension, with Nato looking to show support to Romania at a time when tensions in this region are higher than in recent years.

Explaining this aspect of the joint package, Lt Col Till said: "Being here

TRAINING IN NUMBERS

180

British troops deployed to Romania

1,200

Multinational personnel on Exercise Carpathian Express

sends a clear message – it tells the east of Europe that Nato is unified and well trained."

1st Lt Cutchan added: "These are insecure days in Romania and it is good to see that we are not alone.

"It is vital that partner countries can work together and exercises like this allow us to take a good look at each other's tactics.

"The more we train together the more likely it is that we could operate as a strong team if it was a requirement."

The British guardsmen have now returned to the UK armed with ideas gained from their international comrades and with the knowledge that Europe now feels safer with their support. ■





What we
do directly
translates to
operations



NEED FOR SPEED

(...AND GOOD NAVIGATION)

Orienteering teaches some vital military lessons



Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

A SOLDIER who can navigate, make decisions under pressure, work within a team and act at speed would be deemed as a strong asset to any unit. And for that reason more and more Army personnel are ignoring the notion that orienteering is unfashionable and taking it up as a means to improving their range of military skills. Bearing in mind that some still view the tough outdoor pursuit as a niche preserve of the more senior members of society, *Soldier* decided to find out what the discipline really has to offer.

An initial observation was that the field of more than 180 competitors challenging for the Army Inter-Unit Championships included a wide spectrum of ranks, ranging from private soldiers to lieutenant colonels.

Explaining how the pursuit can cater for all levels, Maj Steve Collinson (RAPTC), part of the event's organising team, said: "If the Service's best cross-country runner was out on the course they would lose against someone with better navigation skills."

"Orienteering levels the playing field because military know-how needs to be paired with physical fitness."

"Young fit novices often get frustrated when they finish behind runners who are older and slower but who have excellent technical ability."

The aim of the game is for individuals to get round the course as fast as possible while punching their personal electronic cards into strategically placed control stations along the route.

And it seemed that the event at Sutton Park in the West Midlands was a perfect example of how expert map reading rather than pure physical fitness usually wins the day.

"I had a couple of nightmares when I was just two metres from the control station but couldn't find it," explained Capt Richard Fergus (71 Engr Regt).

"One thing orienteering teaches you is not to rush into something before knowing what you are doing."

Spr Ben Drayton (3 RSME) added: "I think it's more of a military discipline than a sport due to the map reading and also because you're running over rough ground rather than on a track."

"It's not just going for a run – you are navigating under pressure."

The Service classifies the activity as part of individual training and on the evidence it is clear why. It boosts cardiovascular fitness and stamina; increases self-confidence and self-awareness; improves the ability to make rapid decisions while under physical duress; teaches superior map-reading skills; and develops a sense of team cohesion.

Maj Bernie Fowler (AAC), secretary of the British Army Orienteering Club (BAOC), said: "It is very much a soldiering skill and we want young troops to get out and improve their abilities in map reading, managing pressure and working with a team."

"We are in a space that overlaps fitness and military training – confidence and self-belief makes good orienteers."

The competition was open to all units and all levels, with four different courses of varying difficulty to choose from, and had the aim of removing any barriers to novices while attracting as many entrants as possible.

Armed with an ecard, map and compass personnel set off at a time of their choosing within the designated two-and-a-half-hour window and their results were downloaded once they arrived at the finish line.

On some parts of the proving area confused soldiers were found slowly pacing the ground searching for a landmark before bursting into action when the desired location was found on the map.

Launching themselves into the thicket and through the trees the required touches were made on elusive control points.

Elsewhere the seasoned competitors seemed not to break stride as they meandered from start to finish in an efficient manner.

"Orienteering helps you become a good soldier," was the simple summation of the activity by Lt Col Chris Huthwaite (RA), the man in charge of the BOAC.

The officer added: "The maps we use are very different to what troops are usually exposed to so it's really good training for working with some unusual navigation materials."

"The whole idea is to give personnel the confidence to navigate while under stress."

Orienteers with the courage of their conviction sprinted off in the hunt for the next location – if correct they gained time on their opponents but if wrong they simply added distance to their journey.

While map reading can be taught in a classroom and a squad run is easily organised, orienteering appears to offer a more enjoyable environment to cover the same areas with a competitive element.

SSgt Turtle Fowler (3 RSME) said: "As a soldier physical endurance and navigation skills should be priorities so this is a good way to practise."

"It also teaches you to reset your brain when you're flustered or frustrated, so that you can carry on as if a mistake didn't happen, which is vital in the military."

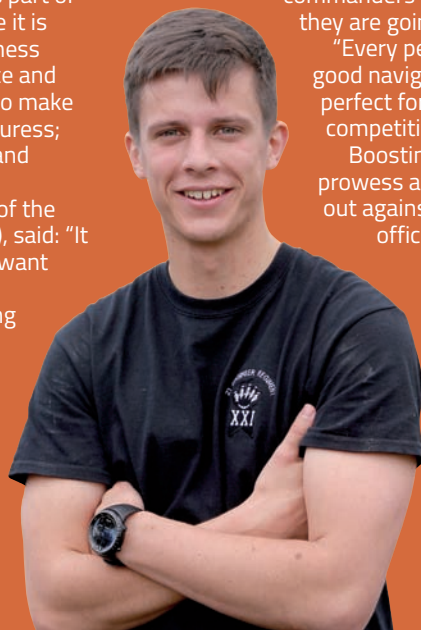
"Even though we are running around in the sunshine what we are doing translates directly to operations."

Lt Alastair Purcell (pictured left, 21 Engr Regt), added: "I think there is too much reliance on section commanders and GPS devices to know where they are going."

"Every person in the Army should have good navigation skills so orienteering is perfect for improving in that area in a competitive environment."

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“The new kit felt lighter and gave me a lot more movement”



THIS TIME IT'S PERSONAL

The Army's new body armour system is about more than just protection

Report: Steve Muncey
Pictures: Steve Dock

INFANTRY personnel have been required to carry more and more equipment into battle in recent years – on Op Herrick average loads reached around 56 kilograms.

However, burden is not just about weight because comfort and flexibility are also important factors.

Even if a load can be reduced, if it is carried in an uncomfortable and rigid manner it will not help the agility of the soldier and, ultimately, could compromise the Army's ability to gain superiority on the battlefield.

The Virtus system, the result of a three-year project overseen by the Combat Capability Directorate in Army Headquarters and delivered by Defence Equipment and Support, has been designed to address the shortcomings of the Service's existing body protection and load carriage solutions which are, primarily, weight and bulkiness.

Virtus employs new materials that provide at least as much protection as the existing Osprey system but are lighter, move with the body more easily and produce a slimmer profile.

The amount of protection employed can also be scaled up or down to match the type of threat by adding or removing soft armour pads and hard ballistic plates.

"Commanders can select a level of armour using a combination that they think is sufficient for the situation," explained Lt Col Rob O'Connor (Yorks), commanding officer of the Infantry Trials and Development Unit.

"This allows them to scale back the amount of protection in favour of agility if they want."

Crucially, Virtus is 4.7 kilograms lighter than Osprey and will become lighter still once new armour plates in development are introduced, but for now the existing items remain.

The system also employs a new quick-release mechanism – a pin positioned on the chest that when pulled releases the entire body kit – to aid safe extraction from hazardous situations such as burning vehicles or water.

This replaces the numerous Velcro straps that soldiers currently have to rip open to release their body armour.

A new, lighter helmet will provide increased blunt impact protection, face and mandible guards for certain roles and a shape that is designed to work with the armour and daysack so weapons can be comfortably used even in a prone position.

The headgear also features a permanent universal mount for the night vision scope and a scalable counterweight that is attached to the helmet's rear when the system is in place to ease strain on the wearer's neck.

Arguably, the most radical innovation is an integral spine, the so-called dynamic weight distribution (DWD) system.

This is a world first and likely to be copied by other armies around the globe.

The device is linked to the user's waist belt and helps spread the load of the body armour, a Bergen or daysack across the back, shoulders and hips.

The wearer is able to adjust the weight bias to his or her preference with one hand via a small controller in the small of the back.

So on long marches, for instance, troops can opt for the most efficient set-up where most of the burden is towards the hips and away from the shoulders, increasing comfort and stamina.

"The new kit felt much lighter and gave me a lot more movement," commented one of the troops who trialled the gear, Pte David Thomas (1 Mercian).

"The DWD system is definitely effective, it supported my natural spine alignment and you can really notice the transfer of weight from the shoulders to your hips when carrying a heavy load on long tabs.

"The helmet is also easy to adjust and it feels a lot more secure on the head."

Pte Ratu Lum (1 Mercian) added: "All the kit felt comfortable to carry.

"This was mainly due to the DWD but also the vest was smaller than the old version and that made me more manoeuvrable."

Virtus will be developed and updated over the next few years with lighter components to increase the mobility and agility of the wearer to an even greater degree.

Also in the pipeline is the incorporation of a central power supply and data system that will reduce the battery burden and allow the introduction of new digital situational awareness tools.

All these features are the result of extensive consultations with personnel from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, the Infantry Battle School, Support Weapons School, Armoured Combat Service Support, Joint Air Despatch Trials and Evaluation Unit and Institute of Naval Medicine as well as the Defence Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Centre.

The Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery, The Yorkshire Regiment, The Rifles, The Parachute Regiment, The Mercian Regiment and Royal Marines also vigorously tested the new system and provided input on its design.

With lots of feedback and experiences from troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan taken into account, this huge collaborative effort should ensure that British Army personnel go into future conflicts better equipped than ever before. ■



VIRTUS in detail >>
pages 36 and 38

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■ The Scalable Tactical Vest (STV) can be used for load carriage without any armour; as a fragmentation vest with soft armour padding consisting of a composite granular material but no hard plates; as a plate carrier with no soft armour; or as a full body armour system with soft and hard armour. It is compatible with both Osprey and Enhanced Combat Body Armour. Any combination of front, rear or side plates can be employed.

■ The STV comes in seven different sizes that allow for a much more tailored fit. Chest size and torso length instead of height are now used for measuring. Modified lower profile soft armour further reduces the bulk when compared with Osprey, allowing for more agility.

■ The quick-release pin allows the STV to be removed in a couple of seconds with one pull. This applies when it is used in any of its configurations.

■ A lightweight webbing system is designed to be worn under and integrated with the body armour.

■ Both the daysack and Bergen are fully integrated with the rest of the torso sub-system. This ensures that they are carried close to the body preventing excessive movement of the load but without pushing the rear ballistic plate into the body. Both can be used in conjunction with the dynamic weight distribution system.

■ Pouches are now made from one piece of fabric and fold flat when empty, minimising the soldier's profile and the possibility of snagging.

Vest's quick release pin

Protection levels can be altered

Side protection with flap only, soft padding added, and with soft armour plus ballistic plate

TORSO





Dynamic weight distribution system

■ The dynamic weight distribution system contains a hard spine that takes the load and is linked to a hip belt. This allows the soldier to transfer the weight of his load from the shoulders to the hips or the other way via an adjuster positioned in the small of the back.

It is essential that both the troops and equipment are sized correctly otherwise the DWD will not be as effective as it should be. It is estimated that personnel will need a day's worth of training and familiarisation with the kit.

■ The Virtus helmet has a fixed shroud for the mounting of night vision goggles and a counterweight for neck comfort.



■ Its fit can be easily adjusted in the same way as modern cycling and climbing helmets.

■ The sculpted rear (see above) prevents interference with body armour or daysack when adopting a prone fire position.

■ It provides more protection to the side of the head and is 350g lighter than the Mk7 it succeeds.



■ The helmet can be fitted with both mandible guard and visor, or either, which provide face protection for crews in open vehicles such as Jackal or WMIK.

HELMET



Training takes off with new facilities

CLASS ACT

Report: Steve Muncey
Pictures: Graeme Main

WITH the Army's future plans hinging on recruiting 30,000 Reservists, moving large numbers of volunteers through the training phase quickly enough to prevent disenchantment setting in is a challenge that has to be taken seriously. That's where the new Army Training Regiment at Grantham comes in. Its sole purpose is to turn civilians into accomplished soldiers as quickly and effectively as possible.

Helping to achieve its goal is an impressive suite of facilities, including a firing range, assault course, dismounted close combat trainer, 20 classrooms, lecture theatre, military vehicle driving areas, a command and control trainer and a huge gym that has become a sporting centre of excellence, regularly used by the Army basketball, badminton and cycling teams.

"This is a brilliant location for the function," said the unit's commanding officer, Lt Col Guy Stone (WG).

"We can accommodate more than 1,200 people at any one time and the travel connections are great; we're near the A1 road and the train station is only a mile away so access is straightforward."

The formation is also the Service's first all arms Regular/Reserve regiment with a mixture of instructors from both categories teaching the newcomers.

"It's good for the recruits to see Regular instructors at work and aspirational for them to see Reservists in that role too," said Cpl Sean Rodgers (RLC), one of the regiment's Regular staff members.

"We also benefit from working with Reserve instructors because they have their own views on how things should be done, often through lessons learned in the civilian world, so we can swap ideas."

The new regiment is able to conduct specialist phase three tuition such as skill-at-arms courses, physical training and first aid but its bread and butter work is conducting phase one courses over a consolidated seven-day period or four weekends as an alternative, plus a block period of 16 days tuition to complete the last segment of that initial training stage.





» "We can cater for anybody here, all arms, all cap badges, the lot; so the work is fascinating and rewarding for the instructors," commented Lt Col Stone.

"They might have a labourer and a solicitor in their group – and that presents the sort of professional challenges their counterparts teaching Regular recruits rarely face."

Grantham now has the capacity to deliver up to 2,000 trained Reservists a year and the stream of high level visitors, including the Minister for Reserves, Julian Brazier, and Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Sir Nick Houghton, demonstrates just how critical this site is to the Service.

"Our aim is to turn this facility into the Reserve centre for training in the same way that Harrogate has become the hub for junior leaders," added the commanding officer.

Technology paves the way

THE recruits being put through their paces at Grantham and other training units around the country are all benefiting from the pioneering work of the Army Recruiting and Training Division's Staff Leadership School (ASLS) in Pirbright.

Through its renowned Defence Train the Trainer (DTTT) course, which phase one and two training instructors are required to complete, the organisation has changed the way personnel are taught and treated.

Since the school opened in 2007

it has been placing an increasing emphasis on the value of nurturing and mentoring new recruits to help them achieve their full potential – and this has opened the door to some innovative teaching techniques.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the latest addition to the facility's curriculum that focuses on technology in the classroom.

At most educational establishments the sight of a pupil with a smartphone in hand would send the teacher into an apoplectic fit, but the individuals on the DTTT course are now being encouraged to consider how they and their pupils can use digital devices together to enhance learning.

Soldier was invited to one session where 30 military instructors had been split into six groups and were pitching new ideas to each other in a *Dragon's Den*-style scenario.

Their concepts ranged from feasible-sounding wall-mounted interactive boards linked to smartphones or tablets – so questions could be posted by pupils during lectures – to remotely-controlled robots for demonstrating basic drills.

Were they all realistic ideas? Perhaps not, but as the ASLS's Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Steven Henry (RLC), explained:

"This is all about getting the instructors to start thinking outside the box.

"We want them to change their thought processes and consider what is the most effective way of achieving the optimum

Above and below left: Phase one instructors are being taught the value of mentoring. Bottom: Exploring the use of smartphones in the classroom at ASLS

This is all about getting the instructors to start thinking outside the box

WO1 (RSM) Steven Henry



result for their recruits."

The course programme certainly benefited Cpl Liam Derham (RLC), a member of 1 Army Training Regiment who currently oversees phase one trainees at Pirbright.

"It was full of surprises and one thing that struck me was learning to deal with recruits who have genuine learning difficulties, such as dyslexia; it changed my mindset to think more laterally when it comes to problem-solving," he said.

"For instance, I had one guy who just couldn't get the firearm safety precaution drill right and was facing discharge so I sat down with him and we devised a numbering system that he responded well to. He passed his weapons handling test first time.

