

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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COMPETITION**
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PHANTOM, WIZARD

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AWARDS

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OF 2019

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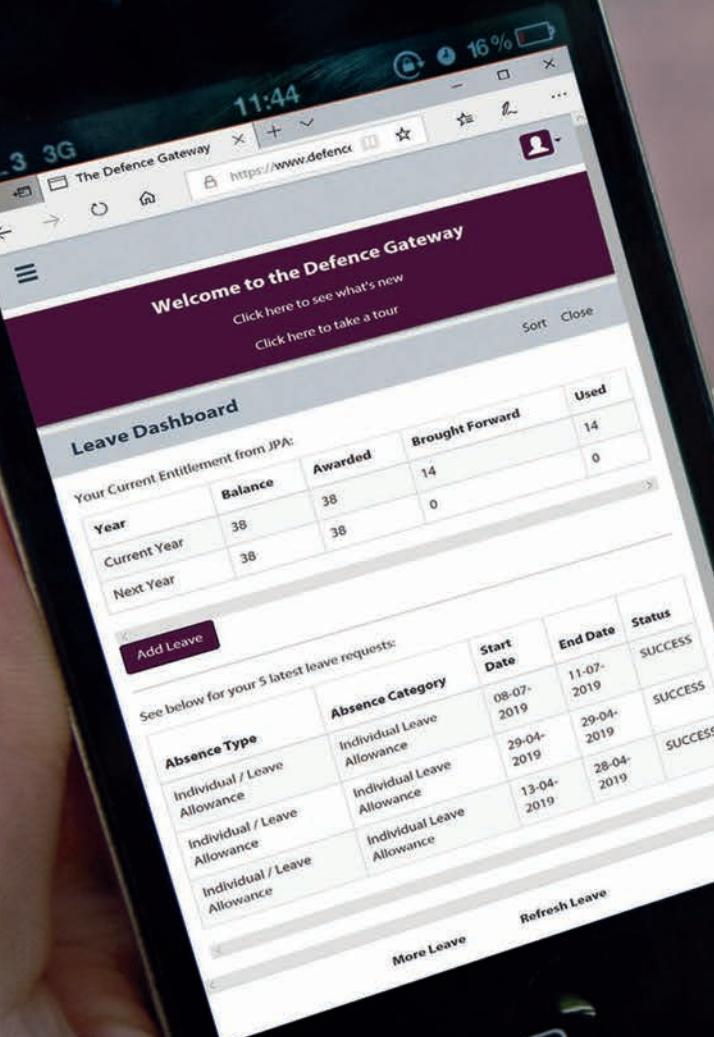
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Individual / Leave Allowance	Individual Leave Allowance	29-04-2019	29-04-2019	SUCCESS
Individual / Leave Allowance	Individual Leave Allowance	13-04-2019	28-04-2019	SUCCESS

More Leave Refresh Leave

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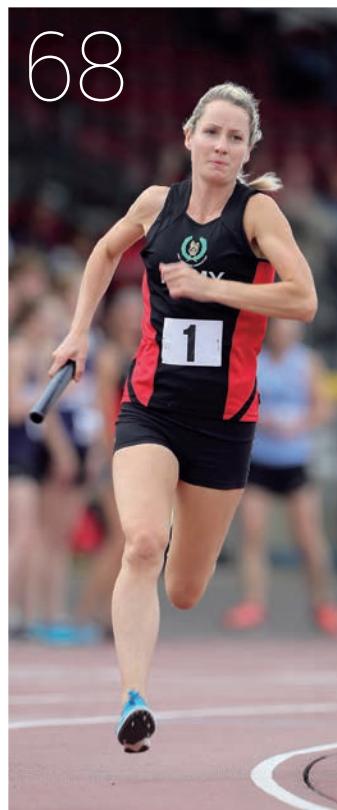
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2019: We salute you – p30





Change is in the air



THANKS to the General Election purdah period you may notice a few differences in this month's issue.

Unfortunately, the *Talkback* pages cannot be published and the news section has been cut back to ensure our content does not breach government guidelines.

However, the restrictions haven't prevented us from reporting on the Service's wide-ranging efforts to meet the evolving nature of conflict (pages 11, 26 and 43), or to move and adapt quickly when dealing with environmental disasters (page 7).

As our review of the year (page 30) shows, this is an organisation that can have an awful lot thrown at it in the space of 12 months.

Next year is likely to contain much of the same again, so enjoy your Christmas break and while you're away keep yourself fit enough (page 18) to face that major menace to us all – mince pies.

Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

Where to find *Soldier*

► Printed copies

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

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

► Online

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

► Purchase

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“
We were in
towns many of
us hail from
”



Picture: Cpl Sam Jenkins, RLC

Fighting the floods

Personnel braced for busy winter following recent relief tasking

AROUND 1,200 troops drawn from three UK standby battalions are facing the prospect of a very busy winter.

The formations have been placed on high readiness to deploy and The Light Dragoons, 5th Regiment, Royal Artillery and 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment were recently called into action in the Doncaster area.

Around 200 soldiers from all three units helped shore up flood defences.

They filled and distributed some 3,000 industrial-sized sandbags, built up barriers in residential areas in and around the villages of Fishlake and Kirk Bramwith, helped protect a power substation in Thorpe Marsh from rising water levels and carried out patrols along the River Don at the request of the Environment Agency.

A team from 170 Engineer Group, based at Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell, also conducted checks at Bentley Ings pumping station.

Maj Luke Dodington (LD), officer commanding C Squadron, said: "Some of the jobs – lugging, humping and dumping sandbags, as well as assisting minor engineering tasks – weren't the most technically challenging for the lads but they got a lot of satisfaction from carrying them out successfully.

"That's because South Yorkshire is

one of our main recruiting areas – we were in or near towns and villages where many of us hail from."

Such deployments are likely to occur more frequently in the future if weather pattern projections prove to be accurate.

Winter flooding has caused billions of pounds of damage in the UK in recent times and record downpours were recorded last year.

According to the UK Meteorological Office, UK winter rainfall for 2009 to 2018 was on average 12 per cent higher than for 1961 to 1990 – and four of the five wettest years on record have occurred since 2000.

A weather station in Sheffield also announced that 2019 produced the wettest autumn ever for the region.

The record-breaking figure was confirmed while around 80 flood warnings were still in place across England and Wales.

The Light Dragoons were last called upon to carry out flood relief tasks only in August, building a temporary structure to divert water from Toddbrook Reservoir in Derbyshire to a nearby tributary after the dam threatened to burst and flood the town of Whaley Bridge.

• The Big Picture – page 16



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

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

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GLOBAL SITREP



1. CALIFORNIA WHERE EAGLES DARE

ARMY Air Corps pilots pitted themselves against the hot and dusty deserts of the USA during Exercise Crimson Eagle.

Staged at Naval Air Facility El Centro in California and Gila Bend in Arizona, the three-month package was part of conversion-to-role training for aviators from the Attack Helicopter Force's 653 Squadron.

Six Apaches were brought over from the UK for the serials, which allow pilots to experience how the airframe handles in high temperatures and at altitude.

It was also a chance for ground crews from 3 and 4 Regiments, AAC and personnel from 7 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers to practise their respective support skills.



2. TIBET “MISSION ACHIEVED”

FORMER soldier Nirmal Purja (ex-QGE) smashed the record for climbing the world's 14 highest mountains – by seven years.

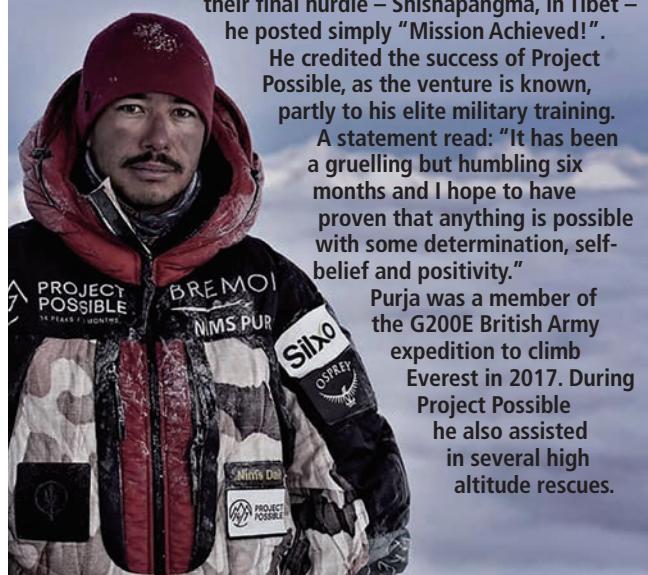
The previous time set for summing every peak of more than 8,000 metres – all of which are in the Himalayan and Karakoram ranges – was nearly eight years, but Purja completed the feat in an astonishing six months and six days.

Confirming on social media that he and his team had scaled their final hurdle – Shishapangma, in Tibet – he posted simply “Mission Achieved!”.

He credited the success of Project Possible, as the venture is known, partly to his elite military training.

A statement read: “It has been a gruelling but humbling six months and I hope to have proven that anything is possible with some determination, self-belief and positivity.”

Purja was a member of the G200E British Army expedition to climb Everest in 2017. During Project Possible he also assisted in several high altitude rescues.



1. CALIFORNIA

“
We felt quite
proud and
humbled
”

Soldier recalls hurricane
help – page 30

3. KENYA HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

GRUELING terrain, dangerous wildlife and baking temperatures awaited troops from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland at British Army Training Unit Kenya.

The latest iteration of Exercise Askari Storm saw them go head to head with the Coldstream Guards in the vast and arid African bush.

An initial “warrior phase” saw drills gradually ramp up in intensity, building towards night-time live firing at platoon level.

For the next stage the two formations took turns playing the enemy to test each other in a peer-on-peer scenario.



Picture: L/Cpl Darryl Knott, Scots

In numbers **11**

days that members of HQ Defence Primary Healthcare spent cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats. The 874-mile trip saw the eight-strong outfit put their physical stamina and teamwork to the test.



INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?



FESTIVE treats will be delivered to soldiers on the UN peacekeeping mission Operation Tosca this month, thanks to WRVS Services Welfare. The charity will be delivering 400 hampers, which were funded by the Asda Foundation.



5. ITALY TROOPS VS THE VOLCANO

ITALY'S ancient Roman ruins were among the marker points on the challenging, but picturesque Mount Vesuvius run organised by British personnel stationed near Naples.

This year's race started on the streets of Herculaneum – which, along with Pompeii, was destroyed when the volcano erupted in 79 AD.

Participants then climbed 963 metres over the 12 kilometre-course to finish on the crater's edge.

First staged more than 30 years ago, the run sees members of the British military community taking part alongside Italian soldiers and civilians. "It reminds us all of the value of our relationships with our Neapolitan hosts," said WO2 Matt Anderson (R Signals).



4. MOROCCO

DESERT RALLY CALL UP

SERVICE personnel have until the end of this year to sign up to a 17-day fundraising adventure that will see teams attempt the Dakar Rally route across the Sahara Desert in old Volkswagen Beetles.

For more details on the Sahara Bug Rally in March 2020, which will raise money for the PTSD support organisation Driven to Extremes, visit driventoe extremes.org



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7. FRANCE

TAKING THE HIGH ROAD

THE high-altitude splendour of the Haute Alpes in southern France played host to a challenging mountain biking expedition for Service personnel from the National Reserves Headquarters, Royal Artillery.

An eight-strong party deployed on the adventurous training trip, which was designed to provide the relevant experience for those looking to gain mountain bike leader and foundation qualifications.

Hill climbs, rugged descents and distances of up to 20 miles a day provided a true test of their cardio fitness, while altitudes of almost 2,000 metres in places added to the demands.

6. ESTONIA

ALL ROADS LEAD TO TALLINN

A MASSIVE logistical move across Europe by land, sea and air culminated in a large-scale capability demo in Estonia.

Exercise Tractable was the mission to rotate the fleet of Nato's enhanced forward presence, as The Queen's Royal Hussars took over the lead from The King's Royal Hussars.

The handover was marked by a series of manoeuvres involving both battlegroups and personnel from 16 Air Assault Brigade.

Some 160 soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment flew from RAF Brize Norton in two RAF C130 Hercules aircraft to jump at Nurmsi, where they linked up with the Estonian Defence League, who had secured the drop zone.

"It's all been very fast-paced, exciting and at times exhausting, but that's what being a paratrooper is about," said Pte Callum Prinsloo (Para). "And if this was an operation, the real work would start after we've landed."



Picture: Cpl Jamie Hart, RLC

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Pictures: Ssgt Rupert Fiere, RLC

BERLIN WALL RELIC

■ A SECTION of the Berlin Wall has been installed at the National Army Museum in London to mark the 30th anniversary of its fall. The structure was built in 1961 to separate the capitalist west and communist east of the German city.

CHALLENGING GIVEAWAY

■ WE have ten copies of The British Army Challenge quiz book to give away. Email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk with "Challenge Book" in the subject line by December 15. Ten entries, drawn at random, should receive their copies in time for Christmas.

Trailblazing on Iron STRIKE

■ XPERIMENTATION was the name of the game when troops from a host of cap badges took to Salisbury Plain for Exercise Iron Strike.

The three-week test involved more than 400 personnel and saw the Household Cavalry Regiment and 3rd Battalion, The Rifles forming the core elements – with Apache pilots, signallers, gunners and medics among a strong supporting cast.

The aim was to experiment with tactics and procedures that could be adopted as 1 Armoured Infantry Brigade transfers to become a so-called strike brigade – and the onus was on junior commanders to lead the charge at sub-unit level.

Agility, lethality and use of innovative technology were all covered, and the outcomes will be used to help the strike concept evolve.

LCoH Sam Gasan of A Squadron, HCR, said the exercise had been a great test for inexperienced colleagues.

"We've been working with Apache and drones, which I've never seen before on an armoured exercise," he told *Soldier*. "From the outset we were told to use this as a way of taking risks and that, as commanders, we should do things differently."

Commander of 1 Armoured Infantry Brigade, Brig James Martin, said the troops had approached the tactical tests with enthusiasm.

"Under strike there will be demands on low-level leadership," he added.

"We have been asking junior commanders to make decisions that would usually be the preserve of more senior colleagues, and they have really grasped the opportunity."

HCR develops drone tactics – **page 26**



CHILLY TEST FOR TROOPS

■ PERSONNEL have successfully completed stage one of the Army's first cold weather instructor course.

Held at Capel Curig, the two-week phase saw 30 troops from a host of cap badges learn how to operate in a cold, rugged environment.

The action switches to the Bardufoss region of Norway in March, when they will embark on four weeks of training in sub-zero temperatures – with survival and mobility at the fore.

Led by experts from the Royal Marines, the course has been designed to help the Service meet the challenges of deployments such as Op Cabrit in Poland and Estonia.

ZIPWORLD FUN

■ THRILL-SEEKING troops can claim half price adventures at North Wales's Zip World, which boasts the longest zipline in Europe, until the end of this month. To book visit www.zipworld.co.uk and quote SERVICES50.



TECH OF THE YEAR

■ ONE of the Army's most highly skilled bomb disposal experts was a winner at this year's Women in Defence Awards and was also named Armed Forces Technician of the Year by the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

WO2 Kay Howells (RLC) was praised for her work as an ammunition technician in Afghanistan and weapons intelligence in Iraq.

She was recognised at the Defence Awards for her exceptional skill and for overcoming adversity, having broken her back early in her career.





Contact Gav on Defence Connect

Ground view

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

ASI APPROACH the final month of my first year in this role, I have been asked by some about the highs and lows of my 12 months in post.

The best part of the job has undoubtedly been getting out and seeing soldiers both here in the UK and on overseas ops. Being able to make a difference for you is a great feeling.

But be in no doubt that I'm aware there are areas in which we still must improve our offering, and it has been disappointing to see some issues coming up that we have still not been able to solve.

I'm talking about old chestnuts such as accommodation and contracts – yes, they are complex matters, but we must, and will, find solutions.

It is important for me to reiterate that our generals do care and they want the best for troops.

One of their key objectives is to improve your professional life through major

initiatives such as Programme Castle. This has been looking at career structures, how we identify talent and the best way of empowering soldiers. You'll hear more about this project in the coming year.

We already have two novel schemes that help our decision-making processes. The lemonade factory and lawnmower brigade are part of the wider empowerment programme, so when they visit please engage with them.

As their names imply, they'll get you doing basic tasks such as cutting the lawn and making fizzy drinks, and you'll talk about how processes could be improved.

We have many gifted people in our ranks. Recently, it was humbling to meet young people with huge responsibilities, including soldiers who sign off Apaches as ready to fly.

