

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

**Servicewomen
take centre stage**

INCLUDING:

- Combat role review
- Gender in focus
- Adventures on ice



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Breaking barriers

TRY the following thought experiment: "A father and son are in a terrible car crash that kills the father. The son is rushed to the hospital and just as he's about to go under the knife the surgeon says, "I can't operate – that boy is my son!"

Confused? When researchers posed this question to college students, even those who declared themselves feminists tended to overlook the answer – that the surgeon is the boy's mother.

It is this kind of ingrained bias that can undermine the best of intentions and the Army has plenty of those when it comes to its Servicewomen, as our special 20-page section illustrates.

For example, there's a good chance that those who can make the grade will soon have the opportunity to serve in that traditional male bastion, the Infantry (page 22).

New flexible working rules are set to have a huge impact on the careers of both sexes (page 37) and fresh measures such as integrated training (page 41) and enhancing the role of women in peace and security operations (page 38) are undoubtedly raising the female military profile.

For an organisation that wants, and needs, to maximise all the talent at its disposal these measures are of the utmost importance but their success will ultimately hinge on the ability to change culture and attitudes – and those will be much tougher nuts to crack.

Enjoy the issue. ■



Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

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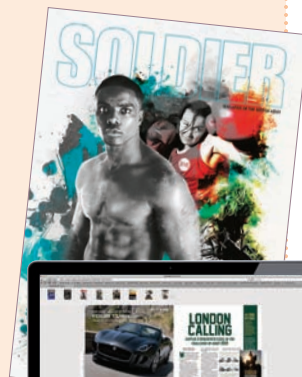
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Online

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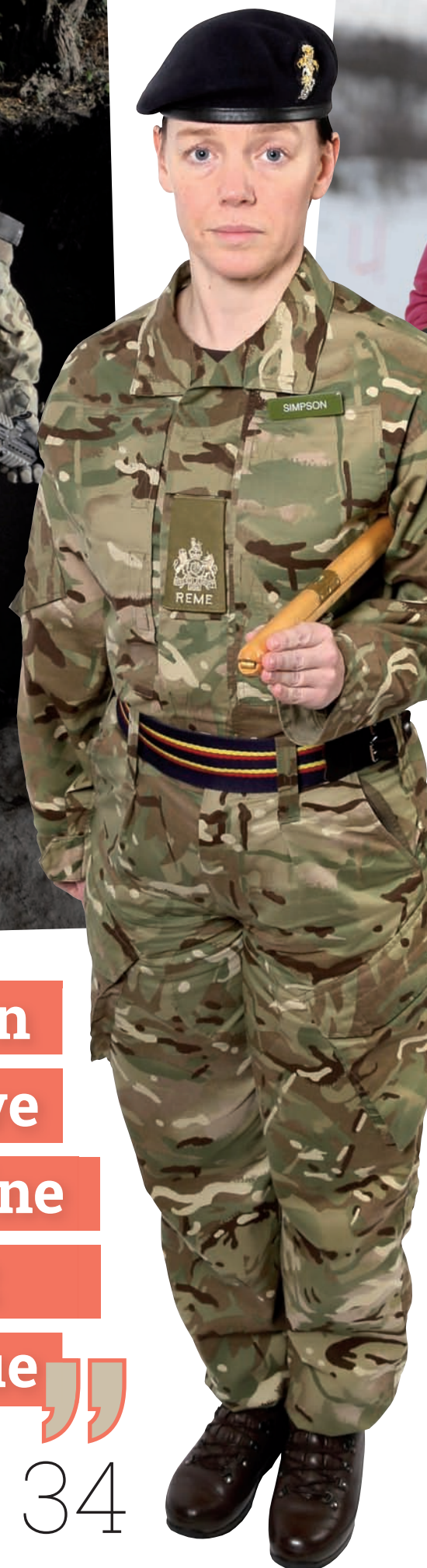
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to be masculine
to fit in but
that's not true

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"By paying us less they're putting smaller amounts into pensions"

Pay reform sparks a storm

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Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

Bomb disposal troops honoured

Team recognised for disarming device in heart of London

TWO ammunition technicians with the Royal Logistic Corps who displayed "inspirational and courageous action in the face of an ageing and lethal weapon", have each been recognised with the Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the latest operational honours and awards.

SSgt Edward Clinton, of Tewkesbury-based 721 Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Squadron, and SSgt Richard McKinnon, of Colchester-based 621 EOD Squadron, deployed to Bermondsey to disarm a 250kg Second World War German high explosive bomb – a complex task that lasted two days.

The nature and intensity of the procedure meant the pair had to work in shifts through the night, painstakingly drilling into the device with a hand tool to apply a neutralisation solution before the weapon could be removed to a safe detonation site.

"Their action undoubtedly prevented loss of life and is especially worthy of public recognition", noted the soldiers' citation.

Workers had accidentally disturbed

the projectile while digging at a site in a heavily populated area near The Shard skyscraper and thousands of people had to be evacuated.

The risk of collateral damage if the potentially unstable munition detonated was extreme and the troops' expertise was essential in neutralising the device.