"Before I took the DTTT course I wouldn't have known what to do with him and he would almost certainly have failed and been lost to the Army."

For the junior NCO, the process proved life-changing.

"The fact that this initiative enhances your Service career and provides civilian-

recognised qualifications was already a big plus but learning to turn around potentially failing soldiers really fired me up," he added.

"I'm now hoping to complete the troops-to-teachers scheme when

I leave the Army – I've realised I love doing this and it's something I want to continue with later on in life." ■



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BEST OF BOTH

Lancers focus on high-readiness role following historic merger

Report: Becky Clark
Pictures: Steve Dock

“WE are about the future not the past.”

That was the unequivocal message from the man in charge of the Army's newest cavalry regiment, The Royal Lancers, during its first official training package.

Just five weeks earlier Lt Col Marcus Mudd had led his men on parade in Richmond to mark the amalgamation of their previous units, The 9/12th Royal Lancers and The Queen's Royal Lancers.

But with a stint on high-readiness looming, there was little time to mourn the loss of two historic formations.

On June 1 the new regiment took on the role of lead cavalry battlegroup (LCBG) and in order to ensure they were up to the task its squadrons immediately began working on collective drills – first stop, Castlemartin ranges.

Speaking during the month-long programme of live firing, Lt Col Mudd told *Soldier*: “You cannot take on a readiness role until your crews have operated and fought alongside each other.

“I've been extremely fortunate that the soldiers have been very mature and forward leaning in their approach and what I see now is a very proud regiment that is stepping forward as one.

“Because both units were lancers they weren't so different – they had a similar ethos and our troops came from similar recruiting areas.

“As a result the merger has been pretty seamless.”

A major focus of the package, known as Exercise Waterloo Lancer, was on certifying that the regiment's CVR(T) operators were fit for action.

Drivers, gunners and vehicle commanders faced a series of increasingly complex shoots before being graded as part of their annual crew test and, despite only recently having begun working together, the 93 teams being assessed achieved a pass rate of 100 per cent.

Former QRL soldier, Tpr Matthew Dunn, said the training was exactly what was needed to build unit cohesion.

“None of us knew each other but we did a lot of team building exercises to become acquainted and now coming on this exercise we're all gelling really well,” explained the 22-year-old.

“It means we can see one another's strengths as well as any weaknesses.

“I'm a driver and I'm finding that I've been given more responsibility because when I was in the QRL I was one of the newest members but now I'm working with a few lads who have just joined.

“I've been bumped up to the role of senior trooper, so I'm showing them tips and tricks.”

While the lancers are the first to act as LCBG – a new structure under Army 2020 – for the ex-QRL troops, the task is familiar territory.

The regiment spent last summer testing the concept on the plains of Canada, among them Tpr James Lowe, who was just ten days out of phase two training when he deployed to Batus.

“Prairie Storm 2 was the trial for it,” he said.

“It was a steep learning curve but we smashed it and proved that it could be done, so going into the role straight after the amalgamation wasn't a problem.

“It's been pretty smooth – we're Royal Lancers now and we're doing the soldiering job that we joined to do.”

And while the LCBG construct is less familiar to the former 9/12L personnel, as some of the last troops to deploy to Afghanistan they brought nine months of recent operational experience to the table.

“Having the combined knowledge of the guys who were on Herrick 19 and the ones who helped develop the armoured cavalry role in Batus is a really good place to be in,” said Lt Alex Humphreys, a troop leader in D Squadron.

“The 9/12L have slotted in seamlessly. In Afghanistan they were on the likes of Jackal or Husky but Royal Armoured Corps soldiers will adapt to whatever platform they're on.

“As long as they understand how to work as a crew they can switch between vehicles with just a bit of extra training and the CVR(T) was everyone's core role before we deployed on Op Herrick.”

While the LCBG is a departure from the lancers' previous work in formation reconnaissance, Lt Humphreys said the new challenge was something that the troops were eager to take on.



Forward as one: Some 300 soldiers deployed to Castlemartin ranges for Exercise Waterloo Lancer



It was a steep learning curve but we smashed it



“We’re particularly proud to be the first formed armoured cavalry regiment to go forward and do the job,” he added.

“It means we’re now at ten days notice to move with all our kit and equipment ready to go and that’s a pretty big thing for us.

“In the past you’d see squadrons detached working for different battlegroups in various roles but now it’s our name that goes to it – The Royal Lancers battlegroup – so it’s not just an important job, it’s important for our identity as well.”

Having been informed in 2012 that the merger would take place as part of Service restructuring, planners faced the sizeable challenge of integrating the two formations fairly, as well as moving the 9/12L back to Catterick after 15 years in Germany.

Sgt Michael Burton, a troop sergeant in B Squadron headquarters, explained how the command structure of the new unit had been made as impartial as possible.

“The squadrons are pretty much 50-50 from both cap badges,” he said.

“You might have an officer commanding who was 9/12L and a QRL second-in-command or vice versa, and so on down the ranks.

“It’s been quite painless and smooth really – like one big happy family because we’re cut from the same cloth.”

Even the potentially thorny issue of the regiment’s new emblem, which combines elements of both previous insignias and the QRL motto “death or glory”, met largely with approval.

“Our cap badge as the 9/12L was the crossed lances and the Welsh plume in cloth,” said Cpl Kyle Hastilow.

“Now we have the lances but with the skull and cross bones of the QRL so it has been quite fair.

“I’m happy with what they came up with and the lads are the same.

“They’ve tried to take the best of both to make a strong brand that will be recognisable in the Royal Armoured Corps and wider Army.”

With a new identity, a new role and exercises on Salisbury Plain and in Germany in the coming months it seems The Royal Lancers have much to look forward to, despite having seen a chapter of their past close.

Maj Will Richmond, Officer Commanding B Squadron, was sanguine: “Change, if done in the right way, is almost always a good thing because it allows you to grow and adapt,” he commented.

“Of course it is sad to see old units taken out of the line but I know already, one month in, that this is going to be the best armoured cavalry regiment in the Army because it has such good people and such fine spirit.” ■



LANCER LIFE

Personnel reflect on joint future

The merger hasn't changed who we are. The two regiments have proved their pedigree time and again and the fact that we've merged means the best of both have come together and it makes us a very capable organisation.

The amalgamation parade was the proudest day that I have spent in Her Majesty's Forces.

To stand in front of a new formation as the commanding officer and for the Queen to bestow upon us the honour of being our new Colonel-in-Chief was a very poignant moment. **Lt Col Marcus Mudd**



There was a bit of a dark cloud and people thought there would be some animosity but everyone has bonded well and it has gone very smoothly.

As the 9/12L, we were over in Germany so coming back to Catterick has been good for the lads in terms of getting to go home more often.

We all understand that we've been through a massive transformation but they've taken two regiments and made it into one better unit that's capable of doing the job that's asked of it.

Cpl Kyle Hastilow

I loved being in the QRL but our future is the important component rather than whatever we did in the past.

I think the merger has gone well because we were two quite similar regiments with a similar philosophy – professionalism and reconnaissance.

The squadrons had worked alongside each other on previous operations and because we all did our training in Bovington, a lot of the junior officers and soldiers knew each other.

Now that Herrick has ended people are looking for the next thing and the boys are excited about being on high-readiness.

Lt Alex Humphreys

When we heard about the merger we were pretty annoyed – I joined up to be in the QRL, not the RL.

We were given the option to transfer to other units but I chose to stay and now I think we've got the best of both in terms of how we do things.

There is no "us and them" mentality and we still have exactly the same mindset.

LCpl Nathan Turner

SCOUT SET TO CAUSE A STIR

Troops prepare to trial Army's new asset

● IN another first, personnel from The Royal Lancers are due to test out the new Scout Specialist Vehicle ahead of the rest of their comrades in the field Army.

The formation is not due to receive the platform until 2018 but in September some 30 members of the regiment will be taking part in trials at Lulworth and Bovington.

According to Tpr James Lowe the opportunity to get hands on with the asset is already causing a buzz within the ranks.

"It's a big thing and we're all really excited about getting it," he said.

"I'm a bit of a geek, so I've been looking at its capabilities in my spare time and it's got all sorts of stuff.

"The CVR(T) Scimitar has a 30mm Rarden cannon that can fire six rounds in automatic mode but the gun car version of Scout has got a 40mm twin-linked chain gun – so, two feeds of different ammunition – which means you can just keep going for it instead of having to reload.

"It's going to be a hefty bit of kit which will be able to outshoot its eastern European BMP-3 counterpart hands down and it brings us up to the same capability as the Americans with their Bradley fighting vehicle."

Sgt Michael Burton agreed that the new platform is more versatile and therefore ideally suited to potential short notice deployments around the globe.

"Scout will bring a lot of reliability, as well as technology and performance upgrades," said the senior NCO.

"Broadly it's going to be a lot bigger and it's brand new so it will give us better operational effectiveness over multiple theatres whereas some vehicles suit some terrain better than others.

"It will give us a much more varied role."



“I

T was a hell of a punch-up”.

That was the blunt description of the Battle of Plaman Mapu, given by 69-year-old Mick Murtagh half a century after he and his paratrooper comrades fought off a violent attack by Indonesian special forces.

The events of April 27, 1965 are relatively unknown in civilian and even military circles but they are historically significant – and for the veterans that remain the memories are still vivid.

Lying asleep in the wet and humid conditions of Sarawak in northern Borneo, 36 troops of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment suddenly found themselves under heavy fire – and outnumbered 11 to one.

Under the orders of Indonesia’s President Sukarno, the attackers had crept stealthily through the dense undergrowth with the aim of overrunning Plaman Mapu, a forward operating base near the border between Malaysia and Indonesia that was manned by UK personnel conducting jungle training.

The Indonesian leader was determined to destabilise the newly-formed Malaysian Federation, which he believed boosted British influence in the region.

Three veterans of the violent skirmish, which became known as the Indonesian Confrontation, recently revisited the site, along with five serving members of The Parachute Regiment, to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the conflict.

The party included Lt Gen James Bashall, a former commanding officer of 2 Para.

They returned to the site of the largely forgotten battle to lay a plaque on a cairn built by indebted villagers to remember the offensive and honour fallen comrades.

Reflecting on the moment of the attack, Les Simcock, an 18-year-old private at the time, said: “I was under a homemade shelter made of an old parachute. It hung just inches from my face and I could hear the slithering of pythons across the silk – they were feeding off the rats which infested the camp.

“I had just nodded off when the whole place seemed to explode.”

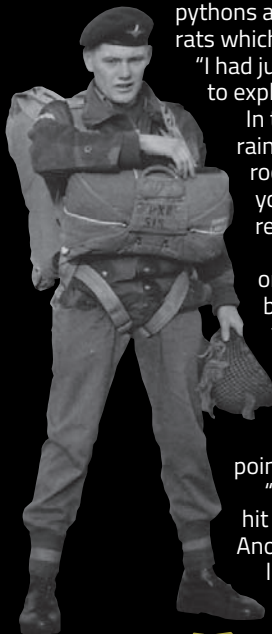
In the darkness of the early hours, as monsoon rain lashed down, machine-gun bullets and rocket-propelled grenades were fired at the young soldiers, many of whom had only recently completed basic training.

The Indonesians had decided to strike while only one of 2 Para’s three platoons was at the base. They swarmed into the British garrison from every direction.

Mick Murtagh was just 19 years old when the attack happened but vividly remembers the events of that day.

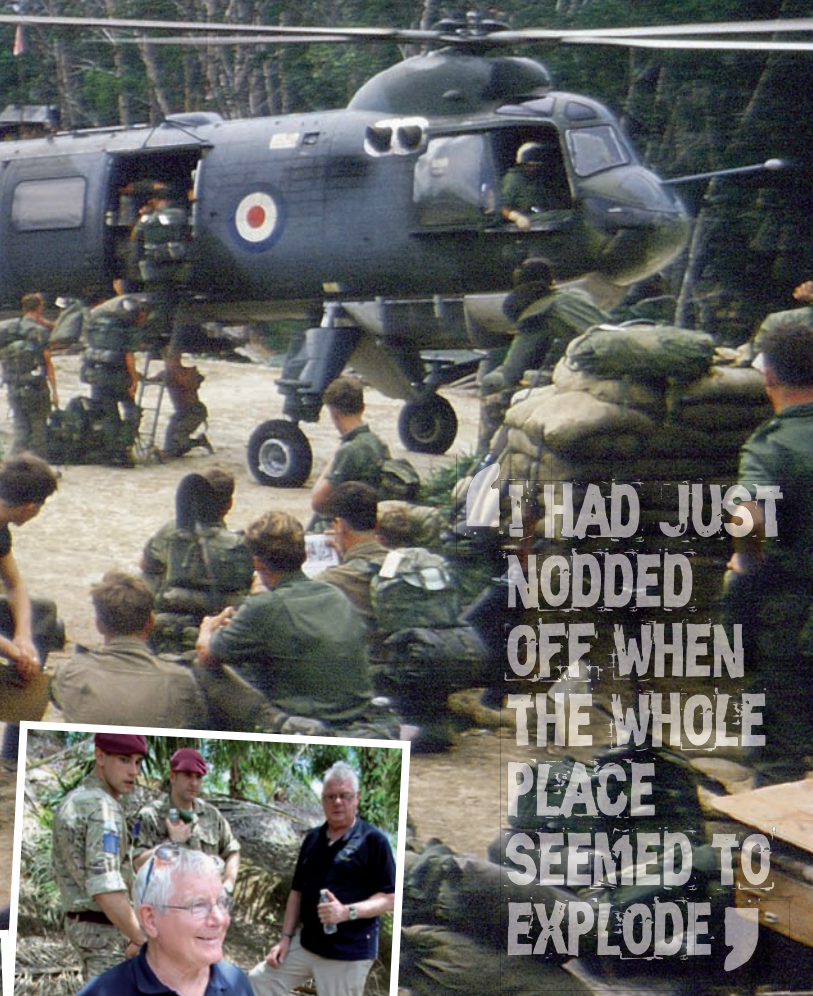
“I was firing from over there,” he said pointing to a shallow trench.

“One of our blokes, Pte Harry Smith, was hit by an RPG and killed almost immediately. Another of our comrades, LCpl Ian McKellar, was left in a very bad way.



OUTNUMBERED

PARAS MARK THE 50-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF A MUCH-FORGOTTEN BATTLE



Anticlockwise from top: Disembarking from a Bristol Belvedere helicopter in 1965; paratroopers in jungle training; saluting the memorial stone that marks the battle and those that fell; Mick Murtagh explains the order of events; George Averre displays utensils found in his old mortar pit



● Filmmaker Chris Terrill has produced a documentary on the battle entitled *Return to the Jungle*. It will be broadcast on Forces TV at 2100 on Sunday, July 5.

"We didn't have time to be afraid but we knew we had a hell of a job on our hands."

Rusted cartridge cases and mortar fuses still litter the ground today and serve as a stark reminder of the desperate fight that took place.

Taking position in his old mortar pit and putting on the same bush hat he wore when launching his weapons all those years ago, George Averre, now 72, explained how he had to think on his feet to have an effect.

"The enemy was so close that our mortars were going over their heads," he recalled.

"There was only one option – I had to hand-hold the barrel virtually upright and using only the primary charge fire the bombs almost vertically up in the air.

"The things were dropping about 20 yards away".

Remarkably, after a fraught episode of sustained fire the British Servicemen managed to beat their determined enemy back.

The platoon lost Pte Smith and LCpl McKellar and suffered about a dozen injuries but the opposition was defeated emphatically, with more than 50 killed and many more wounded.

Gil Boyd, organiser of the visit to Plaman Mapu and trustee of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Museum at Duxford, has conducted painstaking research into the clash and is fighting to secure recognition for it as a battle honour for the unit.

"It's a forgotten campaign for The Parachute Regiment and I have always felt that it was something that should be recognised," said the former member of 2 Para.

"It was probably what they achieved in 1965 that made President Sukarno realise his men would never beat the British military.