It is very important that we better harness your talent for the benefit of the wider Service.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



Q

What is your favourite Christmas song?

A

Stop the Cavalry – by Jona Lewie. It's a great 1980s tune but as an infantryman I'd obviously appreciate it more if the words were focused on my branch of the Service.



“
They are complex matters but we must find a solution
”

It's time to connect

MANY of you have been making your views known to me through Twitter.

It's important that you complain properly and through channels where, together, we can make things happen.

Social media is an entirely open forum – so if there are more sensitive military matters you want to discuss you can also reach me on Defence Connect via our

internal comms network.

You'll need a password for Defence Gateway to access this service, but it is important that you are connected to it. In time you will have all kinds of need-to-know info, such as company and part one orders, at your fingertips when you want to view it.

Our systems are always being reviewed and updated – make sure you stay in the loop.

CHRISTMAS ON THE ROAD...

■ DURING an Army career just short of 23 years, I've spent a fair few festive seasons away from home – so I thought I'd continue the tradition and go over the water to have a Chistmas dinner on ops this year. But I can't tell you yet where I'm headed.

Contrary to some public perceptions, we have thousands of soldiers deployed around the world in places as diverse as Poland, Estonia, Iraq and Afghanistan and you are doing a fantastic job, thank you.

To all of you who are away, stay safe over the holiday season and always remember how much your efforts are appreciated. I look forward to catching up with you all again as we enter the new year.

It is humbling to be able to represent you all in my role as the Army Sergeant Major.



Picture: WO2 Martyn McNeill, RE

Trenton's 3D revolution

New system set to transform overseas aid

ROYAL Engineers in South Sudan are set to trial cutting edge digital construction techniques that could revolutionise the way the Army delivers aid worldwide.

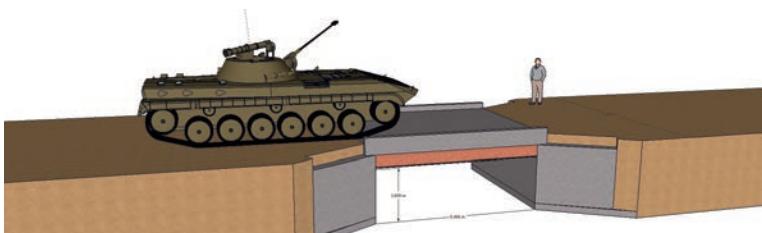
Members of 36 Engineer Regiment will use 3D scanning and photographic measuring to capture and upload information, which enables a team back in the UK to produce designs.

The unit's quartermaster sergeant instructor for construction, WO2 Casper Egan (pictured right), explained: "The lads out on the ground will have smartphones and HD cameras, as well as virtual reality headsets.

"We will use the information they send us to create 3D models of the structure, for example a bridge (shown below), which can then be sent back to them to view in VR.

"It means they can visualise the task in front of them and show others what is required."

Tests conducted in the UK indicated the method would reduce the time troops spend reconnoitring sites by around 73 per cent.



"Last time we were out there we had to recce a bridge four times," continued WO2 Egan.

"This is going to save a lot of helicopter flights and will significantly cut the time guys spend on the ground – not just the engineers but the Infantry providing force protection too. So it also lessens risk to life."

It is hoped the technique will work in conjunction with 3D printers already in situ on Op Trenton, which can be used to create bespoke parts as sappers finish off the second of two hospitals built at UN camps in the country.

Even though the mission is due to end in March, WO2 Egan believes the same technology will benefit aid efforts across the globe.

"A large part of any relief programme is the provision and maintenance of infrastructure," he said.

"But agencies struggle to deliver solutions in all their locations due to a lack of experienced professionals.

"Instead of having to get the engineer to the problem, this brings the problem to the engineer."

“It's going to save a lot of helicopter flights”



the reduction in reconnoitring time as a result of the measuring system

SPINELINE COMPETITION



THE spine clues on last month's magazine may have been more familiar to one cap badge above others. Inspired by our news article on the future of Army nursing, (Pte Dorothy) Brown, (LCpl Linda) Dougherty, (Pte Patricia)

Fenelon and (Capt Andrea) Rogers are all members of the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps who died in service, and whose names are carried on the formation's monument at the National Memorial Arboretum.

This month we have teamed up with lighting supplier Streamlight (www.streamlight.com) to offer three lucky readers a Protac HL-X torch, as featured in our September issue.

Described as "highly impressive" by the reviewer, this lightweight tactical light offers 1,000 lumens and can be powered with either disposable batteries or a rechargeable cell.

To have a chance of scooping one, just tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Answers – including daytime telephone number – to the usual postal address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by December 31.



ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION

PERSONNEL are being advised to read **2019DIN06-028** on asbestos management following low-level contamination being detected at the MoD Ashchurch vehicle and equipment storage site.

Air sampling has shown satisfactory results but vehicles and kit previously stored there could be contaminated.

Also, while the risk remains very low, soldiers who have worked at or regularly visited the site are advised to complete **MoD form 960 Asbestos – Personnel Record Annotation**. This should be forwarded to the medical officer (for military personnel), while MoD civilians should send a copy to Defence Business Services.

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Stepping in front

A VETERAN recovering from open heart surgery walked 100 kilometres along a virtual front line. Jason Horton-Smyth, 49, covered the equivalent of the length of the Western Front, just weeks after a double heart bypass.

Amount raised:
£1,286
For: ABE The Soldiers' Charity



Vets get festive

RESIDENTS at the Royal Star and Garter home in Surbiton are raising money for the charity that cares for them by designing greeting cards. Keen painter, 92-year-old Dick Jahn (ex-REME) created the robin design above, while Marjorie Steiner, an RAF widow who passed away in July aged 102, created the Christmas tree. To purchase the cards visit www.charitycardsonline.com/starandgarter

Walk for wounded

STAFF at the regimental headquarters of the Royal Yeomanry are walking 100 miles for Walking With The Wounded on December 16 to 18. Find out more or rival them at www.WalkingHomeForChristmas.com

ON A MISSION?

news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Picture: Shutterstock

The art of cyber deception

New lab stands ready to assist hundreds of Service personnel

THE fight against network attackers has been cranked up a notch with the launch of a National Cyber Deception Laboratory.

Set up by the Defence Cyber School and Cranfield University, its work is expected to involve hundreds – if not thousands – of British soldiers whose roles cover cyber defence.

It will bring them together with academics and industry experts to research new and novel ways of disrupting attackers, running seminars and workshops that demonstrate how to use military deception methods to throw them off track.

This could involve anything from confusing the enemy into doing things that help reveal their identity, to sabotaging attacks.

Darren Lawrence, director of the new lab and a lecturer in behavioural science at the university, is delighted to be working on the initiative, which he said would enable military cyber defence to be more "aggressive" in the future.

"Deception is all about creating errors in how our adversaries make sense of their world," he added. "It is about getting them to act in ways that suit our purposes, not theirs."

Working with other government departments, the lab will also carry out important research.

The Defence Cyber School was opened by the MoD last year to deal with emerging online threats.

Cranfield University is a leading centre for defence education.

Farewell, field marshal...

TRIBUTES have been paid to former chief of the defence staff, Field Marshal Lord Bramall, who died last month at the age of 95.

The D-Day hero took part in the 1944 Normandy landings as a young officer in the King's Royal Rifle Corps and was later awarded the Military Cross for his actions.

He went on to serve in nearly all major campaigns until his retirement in 1985, overseeing the successful Falklands conflict as head of the Army.

Speaking to *Soldier* on the magazine's 70th anniversary in 2015 (left), he said the mission to retake the islands had been the most significant of his career.

However, the veteran's final years were plagued by false allegations of historic sex crimes – an ordeal which he said had wounded him more deeply than any emotional or physical suffering he experienced in the military.

Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Sir Nick Carter, said: "We will all miss his wisdom, his generosity and his rifleman's lightness of touch."



Lord Bramall browses the earliest issue of *Soldier*



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EMPLOYER
RECOGNITION
SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

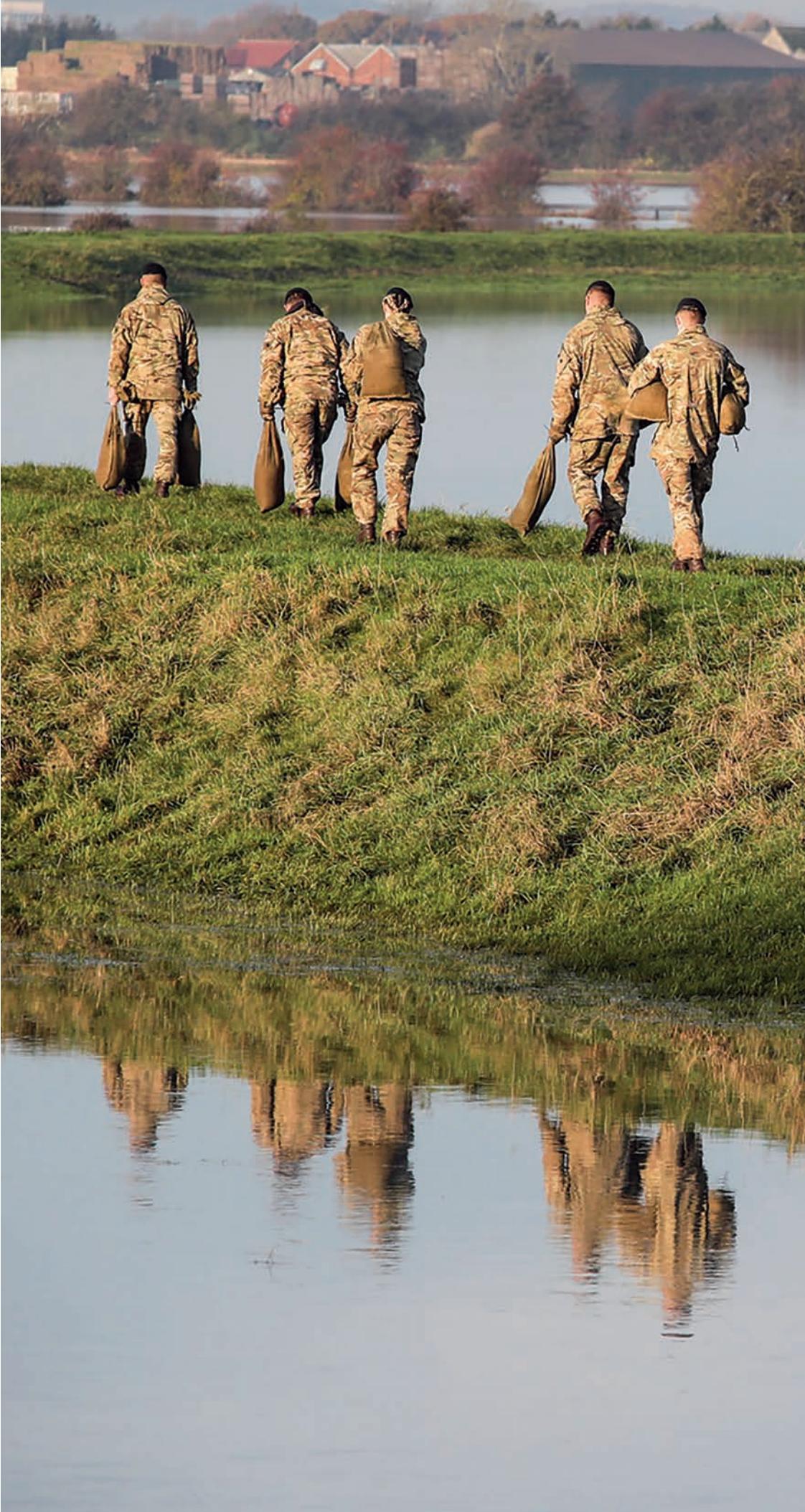
THE BIG PICTURE

South Yorkshire

Stemming the tide

THE LIGHT Dragoons provided support to the Environment Agency and Doncaster Council as part of the effort to reinforce flood defences in the village of Kirk Bramwith, South Yorkshire. The troops deployed from Catterick Garrison in the early hours and went house-to-house in the parish with partner agencies to provide help and assistance as well as taking part in emergency reinforcement construction tasks (see page 7).

Picture: Ben Shread, MoD



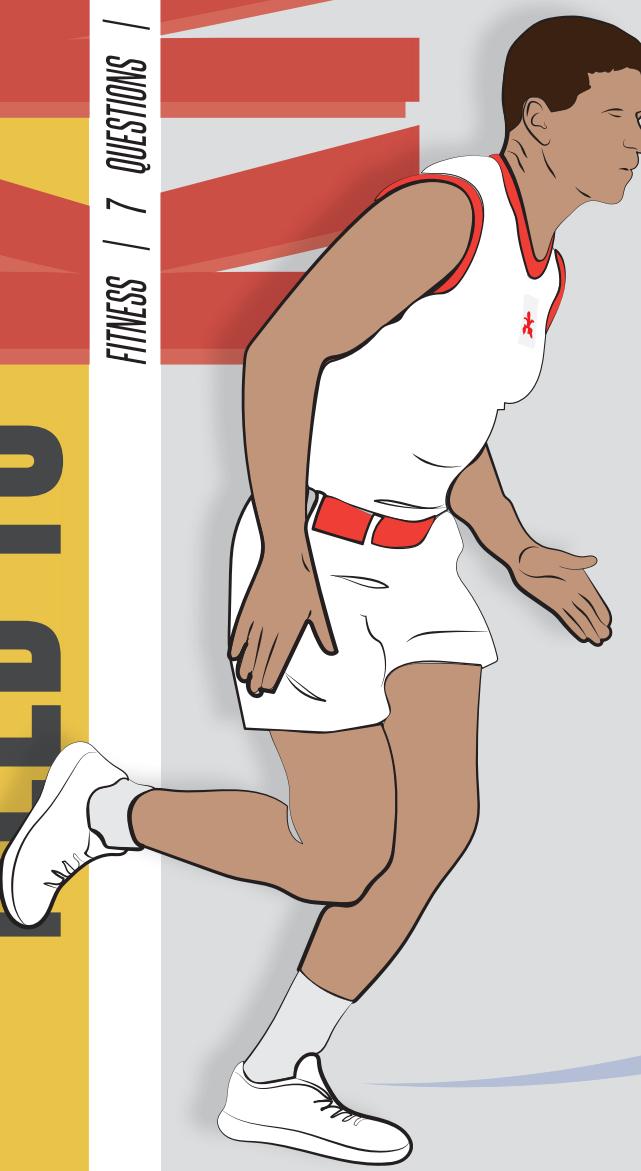


WEED TO GIVE

FITNESS / 7 QUESTIONS / SKILLS & DRILLS / RULES & REGS / EXPERIENCE

Going solo

The lone soldier physical training programme can help you keep fit while you're on leave over Christmas



THE latest stage in the Army's ongoing revamp of its fitness system has been rolled out.

Hot on the heels of the soldier conditioning review and the new physical employment standards, the lone soldier physical training programme is designed to enable personnel serving away from their unit or in isolated posts to keep pace with their Service colleagues.

Comprising three blocks that are followed in sequence – foundation, resilience and specific – in line with the Army physical training system, it must be issued by a PTI. If you are looking for a structured plan to follow over the Christmas leave period, these three sessions from week one of the programme's foundation stage will fit the bill perfectly...