"The actions of those troops epitomised everything about the maroon beret – when outnumbered and outgunned a Para soldier comes into his own."

During a moving ceremony at the memorial cairn the Borneo locals turned out in force to show that they will always be thankful for the Servicemen who fought to defend their homes.

In stifling 48 degree Celsius heat the beads of sweat streaming down the faces of veterans and serving personnel were indistinguishable from the tears as they reflected on this unsung chapter of military history.

"We are all part of the maroon machine," said 29-year-old Cpl Ryan North (2 Para).

"We have so much to learn from the veterans – about courage, commitment and loyalty; they set the standards for us to live up to."

Lt Gen Bashall added: "The men involved exhibited extraordinary bravery and by repelling the attack so emphatically could well have turned the tide of history."

Whether the courageous acts of those at Plaman Mapu are thought worthy of a battle honour or not is for senior officials to decide.

What is clear though is that those who understand what happened here are humbled, impressed and grateful to the 36 men who stood up for Britain and the people they were protecting. ■

AND OUTGUNNED

REPORT: JOE CLAPSON

PICTURES: UPPERCUT FILMS, GEORGE AVERRE, LES SIMCOCK, MICK MURTAGH AND ROD SCOTT

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PEARSON



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TALKBACK

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

Price of mergers and acquisitions

THE formation of The Royal Lancers has led to soldiers and officers being out of pocket despite being told that no one would be financially disadvantaged.

All Service personnel were given basic working dress but this didn't include items like rank wristlets and stable belts.

Warrant officers are set to lose the most money as they have to purchase officer pattern mess dress costing around £1,600 – but they only receive a grant of £720.

And all ranks are expected to fund the tailoring of their new uniforms.

I am one of many serving soldiers who have no issue with the restructuring of the Army.

What I am struggling to comprehend is the expectation that we should pay anything from £100 to more than £1,000 to get into the appropriate dress for the new unit.

Most of us have already paid into the regimental institute fund while serving in our respective units before the amalgamation so this additional cost is hardly serving as a retention tool. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, responds: All new items of dress for soldiers in The Royal Lancers will be publicly funded, including rank wristlets, but with the exception of stable belts and tactical recognition or formation flashes, which are optional items of dress for all regiments and corps.

Officers and senior NCOs transferring into the amalgamated regiment are entitled to the transfer grant to cover the cost of new attire needed for mess dress and for items of number two dress not already issued to officers.

The design of the former deliberately incorporates a number of pieces from the previous regiments so the grant should be sufficient to ensure the majority of individuals are not out of pocket.

Some warrant officers are authorised to wear officer pattern mess dress but this is regimental rather than Army policy.

“ALL RANKS ARE EXPECTED TO FUND THE TAILORING OF THE NEW UNIFORM”



Picture: Graeme Main

SINGLE PEOPLE 'LET DOWN' BY SERVICE

● I AM a serving soldier who recently turned 37 years old and feel aggrieved that as a single person I'm not awarded the same benefits as a married soldier, or one who is in a civil partnership.

Being on your own means it is significantly more difficult, financially, to prepare for civilian life.

For instance, I pay my former partner £425 per month voluntarily as well as funding my own living expenses, including a mortgage.

This means the playing field is not level when it comes to making plans for the future because married personnel are often in a household with two incomes and yet they are still eligible for the Over 37 package.

I've also heard that Royal Air Force and Royal Navy personnel are entitled to a similar allowance regardless of their personal status category – and after examining section eight of JSP 752 this would appear to be true.

Doesn't this go against the fact that this is supposed to be a tri-Service regulation?

I feel let down by the system and believe single people are being prejudiced against.

Are there any aspirations to make this fair for all? – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), replies: The Army's single living accommodation waiver – the Over 37 package – was designed to support people who wished to settle their families in their own house towards the end of their service, to help with transition.

For this reason it was limited to those personnel who are in relationships and/or have children and as such are classified as personal status category one or two.

The Army's approach to this issue differs from the Navy's and the RAF's.

I recognise that the situation has changed since the inception of the allowance and a much wider range of people have become homeowners through initiatives such as Forces Help to Buy.

We are reviewing the situation as a consequence of the New Employment Model, and while this does not solve your issue in the short term I hope it provides reassurance that the Army is seeking to update policy in line with the needs of soldiers.



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

If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, academic results, a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, excellent sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects, first class confidence and self assurance. If you want the best for your child, and to stand a chance of achieving most of this list, we believe you would need to pick one of the top 10 UK Independent boarding schools as ranked by the Sunday Times. **Yes we are in the top 10 !**

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Who comes where in the independent schools league tables?

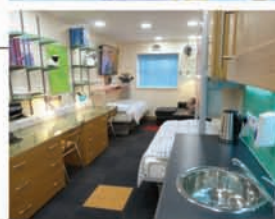
All independent schools want to portray themselves as academically successful. So how do parents make a sensible comparison of the different claims made? The answer is to use the internationally recognised independent school league tables produced by the Sunday Times each year. It contains virtually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

We are 7th and 9th.

Queen Ethelburga's

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

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



Alphabetical Ranking

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

Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School	Position	A*/A	Name of School
21st	66%	Abingdon School	77th	49%	Dean Close School	60th	53%	Merchiston Castle Sch	172nd	31%	St Felix School
155th	34%	Ackworth School	138th	38%	Denstone College	100th	45%	Mill Hill School	107th	44%	St Francis, Letchworth
120th	41%	Adcote School Girls	182nd	29%	Dover College	192nd	25%	Millfield School	161st	33%	St George's, Ascot
94th	47%	Ampleforth College	16th	70%	D'Overbroeck's College	109th	44%	Monmouth School	178th	29%	St James Senior Boys
90th	47%	Ardingly College	15th	73%	Downe House	95th	47%	Moreton Hall	72nd	50%	St John's, Leatherhead
70th	52%	Ashford School	112th	43%	Downside School	108th	44%	Mount Kelly	167th	32%	St John's, Southsea
137th	38%	Ashville College	27th	63%	Dulwich College	58th	53%	Mount School, York	92nd	47%	St Leonards School
23rd	66%	Badminton School	140th	37%	Durham School	88th	47%	New Hall School	31st	61%	St Leonards-Mayfield
171st	31%	Barnard Castle School	76th	49%	Eastbourne College	127th	40%	Oakham School	128th	40%	St Margaret's, Bushey
143rd	36%	Battle Abbey School	36th	58%	Epsom College	49th	55%	Ockbrook School	97th	46%	St Mary's, Cambridge
87th	48%	Bedales School	4th	85%	Eton College	144th	36%	Oratory School, Reading	13th	75%	St Mary's, Ascot
154th	34%	Bede's Senior School	9th	78%	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	179th	29%	Oswestry School	83rd	48%	St Mary's Shaftesbury
93rd	47%	Bedford School	190th	26%	Farlington School	34th	59%	Oundle school	3rd	86%	St Paul's Sch, London
159th	33%	Bedstone College	163rd	33%	Felstead School	191st	26%	Padworth College	51st	54%	St Peter's, York
82nd	48%	Bellerbys Coll Brighton	55th	53%	Fettes College	146th	36%	Plymouth College	14th	75%	St Swithun's School
98th	46%	Bellerbys Coll Cambridge	193rd	24%	Framlington College	168th	32%	Pocklington School	91st	47%	St Teresa's, Effingham
44th	56%	Bellerbys Coll London	NR	20%	Giggleswick School	177th	29%	Princess Helena College	123rd	41%	Stamford High Sch
28th	62%	Benenden School	149th	36%	Glenalmond College	63rd	52%	Prior Park College	135th	39%	Stamford School
71st	50%	Berkhamsted School	89th	47%	Godolphin School	162nd	33%	Queen Anne's, Cavsham	174th	30%	Stonyhurst College
187th	27%	Bethany School	121st	41%	Gresham's School	7th	82%	Queen Ethelburga's College	116th	42%	Strathallan
37th	58%	Bishop's Stortford Coll	53rd	54%	Haberdashers' Mon Girls	20th	66%	Queen Margaret's, York	150th	35%	Sutton Valance Sch
85th	48%	Blundell's School	118th	42%	Haileybury	110th	43%	Queen's College, Taunton	111th	43%	Talbot Heath School
69th	52%	Bootham School	158th	34%	Hampshire Collegiate	46th	56%	Queenswood	157th	34%	Taunton School
156th	34%	Box Hill School	119th	41%	Harrogate Ladies College	26th	64%	Radley College	194th	24%	Tettenhall College
132nd	40%	Bradfield College	25th	65%	Headington School	147th	36%	Ratcliffe College	74th	50%	The Leys School
103rd	45%	Brentwood School	183rd	28%	Heathfield, Ascot	99th	45%	Reed's School	170th	31%	The Purcell School
10th	76%	Brighton College	114th	42%	Ipswich School	195th	24%	Rendcomb College	11th	76%	Tonbridge Schhol
52nd	54%	Bromsgrove School	80th	48%	Kent College, Canterbury	42nd	56%	Repton School	141st	37%	Trent College
96th	46%	Bruton School Girls	32nd	60%	Kent College, Pembury	79th	49%	Roedean School	180th	29%	Tring Park Perf Arts
78th	49%	Bryanston School	125th	41%	Kimbolton School	48th	55%	Royal High Sch, Bath	115th	42%	Truro High School Girls
73rd	50%	Burgess Hill Sch Girls	105th	44%	King William's, Castletown	26th	48%	Royal Masonic Sch Girls	81st	48%	Truro School
38th	57%	Canford School	189th	26%	King's Bruton	147th	41%	Royal Russell School	133rd	40%	Tudor Hall
22nd	66%	Caterham School	164th	33%	King's College, Taunton	99th	57%	Royal School, Haslemere	47th	56%	Uppingham School
181st	29%	CATS College London	113th	43%	King's Ely	195th	54%	Rugby School	169th	31%	Warminster School
185th	27%	CCSS Centre 6th Form	35th	59%	King's School, Canterbury	42nd	69%	Ruthin School	33rd	60%	Warwick School
176th	30%	Chase Grammar School	129th	40%	King's St Michael's Coll	142nd	37%	Rydal Penrhos Senior	19th	67%	Wellington College
86th	48%	Cheltenham College	184th	28%	King's, Rochester	67th	53%	Rydal School U Chine	134th	40%	Wellington School
12th	76%	Cheltenham Ladies' Coll	43rd	56%	Kingswood School, Bath	188th	26%	Rye St Antony School	75th	49%	Wells Cathedral School
117th	42%	Chetham's School Music	126th	41%	Kirkham Grammar School	186th	27%	Sedburgh School	101st	45%	West Buckland School
50th	55%	Chigwell School	61st	52%	Lancing College	6th	82%	Sevenoaks School	5th	85%	Westminster School
66th	53%	Christ College	148th	36%	Langley School	59th	53%	Sherborne Girls	29th	62%	Whitgift School
56th	53%	Christ's Hospital	166th	32%	Leighton Park School	104th	45%	Sherborne School	2nd	89%	Winchester College
18th	67%	City London Freeman's	68th	52%	Leweston School	39th	57%	Shrewsbury School	106th	44%	Windermere School
65th	53%	Clifton College	131st	40%	Lincoln Minster School	124th	41%	Sidcot	45th	56%	Woldingham School
130th	40%	Cobham Hall	102nd	45%	Lord Wandsworth College	173rd	30%	St Bees School	151st	35%	Woodbridge School
8th	81%	Concord College	136th	39%	Loretto School	24th	65%	St Catherine's Sch, Bramley	160th	33%	Woodhouse Grove
57th	53%	Cranleigh School	40th	57%	Loughborough Grammar	165th	32%	St Edmund's College	152nd	35%	Workshop College
175th	30%	Culford School	139th	37%	Luckley House School	145th	36%	St Edmund's Canterbury	153rd	35%	Wrekin College
64th	53%	Dauntsey's School	30th	62%	Marlborough College	62nd	52%	St Edward's Sch, Oxford	1st	91%	Wycombe Abbey Sch

State Schools not ranked however if Duke of York's Royal Military School were, with 29% A*/A A-Level, it would come around 178th. Welbeck would come around 178th also with 29% A*/A A-Level

I have been trying to find this picture for years

TALKBACK

Blast from the past

I WAS absolutely blown off my feet when I read your article "Free at last" in the May edition of *Soldier* and found a picture of my grandfather, Edward Percy Phillips, at the moment of being freed from his prisoner-of-war camp.

I have been trying to find this picture for years.

He joined 1st Battalion, Royal East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) in 1932 and went out to Palestine before the Second World War but didn't come home until 1945.

He served in North Africa, where his unit was virtually wiped out at the Battle of Alem Hamza in December 1941.

Some 500 men were reduced to 75, of which my grandfather was one, and he was taken prisoner.

After the war he stayed in the Army and retired in 1962, gaining the meritorious service medal.

As a child he would tell me his war stories and gave me all of his remaining uniform badges.

He passed away in 1998 but he is my hero and always will be.

I never made it into the Regular Army but joined 3rd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment in 2002 because The Buffs are one of its antecedent units.

I now do the same job that my grandfather did and hold the same rank as him. I hope that in some way he would be proud to see that I have followed in his footsteps.

Thank you for this wonderful article, and I shall treasure this edition of *Soldier* with the belongings I have from my grandfather. — **Sgt Rob Drewe-Phillips, 3 PWRR.**



SOME 500 MEN WERE REDUCED TO 75, OF WHICH MY GRANDFATHER WAS ONE



Picture: Imperial War Museum

CHILDCARE PROVISION FALLS SHORT

● I HAVE recently signed up to the MoD childcare voucher scheme and found the online system excellent and the staff helpful.

I was, however, surprised to discover that unlike most other childcare schemes the Sodexo-MoD offering does not allow the backdating of vouchers and I'd like to know the reasons for this.

Is there not an imperative to enable this on the MoD scheme, where the users are more likely to be moving home and registering child carers at short notice? —

Name and address supplied.

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: The scheme does not currently allow for the backdating of vouchers as parents can join as soon as their child is born.

They are valid for 18 months and so they can take vouchers every month and save them up for when they need them (as advised on www.modchildcare.co.uk).

The Directorate of Children and Young People has been advised by Sodexo that vouchers can only be backdated for the current tax year; therefore you would not be allowed to exceed your annual allowance as defined by the basic earnings assessment in one tax year.

Sodexo has confirmed that it will deal with individuals wishing to backdate their vouchers on a case-by-case basis and, as such, those wishing to pursue this option should contact them directly.

VOUCHERS CAN ONLY BE BACKDATED FOR THE CURRENT TAX YEAR

Fine mess over dress

● WHY are junior NCOs forced to pay upwards of £700 for mess dress they are required to wear?

If the Army wants its personnel to wear this clothing then surely it should be issued.

— **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, responds: Queen's Regulations require members of the officers' mess and the warrant officers' and sergeants' mess to wear this dress as directed by their commanding officer.

The Army provides these individuals with grants as a result.

There is no requirement for junior NCOs to wear this attire so the Service does not provide the grant.

A number of regiments form corporals' messes in

order to better recognise the role that they play in regimental life.

In such cases the purchase of the outfit is encouraged on the understanding that the costs can be reclaimed on promotion to the rank of sergeant.

Anyone encountering financial hardship as a result of this approach should speak to their chain of command or mess committee.



DIGITAL DOSSIER

Your views from the web...