Before you start

- **Don't forget** to **warm up** ahead of exercising and **cool down** properly afterwards

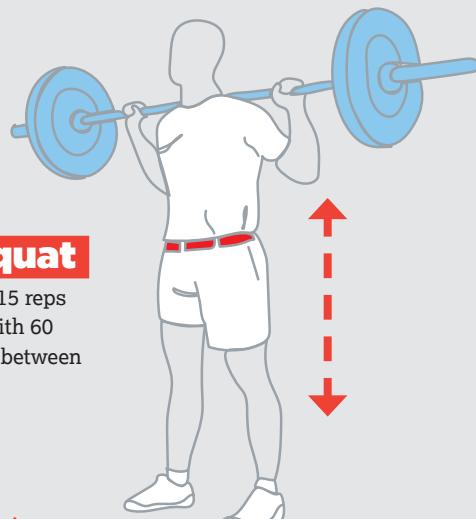
- **RPE** refers to the **rating of perceived exertion** scale. This indicates what intensity you should be working at and runs from 0-10, with zero being at rest, and ten being 100 per cent effort

- **Full demonstrations** of each movement, plus **warm-ups** and **cool downs** are available on Defence Connect and the HQ RAPTC SharePoint site by searching "LSPTP"

SESSION ONE

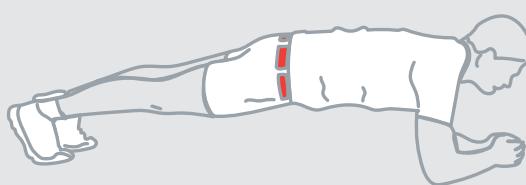
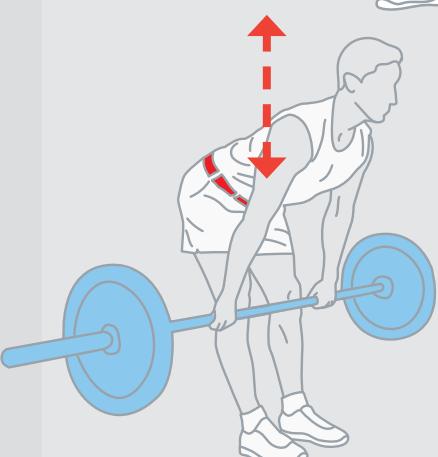
Back squat

Three sets of 15 reps (RPE 4-6), with 60 seconds rest in between



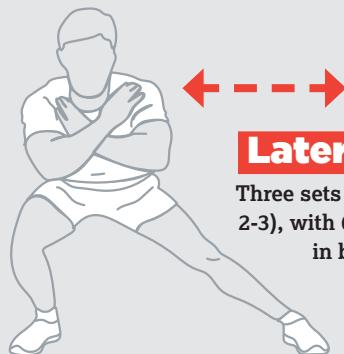
Romanian deadlift

Three sets of 15 reps (RPE 4-6), with 60 seconds rest in between



Front plank

Do three of these, holding for 30 seconds each time, with 90 seconds rest in between each rep

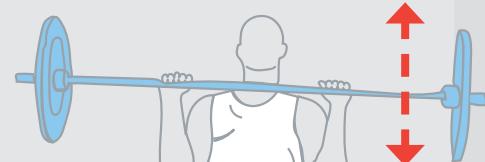


Lateral lunge

Three sets of 20 reps (RPE 2-3), with 60 seconds rest in between

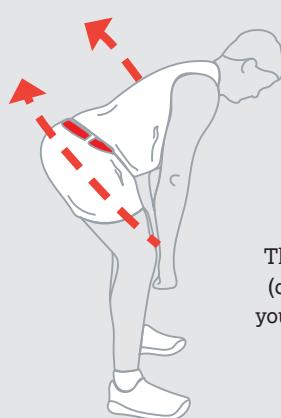
SESSION TWO

Prior to starting this workout complete 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise. This could be a run, row, x-trainer session, bike ride or swim and should be carried out at RPE 4-6



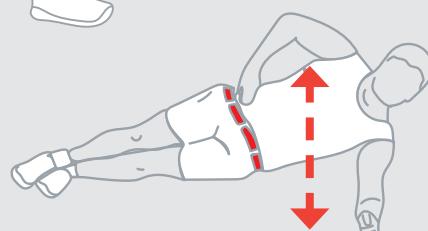
Push press from front

Three sets of 15 reps (RPE 4-6), with 60 seconds rest in between



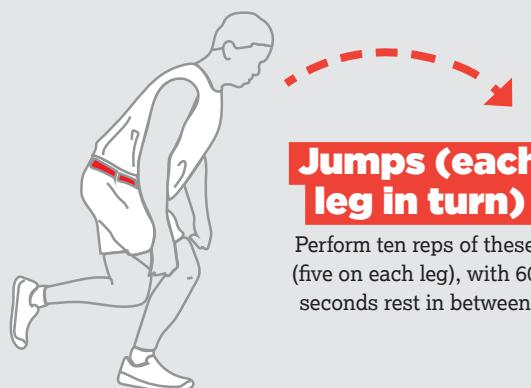
Hinge W shoulder

Three sets of 15 reps with weight (choose a weight that is right for you but no more than 5kg), with 60 seconds rest in between



Side plank

Do three of these on both sides, holding for 30 seconds each time, with 90 seconds rest in between each rep



Jumps (each leg in turn)

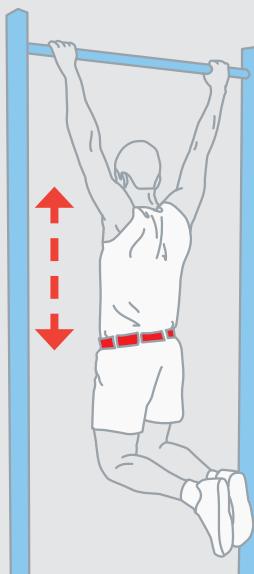
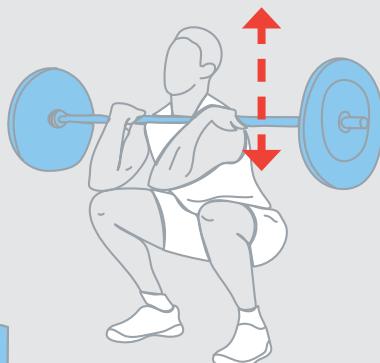
Perform ten reps of these (five on each leg), with 60 seconds rest in between

► FITNESS CONTINUED

SESSION THREE

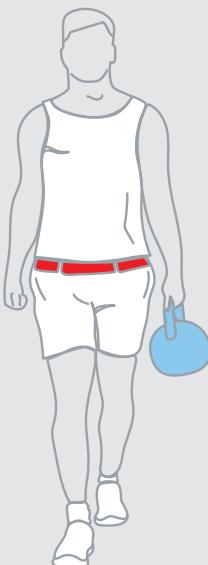
Front squat

Three sets of 15 reps (RPE 4-6), with 60 seconds rest in between



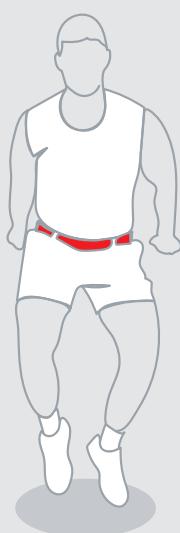
Pull-ups

Perform as many as you can up to a maximum of eight. If you are struggling use a band or an incline to help you. Complete three sets, resting for 90 seconds between each



Suitcase carry

Carry a weight of up to 25kg – for example a jerry can or free weight – a distance of 30m, four times. Perform three sets of these, resting for 90 seconds in between each one



Lateral jumps (both legs)

Do three sets of ten jumps, with a 60-second break in between



To progress to the next stage, complete these exercises for four consecutive weeks. You'll find you'll be able to up your intensity as you go.

Soldier interrogates para turned TV hardman, Mark "Billy" Billingham, on life in the fast lane

► BEST known for his tough talking persona on Channel 4's *SAS: Who Dares Wins*, Billy Billingham joined the Army in 1983, aged 16, before rising up the ranks of the elite forces.

His new book, *The Hard Way*, documents his journey from teenage tearaway to top soldier, and how he honed the skills that would later open doors in the world of celebrity close protection, humanitarianism and reality TV.

We caught up with him in between promotional events to find out more...

1 What has your time in the Special Forces community taught you about the mindset of elite soldiers?

It's all about perseverance against the odds and thinking outside the box. Generally, when faced with a problem it's easy to say 'oh, it can't be done' but maybe it can, if you look for another option.

2 What would you say to troops considering selection?

Be sure it's what you want and do your research now before you step onto the parapet. Be prepared for how hard it will be and to go that extra mile.

3 What do you consider

your greatest achievement?

I've saved a lot of lives – it's always great to be able to free a hostage – but I think the best thing I ever did was going after people indicted for war crimes. It feels very special to capture these individuals when you know the truth of what they've done.

4 What's your worst habit?

My administration – I let people down all the time and I hate it. I find it difficult to say 'no' to anything. I really try but I often end up double-booking myself. I'm still learning how to manage this better. Also, I'm usually late.



5 What do you miss most about the Army?

Everyone says this, but it's the camaraderie and the banter. Your mates from the military are closer than your family from the day you join. You might not have seen them for 30 years but as soon as you meet it's like it was yesterday. I also miss the job – it was always different from one day to the next and it was valuable stuff that we were doing.

6 You counted the likes of Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie among your clients as a bodyguard – what was your weirdest Hollywood experience?

I could never get my head around the overzealous fans and the power that celebrity holds. I remember filming in Chicago, it was freezing – about minus 20 degrees – and this guy swam across the lake just to get a signature. People are absolutely obsessed, crazy.

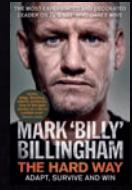
7 What were the best and worst places you ever spent Christmas?

The worst place was probably Bosnia. There wasn't much going on – we could have been with our families. It all seemed a bit pointless. People had stopped fighting and it felt wrong to be far away when the kids were opening their Christmas presents. The best place is being at home and being around to see that.

The boy done good



The Hard Way, by Mark "Billy" Billingham
is published by Simon and Schuster and priced £20



Christmas crackers



Want to nail an epic Xmas feast? Plan your meal with military precision, says Army chef WO1 Gus Campbell (RLC)

D-Day minus 1: Prior prep

Getting all of your trimmings prepped the evening before will set you up nicely for the big day.

Peel and chop your veg and tatties, make your stuffing and pigs in blankets and refrigerate. If fridge space is tight the vegetables can be covered with water and put aside.

**For flavourful fowl have a go at soaking your turkey in brine on Christmas Eve. Cover the bird with water in a large pot and add some aromatics such as bay leaves, thyme, peppercorns, citrus fruit and salt. This helps the meat retain moisture when cooking as the salt breaks down the protein strands. Place it in the fridge if you can.*

D-Day: Get cooking

If you choose not to brine the turkey, removing it from your fridge at least 30 minutes before you need to put it in the oven allows the meat to relax and will give you a more succulent cut once cooked.

Around 45 minutes before the bird is cooked you should get your potatoes on for roasting.

Parboiling them first will give you more space in the oven. Simmer them for no longer than five minutes, drain, return to the pot and shake over a low heat to fluff up the edges.

So YOU want to be a pillar of the community?



Check out these **7** tips for running a successful fundraising project



H-Hour: Rest up

As the chef you've done your part, so enjoy the meal. It's now time to put your feet up, relax and get the family to do the washing up!

Get everything else ready whilst the spuds are cooking and nominate someone to carve the bird.

Back to the potatoes – put a big enough tray with goose fat in the oven and heat for 5-7 minutes. Carefully toss your tatties in the hot fat. Return the tray to the oven and turn periodically.

Meanwhile, get the turkey out of the oven, cover with foil and rest for a minimum of 25-30 minutes – don't worry, it will retain its temperature. Letting the meat relax and the juices to be reabsorbed will result in a tender and succulent cut of meat.

► AFTER bereavement led him to reassess his life, WO2 Pete Briggs (AGC (RMP)) set up a memorial garden for his local community to remember former players, staff and fans at Burnley Football Club. Four years on, he has the following advice for anyone embarking on a big-hearted project:

Have vision

I imagined what I could create, found the perfect location and made a few Photoshop images of what it might look like. This helped interested parties picture the garden and what it would do for local residents.

Create a team

Assemble a committee of individuals who will each bring something to the project. Having a team I could trust with specific tasks was invaluable.

Communicate well

This is a key skill. Being in the Army and working at a distance often means speaking to contacts on a sporadic basis, which can be tough – especially if you don't articulate a plan well enough.

Roll with the punches

Sometimes a bolt from the blue blows you off track, and no plan survives contact, so if something isn't working change the plan and make sure you take everyone in your team with you.

Think finance

This was probably the hardest part of my project – after all, it is not a big problem when planning an activity in the Army. But in the world of professional football and councils, it posed issues. Volunteers and charity helped, and I created a GoFundMe web page.

Nail the paperwork

...and expect lots of it, from planning permission to business cases.

Remember social media

It connects you to supporters, and helps with fundraising. I used social media to keep people informed as well as to sell plaques, which helped generate more cash.



● Find out more about the Turf Moor Memorial Garden at www.turfmoormemorialgarden.com

Power to the people



Changes to armoury inspections, pay checks and gym inductions will be welcome news for soldiers frustrated by pointless admin

FIELD Army's empowerment project is targeting unnecessary form-filling, box-ticking and red tape.

Among the tasks identified by troops as being overly time consuming were armoury and statement of earnings (SoE) checks as well as gym inductions.

Here, we highlight the main differences in the policies and Maj Adam Siggs (RE), from the empowerment team, explains the rationale behind them...

Armoury checks

- Ordnance, munitions and explosives (OME) inspections can now be carried out by corporals with at least ten years' service, as well as those who have qualified for promotion to sergeant. Previously only officers and senior NCOs could do this. The frequency of inspections remains the same.

Read ACSO 2007 for full details

Maj Siggs says: "This issue was actually raised by corporals who felt frustrated that they were trusted to inspect weapons on tour but not given the same level of responsibility back in barracks. Increasing the pool of people who can conduct OME checks like this empowers junior leaders, while at the same time easing the admin burden on senior NCOs and officers."

SoE checks

- Clerks no longer have to carry out 100 per cent checks on troops' pay statements. Instead, they must only audit those that are non-standard and therefore more likely to contain errors – for example when personnel receive extra allowances for deploying or new trade-related pay. Units should also perform ten per cent checks on any personnel

admin staff and those with JPA actor roles affecting remuneration.

Read Personnel Administration Instruction (PAI) 07/19 for full details

Maj Siggs says: "Before this rule change admin staff were doing around 1.2 million first line SoE checks every year. Concentrating on the statements that are more likely to contain mistakes is going to save a lot of valuable time and should improve the quality of the checks that are carried out."

Gym inductions

- Troops are no longer required to have an induction every time they use a new gym that has standard equipment. Bespoke inductions should only be conducted on unfamiliar pieces of kit.

Read AGAI Vol 1, Chap 7 for full details

Maj Siggs says: "We knew soldiers were getting very annoyed by not being able to use gyms when they were away on short-term courses, for example. Often, in the time it took them to have the induction, it would be time for them to return to their unit and they were missing out on PT. From now on, all personnel will go through a detailed induction during initial training and it will be logged on JPA. They will only have to do another one if they go to a new gym with unfamiliar equipment."

- Got a query or something to share with the empowerment team? Contact them on 01264 387 052 / adam.siggs276@mod.gov.uk or tweet @ Empowrd_Soldier

A man in a military beret stands in front of a wall of names on a plaque, with a banner overlaid containing the quote 'I became a British citizen to join the Army'.

This Hungarian was so determined to serve with a world-leading military that he applied for UK citizenship

► IN THESE strange and tedious political times, it is difficult to find anyone waxing lyrical about how fantastic it is to be British.

Difficult, but not impossible – as Pte Greg Szanto proves.

When the Reservist from 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment begins his six-month tour of Afghanistan on Op Tora this month it will mark the achievement of a lifelong ambition – to serve Queen and country on overseas operations.

And last year, after arriving from Budapest a decade earlier, the keen traveller and reiki healer was finally able to join up after gaining British citizenship. Here, the infantryman explains why he is so proud to call this country home...

Coming to the UK was the obvious choice for me, and I have never regretted it.

"I came to visit a friend in London and fell in love with the place from the moment I arrived here."

"I decided I wanted to serve in the British Army almost immediately. So I settled, found work in various security roles and looked into gaining citizenship.

"Now I have it and I am a British soldier it's a really great feeling – I am so proud, and it's more than just personal pride.

"I have served in the Hungarian Army in the past, but that felt like more of a peacetime military, with lots of training and not a lot of action involved.

“But I always wanted to test myself further, which the UK is allowing me to do.

"I'm really excited about deploying to Afghanistan – it will allow me to give

something back to the UK.

"I have got so much good from Britain. People born here don't realise how great it is to be part of this nation. But the values and the culture are fantastic. And it's so civilised – I have travelled across Asia and Europe and I certainly think this is the most civilised country there is.

"I have made some good friends in 4 Yorks; the comradeship is so strong.

"The joining process was very straightforward too and everyone in the military community has been really welcoming.

"Things were topped off when I got married earlier this year. But the day after the wedding I had to go on a mission-rehearsal exercise.

"My wife is very supportive, though, and we'll have a honeymoon next year when I get back. ■





The Household Cavalry Regiment are developing stealthy flying tactics to deploy drones with thermal imaging capability effectively



ABOVE and BEYOND

The unit that's pushing the boundaries with its UAV capability

66
We are now one
of the leaders
in this field in
the Army
99



WHEN a Taliban hand grenade was thrown from behind a wall near Sangin district centre in March 2010, it changed LCoH Michael Hookham's (HCR) life in more ways than one.

First and foremost, it fatally wounded one of his closest friends and one of the most capable and popular members of the regiment, LCoH Jonathan "Jo" Woodgate (HCR).