@soldiermagazine

@MorganRawbone

Amazing day performing for the troops @millenniumstad for presenting of The Colours to The Royal Welsh by the Queen

@becky_rizzles

For anyone starting Phase 1 training. Befriend the chefs in the cook house and the clerks, your life will be miles better #britisharmy

@JackClayton617

World changed forever 200 years ago at Battle of Waterloo

@CSCA_IST20

Congratulations to the #Army who have played well as a team. I wouldn't like to choose the Player of the Tournament #IST20 #cricket

#BASTION MEMORIAL

@Number10gov

PM laid a wreath at #BastionMemorial: "What you have done for our country and for the world will never be forgotten"

@PARA_Band

Privileged to perform for the #BastionMemorial service today. #WeWillRememberThem

@richardgaisford

At @Nat_Mem_Arb @GMB for unveiling #BastionMemorial, remembering 453 British service personnel killed in Afghanistan



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

TRANSGENDER

Ron Burton

Total respect for Hannah, it was a huge and brave choice while still serving. I'm glad to see that the Army is accepting of her decision and hope that her career will continue without discrimination

Jean Ramm

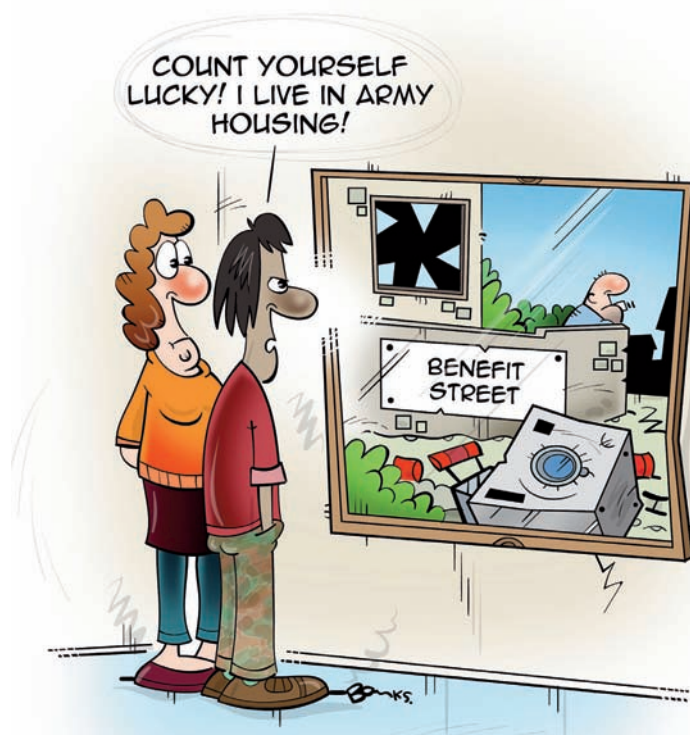
I love this story, Hannah you have shown true bravery, it's so nice to hear a story of acceptance, we should all live as our true selves

GOT A GRIPE?

✉ mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

🐦 @soldiermagazine

“MANY GARAGES ARE DAMAGED AND HAVE BECOME DUMPING GROUNDS FOR HOUSEHOLD RUBBISH”



Tipping us over the edge

I HAVE concerns about the company now providing housing support.

I attempted to request a garage but it told me that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) didn't know whose names these units were in or even which ones were serviceable or not.

The trouble is many of these structures are damaged and have become dumping grounds for household rubbish.

I realise that it isn't the DIO's role to police these matters but surely common sense dictates that such facilities should be repaired and used to generate money where possible.

I appreciate there are more pressing matters within the Armed Forces but I will be raising a complaint with the area manager.

It is hard to find pride in the place you live when there are various bits of furniture and fridges dumped in view of your house.

On a further note, why doesn't the DIO offer us the option of taking self-storage units instead of garages?

The typical family's list of possessions has grown considerably over the last 60 years but most of the houses haven't. – **Name and address supplied.**

A statement from DIO Service Delivery Accommodation:

We are sorry to hear about your experiences with applying for a garage and fly-tipping.

CarillionAmey took over responsibility for the management of garages on December 1, 2014 and is currently reviewing the condition and allocation of these across the UK.

It is looking to improve its information so more units can be made available.

In the meantime, any requests of this type or maintenance issues should be directed to its helpdesk on 0800 707 6000. We encourage all families to act responsibly and dispose of their rubbish correctly.

Reports of fly-tipping should also be directed to the CarillionAmey helpdesk or your local customer service centre.

On your last point, many Service homes have plenty of space compared to private properties and DIO has also installed sheds as part of its upgrade work.

The organisation has no plans to introduce storage units as the charges would not cover the cost of building and maintaining them.

Off note on silver bugle

I WAS made redundant in 2013 after 35 years of service in the Army with the Light Infantry and then The Rifles.

On countless occasions I had watched in awe the presentation of the silver bugle to those leaving after a long career.

This is enmeshed in our regimental heritage and to receive one is an honour.

I became part of the warrant officers' and serjeants' mess some 26 years ago and contributed to the presentation fund all through my career.

Then, while serving as a WO2, I was made redundant but I have never received a silver bugle despite contacting 5 Rifles on numerous occasions.

No doubt I could pursue the repayment of my contributions to the presentation fund through the courts but I have some pride and will not beg for something that I had always hoped to receive.

John Poole-Warren's reply to the letter, "Brassed off by no silver bugle", in the October edition of *Soldier* has only added to my feeling of rejection.

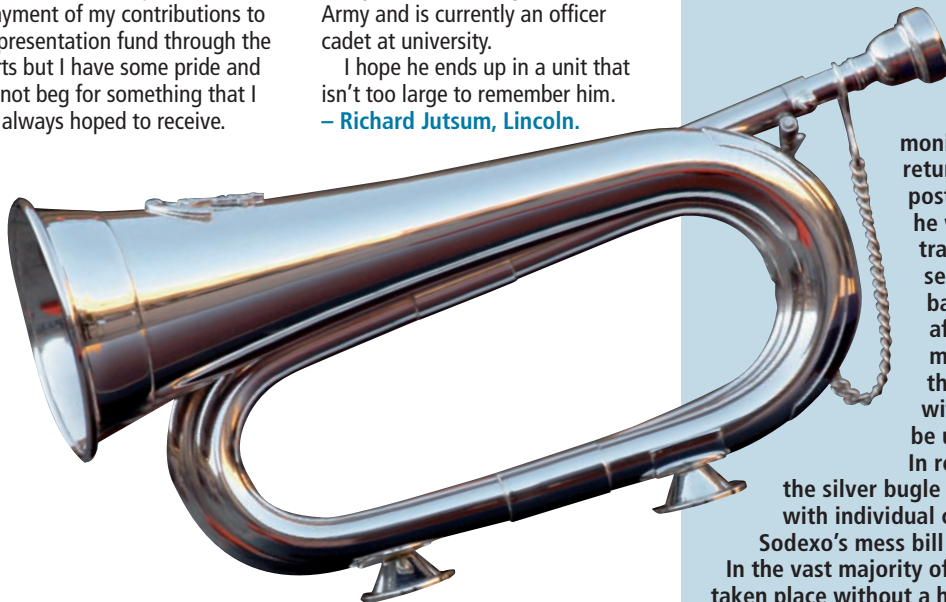
It may be policy that the colonel commandant writes to individuals upon conclusion of their careers but this never happened in my case – unless the letter is with my P45, which was sent to the wrong address by the Army Personnel Centre, or with my testimonial of service which I also never received as my CO couldn't, or wouldn't, interview me on discharge.

The only way I can show displeasure at my treatment is to not attend reunions, which is a shame as I've lost contact with many good friends.

My son is following me into the Army and is currently an officer cadet at university.

I hope he ends up in a unit that isn't too large to remember him.

– **Richard Jutsum, Lincoln.**



And now for the encore...

● I COMPLETELY agree with WO2 Rob Chapman's letter in the October edition entitled "Brassed off by no silver bugle".

I spent 22 years with The Royal Green Jackets and three with The Rifles before leaving the Army in 2010, but obtaining my silver bugle was an uphill struggle.

During the last seven years I was mainly engaged on external postings and when I asked about it I got the distinct impression that no one was interested.

I eventually received a bugle more than a year later and at about

the same time I was offered a dine out with six other individuals.

It felt like an afterthought to me so I declined.

And as for the regimental policy of sending letters out on conclusion of service, well I must have missed that one.

I certainly never had any such thing and I am sure that no one in the regiment was even aware that I had left the Army because I was never called back to do the paperwork and I still have my ID card. – **Leo Healy, Newcastle upon Tyne.**

WO1 Pat Hyde, Command Serjeant Major, The Rifles, responds: In reply to both these letters I reiterate my regimental secretary's earlier correspondence that this is a warrant officers' and serjeants' mess matter.

In a regiment that provides opportunity for soldiers to switch battalions frequently, mess presentations within The Rifles can become a complex issue, especially when the units were so heavily committed on operations during the periods in question.

The situation demands a common set of mess rules to apply across 1-5 Rifles and relevant extracts from the extant directions are as follows:

- The presentation received on completion of 22 years of service or commissioning will be a silver bugle, unless the mess member would like something similar and providing that he has paid into the presentation fund the amount to cover the cost of the standard presentation from the mess.

- In addition, all members on completion of 22 years of service or commissioning will be entitled to a dining out dinner. This must be completed within six months of discharge date and is your responsibility in consultation with the regimental serjeant major and president of the mess committee.

- On posting from the battalion to another mess the member's presentation monies will be frozen until he returns. If the mess member is posted to another Rifles battalion he will have six months to transfer his monies from the serjeants' mess to The Rifles battalion that he is posted to. If after the six-month period the mess member has not claimed the monies, they will be freed within the presentation fund to be used as the mess sees fit.

In respect of the funds to pay for the silver bugle – the current cost is £280, with individual contributions captured using Sodexo's mess bill database.

In the vast majority of cases presentations have taken place without a hitch, although I accept that there were understandable issues in the initial period after the regiment's formation in 2007.

In the case of Mr Healy, I note he received a silver bugle and am disappointed that he did not take it upon himself to complete his discharge properly.

In the case of Mr Jutsum, the correct process was not followed and that is regrettable.

Sadly, noting his misgivings about receiving a silver bugle now, should he change his mind (as I would wish) Mr Jutsum should contact the president of the mess committee at 5 Rifles to establish the amount of money he contributed towards the presentation fund before moving to Recruiting Group and taking the matter forward from there.

Finally, a review of the regiment's valedictory letter procedures is being conducted to ensure every soldier receives appropriate recognition at significant moments in their military career.



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RESERVIST CAREERS COME UNDER FIRE

● WITH the current emphasis on recruiting and retaining more Reservists, why are there obstacles in the career path of Royal Artillery observers?

I have been a volunteer for nearly ten years and have not been able to attend a level three or four course to gain my promotion to sergeant despite having completed all the other tuition that's required.

This is due to the fact that they last up to ten weeks and there is no modular-based equivalent programme for Reserve personnel.

I cannot expect my employer to release me for such lengthy periods without mobilisation to guarantee security for both parties.

Will there be any change to this in the near future, or is my only option to change my career choice if I want to progress up the ranks?

I have been advised this is not allowed with Crewman 2000, the framework for trade qualification for a bombardier. – Bdr Ben Appleton, RA.

Lt Col Toby Harden, SO1 Trg, Land Forces Capability Combat Support, responds: Firstly, all Royal Artillery level three and four courses for Reserve soldiers have been reviewed in order to create more attractive options.

These are now being rewritten and in many cases will result in 15-day integrated modules to be completed alongside Regular soldiers.

Complementing them will be online material to help ensure individuals are fully prepared.

Where appropriate, modules will contain an element of computer-based training, classroom, simulator and practical live-firing periods.

This is an exciting development in RA training and will benefit Reserve and Regular soldiers.

The new courses are now in the design phase and should be released for delivery in the next few months.

Finally, there is nothing written down in Crewman 2000 that prevents an individual from changing the career employment qualifications at any stage, although it can be time-consuming and require significant retraining.

Time to trash the emails

I JOINED the Army for the job, the career and the lifestyle attached to it. I wanted an active routine that was far removed from my previous existence in the City.

Five years in and I am sat here wondering, "how did it come to this?".

Emailing takes up most of my day. Whatever happened to the face-to-face meeting and the telephone?

It's a wonder we don't lose more good officers and senior NCOs at an earlier stage in their careers when this is how many spend their time.

The Army would be wise to copy what a few brigade headquarters have already done and ban internal emails in favour of phone calls.

"Free up the white space," they say.

I agree – make it more personal and relevant and give back the lifestyle that we all joined up for.

It's not being work shy; being good



at your job is about efficiency.

Enabling efficiency can only be seen in a positive light.

Filling an inbox with yet another random email only hampers this effort and should be stopped – **Name and address supplied.**

Housing work falls down

● WE'VE just had a full bathroom refit at the Baden Powell housing estate in Catterick but the communications between the maintenance company and the tenants was zero, apart from a letter with possible dates for the work to be carried out.

When the workmen arrived they came and went at different times and sometimes didn't turn up at all for days even though many of our partners had taken time off work to allow them access.

The tasks carried out were not checked over by anyone and I still have issues regarding loose wires, trimming not finished and a water pump left exposed in a drying room.

The shoddy standards and communications would not be tolerated by civilian homeowners so why must serving soldiers accept this? – **WO1 (RSM) John Brown, SG.**

Jayne Smith, DIO SD Accommodation, responds:

We are sorry to hear of your dissatisfaction with the communications you received during work to improve your Service home.

An onsite liaison officer was available during the period that the team were there and should have passed contact details on to you to discuss any issues and

answer questions. If this did not happen we can only apologise.

Work is inspected, and assurance undertaken in a selected number of properties.

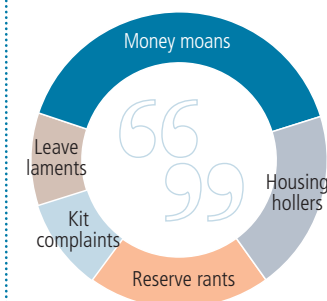
However, our records do not indicate that you have reported any defects or complaints about the workmanship on your bathroom upgrade.

Therefore, our advice, which applies to anyone who is unhappy with any aspect of work undertaken, is to please call **0800 707 6000** to formally report this.

CarillionAmey are now investigating the defects you refer to in your letter.

SLICE OF SERVICE LIFE

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



THE RIPPLE EFFECT

The small groups helping military families weather the storms of Service life

Interview: Becky Clark
Pictures: Steve Dock

"M Y friends didn't understand and said I was an idiot for sticking by him. "But when you say your marriage vows you promise to stay together 'in sickness and in health'".

Steph Carroll (pictured below) is recalling the strain of trying to support her soldier husband through his struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

A private in 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, he had served in Iraq and was diagnosed with the illness shortly before leaving the Armed Forces in December 2012.

The mother-of-one does not want to describe exactly how her spouse's condition manifested itself, but says simply: "It was bad. It was an absolute roller-coaster and I felt completely alone."

Among the many possible symptoms associated with PTSD are anxiety, insomnia, depression and misuse of drugs or alcohol.

And although severity varies from sufferer to sufferer, the condition can have a serious impact on day-to-day life and relationships.

For Mrs Carroll and her family, the prospect of leaving military life behind was an added worry.

"Adapting to civvy street is hard," she continues.

"All the doors close in your face and you feel like you're in a dark alleyway trying to find a way out."

Fortunately, two years down the line, things are looking up – thanks in part to a self-help group that the 23-year-old turned to during her lowest times.

The Ripple Pond is a support network for the loved ones of Service personnel affected by issues such as injury, mental health problems or difficulty adjusting to life in the civilian world.

The charity was set up in 2012 by two Army mothers, Julia Molony and Sue Hawkins, whose sons had both been injured in Afghanistan.

"My son Anthony was wounded when his vehicle went over an IED in May 2009," explains Mrs Molony.

"I took his wife and two young children up to see him in Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham.

"The welfare system provides accommodation for next of kin but parents aren't considered part of the family so we had to find somewhere to stay, which I found very distressing.

"I felt like I came second in everything and I needed someone to talk to."

Over the course of the next year Anthony, a captain in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, underwent a series of operations on his injured leg before he and his wife decided he should have an amputation.

"I didn't want him to have the procedure and, again, I felt like there wasn't any support for someone in my position," Mrs Molony continues.

"As a trained counsellor and psychotherapist I knew how important it was to have somebody to talk to and that's what led me to set up the Ripple Pond."

Through a quirk of fate, Mrs Hawkins' son, Ed, was injured a year to the day after Anthony, and after meeting through a charity the two military mums set about establishing a network to provide much-needed emotional back-up to others.