But the Serviceman didn't just feel the pain of losing a good mate. It sparked in him a determination to significantly reduce the odds of such an incident ever happening again.

Nearly a decade later, it's an ambition that's still driving him on.

"That grenade caught Jo out but

it only happened because we didn't have an Istar asset available at the time," he tells *Soldier*.

"Drones weren't readily available back then – we may have had Black Hornet in service but it was very early days.

"After returning from Afghanistan in 2011 I was quite wound up by losing Jo and started thinking about how drones might change things by providing us with greater situational awareness.

"I started making fixed wing aircraft from foam board with model airplane engines and after a while moved to quadcopters after advances in technology made them cheaper to buy.

"My commanders became interested in the concept and it's grown from there."

In early 2018 LCoH Hookham enrolled on an unmanned aerial vehicle piloting course for Armed Forces personnel with the Royal Navy's 700X Squadron at RNAS Culdrose.

The skills and tactical knowledge he had already acquired led to him being invited back to the station to serve as its first ever Army instructor.

After a few months he returned to his unit and became pivotal in ➤



➔ forming B Squadron's dedicated UAV troop.

Currently equipped with Parrot Anafi drones that can have thermal as well as optical sights, the formation now has one of the most developed drone capabilities in the British Army, giving this elite armoured reconnaissance force a vital edge on the battlefield.

The Household Cavalry Regiment is also an important cog in the Strike Experimentation Group, which is building, testing and developing understanding of the concept – and it has been positively encouraged to think outside the box with this technology.

"Our commanding officer is massively on board with the capability,"

says LCoH Hookham.

"We've developed lots of tactics ourselves such as hot swapping."

This is where a two-person team of pilot and observer operate two drones. As the power reserves of the first platform fall, the second UAV flies up and replaces it. As a result, the video feed of the target continues uninterrupted.

"We also teach our people to fly two to three feet above the ground and pop the drone up when they get close to the target in order to conceal their location."

"And we show them how to use wind and sunlight to mask the device's visual and acoustic signal," adds the NCO.

"It's the sort of tactics you employ when you're dismounted but adapted for operating drones."

There are subtler techniques to master too, like flying in a manner that does not attract the eye by using tree lines or adopting a pattern of movement that makes the UAV look like a bird.

But acquiring these skills takes time and resources so the regiment is pushing for the operators to be professionally recognised as a career path, according to B Squadron's officer commanding, Maj Dan Marsh.

"This could lead to increased interest and recruitment from both within the Army and externally and would be a positive step as we look to grow the

capability," he adds.

In the long term it will also mean personnel are perfectly placed to keep abreast of a rapidly evolving discipline.

"I've talked to units who have been caught out when acquiring a UAV by not having the right knowledge for flying it effectively or awareness of all the latest rules," says LCoH Hookham.

"They are a necessary part of this world and the Military and Civilian Aviation Authorities heavily regulate the use of drones, which you have to keep on top of."

Technology and tactics are changing around the globe too, with swarm attacks – where multiple UAVs carrying small charges that detonate on impact – and facial recognition cameras employed

on search and rescue missions, being just two of the more interesting innovations recently developed by industry.

"Having a dedicated troop means we have commonality of training to a high standard and the command element is always plugged into the latest innovations, developments and regulations," says Maj Marsh.

"I would say we are now one of the leaders in this field in the British Army and in time we could create a blueprint for the strike brigades at the very least."

But with the use of UAVs developing so fast is a specialist body, similar to what's been set up for cyber or CBRN for example, now called for?

"That may be the case," comments LCoH Hookham.

"We would certainly welcome the chance to link up with other parts of the Army who are currently doing their own thing in order to exchange information and ideas so everyone is on the same song sheet."

"There is a wealth of UAV knowledge around the Service that needs to be shared because, among many other things, it might just save the life of a soldier who finds him or herself in a similar situation to Jo's." ■

There is a wealth of UAV knowledge around the Service



B Squadron's hardware...

Parrot Anafi drone

Range: 2.5 miles

Endurance: Up to 26 mins

Max speed: 34 mph

Max wind resistance: 31 mph

Video resolution: 4k

Transmission range: 4km

Thermal camera: FLIR Lepton 3.5 resolution with 16x120 active pixels

Size unfolded:

175x240x65mm
(Thermal version 241x315x64)

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2019. WE SALUTE YOU

From pay rises to plucky polar expeditions, the past year has been eventful to say the least....



HURRICANE HELP

IN AUGUST, Army personnel stationed on RFA Mounts Bay helped deliver aid to parts of the Caribbean that had been flattened by the strongest storm ever recorded – Hurricane Dorian.

Troops from the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief team, among them Pte Andrew Camp (pictured inset, RLC) from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, worked night

Pictures: LPhot Paul Halliwell, RN

and day to bring vital supplies to the devastated islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama.

He recalled: "We loaded up the Mexeflotes with stores, including emergency shelters, hygiene kits and water – a lot of which had to be done by hand – and then unloaded it on to the shore.



"As we approached, we realised the scale of the destruction.

"There was nothing left apart from lots of rubble and torn down houses.





"The islands would normally have been a paradise but it looked like a bomb had hit them. It is really hard to appreciate the full power of the hurricane."

"Thousands of people had been made homeless and it was sad to see, but the locals seemed grateful for our assistance."

"At the time it was all a bit of a blur, but afterwards we felt quite proud and humbled to be able to give them a helping hand."

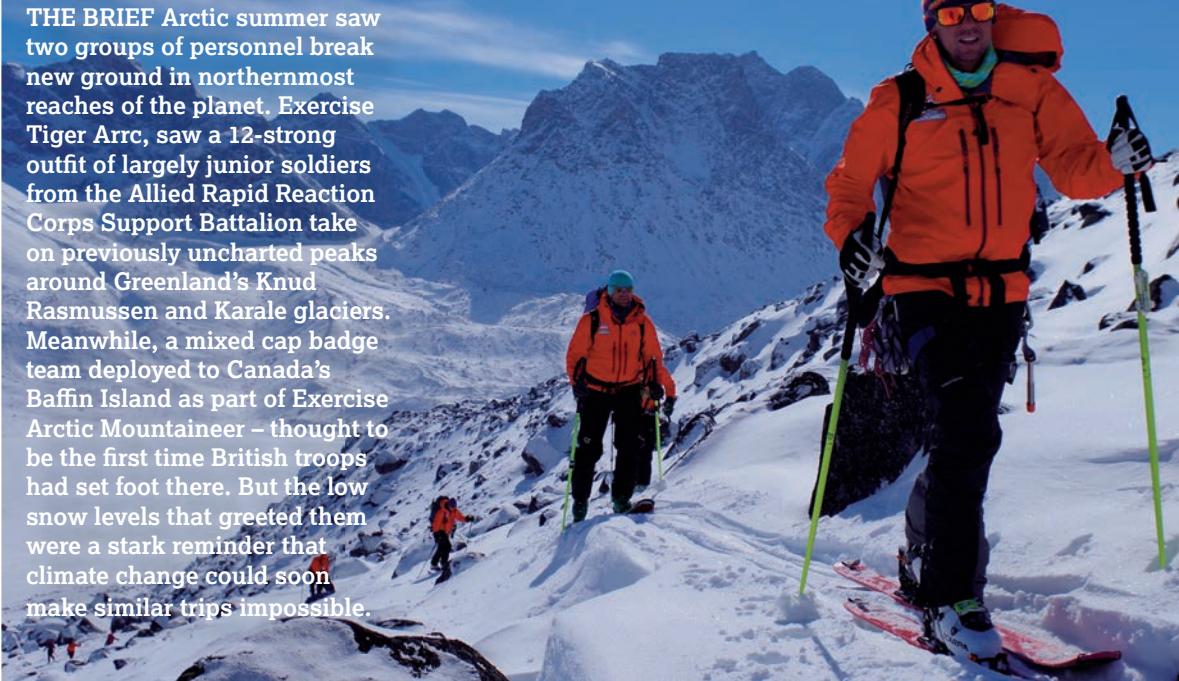
"It was fantastic to do our jobs in a real-life scenario as well, and to see the whole ship – including the Navy and Royal Engineers – pull together in one big team."



“As we approached, we realised the scale of the destruction”

POLAR PLUCK

THE BRIEF Arctic summer saw two groups of personnel break new ground in northernmost reaches of the planet. Exercise Tiger Arrc, saw a 12-strong outfit of largely junior soldiers from the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Support Battalion take on previously uncharted peaks around Greenland's Knud Rasmussen and Karale glaciers. Meanwhile, a mixed cap badge team deployed to Canada's Baffin Island as part of Exercise Arctic Mountaineer – thought to be the first time British troops had set foot there. But the low snow levels that greeted them were a stark reminder that climate change could soon make similar trips impossible.



Picture: Cpl Rob Travis, RAF

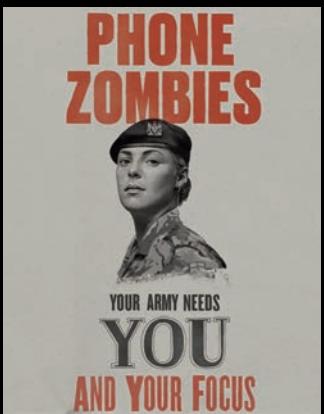
HOLDING BACK THE FLOOD

SOLDIERS pitched in with Royal Air Force colleagues to prevent a dam bursting and flooding a Peak District town in August.

Nearly 1,500 residents of Whaley Bridge had to leave their homes after heavy rainfall weakened the structure.

Members of The Light Dragoons, Reservists from 162 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps and specialists from 170 Engineer Group worked with civilian agencies to help shore up the dam and assist those affected.

More recently, personnel were called into action to tackle flooding after torrential rain in South Yorkshire, building defences and helping to restore power supplies around the Doncaster area (see page 7).



RECRUITMENT AD CONTROVERSY

THE SERVICE'S new recruitment campaign raised a few eyebrows when it was launched in January. Among the groups targeted by the "Your Army Needs You" adverts were so-called snowflakes, smartphone zombies and selfie addicts, as part of a bid to highlight the diverse skillsets required in the military. Despite a sceptical reception, recruiters had the last laugh when figures showed enquiries had nearly doubled in the month after the campaign's launch.



Picture: Dominic King

UPPING STICKS

SOME 8,000 troops said auf Wiedersehen to Germany and returned to the UK or Cyprus over the summer as the drawdown of the British presence in the country entered its final stages. From a peak of around 80,000 personnel in the early 1950s under the British Army of the Rhine, just 250 or so now remain, centred mainly on Sennelager Garrison, which will continue to host units for training and is also home to the Germany Enabling Office and 23 Amphibious Engineer Squadron, Royal Engineers.



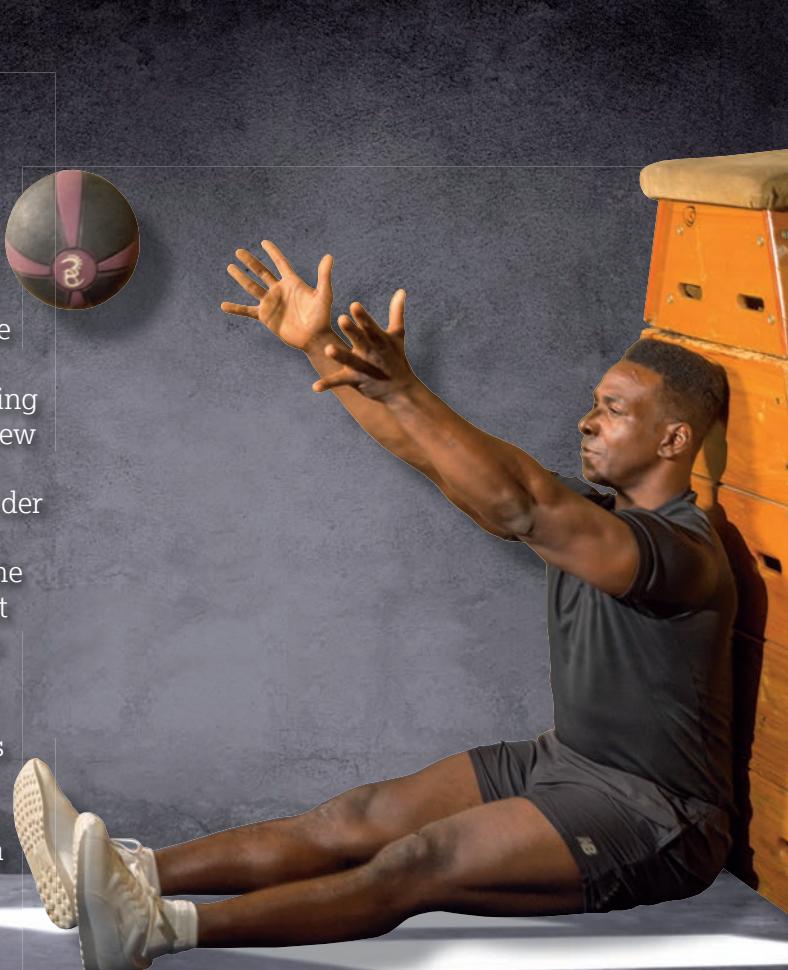
PAY RISE RESULT FOR PRIVATE

NEWLY qualified soldiers welcomed the news that they would be better off to the tune of £1,140. A Service-wide pay hike of 2.9 per cent was announced for most troops, but junior personnel fresh out of phase two training received six per cent, taking their salary to £20,000. The extra cash made an appearance in September's pay, backdated to April.

Picture: RAPTC

OUT WITH THE OLD

THE PERSONAL fitness assessment became a thing of the past when the Royal Army Physical Training Corps unveiled the new soldier conditioning review. Part of the wider overhaul of fitness across the Service, the updated test does not differentiate between age and gender and requires troops to perform six exercises – deadlifts, pull-ups, jumps, weighted throws, sprints and a two-kilometre run.



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Model shown is a Fiesta ST-3 3-Door 1.5 200PS Manual Petrol with optional Full LED Headlamps.

Fuel economy mpg (l/100km): Combined 40.4 (7.0). *CO₂ emissions 136g/km.

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

*There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures. The CO₂ figures shown, however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.



SUPER SWITCH

HAILING from a background in rugby union, there were a few raised eyebrows when Pte Ratu Naulago (Yorks) switched codes to sign for Super League outfit Hull FC in February.

The soldier soon proved the doubters wrong with a debut to remember – scoring twice in a 23-22 win over Wigan Warriors.

He finished the season as the club's top scorer with 15 tries and has signed a new contract for the 2020 campaign.

Picture: Dave Lofthouse

SERVICE TAKEOVERS

THE ARMY took over the responsibility for two critical functions of UK defence in 2019 – countering the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threat and protecting UK-controlled skies from hostile forces.

The Royal Air Force handed over the keys to the Defence CBRN Centre in Porton Down and

in 2020 it will increase its capacity by some 20 per cent, meaning around 1,300 personnel will pass through its doors every year.

"The needs of all three Services will be met but this is an acknowledgement that the greatest CBRN threats are in the land environment," said the centre's new commandant, Lt Col Mark Normile (RE).

The Army also took over control of air defence batteries, with Joint Ground Based Air Defence renamed the 7th Air Defence Group.

The transfer came amid an equipment upgrade and the start of a ten-year programme to modernise weapons and radar systems.

The renamed outfit also relocated from the RAF HQ at High Wycombe to Thorney Island near Chichester, where Royal Artillery air defence batteries are based.

Picture: Graeme Main



COOL 'COPTERS

APACHE attack helicopters made their flying debut inside the Arctic Circle.

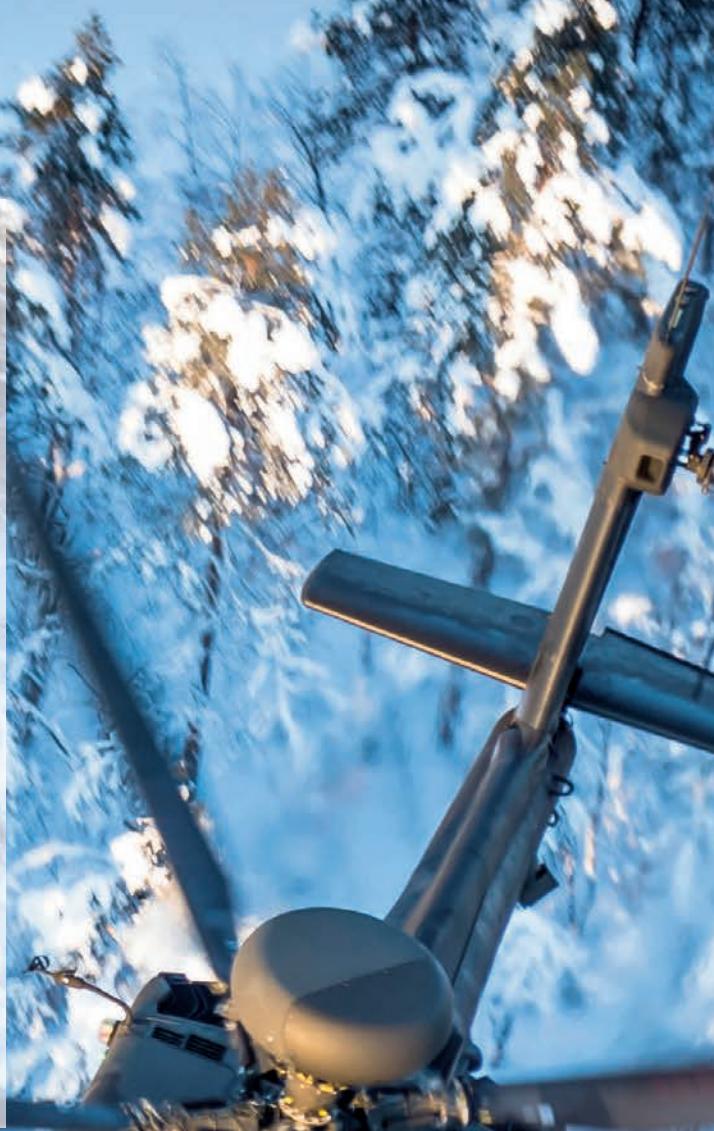
A six-week training exercise by 656 Squadron, Army Air Corps – part of the Attack Helicopter Force, based at Wattisham, in Suffolk – at the start of the year saw the platforms put through their paces in temperatures as low as minus 27 degrees Celsius.

During the exercise in Norway the personnel also endured white-out flying conditions.

Maj Huw Raikes, officer commanding 656 Squadron, said: "It's been both a challenge and a privilege to bring the Apache into the Arctic for the first time, and we've been working at the limits of both human and the aircraft's performance."

The unit maintains a force of Apaches on standby to provide an aviation strike capability to the Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade, the British military's extreme cold weather warfare specialists.

Picture: Cpl Jamie Hart, RLC



FIT FOR PURPOSE

TROOPS saw a change to the military annual training tests (Matts), making them more user-friendly and easier to administer.

From April 1, personnel could complete several of the theory-based tests by using their smartphone and logging onto the Defence Learning Environment portal.

Meanwhile commanding officers were granted more control over when mandatory tests were staged by allowing practical elements – such as battlefield casualty drills – to be signed off during exercises rather than at a one-off event.

"It is fair to say the way we run the tests has not kept pace with busy military life," said Maj Liam Wilson (RRF), who helped draw up the changes.

"Personnel can now complete more than half of the Matts online – and we've also given commanding officers more empowerment and flexibility over when the tests are run."



CAMBRIAN PATROL TURNS 60

THE 60th staging of the Cambrian Patrol competition took place in October with more than 130 eight-person outfits from 34 countries negotiating their way over a 60km course traversing the rugged Cambrian mountains and Brecon Beacons.

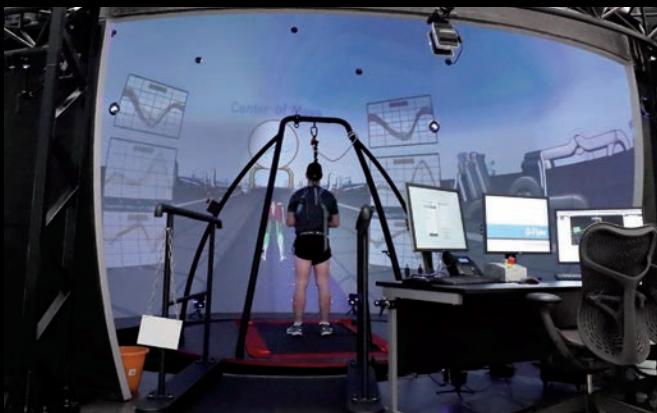
Despite the international flavour to proceedings the British Army dominated, claiming 13 of the 16 gold medals awarded.

It proved to be a particularly strong year for the Royal Gurkha Rifles who secured two gold medals, while ten university officer training corps teams won silver and bronze to match experienced infantry personnel from New Zealand, France, Canada and the Netherlands, among others.

Brig Alan Richmond, head of the Army in Wales, said the exercise was a "very good gauge to test the basic soldiering skills".

"What is clear today is the esteem to which international armies from across the world hold this event," he added.

"Many see it as the ultimate patrolling challenge."



MEDICAL MARVEL

THE £300 million Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Stanford Hall opened its doors at the beginning of the year and revealed some ground-breaking new kit.

The stars of the impressive hardware show included a 30-metre-long biomechanics performance laboratory that features three times as many

3D motion capture cameras as the one at Headley Court.

The other notable addition was a new £1.8 million computer-assisted rehabilitation environment machine, a virtual reality-style trainer with a tilting treadmill to recreate different environments. It's one of six such machines in the world and the only one in Europe.

"This centre has been built around the bespoke needs of our patient group," DMRC's commanding officer, Grp Capt Teresa Griffiths, told *Soldier*.

Picture: Graeme Main



VICTORIES FOR COMMON SENSE

A WAR on morale-sapping rules and pointless admin saw life get a little bit easier for troops this year.

The ban on cooking in the block was lifted, surplus families accommodation was made available to couples in long-term relationships and a raft of time-saving measures are being rolled out as part of the empowerment project.

Vehicle, financial and armoury checks, as well as gym inductions are among the tasks that have been simplified to improve the working lives of personnel and save money.

A 'SAFE CBD ALTERNATIVE' FOR ATHLETES

CBD has been a supplement phenomenon, so it's no surprise that its health benefits appeal to athletes. The problem is that CBD presents a risk to competing athletes and will never carry the Informed Sport seal of approval. Levagen+ Sport is athlete safe and provides the perfect alternative.

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CYBER HUBS

THE formation of a network of Army cyber hubs across the UK was announced in May in a move designed to put the country at the forefront of information warfare.

They will complement existing capabilities – including 77 Brigade – plus other national security organisations in providing analysis and helping to dispel fake news.

Maj Gen Tom Copinger-Symes, Director of Military Digitisation, UK Joint Forces Command, said the hubs could be used for overseas ops as well as protecting UK digital comms.

"They will allow the Army and defence to transform the way we use data at speed so that we can compete with our adversaries in a way fit for the 21st Century," the senior officer added.

“
They will allow the Army and defence to transform the way we use data
”

CLEAN SWEEP

THE old way of cleaning weapons was swept away by the Infantry Trials and Development Unit, who tried out ultrasonic cleaning.

Already in use by industry, it works by sending high-frequency soundwaves through water to remove the dirt.

Trials officer Sgt Daniel Birks (RM) said the idea had come to light during the recent upgrade of the SA80 rifle.

"The Armed Forces still clean with oil and metallic brushes, but manufacturers are telling us they don't do it this way anymore," he told *Soldier*.

"We scrub everything to death, but this can actually do damage to the systems – not to mention taking up time that could be better spent training."

Innovation funding allowed the senior NCO to carry out detailed research into ultrasonic cleaning of SA80s and GPMGs, and Army Headquarters has now given him the thumbs-up to carry out further tests with a view to the new system being rolled out soon.



ANNIVERSARY SPECIALS

NO ONE will forget two major Second World War anniversaries that cropped up over the past 12 months.

The D-Day landings of June 6, 1944 were marked with a series of poignant events and ceremonies in the UK and France involving some 4,000 British military personnel.

Around 300 veterans, all of whom were more than 90 years old, left Portsmouth on a specially-commissioned ferry to attend commemorations in Normandy on the eve of the 75th anniversary.

At 0726 on the day itself, a lone Army piper played at Arromanches in Normandy to mark the exact moment the first wave of British soldiers landed on Gold Beach.

Serving personnel also joined veterans at Bayeux Cathedral and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Bayeux War Cemetery for The Royal British Legion's traditional annual commemorative ceremonies.

In September, events surrounding the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem proved equally moving, with 97-year-old veteran Sandy Cortmann from Aberdeen among those who parachuted into Ginkel Heath, along with troops from The Parachute Regiment and personnel from several European armies and American airborne units.

The southern Dutch town of Brunssum also bestowed honorary citizenship on 328 British soldiers buried in its war cemetery in recognition of their sacrifice to help liberate the Netherlands.

During the Second World War around 35,000 British, American and Polish troops landed by parachute and gliders in what was then the largest airborne operation in history.



Pictures: Cpl Jamie Hatt, RLC, Cpl Robert Weideman, RLC, Cpl Lee Mathews, RAF, SAC Amy Lupton, RAF



FORCE TO BE

IMMERSING yourself in the rigours of military training is a daunting challenge for any teenager.

But for Kgsrm Kian Helm (Lancs) this considerable undertaking proved to be the first of two significant tests of his mental and physical robustness in 2019.

This month the 18-year-old will take his place on the start line of the Talisker Whisky Challenge as part of the Force Atlantic crew hoping to row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean.

Their obvious target is to complete the painstaking quest, but they have set an additional goal to see Kgsrm Helm become the fastest teenager to achieve the feat, beating the record of 43 days and 21 hours set by Eoin Hartwright, a civilian from Oxfordshire, in 2014.

The team is the British Army's official entry in the punishing event – which is billed as the world's toughest ocean rowing race – and its members all stem from AFC Harrogate.

Commanding officer Lt Col Richard Hall (pictured right, Yorks) is leading the bid and he will be joined by instructors Capt Chris Hames (RAPTC) and Capt Alex Walsh (RL).

Given the fact they are based at a training establishment, they were determined to include a junior soldier in the line-up and impressive performances in the interview stage and physical assessments saw Kgsrm Helm emerge as the standout candidate from a field of ten main contenders.

"I didn't really know what I was getting into,



but it has turned out to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," the Serviceman, who has since passed through Infantry Training Centre Catterick, told *Soldier*.

"I have met some amazing people and it has been a surreal experience.

"I was one of the fittest pupils at my school and it was the same in my platoon at Harrogate. That has held me in good stead, you can never be 100 per cent prepared but we feel we are more than ready to go.

"I'm sure there will be some bad moments along the way, but we have a positive mindset and that will really help."

The voyage caps a whirlwind start to the young soldier's Forces career.

His commitments to military training and preparing for the race mean he has yet to sample life at his battalion, but he is convinced the

invitation to join the team was simply too good to turn down.

"When I look back on myself as a pupil at high school and compare that to where I am now, I have completely changed," Kgsrm Helm added.

"I think more junior soldiers should be given opportunities like this.

"We are striving for that fastest teenager record – it is there to be grabbed. To become a world-record holder would be fantastic."

The expedition is scheduled to start at La Gomera, in the Canary Islands, on December 12 and finishes on the West Indian island of Antigua.

It has taken 18 months of intense planning and preparation and the quartet completed their training with a four-day test in the North Sea in October.



Rowers braced for Atlantic adventure

RECKONED WITH



And with their boat now waiting for them at the Spanish outpost, they are counting down the days to departure.

"We just want to get going," Lt Col Hall told *Soldier*. "We have bonded really well as a team and even during spells of bad weather we have found time to chuckle about things."

"We've enjoyed the physical aspect of the challenge and there has only been one bout of seasickness so far, which is a good sign."

"Liam has grown up so quickly and he is taking a lot of responsibility, both on the boat and off."

"I think that is pretty inspirational. When I was an 18-year-old I could not do what he is doing now."

"A lot of people who do this are highly qualified and have years of experience behind them."

"This is pretty extreme, but we are showing that the Army can take a junior soldier, fresh from basic training, and make him a viable competitor."

The task ahead will prove considerable.



Seasickness, sleep deprivation, injury and the ever-changing weather will be among the many obstacles to overcome, as will the challenge posed by the Royal Navy's first-ever crew in the race.

"The weather is a big concern," Lt Col Hall added. "We have not been out on really rough seas yet so it will be a case of learning how to row on big waves. I think it's inevitable that we will be knocked over at some point."

"Repetitive strain injuries are another possibility. It will take more than one million strokes to reach the other side and that is going to take its toll."

"The seasickness can be quite crippling – it affects some people to the point of not

recovering. We will have medication at hand, but it might be another hill we have to climb."

"We have not openly stated we want to win the race but what we are trying to do is get the record for the fastest teenager to complete it."

"Obviously, we aim to finish as high up the field as possible, so it is respectable for the Army, and given our background people are expecting us to do well."

"We also hope to create a legacy so other Service teams can take this on. I'm sure that in the future there will be four athletes in an Army boat that will beat the overall race record."



TALISKER TEST IN NUMBERS

39 teams competing

TWO
hours on the oars, followed by two hours' rest then repeat

43 the record, in days, for the fastest teenage crossing

6-7,000 calories burnt by crew members each day

By completing the challenge, the Force Atlantic team hope to raise £100,000 for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. For more information on the crew and to donate visit www.forceatlantic.com

3,000 miles

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ON TRACK TO THE FUTURE



Army showcase
broadens scope
to champion
capabilities

Report: Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main, Sgt Ben Mather, RLC, Jack Eckersley, DE&S

THE Army Combat Power Demonstration has taken a big leap forward in highlighting the Service's range of capabilities, moving from an exhibition of pure firepower to a varied immersive experience reflecting the numerous challenges of modern conflict.

"We've altered the focus from 'this is where we are now' to 'this is where we're going in the future,'" Lt Col Gary McDade (Rifles), the event's chief planning officer, told *Soldier*.

With more emphasis this year on Army-wide know-how, five stands were supplied by 1st, 3rd and 6th UK Divisions, covering information manoeuvre and land special operations, enablement, prototype warfare, warfighting and an interactive zone.

Innovation and technology were prominent, with drones, artificial intelligence and cyber on display, while experts explained how these contributed to combat effectiveness.

"The exhibits were wider in scope than ever before," explained Lt Col McDade.

"We had 3 UK Div demonstrating high-end ➔

Each year thousands of visitors and tourists descend on The Royal Hospital Chelsea echoing a common question. Who are these old soldiers, who after completing their service with the army, merge back into civilian life; only to suddenly re-emerge again as a Chelsea Pensioner? Every Chelsea Pensioner has a different story to tell; this is my story.

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→ warfighting, with The Royal Welsh supported by 26 Engineer Regiment and The King's Royal Hussars, and a Danish Army section fully integrated with CV90 vehicles – a valuable opportunity to show genuine interoperability.

“The stand for 6 Div showcased its intelligence and specialised infantry capabilities, with 77 Brigade and communications experts also contributing.

“The prototype warfare stand had Ajax and Boxer vehicles alongside each other for the first time, and audiences were introduced to the Strike Experimentation Group and the future doctrine for this formation.”

The enablement section, manned by 101 and 104 Logistical Brigades, highlighted the extent of combat service, logistical, medical and equipment support.

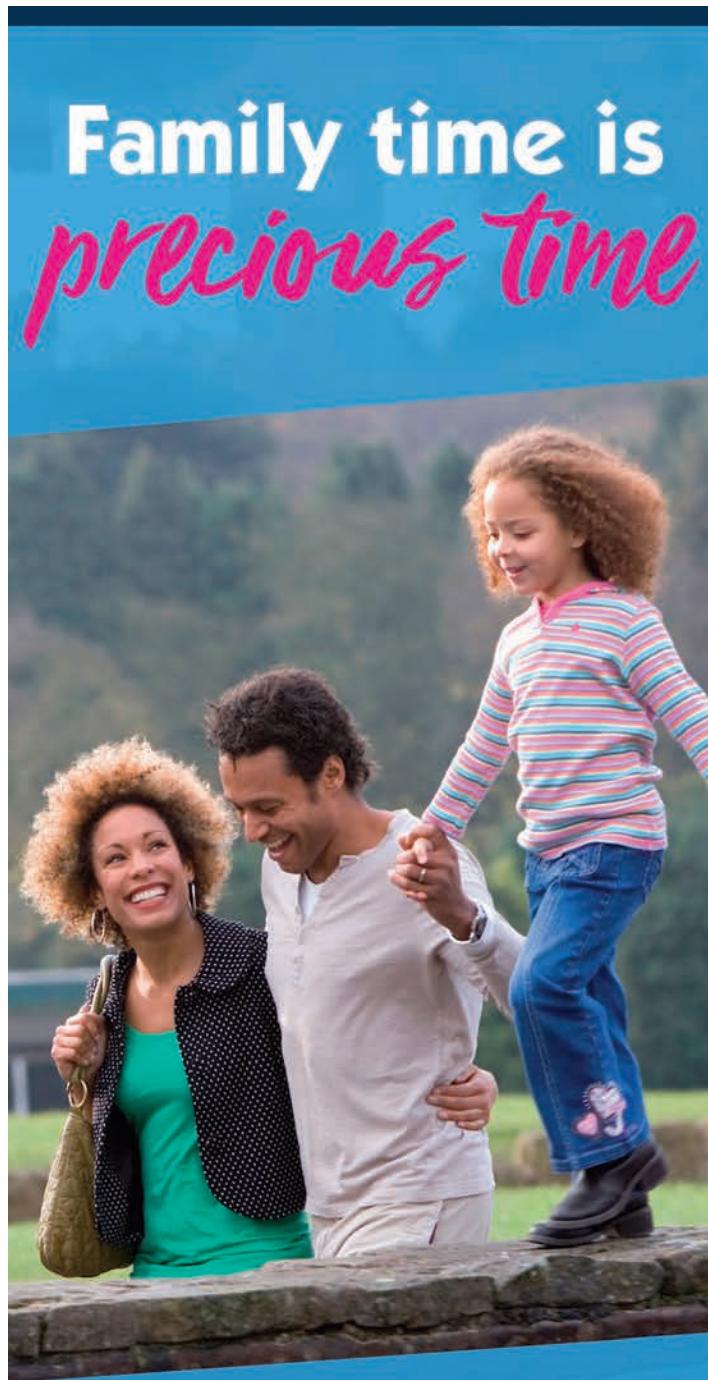
Another first was that each day had a specific audience, which had been tailored by the Engagement and Communications directorate at Army Headquarters.