The organisation takes the form of small, regional groups that are led by a volunteer administrator.

Sessions are held as regularly as members wish and are strictly confidential with links to trained counsellors.

So far 18 Ripple Ponds have sprung up across England and Wales, with a Facebook group also providing an additional forum for members to communicate with each other between gatherings.

"We're not a coffee morning but we're also not a therapy session," says Mrs Molony.

"It's for anyone struggling with the impact of having a loved one in the Forces – it could be a parent, a sibling, a son or a daughter.

"Members can ask each other 'how are you doing?', 'what issues are you facing?'. And they can signpost each other to similar organisations that can help too.

"We've seen people shed tears of relief that there was someone else who knew what they were going through."

After reaching out to the Ripple Pond and seeing its value first-hand, Mrs Carroll went about setting up and coordinating a new group in the Andover area.

"I know there will be lots of people out there who need help," she continues.

"It's really difficult to know how to handle the symptoms and triggers of PTSD but I basically taught myself about it and did a lot of research and reading on the condition.

"Now I'm the one encouraging people to stay together through it if possible because I think it's worth it."

With the impact of not just Iraq but Afghanistan likely to affect personnel for years to come, the odds are that there are many more people suffering in silence with issues related to military service.

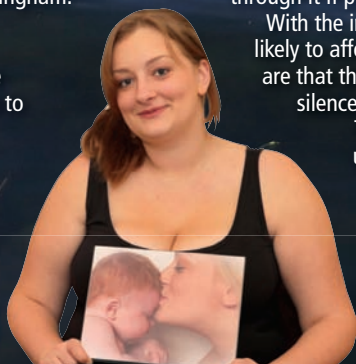
To anyone in that position Mrs Carroll urges: "Please get in contact with the Ripple Pond. It can make a big difference to your life." ■



The 18 locations of support groups:

Aldershot, Andover, Bedford, Brighton, Colchester, Devon, Durham, Gloucester, Gosport, Grimsby, Cleethorpes, Maidstone, Salisbury, Sheffield, Shrewsbury, Southampton, Surrey, Swansea, Tonbridge.

The Ripple Pond is open to anyone over the age of 18 struggling with issues related to having a loved one in the Forces. For more information visit www.theripplepond.co.uk or email theripplepond@gmail.com



BULLET POINTS

BITE-SIZED DATA TO KEEP YOU IN THE KNOW

APPOINTMENTS

Maj Gen James Bashall, Director Personnel Army Headquarters, to be appointed **Commander Personnel and Support Command** in the rank of lieutenant general

CAREERS

Transition Force uses a combination of technology and events to provide personalised career support for ex-Service personnel nationwide. To register visit www.transitionforce.com/events

Ex Military Recruitment assist former Service personnel from specialist technical regiments trained in electrical and mechanical engineering, logistics and telecommunications in finding similar civilian careers. For details visit www.xmr.co.uk

The Enterprise Network, Swindon and Wiltshire will be running a series of nine workshops entitled "Be your own Boss" for military spouses and partners, offering advice on running a business. For further information and to book a free place visit www.theenterprisenetwork.co.uk/civvystreet

High Ground is a charity providing land-based skills to serving and former Army personnel, helping them move into civilian life. For details visit www.highground-uk.org

Employment website TipTopJob has created www.exmilitaryjob.com to help former Service personnel find work in the civilian sector. Visit the website for more details.

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

COMPETITIONS

Spine line winners: Sgt Mark Blincow, Shefford, Bedfordshire; Spr Lee McAuley, Brompton Barracks, Chatham; Sharon Jackson, Kettering, Northamptonshire; Lt Col Andy Johnston, Hopton, Stafford; LCpl Adelle Tudor, Fulwood Barracks, Preston.

The Gurkhas – 200 Years of Service to the Crown: Gordon Crandles, Edinburgh; Gareth Westlake, HQ British Gurkhas Nepal.

Whiplash DVD: Rich Partridge, Bristol; John Dargavel, Bloxwich, Walsall; Frank Johnstone, Hallow, Worcester.

DIARY

July 11-February 2016: Horrible Histories: Blitzed Brits at the Imperial War Museum North. A free exhibition marking the 75th anniversary of the Blitz. Objects, photographs, film and recordings from the centre's collections, narrated with the words of *Horrible Histories* author Terry Deary. For details visit www.iwm.org.uk

July 17-19: Royal International Air Tattoo, Fairford. Commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. For further details visit www.airtattoo.com

July 24: Poppies: Women and War at the Museum of Liverpool. A photographic exhibition exploring the personal stories of women affected by war. For more information visit www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/poppies

July 25-26: Trailwalker Gurkha Challenge. Take on the Gurkhas in this epic 100km endurance challenge across the South Downs National Park. Walk or run in teams of four in support of Oxfam and The Gurkha Welfare Trust. For details visit www.oxfam.org.uk/trailwalker

August 15-16: Combined Ops Show at Headcorn Aerodrome, Shenley Road, Headcorn TN27 9HX. Arena events, history re-enactments and an air display featuring the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the world's only flying Vulcan bomber. Tickets are available at www.combinedops.co.uk

August 17: 70th anniversary of VJ Day commemorative service at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire. For further information on the day visit www.thenma.org.uk

Until August 31: Fashion on the ration: 1940s street style exhibition at the Imperial War Museum London. Uniforms and textiles from wartime Britain. Adults £10; concessions £7; children (15 and under) £5.

Until September 30: Waterloo bicentenary exhibition at the Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum, Winchester. Featuring artefacts, medals, paintings and a model of the battlefield. For more information visit www.rgjmuseum.co.uk

October 3-4: Military and Vintage Revival, Old Buckenham Airfield, Abbey Road, Old Buckenham NR17 1PU. Living history displays, battle re-enactments, vintage fair, fashion shows

and food village. Tickets £5; children (under 12) free. For full details visit www.militaryrevival.com

October 17-December 10: Royal Air Force in Concert tour. In support of the RAF Charitable Trust, the 15-venue tour will serve as a musical tribute to those who participated in the Battle of Britain. For ticketing details and further information visit www.rafinconcert.com

DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity:
0845 241 4820

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

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

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

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

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

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

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

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

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

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

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

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

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01722 436575

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

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

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

Remount:
01451 850 341; www.remount.net

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

DIRECTORY CONTINUED

Stoll (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation):

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

The Not Forgotten Association:

020 7730 2400;
www.nfassociation.org

The Poppy Factory:

020 8940 3305;
www.poppyfactory.org

The Royal Star & Garter Homes:

020 8481 7676;
www.starandgarter.org

The Veterans Charity:

01753 653772;
info@veteranscharity.org.uk

uk4u Thanks!:

01798 812081; www.uk4u.org



INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 080/15: Combined accommodation assessment system – implementation update

ABN 079/15: Reserves colonels promotion grant

ABN 078/15: Army travel study

ABN 077/15: Armed Forces Hindu conference 2015

ABN 076/15: Buddhist conference 2015

ABN 075/15: Army leadership event 2015

ABN 074/15: Regular Army leavers visit to Reserve units

ABN 073/15: AFCAS 2015

ABN 072/15: Forces Help to Buy scheme – update

ABN 071/15: Contact with the media and communicating in public

ABN 070/15: ABF The Soldiers' Charity Carrington Drum

ABN 069/15: Added pension contracts for AFPS 2015

ABN 068/15: Civilian performance management policy changes

ABN 067/15: New Reserve commissioning course

ABN 066/15: New Reserve professionally qualified commissioning course

ABN 065/15: Army Servicewomen's Network inaugural conference

ABN 064/15: Freedom of Information Act 2000

ABN 063/15: Election period restrictions on communications lifted

ABN 062/15: Civilian performance management 2015/16

ABN 061/15: PCS uplift for Army Reserve recruits

ABN 060/15: ADOC monthly SITREP

DIN 2015DIN01-131: Civil Service pensions: changes to partnership from October 1, 2015

DIN 2015DIN01-129: New average property price list – January 1, 2015

DIN 2015DIN01-128: Revised mess and single accommodation charges for MoD civilians temporarily residing in Service messes in the UK

DIN 2015DIN01-127: Dental treatment rates overseas

DIN 2015DIN01-126: Revision of maximum figure for car import duty

DIN 2015DIN01-125: Ramadan and Eid ul Fitr 2015

DIN 2015DIN01-124: Mediation in the Army – a guide for commanding officers, mediators, complainants and respondents

DIN 2015DIN01-123: Amendment to full time Reserve service (FTRS) home commitment (HC) terms and normal retirement age

DIN 2015DIN01-122: Operational working allowance

DIN 2015DIN01-121: Operational deployment allowance

DIN 2015DIN01-119: Changes to initial commitment length of an FTRS (HC) enduring post and FTRS boarding timelines (due to eligibility)

DIN 2015DIN01-118: World faith moral leadership and development conferences

DIN 2015DIN01-117: MoD education support fund 2016

DIN 2015DIN01-116: Cancellation of AGAI Vol 4 Chapter 138 – *Storage of Personal Property of Single Service Personnel on Posting Overseas*

DIN 2015DIN01-115: Term time absence guidance

DIN 2015DIN01-114: JSP 834: *Safeguarding Children*

DIN 2015DIN01-113: Unit guidance on the introduction of shared parental leave and pay for Army Service personnel

DIN 2015DIN01-112: Army officer terms of service command sergeant majors: career structures and implementation

DIN 2015DIN01-111: Raleigh international experience – volunteer manager and venturer opportunities

DIN 2015DIN01-110: Senior officers

course 127 – Nato Defense College Rome – August 31, 2015 to February 5, 2016

DIN 2015DIN01-109: Visits to South Africa

DIN 2015DIN01-108: Pension reform 2015

DIN 2015DIN01-107: Staff specifically recruited for overseas service – annual uplift to monthly accommodation charges

DIN 2015DIN01-106: Armed Forces transition fair Cardiff – June 26, 2015

DIN 2015DIN01-104: Late entry commission in the Royal Army Physical Training Corps

DIN 2015DIN02-003: Establishment of the Joint Information Assurance Coordination Cell

DIN 2015DIN04-122: Notice of DMC 34F and DMC NP obsolescence

DIN 2015DIN04-121: Declaration of confirmed out of service date for rifle 7.62mm L129A1 sniper support weapon; DMC L129, NSN 1005-99-894-1559

DIN 2015DIN04-120: Declaration of obsolete thermal imager HMNVS (TI HMNVS/TAM-14)

DIN 2015DIN04-119: Beyond line of sight equipment transfer

DIN 2015DIN04-117: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – inclusion of Ambu aView monitors and aScope flexible videoscope within medical modules

DIN 2015DIN04-116: Defence Equipment Support transfer of chemical biological radiological and nuclear suits, boots and gloves management functions and change of contact details

DIN 2015DIN04-115: Amendments to operational medical modules contents (May 2015)

DIN 2015DIN04-114: Confirmation of remaining life of mortar barrels L16A1 and L16A2

DIN 2015DIN04-113: Declaration of the back loading instructions for the 37mm less lethal gun L127A1

DIN 2015DIN04-112: Revised procedure for demands on direct delivery of timber

DIN 2015DIN04-111: Declaration of obsolescence of sling lifting weapons Mk 1 and Mk 2 armament ground support equipment, type codes DAC and DTD

DIN 2015DIN04-110: Notification of contract placement: DC/04036. PPE mixed and disposable clothing

DIN 2015DIN04-109: Obsolete DMC LACS

DIN 2015DIN04-107: Obsolete DMC 3V5A

DIN 2015DIN04-106: Declaration of obsolete ground commander pointer (GCP-1B)

DIN 2015DIN04-105: Defence Fire Risk Management Organisation rescue from height

DIN 2015DIN04-102: Amendments to operational medical modules contents (January-April, 2015)

DIN 2015DIN04-101: Guidelines for disposal of PJHQ Promina equipment

DIN 2015DIN06-017: JSP403 Volume 1 – *Handbook of Defence Ranges Safety Part 1 and 2* (V1.1 May 2015)

DIN 2015DIN06-016: Container weighing verification

DIN 2015DIN07-106: Provision of pre-deployment health briefings to troops and units deploying on joint operations

DIN 2015DIN07-104: CN 1308 – Authorised representative course – revised student pre-training requirements

DIN 2015DIN07-102: Adventurous training sea kayaking: planning expeditions to Cyprus in 2016

DIN 2015DIN07-101: All Arms battlenoise safety supervisor course

DIN 2015DIN07-100: Introduction of online training for Defence Medical Information Capability Programme users

DIN 2015DIN07-099: Provision of DAEMS II training

DIN 2015DIN07-098: Conversion training to senior non-commissioned officer weapons controllers

DIN 2015DIN07-097: Maritime Warfare Centre courses spring term 2016 to spring term 2017

DIN 2015DIN07-095: Joint Service sail training Exercise Scotwest 2015

DIN 2015DIN07-094: UK special forces units briefing course dates, selection course dates and medical standards

DIN 2015DIN07-092: Joint Service adventurous training sub-aqua diving 2016 expedition dates for Ascension Island, Cyprus and Gibraltar

DIN 2015DIN08-008: Non-entitled cash casual meal charge for financial year 2015/16

DIN 2015DIN08-007: Claims for loss of, or damage to, personal property (regulation claims)

DIN 2015DIN08-006: Credit unions – access by Armed Forces personnel

DIN 2015DIN08-005: Non-entitled accommodation rates

DIN 2015DIN09-009: Honours, decorations and medals, the Operational Service Medal for Afghanistan – Operation Tora

DIN 2015DIN10-033: British Army motorsports event – Bramley Express 2015

DIB14/15: Post-general election ministerial appointments and private office contacts

DIB13/15: Publication of the results of the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2015 report



REUNION

Remembrance Travel, The Royal British Legion tour operator, will be arranging free tours to the Normandy beaches in September and October for Normandy veterans, a carer and a close relative. Funded by the Libor bank fines, the five-day tours will depart from London and include a ferry crossing, accommodation and visits to the beaches, Bayeux Cathedral and war cemetery. A medic and a Royal British Legion guide will accompany the tours. Veterans wishing to benefit from this should apply via www.remembrancetravel.co.uk or telephone Remembrance Travel's tour operator, Arena Travel, on 01473 660800.

The Royal Pioneer Corps Association annual reunion on July 3-5 at The Royal Court Hotel, Coventry. For full details contact Norman Brown on 01869 360694 or email royalpioneer corps@gmail.com

Royal Green Jackets Association annual veterans day on July 18 at ATR(W), Sir John Moore Barracks, Winchester. Open to all past and present riflemen and partners. For full details contact Maj (Retd) Roy Stanger on 01962 887916 or email roy.stanger787@mod.uk

Army Apprentices College Harrogate "Intake 75C" 40-year reunion. September 12, Majestic Hotel Harrogate. Accommodation available at the hotel. Bar opens at 1800. For more details email ray.bray@gmail.com

Mansergh Troop 75/76 Joint Leaders Regiment Royal Artillery reunion on September 12-13, 2015. Open to all ex-Mansergh Troop 75/76 and their partners. Exact venue and timings to be confirmed. To attend contact Mike Cave on 07516 633675

23/144 Parachute Field Ambulance Old Comrades Association dinner, combined with the Midlands Region Parachute Regiment Association gala dinner, at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry on October 10. For more information contact Roy Hatch on 01926 812363.

8 Regiment RASC/RCT/RLC 14th anniversary reunion dinner on October 24. Open to any cap badge who served between October 1964 and July 2012. For further information email Jimmy Aspinall jimmyasp@hotmail.com or David Southall dcsouthall@aol.com



SEARCHLINE

The National Army Museum "Heritage Helpers" crowd-sourcing platform needs assistance from members of the public to transcribe and tag images in their unique online archive to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, for their *Waterloo Lives: In Their Own Words* project. For more information about the National Army Museum's Waterloo Lives programme, visit www.waterloo200.org

The Kent and Medway Civilian Military Partnership Board is looking for as many current and former Armed Forces and ex-Service personnel and their partners as possible to complete a short questionnaire regarding their needs and those of their families in Kent and Medway. The survey will remain anonymous. The closing date for completion is July 31, with the overall findings and results of the research published in early 2016. Visit www.kent.gov.uk/armedforces to take part.