The first session was hosted by Commander Home Command, Lt Gen Tyrone Urch, with spectators made up of some 500 cadets and schoolchildren enrolled on a British Army-backed science, technology, engineering and maths course.

“Being able to see and have the science, electrics and computing of drones explained was fascinating,” said Ben MacGregor, a student at Clayesmore School in Dorset.

The second day, for industry, was led by Director Support, Maj Gen Simon Hamilton, bringing government officials, Defence Equipment and Support staff and private sector suppliers together to witness exhibitions of combat capability.

Commander Field Army, Lt Gen Ivan Jones, →



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THE FORCES MARCH



20 – 24 May 2020

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The Forces March is organised by and in aid of The Veterans Charity, Registered Charity No. 1123140

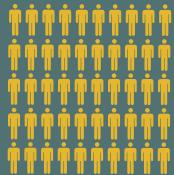
“
We want to provide
an appreciation
of the pressures
soldiers experience
in combat
”



In numbers

2,190

Guests visited over the three days



750

Number of personnel who delivered the demo

SEVEN

Challenger 2 tanks employed

3

Apache helicopters took part, along with two Wildcats

36

Total number of equipment types on display

3,000

Bacon sandwiches served



→ hosted the final day for Service personnel and international partners – including foreign military dignitaries and government organisations.

“As a result of this new structure we achieved different outcomes,” explained project lead, Maj Tim Lauwers (RA).

“For example, we enjoyed valuable defence engagement on day three, which was attended by a host of overseas students from the Defence Academy at Shrivenham and approximately 30 defence attaches based in London, among others.”

Visitors also experienced truly immersive experiences for the first time, carrying ammunition and sandbags to troops or helping to bandage “wounded” personnel in a mock battle, clambering over Warriors, Challengers and Apaches, as well as being shown fake news reels.

“Immersivity is a theme we really are developing because we want to provide an appreciation of the pressures soldiers experience in combat and what life in the Army is all about,” said Maj Lauwers.

“Investing in audience participation as part of the story really allows for a memorable, educational experience.

“It will be interesting to see where next year’s display goes – it could potentially be expanded internally, with units across the British Army invited to send representatives.

“That would be significant because many soldiers don’t routinely see the capabilities and innovations we have and it’s becoming increasingly important in such a fast-moving world to communicate these aspects of the Service as effectively as possible.” ■



DIARY

December 5: Global Analysis Programme 2019 Conference. A thought-provoking day-long event from the Army's think tank, the Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research. Topics covered will include transatlantic security and defence relations, misinformation and the future. To attend email armystrat-chacr-0@mailbox@mod.gov.uk



CAREERS

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

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

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

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

Forces Families Jobs is a platform designed to help partners into

meaningful employment. Visit www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk to see the site, which is free to advertise on for employers who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant.

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

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



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Lt Col Tim Taylor, RA, Defence Academy



DIRECTORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Army Libraries:
01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

Blind Veterans UK:
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Care After Combat:
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Children's Education Advisory Service:
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Combat Stress:
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Defence Humanists:
www.defencehumanists.org.uk

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

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Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01252 787574

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

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

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

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

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

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

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

Scottish Veterans' Residences:
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Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services:
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Continued on page 50



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www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service

WRVS Services Welfare:
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ROADSHOWS

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

January 16: Bristol

January 23: Teeside

January 28: Barking and Dagenham

January 30: Ealing



SEARCHLINE

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

can contact him on 07961 606766.

Loved ones of ex-soldiers emotionally or physically affected while serving are sought for an educational project on the impact of war on families called The Military Family: A Life of Service. Contact info@legasee.org.uk

4 Regiment, Royal Military Police disbanded on November 1, 2019. If you have donated property please contact SSgt Gary McCallum (AGC (RMP)) via gary.mccallum324@mod.gov.uk to arrange its safe return. Anything left unclaimed will go to the RMP Museum.

Author Mike Donovan wants to hear from anyone who served with former footballer Alan Gilzean during his national service in Aldershot/Farnborough around 1959. Email via mikedonovan333@gmail.com

The Advance Study – a research programme into the long-term health of military personnel

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

Former sergeant Frank Tilburn Hodson (ex-REME) is looking for information on craftsmen Pete Boots and Jim Gascoigne, who served in the same command workshop as him in Hong Kong from 1959 to 61. Anyone who has information is asked to contact carolmorgan2412@icloud.com



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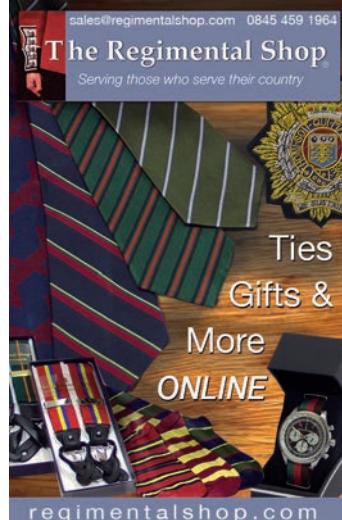
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REVIEWS



MUSIC

HERE'S TO CHRISTMAS

Footballer-turned-pundit spreads festive cheer in musical diversion

"I THOUGHT it was a wind-up," Chis Kamara tells *Soldier* as he explains how his debut musical offering, *Here's to Christmas*, came about. "I never thought I'd be approached by a record company and a 22-piece big band with a view to making an album."

The presenter is known to millions of football fans as the face of Saturday afternoon punditry, but it was his performance on a celebrity version of the BBC singalong contest *All Together Now* that sparked the idea of a secondary career as a crooner.

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MOVIES



» However, these ambitions stemmed from the brains at Silva Screen Records and not from the 61-year-old himself, although a love of big band music meant the approach had a certain level of appeal.

Once assured of the offer's legitimacy, Kamara embarked on his first day in the studio and now, eight months later, he is proud to be centre stage on a record that sees his vocal talents blend with brass, strings and swing on festive favourites such as *Winter Wonderland*, *Let It Snow* and *Santa Baby*.

"At first I went to the studio for a sing-along and they said I was a much better singer than they thought I would be," the ex-Leeds and Sheffield United star explained.

"Then, they wanted to get a 22-piece big band and a conductor involved.

"I never really get nervous, but I was trying to second guess what they were thinking. As musicians they have performed at venues such as the Royal Albert Hall with some of the biggest artists in the world and there they were, working with me.

"The conductor kept pointing my way to say it's my turn to sing, but I was just in awe of the music – it was so surreal.

"But they are proper people and as a band they are simply out of this world – the end product is unbelievable and I could not be more happy with it."

While boasting nine classic covers the album also includes one original number in the shape of its title track.

Written by **Richard Scott**, who has worked with the likes of **Robbie Williams**, the song will form Kamara's bid to achieve the coveted Christmas number one slot.

If he achieves his aim, he will be the first solo artist to top the charts with a

festive effort since Cliff Richard in 1988.

"*Mistletoe and Wine* was the last one and I think it would be great to have a Christmas-themed tune at number one," he added. "Since then it has been X Factor winners and songs that don't really have that festive feel. It's a nice dream to have."

Kamara's musical adventure seems a lifetime away from his early years as a young Serviceman in the Royal Navy.

Despite being a schoolboy footballer at Middlesbrough, the then 16-year-old was marched to the recruiting office by his father to sign-up for a career at sea.

"I was very upset when he did that," the former midfielder, who has been a mainstay of Sky Sports' coverage for two decades, recalled.

"I didn't want to join, I wanted to be a footballer. He thought I would be wasting my life and, with the way things worked out, he was right.

"Not one of the players in that Middlesbrough schoolboy team made it in the game so I'm thankful to him, in a roundabout way."

Kamara's sporting break came

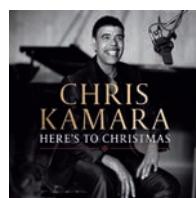
when he impressed while playing for the Navy against Portsmouth and he subsequently signed for the south coast club after spending just four months in uniform.

He went on to play for the likes of Swindon Town, Brentford, Stoke City and Luton before embarking on a career in management.

Despite serving for such a short period of time he believes his experiences in the military held him in good stead for his future endeavours and he has a huge amount of respect for those who have followed in his path – particularly at this time of year.

"It is about the camaraderie with the people you work with," Kamara added. "It is the determination and feeling of unity you have from serving the country.

"But that does not come above family. I feel for those who are away from home at Christmas but that is what they sign up for – it is an incredible sacrifice." ■



• *Here's to Christmas* is out now

INTERVIEW: RICHARD LONG, SOLDIER



PICK OF THE MONTH:

CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE

For PS4, Xbox One and PC

► MORE recent iterations in the *Call of Duty* series seem to have progressed into the laughable, with the exciting, yet almost clownish exploits of wall running and sliding around added to the mix.

But it seems that in order to move forward, we have to look back. And I, for one, am glad that we have.

First things first, this is not a remake, nor a re-master of the original, which left me feeling slightly disappointed.

I have fond memories of crawling through the long grass of Chernobyl with Captain Price and was initially looking forward to seeing this with a fresh lick of paint.

However, it's not that. It's a new campaign and a new story, just with our old friend and his mutton chop sideburns for added effect.

The visuals are well crafted for one thing, especially the night-vision ops, which are eerie, gripping and tense.

The other missions are also visually stunning and there's a sense that though this is a fresh offering there's plenty of nostalgia on display.

But it's in the gameplay that things really demonstrate how good this title is.

There's no need to slide around, or leap from wall to wall like in previous releases. This is a good, old-fashioned first-person shooter, with intricate magazine changes, sights that actually zoom in to improve accuracy and weapon recoil

that makes you aware of the impact of each bullet as it leaves the muzzle in a flash of light.

The multiplayer option is also much improved. I'm pleased to report it's just as fast and frenetic as before, if not more so.

And with the increase in player numbers compared to the original games, things get hairy very quickly, and from pretty much any direction.

The main let-down, however, is the campaign mode; more specifically, the story.

I've felt that since the original *Modern Warfare* the plot elements have suffered in subsequent offerings.

They seemed forced, predictable, and sometimes boring. And unfortunately, the same thing happens here.

The campaign has its moments, but there are areas where mini-game fatigue and quick-time moments ruin the whole experience.

But despite this, it still shines and entices. ■

VERDICT:

Campaign flaws aside, *Modern Warfare* hits the target



REVIEW: DAVID McDougall, CIVVY

GAMES

GAMES RELEASES



The Outer Worlds

For PS4, Xbox One and PC

MOST role-playing games offer an experience of filling someone else's shoes for a while, with varying degrees of success. Titles like *Skyrim*, and some of the *Fallout* series spring to mind. *The Outer Worlds* is another feather in the cap, but this release isn't from heavy hitters Bethesda. Obsidian Entertainment may have worked on the publisher's offerings in the past, but this effort is very much their own, even if it does look and smell like a *Fallout* and *Mass Effect* mash-up. But that's not a bad thing, and it's certainly not a shameless rip-off. It's an assembly of familiar themes that work well, all held within the fun-filled theatre of a world that is begging to be explored.

David McDougall, civvy



Sniper Elite 3, Ultimate Edition

For Nintendo Switch

OXFORD-based developer Rebellion continues its re-master of the acclaimed Second World War stealth action series in impressive style with this third instalment. Despatched on North African ops in 1942, players again step into the boots of US marksman Karl Fairburn as he arrives in Tobruk to help the Brits stem the ferocious Axis onslaught. This new incarnation is slickly delivered with impressive visuals and sound plus controls that make for fluid playability. With a raft of downloadable content and bonus features included, it proves good value for money, offering those with patience a decent downtime blast.

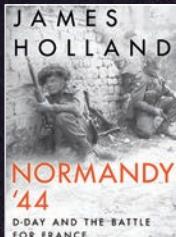
Cliff Caswell, Soldier

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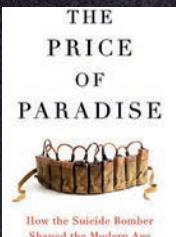
TOP READS OF 2019

Soldier's review team reveal their five best books of the year**Normandy '44**
by James Holland

THE D-Day 75th anniversary commemorations inevitably generated a whole host of new Normandy titles. But

this one just edges the rest out. The most accessible narrative of the campaign, it explains the complexity and scale of Operation Overlord in an engaging and absorbing style that will appeal to the expert and military history novice alike.

Mike Peters, ex-AAC

**The Price of Paradise**
by Iain Overton

THE book that stuck with me most this year was Iain Overton's study of the suicide bomb's evolution

as the weapon of choice for religious extremists. In a bold attempt to make sense of the incomprehensible he retraced the path of destruction, speaking to victims, failed bombers and imprisoned terrorists along the way. The result is not just an enlightening history of this insidious threat, but also of the origins of internecine violence in the Middle East.

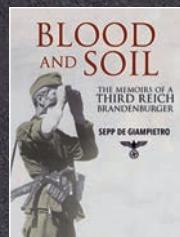
Becky Clark, Soldier

**The Longest Day special edition**
by Cornelius Ryan

THIS is a book I had read before but the Folio Society's special edition, republished to mark 75 years since D-Day,

was such a quality offering that I happily revisited it. Not only is it a true classic – author Cornelius Ryan was there himself and interviewed hundreds of veterans – but the presentation is outstanding and will no doubt take pride of place on any history buff's bookshelf.

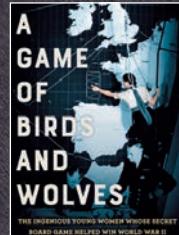
Sgt Adam Jackson, Para

**Blood and Soil**
by Sepp de Giampietro

NEWLY published in English this year, this is one of the few German perspectives of the Second World War and one of even

fewer about Hitler's special forces. The author – a member of the Brandenburg Division – describes the campaigns to seize the Dunaburg and Bataisk bridges, the latter of which left half of his unit dead. It is an extraordinary and mind-boggling account and the untold stories of these mainly foreign German nationals would otherwise be lost to the depths of history. An absolute must for anyone with an interest in the field.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

**A Game of Birds and Wolves**
by Simon Parkin

RARELY have books about the Second World War shown so clearly the contribution of women to

the Allied victory. This account details the efforts of members of the Women's Royal Navy Service – the Wrens – who war-gamed tactics for use in the North Atlantic campaign. Youngsters of 19 to 21 years of age were guiding and advising hardened destroyer escort captains on how they could defeat the U-boat menace. For this they received no decorations or thanks other than a short letter expressing the Admiralty's gratitude. This excellent book does much to right that omission and is decades overdue.

Andy Kay, ex-RS

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PICK OF THE MONTH:

THE COURIER

Predictability proves to be a problem

► BACK in the mists of time – when the likes of prime minister John Major were dealing with the Cold War's aftermath – Hollywood hardman Steven Seagal found himself in an unlikely role in the new world order.

Cast as a US Navy chef in *Under Siege*, the muscleman was plunged into the nightmare scenario of dealing with a legion of mercenaries who had taken over a warship. And it fell to him to thwart the band bent on selling the vessel's lethal cruise missiles.

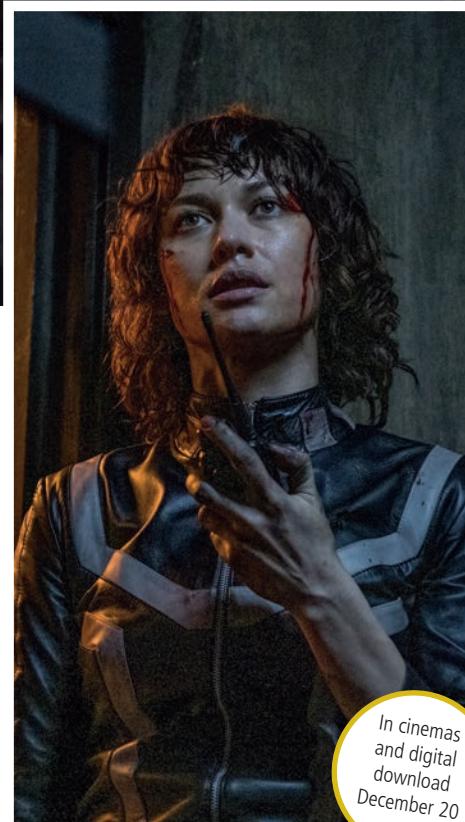
Fast forward nearly three decades – substituting 1990s state-based terrorists for a serious and organised crime group operating in the social media age – and you have the broad outline of *The Courier*.

This time with a female lead, in the shape of ex-Bond girl Olga Kurylenko, the story follows the fortunes of a

motorcycle delivery agent who unwittingly finds herself caught up in delivering a package designed to kill the key witness in the trial of an underworld kingpin.

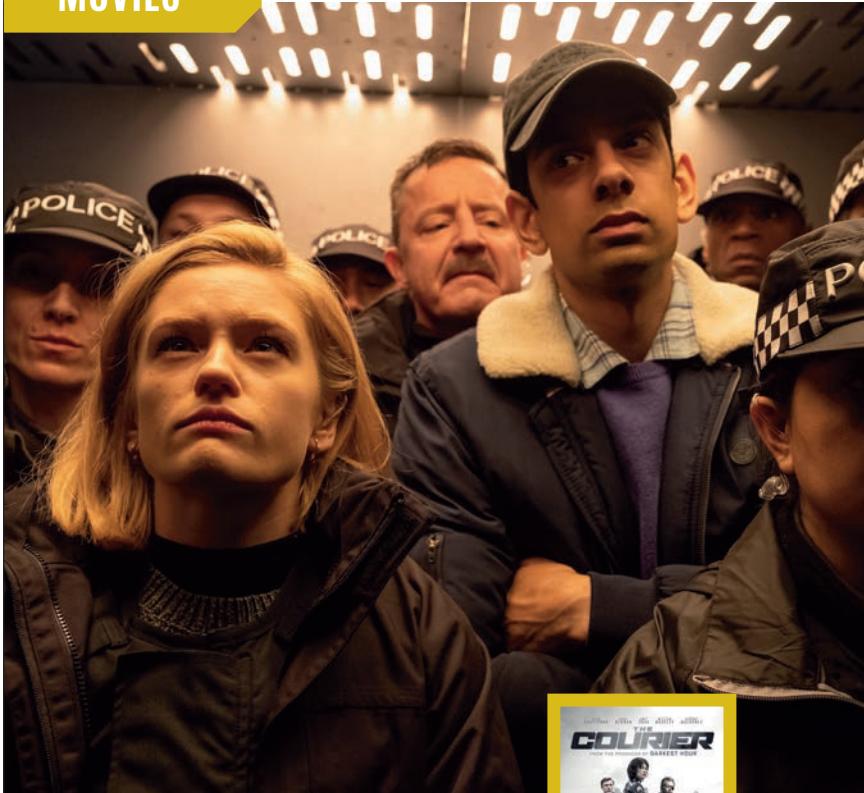
Saving the man – Nick Murch – from certain death after the device she has offloaded unleashes lethal cyanide gas, killing several National Crime Agency officers, the unarmed pair then find themselves pursued into a London multistorey car park by a gang of heavily armed thugs.

It falls to the leather-clad heroine to keep both herself and her ultra-nervous new companion alive through a combination of martial arts skills, expert riding, improvised weaponry and hiding in the shadows.



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MOVIES



As the plot unfolds, and with the ruthless criminal mastermind Ezekiel Mannings growing impatient while under house arrest in the US, an already astonishing level of violence escalates.

Like Seagal all those years ago, it transpires that the courier is actually an ex-US special forces soldier – and the bad guys soon find they might have bitten off more than they can chew.

Audiences will easily guess where this is leading. Villains picked off one by one, Kurylenko declaring that she is only a messenger as Seagal said he was “just the cook”. The heroine has flashbacks to a failed military mission and has to keep it together despite horrific injuries – all of the clichés are present as the romp proceeds to its inevitable conclusion.

The Courier is by no means a bad film. While the acting is patchy in places, Kurylenko holds her own as the lead while *Harry Potter* mainstay **Gary Oldman** puts in a credible performance as Mannings.

Zackary Adler’s direction is impressive, with the action flowing seamlessly from the claustrophobic car park to the cityscapes of London and New York. There are also some impressive motorcycling stunts, while

the fight scenes are slick.

But the movie is let down by its overall predictability and unremitting lack of originality. While it works as a straight action flick, there is nothing new here, and the general concept has been executed better elsewhere.

Misgivings aside, however, if action floats your boat then you will find plenty of it with *The Courier* – and it might well make you see your internet delivery folk in a new light. ■

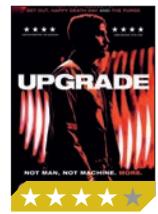
VERDICT:

A spectacularly unoriginal but passable, actioner
★★★★★

REVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, SOLDIER



DVD/DIGITAL RELEASES



Upgrade

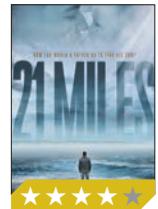
Out January 7

STARRING **Logan Marshall-Green**

(*Spider-Man, Homecoming, The Invitation*) as Grey Trace, this title tells the story of a technophobe living in a future filled with computers.

After becoming the victim of a brutal mugging which leaves his wife dead and Trace a quadriplegic, the protagonist is offered an experimental implant by a billionaire recluse. As well as curing him, this gives him immense strength, agility and stamina, and he uses his second chance to seek retribution on those who hurt him. Any fan of sci-fi movies will love this. The future tech combined with brutal fight scenes make it a real must-watch that I would highly recommend. But be warned: some may find this a bit gory at times.

Sgt Adam Jackson, Para



21 Miles

Out on Amazon download this month

THE unhappy tale of migrant camps in France has already filled endless media airtime – but rarely has the voice of those caught up in this grim drama been fully heard. Now journalist **Richard Perry** has sought to

redress the balance in this documentary charting the fortunes of a Tunisian citizen as he seeks to be reunited with his son in the UK. As the would-be immigrant comes to terms with conditions in the Calais shanty town dubbed The Jungle, the film lays bare both the tensions between those battling for a new life as well as their humanity. A vivid piece of reporting, this provides a perspective on a story still not fully told or understood.

Cliff Caswell, Soldier



Brothers in arms

Out now

POLICE officer and US Marine Corps Reservist Cal (**Jai Courtney** of *Terminator Genisys* fame) faces a dilemma when his half-brother is arrested and imprisoned following a bar fight. With guilt tearing

him apart through a tour of Iraq, Cal and his inseparable mates decide to hatch a plan and bust his sibling from prison. As their loyalties are divided it becomes difficult not to question whether they’re doing the right thing. The intensity builds and builds right up until the last minutes and you’ll find yourself with heart in mouth to see if the feat can be pulled off. A highly enjoyable film and well worth an evening in on the sofa to watch.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

SOLDIER SPORT



BACK IN ACTION

LIGHTWEIGHT star LCpl Shanice James (REME) made a triumphant return to the ring as the Army defeated their German rivals. The soldier had been sidelined for 12 months through injury but won on a split decision. Read more about their international test on pages 64-65...



BOXERS DOWN BUNDESWEHR IN CATTERICK CLASH

THE Army's new breed of fighters showcased some impressive form in the ring as they outclassed their German rivals on a night of international boxing at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick.

Roared on by a partisan home crowd, the soldiers claimed victories in their head-to-head contests with the Bundeswehr's finest and, with Rfn Sid Driscoll (Rifles) and Pte Harry Condren (Para) triumphing elsewhere, they thrilled their fellow personnel with five wins from six bouts.

Development team member LCpl Spencer Collins (REME, pictured right) gave the hosts the perfect start as he defeated Can Aygordu, before Driscoll and Condren followed suit in a storming opening salvo.

Light heavyweight Collins looked tentative in the first round but he upped the tempo in the second, with the left jab proving effective alongside some well

executed combinations.

Both boxers tired in the third but the Army athlete held firm and did enough to secure the result on a split decision.

Driscoll was the next to dazzle as hundreds of future riflemen cheered their man to victory over North Star's Ryan Daley.

Showman Driscoll offered rich entertainment with an open guard and fast footwork but there was no shortage of skill in an all-round attacking display.

Some strong right shots, coupled with the left jab, formed the highlights of an impressive second round and he went on to win via a split decision.

Welterweight LCpl Pete Love (R Anglian) was the only team member to taste defeat, falling on the wrong side of a split decision to Darlington's Tom Summerbell, but Condren got proceedings back on track in his clash with Sheffield City's Hash Rehman.

The light welterweight looked

busy from the outset and he signalled his intent with some stinging right shots.

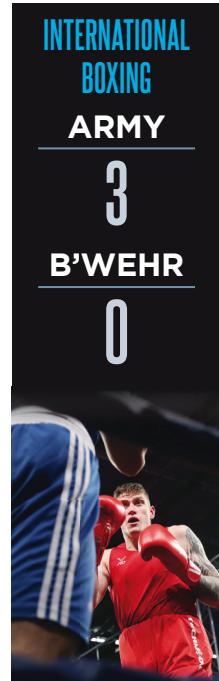
The second round proved to be a closer affair but Condren returned to form in the third, as an over-the-top right and a flurry of punches at the death saw him seal a unanimous verdict.

The show also marked a successful return to action for LCpl Shanice James (REME) after a lengthy injury setback.

A beaten finalist at the 2018 Amateur Boxing Association (ABA) Championships, the Servicewoman eased her way back in a comfortable opening round against the Bundeswehr's Charlotte Hoffmann.

The pace quickened in the second before James floored her opponent in the third, when a punishing left shot forced a standing count and earned her the win on another split decision.

However, the Army saved the best for last as LCpl Carnell



Brown (AGC (SPS), pictured left) proved too strong for rival Melchior Nyary-Normann.

Brown, who is due to attend a Team GB assessment this month, dominated all three rounds in a relentless display that was packed with pace, intensity and a barrage of accurate punches, particularly the left jab.

It came as little surprise to see the light heavyweight prevail on a unanimous decision.

While the overall result proved emphatic the main focus for head coach Sgt James Allen (REME) was gaining experience ahead of the challenges to come.

"We try to split our season into four training blocks and this event has come in the middle of the second phase," he said.

"In many ways it didn't really matter if we lost but it is a home show and we wanted to get the win. It is good for morale and they are bouncing off the walls.

"Sid Driscoll and Harry Condren (pictured below) are full of enthusiasm and positivity.

"Harry showed real moments of class but there were some weaknesses as well, so there are things to improve. He is young and has phenomenal potential.

"From here we will fight at a round robin tournament in Aldershot, with three bouts in three days.

"That will be important as we move into our championship block. If they go onto the ABA finals they will potentially fight for three days on the spin – they need to have that conditioning so the body lasts." ■



BOXING IN NUMBERS

VICTORIES
FOR THE
SOLDIERS
FROM THREE
BOUTS
WITH THEIR
GERMAN
RIVALS

3

NEW
FIGHTERS ON
THE ARMY
TEAM FOR
THIS SEASON

7

MEDALS
WON AT
THE 2019
EINDHOVEN
BOX CUP

5

TEAMS
COMPETING
AT THIS
MONTH'S
ROUND
ROBIN IN
ALDERSHOT

4

MONTH RING
ABSENCE
FOR THE
RETURNING
LCPL
SHANICE
JAMES

12



FOCUSING ON FORCES TITLES

NEWCOMERS Rfn Sid Driscoll (Rifles) and Pte Harry Condren (Para) are targeting places in the Army's Inter-Services team after impressing in Catterick.

Both fighters were added to the squad at the start of the campaign and after excelling at one of the leading amateur set-ups in the country they are now plotting successful ring careers, starting with the Forces showdown in March.

Driscoll (pictured) credited the Army with reinvigorating his love of boxing after he walked away from the sport in 2015 but he was keen to taste the challenges of the day job before making his return.

"I deployed on Op Shader earlier this year and only came onto the team in September," he explained. "I'm glad I did that, it is great life experience and sees you grow up."

"When I joined the Army I thought it would be a good way to get back into boxing.

"An Inter-Services title is

now my main focus, but long-term I want to be successful at the Amateur Boxing Association Championships and then get a place on the Team GB programme."

Local lad Condren was delighted to perform so strongly in front of his home crowd and hopes the experience will spur him onto greater success.

"It was absolutely amazing," he said. "There were 1,300 people here and it is the first time I have boxed with a crowd like that."

"I feel I have improved so much. This is the best set-up in the country, apart from Team GB.

"I'm thinking about my boxing more. In the past I was perhaps too quick on my feet and that saw me tiring out, but now I'm looking to mix it up a bit more and have been learning about range control."

"It is going well and hopefully I can go on and win an Inter-Services title." ■

Include a list of walks to do together over the coming year, in places that are special to you or you know they want to go to. Expert Tip #8

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Let's go somewhere



VANN'S RETURN BOOSTS SUPERLEAGUE CHARGE

FORMER England international Capt Jo Vann (AAC) has returned to the summit of the domestic scene by being named head coach of the Team Bath netball programme.

The 35-year-old enjoyed a stellar playing career with the South West franchise – winning four Superleague titles – and she is hoping her immense experience on the court, together with the skills garnered from her time in uniform, can inspire the next generation of talent to sporting success.

Her remit includes everything from the future performance pathway, which identifies and develops emerging stars, through to high-performance athletes operating on the elite stage.

Vann will also work closely with senior team head coach Anna Stemberige in a bid to improve on the side's third-place finish in last season's Superleague standings.

"To be returning to the club where I was inspired as a player

is a dream," she told *SoldierSport*.

"This role is about engaging with people and bringing the right individuals into the programme. It will also give me a chance to use the knowledge and experience I have gained from the Army to develop our athletes in terms of leadership.

"My approach is a holistic one and it will not be limited to just being a netball coach. I'm looking for the complete package and will be bringing in those who add value to the team."

Plans for the new campaign, which gets under way in February, are still at an early stage but the team faces its first major test when it hosts the Big Showdown on December 7 and 8.

The tournament features four Superleague rivals, as well as the UK's leading men's side.

"These teams are at the top level and they have big ambitions," Vann explained. "It will be an opportunity to try different combinations and bring the group together.



**"TO
RETURN
TO THE
CLUB
IS A
DREAM"**

"We are building on the core of our group from last season and we are in a strong position given the fact we finished third."

Team Bath have already announced nine of the 15 players that will form their squad for 2020 and Vann is relishing the prospect of adapting to a new rule change that will see the matchday contingent reduced from 12 to ten.

"It will be interesting," she added. "It means players need to offer more and flexibility will be important. It will also be challenging for us as coaches."

Welsh international LCpl Fern Davies (RLC) is currently training with the team and Vann will lock horns with another familiar face in the shape of LCpl Dee Bolakoro (RE), who has signed with rivals Celtic Dragons.

"It highlights the incredible support the Army can offer," the officer explained.

"It gives athletes and coaches like myself the opportunity to push the ceiling higher." ■



RUNNERS REACH AWARDS SUMMIT

THE Service's athletics stars were the big winners at this year's Army Sports Awards as they claimed two of the major prizes on offer.

England selection for both road and track running proved to be the highlight of a stunning season for Cpl Dani Hodgkinson (QARANC, pictured above), who finished eighth in the 5,000 metres at the British Indoor Championships.

These achievements saw her crowned sportswoman of the year ahead of Fijian international netball star LCpl Dee Bolakoro (RE) and karate world champion Maj Karen Owen (AGC (ETS)).

"Selection for an England vest is always tough but to achieve this in two different disciplines speaks volumes for her drive and determination," the 34-year-old's citation stated.

Hodgkinson was also part of the women's outfit that triumphed at the Inter-Services Cross Country Championships.

The result represented a 30th successive title for the Army's

cross country and road race squad, who were named team of the year.