The publishers of a new book, Afghanistan – Britain's War in Helmand, are looking for anecdotes to include in the publication. The historical account will be reviewed by the MoD before it is published and is being collated by two former officers. Ex-soldiers can send their stories and images directly but if you are serving

please inform the chain of command. Contact DRA Publishing, Sherwell House, 54 Staddiscombe Road, Plymouth PL9 9NB or send an email to david@dramedia.co.uk

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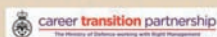
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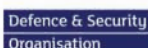
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MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH:
SPY

THE RISE OF McCARTHY

FORMER BRIDESMAID
TURNS SUPER-SPOOK

Review: Joe Clapson

MELISSA McCarthy isn't out of the usual glamorous and gorgeous mould of Hollywood superstars but she is certainly hot property at the moment and *Spy* further proves her credentials.

After taking all the plaudits for *Bridesmaids* and gaining a cult TV following with *Mike and Molly* the plus-size actress once again steals the show when she transforms from a deskbound CIA analyst into an undercover agent tasked with saving the world.

McCarthy, as the frumpy Susan Cooper, stars alongside Jude Law, a super-slick Bond-esque agent and Jason Statham, a macho spy brimming with testosterone and chauvinism.

The film (out now in cinemas) begins with Cooper acting as the eyes and ears for top agent Bradley Fine (Law) as he breezes through dangerous scenarios killing off bad guys while remaining effortlessly cool.

However, when Fine goes MIA and an unassuming agent who hasn't been compromised is needed to save the day, it is the dowdy "cat lady from Oregon" (as Cooper is dubbed) that steps up to the plate.

Given that the movie sees McCarthy reunited with writer-director Paul Feig (*Bridesmaids*, *The Heat*) it was a safe bet that laughs would be plentiful.

The pair once again prove their comedy prowess with a mixture of physical funniness, which errs on the ridiculous (McCarthy performing martial arts), a sharp script and what appear to be ad-lib moments where the female lead has been given a free rein.

It all makes for a Bond spoof to overshadow those that have gone before.

As far as the other talent is concerned, they too put in decent shifts with Statham perhaps the surprise turn in the role of Richard Ford.

Law, who in his younger days might have made a fine 007, sends up his character with a touch of class while Statham, as the resident cockney neanderthal, delivers a notable comic performance.

The spooks travel from Paris to Rome to Istanbul on the hunt for Rayna Boyanov (Rose Byrne), a criminal mastermind planning to sell nuclear weapons.

After overcoming the initial panic of being out of her depth in the field Cooper turns from a meek and mild doormat armed with haemorrhoid wipes and stool softener into a no-nonsense, foul-mouthed ass-kicker.

As expected Miranda Hart, as Nancy, offers up her usual character as Cooper's moronic British sidekick, but astonishingly her basic slapstick routines transfer very well to the big screen.

Memorable scenes such as the comedienne pouncing on an unsuspecting 50 Cent may well earn the bumbling Englishwoman more bookings alongside the showbiz A-list.

The unlikely team of Cooper, Ford and Nancy blunder their way into and out of trouble while their ball-breaking cleanliness-obsessed boss Elaine Crocker (Allison Janney) calls the shots from a high-tech but vermin-infested Langley headquarters.

The one-liners and throwaway comments are memorable and the action comes thick and fast but the movie is by no means groundbreaking – it's basically this generation's *Austin Powers*, which is no bad thing.

McCarthy has carved herself a lucrative niche as the larger-than-life funny woman who brings hilarity via shock tactics and pure physicality.

Spy is an example of how the formula is working and more of the same is what the masses want. ■

VERDICT: Melissa McCarthy leads the way in a laugh-out-loud Bond spoof ★★★★★



THE LOFT: out now

KARL Urban and **Wentworth Miller** star in this thriller about five guys who use their upmarket loft to entertain their mistresses. Everything is fine until a woman's body is found at the abode and naturally the group become murder suspects. The well-made film has a good, easy-to-follow plot while Miller provides eye-candy for female viewers.

Darren McCall, ex AGC (SPS)

VERDICT: Something for everyone with a decent storyline ★★★★★



OUT OF THE DARK out now

THE daughter of a wealthy factory owner moves to Columbia with her young family to take over her father's business. However, on arrival all is not as wonderful as it seems when paranormal activity begins. Unfortunately, this is as interesting as the movie gets and the story fails to develop in any way. Even capable actors cannot save the plot.

Dominic King, ex-RAF

VERDICT: Fails to live up to its potential as a horror or a thriller ★★★★★



CAN'T COME OUT TO PLAY out now

DIRECTED by John McNaughton, the movie tells the story of Andy, a seriously ill boy who is protected from the outside world by his mother, played brilliantly by **Samantha Morton**. It is a very well put together psychological thriller with a detailed storyline and a strong group of actors, which make for an enjoyable watch.

Lt Michael Dawson, AGC (SPS)

VERDICT: A must for fans of psychological thrillers ★★★★★



WOMAN IN BLACK 2 out July 13

AT the start of the Second World War a group of children are evacuated with their headmistress to a large abandoned house on the English coast. Here the well-acted characters awaken the *Woman in Black* who once again makes her terrifying presence felt. The shock-factor of the original film isn't quite there but this sequel is still disturbing.

Dominic King, ex-RAF

VERDICT: Atmospheric dark horror with plenty of frights ★★★★★



REVENGE OF THE GREEN DRAGONS out now

THIS is the tale of two young men who join a notorious gang in a neighbourhood dominated by Chinese immigrants. Restaurants are protected or owned by thugs and the film employs comfortable clichés. The action scenes are poorly directed and there is no chemistry between the actors. It has potential for a good story but that gets lost here.

Cpl Fiona McNeil, AGC (SPS)

VERDICT: Clichéd gangster movie that misses the mark ★★★★★



WIN... THE GUNMAN

AFTER assassinating Congo's minister of mining and surviving an attempt on his own life Jim Terrier (**Sean Penn**) flies to London to find out who wants him dead and why. *Soldier* has teamed up with Studio Canal to offer five readers an opportunity to win a copy on DVD. To enter the competition tell us how many Academy awards Penn has won. Send your answer to the usual address or email comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: July 31

MUSIC

A black and white photograph of the band Drones. Three men are shown from the chest up. The man on the left is looking towards the camera with a serious expression. The man in the center is shown in profile, looking to the right. The man on the right is looking towards the camera. They are all wearing dark clothing. The background is dark and out of focus.

PICK OF THE MONTH:
DRONES

GUITAR HEROES

TRIO DITCH EXPERIMENTATION IN
FAVOUR OF ROCK ROOTS

Review: Richard Long

In a career spanning more than 15 years Muse have forged a reputation as one of the country's premier rock acts.

A lengthy back catalogue has formed the basis for the spectacular live shows the three-piece have become famed for and with new material now added to the mix the show will certainly go on.

While previous release *The 2nd Law* was characterised by a distinctly experimental approach the group's latest offering *Drones* marks a return to the guitar-driven sound that underpinned their early success.

Singer-songwriter Matt Bellamy explained how this was the intention from the outset and revealed that the inclusion of producer Robert "Mutt" Lange (*Def Leppard*, *AC/DC*) allowed them to concentrate on capturing a more edgy sound.

"We set out to achieve a return to the basics of how the band started out," he added. "It was about getting back to a three-piece sound of guitars, bass and drums."

"It is a very guitar-heavy album and we tried to distance ourselves from technology, there are less synths and it is a more simplistic approach."

"We brought in Mutt so we didn't have to get bogged down on the production side of things; it meant we could focus on playing together and that gave us more time to just be a band."

And while the collaborator was welcomed to the fold he also placed new demands on the trio.

Bellamy added: "The biggest challenge was coming to terms with the degree of perfection Mutt was looking for."

"For us that was alien. We were musically raised in the 90s when being a bit raw was seen as cool."

"We found ourselves in a juxtaposition between our intention to go towards the looser end of the spectrum and his quest for perfection."

"In the end we tried to meet somewhere in the middle. There were a few arguments along the way but we got there in the end."

As a big fan of Muse's early albums – particularly *Showbiz* and *Origin of Symmetry* – it was disappointing to see the group migrate towards overly complicated synth arrangements and flamboyant stadium anthems in their more recent efforts.

So talk of a return to basics provoked much intrigue ahead of the release of *Drones*.

The band's intentions are made abundantly clear in the superb *Psycho* – with its pounding drums, heavy bass and screeching riffs – and the formula is repeated on *Reapers* and *The Handler*.

But old habits are hard to shake and there are hints of synthesisers and even a tinge of exuberance on the likes of *Mercy* and *Revolt*, although the balance is perfectly judged as the rock sound still prevails.

However, this album is more than just an exercise in cranking up the amps and thrashing the guitars.

As a concept the tracks tell a story of oppression as the human race is forced into a drone-like state before rising up in rebellion.

This journey is perfectly captured in the tracks *Psycho*, where the lyrics chart the brainwashing of the latest unwilling participant, and the defiant retort of *Defector*.

Having approached this record with a little trepidation it was pleasing to hear that Muse have returned to a formula that served them so well in the past.

And while this is a little more polished than material from those glory days there is no escaping the sense that they are back on the right track. ■

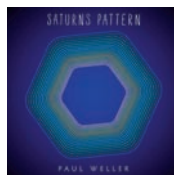
VERDICT: Screaming guitars and a synth departure see Muse back on form ★★★★★

Saturn's Pattern

by Paul Weller

ON first impressions **The Jam's** former

frontman has created another definitive sound on this album, his 12th studio offering. The music **Paul Weller** has encompassed is one of rock mixed with gentle harmonies and a touch of blues. But there are also hints of his early sound on *These City Streets*, which is reminiscent of **The Style Council**. This is more than equal to the great songs he has created previously and will guarantee a new following.



Tony David, ex-RE

VERDICT: A musical mix that forms the perfect chill-out album ★★★★★

In Times

by Enslaved

DIVERSE influences and a rare sort of stubborn simplicity that echoes the band **Venom** has set **Enslaved's** latest effort ahead of the rest. A cynic might dismiss a lot of this work as nothing more than faithful Viking metal and, truth be told, some sections almost feel like demos as they are so safe. But you'd be hard pressed to find fundamental flaws in this clean, progressive sound, exemplified in the hypnotic fusion of *Nauthir Bleeding*.



LCpl Lindsay Whyte, Int Corps

VERDICT: Elegance that surpasses expectation levels ★★★★★

How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful

by Florence and The Machine

BELTING vocals and a dynamic stage presence saw the stock of **Florence Welch** swiftly rise on the back of early albums *Lungs* and *Ceremonials*. But the flame-haired songstress has dropped the pace on her latest offering, where tranquil and melodic tunes dominate proceedings. This new approach proves successful but those yearning for a chest-pumping anthem will welcome the inclusion of *Third Eye*, which certainly packs a punch.



Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: Soft in sound but as effective as what has gone before ★★★★★

Wilder Mind

by Mumford and Sons

FOLK rockers **Mumford and Sons** have ditched the banjos and reached for the electric guitars for a third album that marks

a distinct change in direction. Having never been a massive fan of the band this offering came as a breath of fresh air and the raw, energy-charged sound of *The Wolf* is a true highlight. **Marcus Mumford's** gravelly vocals are the ideal accompaniment for this new approach, making *Wilder Mind* a definite hit.



Richard Long, Soldier

VERDICT: Cranking up the amps spawns positive results ★★★★★

Getting Through

by The Riptide Movement

FINALLY a British indie rock band we can be excited about. *Getting Through* is the group's third album and getting through it wasn't a drama whatsoever. *All Works Out* is a ballsy song and *Friday to Sunday* tells it how it is for those in the student fraternity. There are even slight hints of old-school working class rock, which is nicely summed up with the track *Glor* – where horns, harmonicas and cheeky guitar riffs are packed to the brim.



LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

VERDICT: An album from a band with real potential and promise ★★★★★

Extinct

by Moonspell

AS the sole member of the un-blackened gothic metal scene, **Moonspell** seem oblivious to past achievements on albums such as *Sin*, *Alpha Noir* and *The Antidote* and have become lost in a discography without direction or feel. Although their cool, effortlessly rhythmic execution makes for a soft landing each time, the prevailing stink of power metal and sickly sweet punk rock on this record leaves us frustratingly short-changed.



LCpl Lindsay Whyte, Int Corps

VERDICT: We're still waiting for their best work ★★★★★

BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH:
GHOST FLIGHT

GRYLLS GETS A GRILLING

BEAR'S FICTIONAL FORAY FALLS FLAT



Ghost Flight by Bear Grylls is out now, priced £16.99

Review: Andy Kay, ex-RS

SURVIVALIST, TV presenter and all-round action hero, Bear Grylls, is a man of many talents. Unfortunately though, his debut offering as an author of adult fiction misses the mark.

Having penned several adventure novels aimed at teenagers, *Ghost Flight* is his first foray into writing for an older readership.

In it, we meet ex-special forces soldier Will Jaeger, whose company runs extreme expeditions and who is hired to track down a German aircraft that disappeared in the Amazonian jungle in 1945 – supposedly with vital information about the Nazis' activities after the war on-board.

Meanwhile, his wife and child have also been kidnapped and someone seems to want him dead.

As the mission to recover the plane and get to the truth progresses, a series of increasingly improbable escapades stretch credibility to breaking point.

The team meet an indigenous tribe that has had no contact with the outside world but, helpfully, one of them speaks English.

Using the same parachutes that they dropped into the rainforest with they later pull off a base jump over a 1,000-foot waterfall into a piranha-infested pool.

Further along, super weapons that have languished in the jungle for 70 years still work perfectly.

And so it goes on. I realise that this is a work of fiction but please.

The far-fetched plot makes it seem as if Grylls has tried to stuff far too much into one book.

It is also overly long, partly because he feels the need to explain, in detail, everything that happens and how it works.

Other authors in the military thriller genre – Andy McNab, Chris Ryan *et al* – rightly assume that the reader understands much of what is being said but Grylls interferes too much with the narrative in his explanations, which I found annoying and patronising after a while.

I think a good editor could have cut down the text by a quarter and still made a readable tale.

Tangents, confusing timelines and sub-plots also slow down the action but one of the most annoying things of all is that after 565 pages the story does not come to any kind of conclusion – instead it just moves into the first chapter of the sequel.

That in itself is no bad thing – the publisher is trying to sell a series after all – but the way it was done was very clumsy and frustrating.

For me, Grylls' book has few redeeming qualities. He has come up with a reasonably compelling plot – escaped Nazis, secret weapons and the like – but it's all been done before and if the story was tightened up and concentrated more on the task it would have been a much less turgid read.

His special forces background and personal survival skills certainly come to the fore but in my opinion if he did a bit less grandstanding about it the storyline would flow better and seem less contrived.

Although it is aimed at adults, I came to the conclusion that it must have been written with a much younger and – dare I say it – less cynical audience in mind.

The Grylls brand will no doubt help to sell this disappointing book but if you ask me he would be better off sticking to his tried and tested on-screen formula and non-fiction titles. ■

VERDICT: So implausible that I struggled to even get through it ★★★★★

The Fires of Babylon

by Mike Guardia

THIS book follows the exploits of Eagle Troop of the American 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment during the first Gulf War. It starts with short biographies of the men and as a result I felt more connected to them as they faced the first real combat of their careers. There's nothing in here that would surprise you but if you're interested in modern armoured warfare and tactics then this is well worth a read.



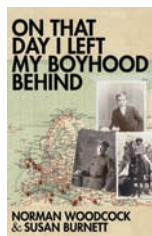
Thor Elsson, Dorset ACF

VERDICT: An easy read with plenty of photos and maps ★★★★★

On That Day I Left My Boyhood Behind

by N Woodcock and S Burnett

THIS account of a young man called up in 1914 and sent off to fight at Gallipoli is one of the best books I have ever read. It is based on signaller Norman Woodcock's personal memoirs, as well as on conversations he later had with his grandchildren. His recollections of having to say goodbye to his trusty horse were particularly poignant. I am grateful to Susan Burnett for sharing her grandfather's story.



Bridget Salvage, civvy

VERDICT: A heartbreaking and inspiring wartime tale ★★★★★

Special Forces In The War On Terror

by Leigh Neville

COLOURFUL, informative and very well written, this title is a must-read for all elite forces enthusiasts. It covers special operations since 2001 in places like Afghanistan and Iraq but also new theatres such as Somalia, Libya and Yemen and their impact on the development of the capability. With a fascinating narrative and previously unseen pictures, once I picked this book up I couldn't put it down.



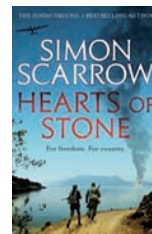
Darren McCall, ex-AGC (SPS)

VERDICT: A must for anyone interested in special ops ★★★★★

Hearts of Stone

by Simon Scarrow

MY first thought on reading this book was that it is quite a departure from Simon Scarrow's usual Roman and gladiator-themed novels. In this offering he brings to life occupied Greece during the Second World War. Three young friends are caught up in the conflict and vow to meet again when the troubles are over. Fans of more action-packed historical fiction may find that this story is a bit heavy on romance.



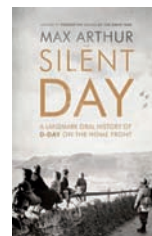
Tony David, ex-RE

VERDICT: An enjoyable yarn but lacking swash and buckle ★★★★★

Silent Day

by Max Arthur

ACCLAIMED author Max Arthur has succeeded again in making wartime exploits and memories accessible to everybody. This collection of chronological diary and letter extracts from civilians, schoolchildren and British, American and Canadian forces gives a fascinating insight into the build-up to and invasion of France on D-Day. I found myself smiling one minute and aghast the next.



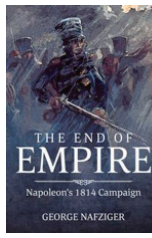
SSgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps

VERDICT: A truly memorable book that I could not put down ★★★★★

The End of Empire

by George Nafziger

ACCORDING to Wellington, Napoleon's 1814 campaign revealed his genius like no other. The emperor's victories culminated in early February. After that, weight of numbers decided the match, despite mistakes by Allied generals. George Nafziger has consulted all authorities, considered the evidence, and gives a sound narrative and analysis of the fighting, with clear maps and good illustrations.



Dr Rodney Atwood, military historian

VERDICT: Comprehensive, clear and well researched ★★★★★

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Adventurous Training Group (Army)

JOINT SERVICE MOUNTAIN TRAINING CENTRE

Developing Leaders and Instructors

SOLDIERSPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long

Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Pushing hard: The Army downhill mountain biking team has been training with one of the world's top riders. Read more about their exploits on page 82...





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SAPPERS STAR IN REDBRIDGE

A DOMINANT victory for Spr Alex Royle capped a fine afternoon for the Royal Engineers in the Redbridge leg of cycling's Inter-Corps Road Race Series.

The full-time athlete – who competes at national level – stormed to the front of the field and his lead never looked in doubt as he stretched his advantage with each lap before eventually finishing more than a minute clear of his rivals.

With fellow sappers figuring prominently in the peloton the team was able to cement its place at the top of the standings after four rounds.

"The standard of these events has really improved," Royle told *SoldierSport* after reaching the finish line.

"That makes it more enjoyable and you really have to push on if you want to win.

"I think it is important for the other lads to see the level they should be aiming for.

"I always improve when riding with stronger racers and hopefully it is the same for these guys.

"There has been a big push for us to get on tracks such as this and it is a great circuit. It has some technical corners that will improve bike handling skills and there is a good kick at the end.

"There is also a hill climb, which means you have to gauge your effort correctly, so there is a lot to think about."

Royle is balancing his efforts on the bike with career progression at 42

Engineer Regiment and recently attended a two-week promotion course.

However, his attention will turn to the Inter-Services races that follow later in the season while also maintaining his commitments on the civilian circuit.

For event organiser Sgt Ben Bradley (RE) the race marked the continuation of a successful campaign as around 90 soldiers lined up on the start line.

"The numbers are very good," he explained. "We are now using purpose-built facilities and that means the guys can really progress.

"Sites like the Redbridge Cycling Centre have chicanes, hills and rolling corners and that helps people improve

across the board.

"It is a great opportunity for us to come here but the traditional airfield tracks still have their place."

Pte Charmaine Porter (RLC) won the women's race, with LCpl Jennings (RLC) taking the B race title.

SSgt Graham Rogerson (RE) was runner-up in the main event, with Capt Bruce Spilsbury (RLC) finishing third.

The Royal Engineers were celebrating again at the competition's fifth stage in York, where Rogerson took top spot to reaffirm the team's dominance this season.

The riders are due to race at London's Olympic Park on July 1 with further rounds to follow in Upavon on July 15 and Catterick on July 22. ■



"The standard has improved – you really have to push on if you want to win"

Spr Alex Royle (RE)



THE Service's rugby league players may find themselves in the shadows of their union counterparts but the women's game has two stars that are going all-out to put the sport on the map.

Sgt Amy Robinson (AGC (RMP)) and Cpl Carrie Roberts (REME) were included in the England squad that recently travelled to France for a two-match tour that formed part of the group's preparations for the 2017 World Cup.

Both soldiers caught the eye while playing for the Great Britain Armed Forces team in last year's Associations Cup and having been named in the 20-man party they are determined to claim a place in the starting line-up for the showpiece event.

For Robinson the call-up represented the continuation of an international career that started 13 years ago.

She was part of the national set-up as a 16-year-old but on joining the Service she progressed towards rugby union before eventually returning to her favoured code of league.

"This is a massive confidence boost," she told *SoldierSport* on the eve of the tour. "I'm no spring chicken, I'm now 29 and have been playing since I was seven.

"I've got a couple of niggles but on the whole I'm fit and ready to go.

"Hopefully I can get a game so I can show what I'm made of and move towards World Cup selection.

"The next couple of years are going to be really busy and I want to stay involved.

"There are a lot of young girls in the group and we don't have much experience as a side but the motivation and commitment is there and that should hold us in good stead."

Robinson's focus is also on the Army team and having recently been made captain she is looking forward to a successful

LEAGUE LEADERS

TARGET WORLD CUP BOW

Army duo looking to make their mark following international call





Pictures: SBS Photography

campaign in 2015.

The stand-off explained that the set-up is different to that of rugby union, where the women's game has a flourishing corps scene that feeds into the Service squad.

She said: "We are looking okay. We've just had our first match of the season and a lot of players are still making the transition from union to league.

"But we do not have the corps system so this is very much a development side as well. It would be great to have something similar but union is more popular due to high profile events like the Army-Navy game.

"People may not think they are good enough to play for the Army but we can help them progress.

"We want them to get involved so they can improve."

The squad has made giant strides in recent times and was crowned team of the year at the 2014 Army Sports Awards.

Roberts (pictured far left) has been an integral member of the group and her England call represents an international double for the dual-code star.

Fine form for civilian club Saracens saw her included in union's England academy set-up but representing her country at league's World Cup remains a top priority.

"It has come as a massive surprise," Roberts said after she was named in the party for France.

"Being in the Army it is hard for me to get up north to train with a civilian club and I assumed the girls who are involved day-in day-out would have more of a chance than me.

"The England coach is looking for the right group of players to take to the World Cup. Being selected for this tour has given me the confidence to go out and prove that I have the ability to be in a squad that

will hopefully become world champions in 2017.

"I'm really looking forward to the challenge in France. The games will be staged in the test match conditions we will face at the World Cup so there is a bit more pressure on us."

Roberts said the Service has played a key role in pushing individuals towards the Great Britain Armed Forces team, which proved to be the springboard for her England selection.

"There are a lot of people in the Army who love the sport of rugby league," the NCO added.

"Without them I don't think I'd even have a foot in the door.

"I'm based at 11 Training Battalion, REME and am in a job where we have to get guys through different courses.

"But my bosses have been really supportive and have given me a lot of time off. My commanding officer is into sport and she has been a massive help."

Despite league forming her immediate focus Roberts also found time to reflect on a successful union campaign and her progress with the England academy.

"When I line up with people who are at a higher level it makes me play better," she added.

"I know I have to step up every time I take to the field.

"I recently played a few fixtures and received positive feedback from the coaches. I'm really pleased with this and hopefully I can continue to develop in the union code." ■

"I'm really looking forward to the challenge"

"



For more details on how to get involved join the Army Rugby League Women group on Facebook or call Lt Rachel Farnham on 07535 004251

Bowlers set the tone

Inter-Services Twenty20

Royal Navy 104
British Army 107-3

Royal Air Force 218-8
Royal Navy 148-8

Royal Air Force 119-7
British Army 120-6

ARUTHLESS display with the ball laid the foundations for a comprehensive title defence by the Army in the annual Inter-Services Twenty20 showdown at Lord's.

Maj Alex Senneck (R Signals) blew the Royal Air Force's top order away with a devastating spell as the Reds secured a four-wicket victory in the tournament decider to lift the trophy for a third successive season.

The officer recorded figures of 3-16 as the challengers struggled to gain momentum with the bat before eventually finishing on 119-7 – a total that was at least 30 runs short of being competitive.

Having removed danger men SAC Ross Diver, Cpl Jake Wray and Cpl Graeme Cessford in his four-over

burst, Senneck watched his fellow bowlers maintain the stranglehold for the remainder of the innings.

Skipper LCpl Jacques Prinsloo (RE) had LAC Tom Shorthouse caught on the boundary as he looked to pick up the pace and when Flt Lt Adam Fisher was stumped off the bowling of Cpl Ross Dearden (RE) the RAF were struggling at 56-5.

But SAC Andy McGeorge and all-rounder Cpl Tom Chapman stemmed the flurry of wickets to post a 41-run partnership, with the latter launching three sixes into the stands as the counter-attack gathered momentum.

However, LCpl Brannon Varley (AMS) struck a decisive blow as Chapman was caught at third man while attempting a wild heave into the leg side, leaving McGeorge to finish proceedings with three sweetly-timed boundaries from the last four deliveries.

Senneck's efforts up front were complemented by a return of 2-18 from Varley's economic spell.

The Army made a positive start in reply as LBdr Graham Wiseman (RA) smashed spinner Flt Lt Scott Edmed for six in the first over.

He and fellow opener Maj Storm Green (Coldm Gds)

rotated the strike and picked off the boundaries with relative ease as the score swiftly moved to 47-0 at the end of the power play.

The introduction of ex-Worcestershire man Cessford ensured the soldiers did not have things entirely their own way and he claimed the wicket of Wiseman after the right-hander raced to 25 from just 19 balls.

Green was then trapped leg before off the bowling of Flt Lt Jim Iago and when Varley became Cessford's second victim for one the soldiers found themselves at 53-3.

Middle-order pair LCpl Jay Boynton (REME) and LBdr Sherwin Govender (RA) adopted a cautious approach as the run-chase suffered a dip in tempo before the latter started to cut loose.

But after manoeuvring the champions-elect to within touching distance of their target the duo fell to successive deliveries from Chapman and medium pacer Cpl Kieran Pearce.

Senneck was then dismissed for seven as the tension continued to mount but Fus Marlon Simon (R Welsh) eased the soldiers' nerves as he struck the winning blow in the 19th over.

The Army had earlier made



“ Our bowling unit worked very well and we applied pressure at vital times ”

LCpl Jacques Prinsloo (RE)

SOLDIERSPORT SITREP



33

the **top score** from an **Army batsman on the day**, posted by **LCpl Brannon Varley (AMS)** against the Navy

3

Inter-Services Twenty20 titles won by the Reds in the six years that the competition has been staged at **Lord's**

57

extras leaked by the **Navy** and **RAF** against the **Army**. The **26 runs** gifted by the **airmen** was the **top score** in the soldiers' innings



5

wickets taken by **player-of-the-tournament Maj Alex Senneck (R Signals)** in two matches at a cost of **39 runs** and an average of **7.8**



the perfect start to their title defence as they won the toss and invited the Royal Navy to bat in the competition's opening match.

Prinsloo saw his decision reap early dividends as Senneck bowled opener Cpl Kevin Bridgen for six and Simon had the dangerous ET Ben Kohler-Cadmore caught on the boundary edge as he chased a maximum.

Senneck claimed his second scalp when AB Keiron Evans was trapped leg before and Mne Jordan Evans followed moments later as he lobbed a simple catch to WO2 Ian Dixon (REME) off the bowling of Dearden.

The Navy's slump continued as all-rounder Lt Dan Robbins gifted Boynton a wicket in his first over.

At 54-5 the challengers looked as though they would fall well short of a decent score but a 37-run stand between the hard-hitting Cpl Alvin Pollard and Lt Cdr Jon Parker stopped the rot.

After a cautious start Pollard picked up the pace with a succession of boundaries but the dismissal of Parker for six sparked a late collapse as the Senior Service slumped from 91-5 to a below-par 104 all out.

Senneck was the pick of the Reds' attack as he recorded

figures of 2-23 from his four overs, with Varley claiming 2-9 from his two-over spell.

The run chase suffered an early blow as Green was bowled by Logs Shorn Bobb for three and Wiseman suffered a similar fate at the hands of Sgt Jon Grasham as the Reds slipped to 28-2.

But with such a small total to chase the remainder of the innings proved to be a formality for the soldiers as they reached 107-3 inside 15 overs. Varley bowled with a knock of 33 – which included five boundaries – and the composed Dixon finished 27 not out. ■

Game brief

Date: Thursday, June 11 2015

Competition: Inter-Services T20

Venue: Lord's Cricket Ground

Army v Navy

Wiseman	Green	Dearden
Boynton		
Varley		Ollerenshaw
Simon		
Dixon		Prinsloo
Govender		
	Senneck	

Army v RAF: Van der Vyver for Dixon; Redfern for Ollerenshaw

Captain's comment

Our bowling unit worked very well and we applied pressure at vital stages. We didn't give anything for the opposition batsmen to work with.

There were some great individual efforts. Alex Senneck was fantastic in both games, while Brannon Varley and Ross Dearden made key contributions; that shows it was a real team effort on the day.

Against the RAF we went through the power play unscathed but then lost quick wickets which brought two new guys to the crease. The same thing happened later in the innings but we got there in the end.



LCpl Jacques Prinsloo (RE)

MONTH in sport

July's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services swimming, diving and water polo

WHEN: Thursday, July 2 to Saturday, July 4

WHERE: HMS *Temeraire*, Portsmouth

COMMENTS: The Army women will be hoping to continue their domination but the men need to close the gap on their rivals



WHAT: Inter-Services Athletics Championships

WHEN: Wednesday, July 8

WHERE: Military Stadium, Aldershot

COMMENTS: Sgt Laura McGawn inspired the RAF women to victory in 2014 but the Army men were the team to beat – winning by 24 points



WHAT: Inter-Services women's cricket

WHEN: Monday, July 13 to Thursday, July 16

WHERE: RAF Vine Lane

COMMENTS: The schedule features 40-over and Twenty20 competitions and the Army are defending champions in both formats of the game



Minnaar makes friends

HAVING tasted World Cup glory on the rugged terrain at Fort William downhill mountain bike star Greg Minnaar took time out of his busy schedule to offer some expert tips to the Army's pool of riders.

The South African ace was the special guest as the team took to the challenging trails of Penhurst Off-Road Club for a training session staged by sponsors O'Neal.

For the soldiers the opportunity to shine in front of a professional athlete came at the perfect time as they head towards the height of the season.

"We cannot compete

with guys like Greg as they are professionals," development team manager Sgt Chris Mount (RE) told *SoldierSport*.

"If we tried to follow his lines we would be in a world of pain.

"But we can be inspired to ride in a similar way and I believe that in the next five years we can produce a rider at World Cup level."