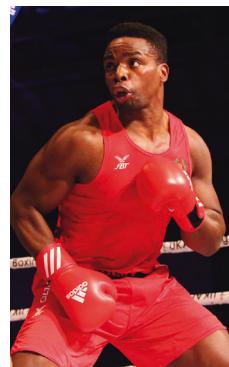
Further success was witnessed at the London Marathon, where four runners completed the course in under three hours. They then claimed the collective honours at the Inter-Services Marathon, Half-Marathon and Ten Kilometre Championships.

Their citation read: "Not only are they balancing successful careers and family pressures, they are also continually delivering success within the sporting arena."

Another athlete with cause to celebrate was boxer LSgt Natty Ngwenya (Gren Gds, pictured right) – the sportsman of the year.

Having completed his Junior Brecon course, the heavyweight ace made a spectacular return to the ring with victory at the UK Armed Forces Championships.

He then went on to enjoy a triumphant campaign at the England Elite National Championships before sealing a Three Nations title in May. ■



**"IT
SPEAKS
VOLUMES
FOR HER
DRIVE"**



STAR ON THE RISE

A STUNNING year that included silver medals at the World and European Junior Championships saw modern pentathlon ace OCdt Kay Bryson (pictured above) scoop the rising star award.

The prospective Army doctor, who is part of Exeter UOTC, started 2019 by being ranked second in the British senior women's standings and went on to represent her country at the full European Championships.

Elsewhere, she competed in the finals of two World Cup events and took silver at the Czech Open in Prague.

Bryson's citation stated: "Military interest in the sport has been revitalised and her emergence at the very top of national and international competition is a beacon for others to follow."

Lt Col Rich Naivalurua (REME) was presented with the sports official prize in recognition of his services to rugby league, while Lt Col Charles Bromley-Gardener (QRH) collected the lifetime achievement award for a career that includes involvement in orienteering, Nordic skiing, athletics and rugby union.



SPORT SHORTS



REDS OVERCOME DISRUPTIVE RIVALS

INTER-SERVICES INDOOR HOCKEY

ARMY

3

NAVY

1



HERE was a familiar feel to this season's Inter-Services Indoor Hockey Championships as the Army women claimed a 23rd successive title.

While the outcome extended an impressive winning run the soldiers were pushed all the way in the tournament finale before prevailing against a resurgent Royal Navy outfit.

A close-range strike from Cpl Lucy Reading (AMS, pictured) in the opening quarter set the Reds on their way but when further goals failed to follow the Senior Service were able to fight back.

Their rivals capitalised from a penalty corner but the equaliser prompted an immediate response as 2Lt Lara Knowles (AMS) converted a set-piece routine.

The third quarter proved to be a nervous affair as the Navy continued to threaten but the contest was finally settled as skipper Maj Nic George (R Signals) dispatched a penalty

stroke with just seconds left on the clock.

"There's no doubt the Navy disrupted our game plan with some really good basic skills," she told *SoldierSport*. "We had to work hard.

"But we adapted and did what needed to be done to get the result.

"Every competition is important to us, especially at Inter-Services level. The rivalry is friendly, but fierce, and we wanted to win this title."

The victory will also hold them in good stead as they head into the qualifying rounds of the National Indoor League later this month.

"This has been perfect preparation as we will be facing the best club sides in the country," George added.

Elsewhere, the Army men endured a disappointing campaign that included a 9-4 defeat at the hands of the Royal Air Force, while the masters' and under-25s' teams also missed out on silverware. ■



Athletes ace Nato test

SERVICE athletes dominated the podium in the women's race at the Nato Ten-Kilometre Road Race in Budapest.

Army sportswoman of the year Cpl Dani Hodgkinson (QARANC) led the charge, claiming the gold medal in a time of 33min 39.8sec. She also helped the UK Armed Forces secure top spot in the team event.

Teammate Pte Jessie Lutwyche (QARANC) was second, with Capt Faith Taylor (RAMC) third.

In the men's race, Maj Ed Knudsen (REME, pictured) claimed third place – beating Royal Air Force rival Cpl James Bellward in the process.



Relays prove popular

MORE than 270 runners took to Tweeseldown Racecourse for the Army Cross Country Relay Championships.

This year's event saw mixed teams competing for the first time and it was 27 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps who claimed the inaugural title. The Defence School of Healthcare Education won the women's trophy, with 6 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps taking the men's major units prize.

SPORT SHORTS

Picture: Anthony McArdle



Toffees' Service support

LAST month's remembrance fixture with Tottenham Hotspur marked the first official engagement for Everton's Tri-Service Toffees.

The brainchild of WO1 Jazz Bal (REME), the initiative comprises a supporters' club for personnel from all three Services and allows them to access Goodison match tickets whenever they are home on leave.

It will also loan flags to members of the Armed Forces as they deploy around the world.

"Remaining close to your team when you are serving means a lot," Bal said. "And returning home to watch a game becomes even more special."

Picture: Marcus Hoare



Forces set for cup run

ARMY ace Spr Dan Stoneman (RE, pictured) sealed a 2-0 win for the UK Armed Forces footballers over Isthmian League outfit Worthing.

The wide man's near-post strike proved to be the perfect send off for the Servicemen, who head to the Netherlands this month on a mission to retain their Kentish Cup crown.

Reds' goalkeeper LCpl Luke Cairney (RE) was another to shine on the south coast, as a string of superb saves kept his side in the contest early on and denied their opponents at the death.

FORCES FIGHT BACK IN STYLE

WINGER LBdr Connor O'Reilly (RA) proved to be the hero as the UK Armed Forces snatched a dramatic late victory in rugby union's annual remembrance fixture.

The soldier touched down for the decisive score with just seconds remaining as the military outfit beat the Rugby for Heroes Barbarians 29-26 at Bristol's Ashton Gate Stadium.

Boasting seven players with experience at international level, the Barbarians showed their class in a devastating first-half display as tries from Sale duo Paul Knight and Benji Lloyd, as well as scores from ex-England forward Luke Narraway and Exeter flier Matt Jess, put the Servicemen firmly on the back foot.

But skipper Capt Jamie Miller (AAC) delivered a welcome boost on the stroke of half-time when he touched down following a scintillating break from LAFT Ben Chambers.

O'Reilly created the platform for a try from Cpl Joe Brown (RLC) shortly after the restart and when Cpl Robert Heath (AGC (RMP)) pounced on a kick from Cpl James Dixon (RE) to cross moments later the comeback was on.

Chambers was the next to score as he intercepted an attempted clearance before O'Reilly (pictured) had the final say as he evaded a Barbarians tackler to stretch to the line. ■



Picture: Alligin Photography

**"THEY
WILL
INSPIRE
OTHERS"**



● THE team for next year's Invictus Games has been announced – with more than half of the 65-strong squad hailing from the Army.

A total of 38 serving and former soldiers will travel to The Hague in May as part of the UK's latest entry in the sporting showpiece.

"Hopefully they will inspire others suffering with life-changing injuries or illnesses that anything is possible," said chef de mission Hannah Lawton.

MONTH IN SPORT

December's key fixtures...



WHAT:

Inter-Corps Swimming and Water Polo

WHEN:

December 4 to 5

WHERE:

Aldershot

NEED TO KNOW:

It was business as usual last season as the Infantry and Army Medical Services retained the men's and women's titles. Who will be making a splash in 2019?

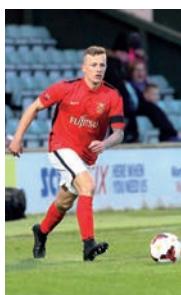


WHAT: Army Women v British Police – rugby union

WHEN: December 11

WHERE: Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot

NEED TO KNOW: This fixture follows on from last month's trials and will form the ideal preparation for tests against Germany and Sweden in the new year



WHAT:

Kentish Cup football

WHEN:

December 11 to 13

WHERE:

Netherlands

NEED TO KNOW:

The UK Armed Forces' footballers return to the international stage with clashes against their French and Dutch rivals. A strong Army contingent will be hoping to steer the team to glory

KARATE IN NUMBERS

GOLD MEDALS WON BY SSGT HAYLEY HALL

3

DAYS OF EUROPEAN ACTION IN THE DANISH CITY OF ODENSE

4

FIGHTS WON BY MAJ KAREN OWEN AS SHE TOPPED THE PODIUM AT THIS YEAR'S WORLD FINALS

3

FOLLOWERS ON THE BRITISH ARMY KARATE FACEBOOK PAGE

731

NEW FACES IN ACTION FOR THE TEAM AT THE GB OPEN LEAGUE EVENT

3

KARATE



MEDALS MOUNT ON THE MAT

THE Army's karate stars made a telling contribution to Great Britain's efforts at the WUKF European Championships as they claimed an impressive haul of 13 medals.

Maj Karen Owen (AGC (ETS)), a nominee for sportswoman of the year at the 2019 Army Sports Awards, and Ssgt Hayley Hall (RE) were part of the women's team that took gold in the senior ippon kumite and both soldiers celebrated further success elsewhere in the competition.

Hall secured gold in the veterans' ippon kumite and sanbon kumite, while Owen topped the podium in the veterans' team sanbon kumite.

The duo also added silver and bronze medals in other kata and ippon disciplines.

LCpl Chris Rowan (Para, pictured) sealed another gold as part of the victorious men's senior ippon kumite team – an effort that was followed by two bronze medals in the ippon

rotation and kumite.

Cpl David Johnson (AGC (RMP)), WO2 Brian Hall (REME), Ssgt Marcus Ratsey (RE) and Gdsm Jack Howe (Coldm Gds) also achieved podium placings as the soldiers finished their bid with a total of four gold, four silver and five bronze medals.

"We were a small contingent of the British squad," Owen told *SoldierSport*. "To bring back 13 medals is a great achievement – everyone performed really well."

The personnel went on to claim five gold and three bronze medals at the Great Britain Open League, when three newcomers made their debut for the Service squad.

They will return to action at the European Champions Cup event, which will be held in Romania later this month.

"We've won world and European titles this season, with further medals at the GB league, and that is phenomenal," Owen added. ■



STAY IN TOUCH: FOR MORE NEWS AND RESULTS FOLLOW @ARMYRUGBYUNION ON TWITTER

GAME BRIEF

COMPETITION: Inter-Services Under-23 Rugby Union

VENUE: Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot

DATE: November 20

ARMY 25: Tries:

Bainivalumailepanoni, Kilbey, Gibbs, Rabuno. Conversion: Riley. Penalty: Riley

RAF 22: Tries: Evans, Crowley (2), Jones. Conversion: Jones



SKIPPER LCpl Josh Wright (AGC (RMP)) praised the efforts of his teammates as they put the disappointment of their opening day defeat behind them to down the Royal Air Force.

"We had a point to prove and we started the game really well," he told *SoldierSport*.

"But fair play to the RAF, they forced their way back into the contest and we made some mistakes they capitalised on.

"Our forwards had to dig deep today. They knew they were going to be in a battle and they really wanted it; they provided the platform for our backs.

"We all have aims and aspirations to play as high as we can and the next step for us is to push for a place in the Army senior squad."



FORWARDS ON SONG IN NARROW WIN

THE Army's young guns survived a fightback from their Royal Air Force rivals to finish on a high in this season's Inter-Service's Under-23 Championships.

Four tries in a devastating 30-minute salvo saw the Reds race into a 22-5 lead in Aldershot as a convincing win looked on the cards.

However, their opponents had other ideas and a spirited response saw them reduce the arrears to just three points as the match ended 25-22.

Having reigned supreme in 2018, the soldiers suffered a disappointing start to their title defence as they crashed to a 28-12 loss to the Royal Navy.

But their forward line proved to be a formidable weapon a week later as they bounced back in style.

Wing Cfn Isikeli Bainivalumailepanoni (REME) opened the scoring in the fourth minute and, from there, the pack took centre stage.

A sustained spell of pressure drew further rewards as a

quick penalty paved the way for flanker LCpl Scott Kilbey (R Signals) to crash over.

LCpl Ethan Riley (RLC) kicked the extras to extend the advantage to 12-0 but the RAF fired a swift reply courtesy of SAC Toby Evans.

Bainivalumailepanoni was in the thick of the action moments later and when he was held up short of the line LBdr Scott Gibbs (RA) was on hand to finish the move.

The set-piece provided the Army's next source of points as a slick lineout saw Kilbey glide through the RAF defence before Pte Aisea Rabuno (RLC) powered home.

However, the hosts suffered a double blow as half-time loomed when SAC Ryan Crowley and SAC Liam Jones both touched down.

The fluency of the first period was lacking after the break but Riley kicked a crucial penalty to stretch the Army's lead before Crowley ensured a nervy ending with his second try of the night. ■

INTER-SERVICES
U23 RUGBY
ARMY

25

RAF

22





WHEELDON ON THE RISE FOLLOWING QUINS CALL

THE Army rugby union set-up has provided a conveyor belt of talent for the sport's professional clubs in recent times and its latest graduate is now looking to make a name for himself at Harlequins.

Cpl Lloyd Wheeldon (Para) signed with the Premiership giants following a successful summer trial and is hoping the experience of training day-in day-out with the club's elite coaching staff and international stars will take his game to the next stage.

The soldier initially joined to provide injury cover at scrum half and is relishing the opportunity to show what he can do in such esteemed company.

"It has been a massive step up," the 23-year-old told *SoldierSport*. "Pre-season was tough and the level of ability at the club speaks for itself.

"There are areas I need to focus on, but I feel I am progressing every day – it's about developing

my all-round game.

"Being part of the Army team held me in good stead but I have come on leaps and bounds since I've been here."

Wheeldon's new teammates include England players Chris Robshaw, Mike Brown and fellow scrum half Danny Care, while head of rugby Paul Gustard helped coach England to back-to-back Six Nations titles before joining Harlequins in 2018.

"It is a massive club," he added. "Training alongside them every day is amazing.

"We are in a very good place. I've only been here for a short space of time but I can see the team is heading in the right direction. The players are very positive and confident they can challenge for trophies."

Wheeldon's chance to impress came on the back of some impressive form for the Army and he played a starring role in the team's victory over the Royal



**"I HAVE
COME ON
LEAPS
AND
BOUNDS"**

Navy at Twickenham in May.

A graduate of the Reds' under-23 squad, he has followed in the footsteps of Service teammates LCpl Semesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) and Cpl Lewis Bean (Rifles), of Bath and Northampton respectively, in moving to the Premiership and believes it is a pathway that more soldiers can follow.

"Playing in the Army-Navy game was a big factor for me," Wheeldon added.

"If you can play in front of a crowd like that and hold your nerve it bodes well."

"Me coming here shows the military system works."

"From corps level right through to the Army and UK Armed Forces, the process continues to be successful."

"It is good to know the Service has links to professional clubs and seeing players get signed creates further opportunities and gives hope to others." ■

Final Word



Some of the shooters earning the chance of competing at the 2020 Olympics. They do their strength and conditioning training at our boxing gym and it would be great to see them at the Games.

LCpl Josh Woods, PWRR



The Service has delivered across the board; the netballers have done very well and there was a victory in the Army-Navy match at Twickenham. The Royal Engineers have also started a go-karting team, which has been very successful. It shows you can do any sport you want in the Service.

Sgt Sam Gowin, RA



Seeing so many athletes supported at the Masters' European Age Group Championships was impressive. Medals were won across a variety of sports and it shows the vast range of opportunities there are to compete at an amateur level in the Army.

Capt Katrina Rye, RAMC



It would have to be LCpl Dee Bolakoro (RE) representing Fiji at the Netball World Cup. The scale was immense – it was a competition that was followed, or attended by, more than six million Brits.

Capt Jo Vann, AAC

There has been a lot of success in rugby union. The seniors won the Inter-Services this year and that has filtered down to us at age-group level. We've had some integration with that set-up, which has been a really beneficial experience.

LCpl Scott Kilbey, R Signals



Boxer Gnr Karriss Artingstall (RA) won a silver medal at the European Championships, followed by a bronze at the World Championships. That is a phenomenal achievement.

LCpl Shanice James, REME

Peak performance

We asked Army athletes what they consider to be the Service's sporting highlights of 2019

Three female boxers competed at the Amateur World Championships. They are leading the way for the girls who are coming through and are absolutely smashing it.





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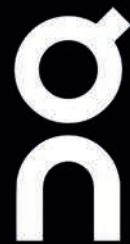
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The Army's National Charity

75TH ANNIVERSARY
1944-2019

RIFT

Wishes a Merry Christmas to the Armed Forces Community and congratulations to our partner charity, ABF The Soldiers' Charity, on celebrating its 75th Anniversary this year.



Photo credit: Murray Kerr's "Festive ramble". Winner of ABF The Soldiers' Charity photo competition 2019.

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