The session also attracted personnel from the Army's enduro set-up, who were keen to tap into the knowledge pool of their downhill counterparts.

Cpl Joe Robson (REME) finished 38th in the E2 category at the Enduro World Series event in

Scotland and said the crossover between the two disciplines could prove vital.

"The downhill guys ride rougher, bigger jumps and will normally do just one run whereas we have to concentrate on five different routes and then get back to the top of the course," he explained.

"But we can learn a lot from them in terms of what lines to take and how to tackle the jumps.

"It was good to see what Greg does on the bike. The professionals make it look so easy but there are things we can pick up on, such as where he positions his wheels and how he always looks ahead." ■



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SPORT SHORTS



Blades of glory

A 6-3 victory over the Royal Air Force Aces saw the Army Blades secure the Inter-Services ice hockey title in Sheffield.

The soldiers defeated the Royal Navy Destroyers earlier in the tournament, with the airmen beating the same opposition 9-4.

The teams resume battle on Saturday, July 4 in a charity tournament at Telford Ice Rink in aid of SSAFA. The action starts at 1515.



Bowen's best

DISABLED athlete and former soldier Sam Bowen took top spot in the women's F44 discus at the IPC Grand Prix event in Italy.

Bowen, who served in the Royal Artillery, secured gold with a throw of 27.05 metres – finishing nearly ten metres clear of the field.

The Welsh star was a member of the British Sitting Volleyball team at the London 2012 Paralympic Games.



CROSSING THE CAPITAL

ULTRA-FIT soldiers LBdr Stuart King (RA) and Cpl Daryl Green (2 PWRR) will be pushing for national honours when they compete at crossfit's British Championships next month.

The duo will descend on London's Lee Valley Athletics Centre for the event, which pits competitors against a selection of punishing workout stations designed to test their powers of strength and endurance.

Qualification for the showdown saw the soldiers performing and recording a variety of exercises – ranging from deadlifts and burpees to box jumps and thrusters – before posting videos of their

best efforts online.

The top 80 were then selected for the finals and King (pictured below) is looking forward to squaring-off against some of the fittest athletes in the country.

"Qualifying was pretty tough and I had a couple of attempts at some of the challenges in an attempt to boost my score," the gunner told *SoldierSport*.

"The championships will be a step up and we don't know what's coming until a week before, when details of the workouts are released.

"I would like to place higher than I did in qualifying, which was 34th. Training has gone well and my unit – 5th

Regiment, Royal Artillery – has given me time off to prepare, which has really helped my cause."

Green (pictured above) was introduced to the sport via the Great British Box Tour event and has been an avid participant ever since.

"It makes you focus on things you never thought you could do," he explained.

"You have to lift weights, there are elements of gymnastics and your endurance levels are tested.

"If I could finish in the top 40 I would be more than happy but the dream is to achieve a podium place."

The championships will be held on July 4 and 5. ■





Boxers deliver in season finale

A SUCCESSFUL season of boxing action drew to a close with a feast of hard-hitting bouts at the Army Individual Championships.

An array of fighters from novice to elite level took to the ring for the four-day competition and with the Reds' coaching team looking on they were going all-out to impress.

Cpl Mathew Martin (R Signals) caught the eye with a controlled performance in his development class B final and the middleweight star was delighted to record a win in his first contest for some time.

"I was quite anxious going into the fight as I had not done much training since Christmas due to my commitments at

work," he told *SoldierSport*.

"I was part of the Royal Signals' training camp and that helped but I moved up a weight and was thinking the guys would be bigger and stronger than me.

"But after the first round those doubts fell by the wayside and I felt relaxed."

Martin (pictured) was part of the Army's novice squad in the early part of the season and he hopes to return to the fold next year.

"I went out there to impress the coaches and to show that I have improved," he added.

"To be involved with the set-up was brilliant and the facilities are second to none."

The elite light welterweight

final pitted Service fighters LCpl Ollie Knight (1 RRF) and Cpl Matt Wells (REME) against each other and it was the former who triumphed via a unanimous decision.

The victory formed a fitting finale for the athlete, who suffered a narrow defeat in this year's Combined Services.

"I was quite edgy early on but then I eased into the fight," he explained.

"I think I nicked the first two rounds but the third was too close to call.

"It was tough though. We are teammates and train together every day. We spar all the time and know so much about each other – there is a lot of respect." ■

MORRISON'S MEDAL HAUL

» BANTAMWEIGHT fighter Pte Kyle Morrison (RLC) has gained valuable international experience with strong showings at tournaments in Serbia and Spain.

The Welsh boxer started his campaign by beating the Norwegian champion to secure a bronze medal at the Belgrade Winners Cup before his attention turned to the Boxam Tournament in Murcia.

A second medal failed to follow as he lost to French rival Samuel Kistohurry at the quarter-final stage but he put the setback behind him to secure bronze at the British Championships in Sheffield.

Morrison was in action for the Army at the Haringey Box Cup as this issue went to press.



Ring report

Date: June 1-4, 2015

Competition: Individual Boxing Championships

Venue: Combat Sports Centre, Aldershot

Winners

Male Development Class A

Gnr Walker (4 Regt RA) – flyweight

Gdsm Charters (1 Gren Gds) – bantamweight

Cpl Cassidy (5 Med Regt) – lightweight

Spr Anslow (Wimbish Station) – light welterweight

Lt Coward (11 Trg Bn REME) – welterweight

LSgt Monkhouse (1 SG) – middleweight

LCpl Mitchell (1 SG) – light heavyweight

Gnr Stronach (3 RHA) – heavyweight

Female Class A

Sig Curwood (30 Sig Regt) – flyweight

Gnr Massey (19 Regt RA) – featherweight

LCpl Gee (4 Rifles) – lightweight

Male Development Class B

Gnr Bradshaw (26 Regt RA) – light welterweight

Spr Oates (1 RSME) – welterweight
Cpl Martin (11 EOD) – middleweight

Male Elite

Gnr Fillingham (29 Cdo Regt RA) – lightweight

LCpl Knight (1 RRF) – light welterweight

Pte Vian (Para) – welterweight

Pte Marvin (1 PWRR) – middleweight



SPORT SHORTS



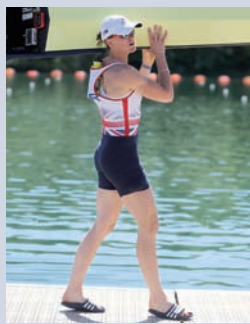
Stanning takes European gold

» **ROWING** star Capt Heather Stanning (RA) made a superb start to her international season with victory at the European Championships.

Competing alongside regular partner Helen Glover in the women's pair, the officer progressed to the final with relative ease following convincing wins in the heats and semi-finals.

The duo faced a strong field in the showpiece race that included 2014 European silver medallists Cristina Grigoras and Laura Oprea of Romania but were in complete control as they set a competition best time of 6min 58.28sec.

Stanning said: "That was a great way to kick start our season. Having a championship event in Europe is really important as rowing is such a strong sport here."



Pictures: SBS Photography

Forces fly down under

THE Great Britain Armed Forces rugby league team is hoping a winning run in this year's Associations Cup will form the springboard to success during a two-week tour of Australia.

A strong contingent of Army players have been named in the squad for this month's trip – the highlight of which will be a match against their Australian rivals in front of a potential crowd of 80,000 fans.

A run of three straight victories during their recent cup campaign means the Servicemen will head into the fixture in fine form but they are braced for a tough examination down under.

The host nation's Armed Forces triumphed 20-16 when

the sides met at the 2013 Defence World Cup and their latest encounter is a curtain-raiser to the State of Origin match between Queensland and New South Wales.

The game will be played at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium and given the high-profile nature of the sport a strong turnout is expected.

Sgt Jordan Kerman (RAPTC, pictured) is one of the Army players in the squad and he spoke about his call-up and the magnitude of the trip on the eve of departure.

"It hasn't really sunk in yet," he told *SoldierSport*. "State of Origin is probably the biggest game in rugby league and there could be 80,000 people there – it is phenomenal.

"It has taken a lot of hard work for me to get here. I have progressed from the Combined Services under-23s to the Army team and now the senior Armed Forces squad.

"The Aussies beat us in our own backyard two years ago and we want to get revenge over there.

"We know they will be a quick, strong, robust team. You see that on the international stage and it filters down to all levels.

"But we can match them. We have done a lot of conditioning work and are ready for the challenge."

The game will be played on July 8 and the tour also includes a match against a regional select side. ■

RUGBY LEAGUE



5 Army players named in the Great Britain Armed Forces squad

IN NUMBERS

110

Points scored by the military side in the 2015 Associations Cup



AUSTRALIA

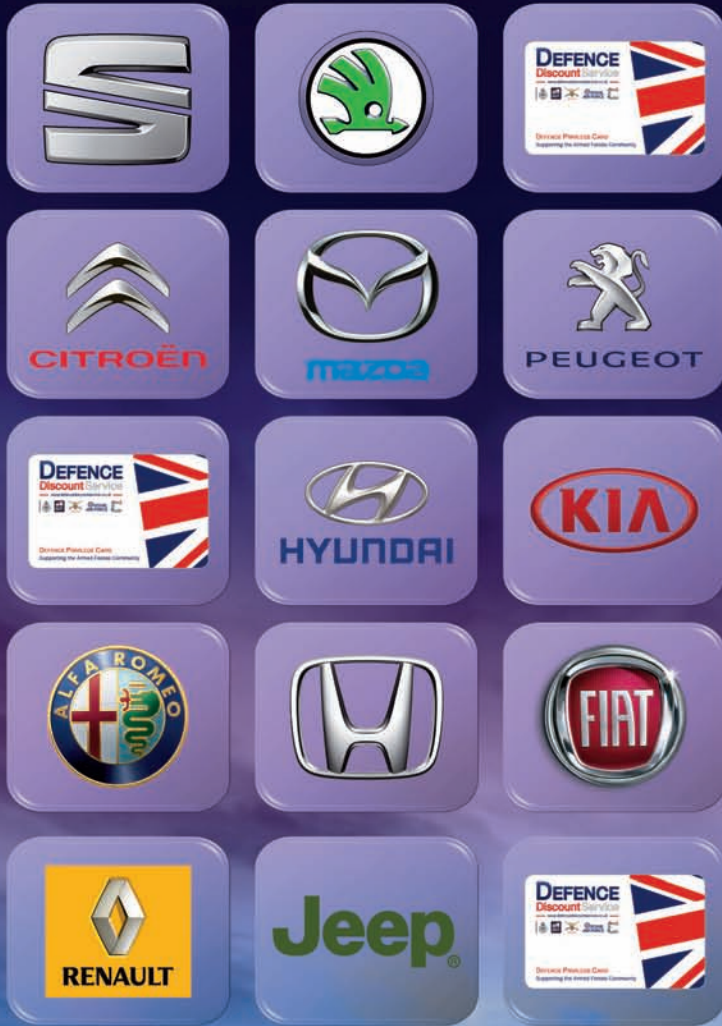
35

Years since the first State of Origin series was staged in Australia



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SPORT SHORTS



Loggies on top

» FOOTBALLERS from the Royal Logistic Corps capped a successful campaign by lifting the Massey Trophy.

A record of ten victories from 12 league games saw the loggies secure the division one crown and they were also beaten finalists in the Woolwich Cup.

The team completed their schedule with a post-season tour to the USA last month, where they played three matches and took part in a training session with LA Galaxy.

"We have brought a lot of young lads into the fold," manager Capt Sean Birchnall said. "Five of our players are in the Army under-23 squad and two others are in the senior team so that has formed a strong base."

"We started the year with a pre-season training camp in Grantham and then beat the Infantry 6-2 in our opening fixture. From there we went on a ten-game unbeaten run."



→ Team of the month

Army Women's Volleyball Team



SUBLIME form on the court saw the Army women's volleyball team reign supreme at the annual Crown Services tournament – where they triumphed in six straight matches without dropping a set.

The winning run saw the Reds lift the trophy for the first time in 43 years and with the Inter-Services Championships being staged as this issue went to press the players were confident of adding further silverware to their haul.

A 2-0 victory over the Fire Service in their opening match set the tone and the same scoreline was repeated in the other group games. The outcome was mirrored in the tournament final, where they overcame the challenge of the Police.

Coach SSgt Nikki Mead (AGC (SPS)) was thrilled with the performance of her team, who were quick

to adapt to a new approach to training.

"I've recently completed the Volleyball England level three course, which is the highest coaching qualification in the country," she told *SoldierSport*.

"I was working with the Team GB ladies Olympic coach and that gave me great insight into the sport. I based our training around this new knowledge and it worked excellently."

"Winning the Inter-Services is one thing but this has been a major goal of ours for a long time."

The inclusion of former England junior players OCdt Robyn Sayers and Lt Kim Smith (RE) was a major boost to the squad, while stalwarts LCpl Dee Bolakoro (RE) and Capt Karen Tait (AGC (RMP)) were also in fine form.

"Robyn was named most valuable player in the tournament," Mead added.

"She is only 19 years old and to have someone so fresh and keen, who gives everything in training, is great for us."

"Karen is our skipper. I can give her directions from the sidelines and I know she will carry them out on court."

"The partnership between her and myself really showed its strength in this tournament."



Crown Services
The Army beat the Fire Service, Police, Navy, Prison Service and RAF 2-0 in the group stages

Final word

We asked members of 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery, Royal Artillery and 1 Special Observation Post Squadron, Honourable Artillery Company training together in Malaysia, why they think integration works for them...



Sgt Izzy Zakaria (HAC)

Our successful integration is born partly from previous operations, where we deployed alongside the battery, were entrusted with certain jobs and delivered. Secondly, we all meet the basic standards. The bottom line is we all volunteered to be here and we put a lot of effort into earning our place among these men. They don't care who you are, as long as you can do the job they'll fight with you.



Tpr Tom Moses (HAC)

We now jointly run the selection course and participate more in 4/73 Battery exercises – this is the third one I've been on this year. Because we do a niche role it's simpler to integrate. Now that our training doctrine and standard operating procedures are the same it's even easier for us to attach. A lot of guys have been on operations so there are friendships in place too.



Maj Jon Chorley (HAC)

One of the reasons it's a success is because it's a very specialist capability. There isn't anybody else who does this role so it's like a small community. The job is thankless, dangerous, uncomfortable – it involves carrying your own body weight a long distance in the dark, eating cold food and staring at a target for days on end. It's a particular sort of person who enjoys doing that so the people you select tend to be of a very similar mindset.



Sgt Carl Barnes (HAC)

The reason we work well together is due to the joint patrols course. Because we have that leveller we know when we deploy we have common ground and most of us here have been on tour with the battery. The way we trained alongside each other already fitted the Army 2020 model but since then it has just become more ingrained.



LBdr Phil Thompson (RA)

To be part of this battery you have to go through an arduous course and the HAC guys have done that so to me that proves they really want to be here. They seem to enjoy it and are always willing to work hard, which shows how seriously they take it.



LBdr Tom Mawle (RA)

We're based in Catterick and the HAC are in London, so the distance can be an issue but there is always a good turn out for exercises and numbers have increased even more since Army 2020. It's not like a bunch of random people pitch up – you know them, they're your friends. They're keen and they want to get amongst it. It's not just the best guys that come – they send everyone so we all know what stage people are at and we get used to operating together.

SSgt Christopher O'Connor (RA)

I think it works because it's such a niche capability – only we do this so we have to rely on the HAC to bolster our numbers. They're Reservists but they're also part of the wider surveillance and target acquisition (STA) patrols family. It's not a glamorous job. Our role is to dig a hole and remain hidden and if you volunteer to do that you have a certain determination, especially if you're a civilian.



Maj Jamie Linsdell (RA)

Our integration has really been cemented in the last couple of years since Army 2020. We've taken huge steps forward in coming up with common doctrine that both parties agree on. It's all about having the same operating standards and the first joint selection course we ran was a success. We're operating in mixed teams now, so it's more about the STA patrols capability rather than the units that individuals belong to.

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