“I recognised it because we had only recently done the course”

"Luckily I recognised it because we'd only recently done the course," commented SSgt Clinton, who defused numerous explosive devices during three tours of Afghanistan.

"So that was a bit of reassurance. However, it is a relief knowing that you've done the job successfully because you don't have the opportunity to train on live versions of these types."

There were 55 Armed Forces personnel recognised for their bravery, commitment and meritorious service during the period January 1 to September 30, 2015.

Despite the drawdown of Operation Herrick in Afghanistan, 33 awards went to British Army personnel on operations both at home and overseas.

Steady nerve: SSgt Richard McKinnon (RLC) checks the fuse of the 250kg German bomb

'I count myself very lucky'

■ AN officer has been recognised for "personal courage" with an Order of the British Empire for actions during a mission in civil war-torn South Sudan.

Col Edward Dawes (late RA) led a United Nations mission in the country for 12 months from April 2014, with 12,500 international peacekeepers from 77 nations in his charge.

The officer arrived "during a very testing and dangerous time", according to his citation in the recent operational honours and awards.

Savagery and sexual violence had become a daily occurrence in the raging civil war – and then one incident very nearly cost him his life.

Six weeks into his tour, Col Dawes was attacked at an illegal checkpoint, dragged out of his vehicle, beaten and abducted. He later managed to shake off his guard, jump behind the wheel and drive through a barrier to escape.

"It was quite something," he said modestly.



"After the beating I found myself on my knees with the muzzle of a gun in my mouth and I could feel my broken teeth with my tongue...I count myself very lucky to have got out of that."

He resumed his role with the peacekeepers, whose main tasks were to protect villages under threat and care for internally displaced people, looking after up to 120,000 mostly women and children at fortified sites.

"It was the most difficult task I've done in my 27 years in the Army," said Col Dawes.



GLOBAL SITREP



HELPING HANDS

Gurkhas head home on reconstruction mission – pages 46-48



British Army Training Unit Suffield

1 UK TOP GUNS

TROOPS from Denmark, Estonia, France and Australia descended on the Otterburn Training Area for a demanding live firing exercise alongside their British counterparts.

The test formed 1 Artillery Brigade's annual gunnery camp and saw French and UK personnel using Caesar truck-mounted 155mm guns.

Pilots from the United States Air Force were also on hand to provide simulated air support.

Chief of Staff at 1 Artillery Brigade, Maj Nicholas Morton, said: "We are certainly on the road to interoperability with the French, Danish and Americans here. It's all about understanding how we work in a multinational environment."

“
We're on
the road to
interoperability
”



2 GERMANY

HECTORS HONES FIELD SKILLS

JUNIOR NCOs from 35 Engineer Regiment developed the skills they need to lead soldiers in the field during Exercise Hectors Trials in Bad Pyrmont.

More than 180 personnel tackled a variety of serials including section attacks, a mine strike, casualty extraction and a ten-kilometre night patrol.

They were also tested and assessed on their battle procedures, teamwork and discipline.

The exercise marked the start of a busy year for the regiment which features a Batus deployment and multinational training as part of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.



3 GERMANY CREWS TAKE AIM

THE Queen's Royal Hussars deployed three squadrons of Challenger 2 battle tanks on the vast training area at Hohn as part of a gruelling live firing package.

Harsh weather greeted the troops, who were taking part in their annual crew tests before they head to Batus on Exercise Prairie Storm.

Commanding officer Lt Col Alex Porter said: "We do a lot of training on simulators but to actually drive and fire these machines is different and for many a real eye opener of the task expected of them."





IN NUMBERS:

22

Servicewomen tested themselves in the unforgiving Norwegian wilderness in a bid to earn a place on the Army's all-female expedition to the Antarctic. See pages 28-33

Afghanistan

Brunei



4 UKRAINE

TRAINING TICKED OFF

THE UK has met its target for training some 2,000 members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces ahead of schedule.

An initial date had been set for the end of the financial year but personnel achieved the figure last month and are now expected to surpass it by around 300 people.

British troops have been delivering packages in areas including the identification of mines and IEDs, medical care, logistics and operations in an urban environment.

The training is expected to continue for another year.

“We are looking forward to getting to grips with a very different theatre of operations”

5 CYPRUS

SAPPERS SET FOR CYPRIOT STINT

HUNDREDS of Regular and Reserve soldiers from the Royal Engineers have practised their public order skills during a demanding training exercise ahead of their deployment to Cyprus.

The 250-strong cohort from 36 Engineer Regiment were put through their paces on the Nesscliffe training area in preparation for their commitment on Op Tosca 24.

“We are looking forward to getting to grips with a very different theatre of operations and putting our skills to the test,” said training officer Capt Al Bramson.

The exercise culminated with the sappers receiving their blue UN berets. They are replacing personnel from 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland in the country this month.



6 IRAQ

RIFLES READY

PERSONNEL from 1st Battalion, The Rifles have completed a two-week skills package as preparations continue for their latest deployment to Iraq.

The unit has been committed to the mission to train Iraqi and Kurdish security forces since August 2015 and has helped local fighters perfect their infantry, counter-IED, weapons maintenance and combat medical skills.

The soldiers will be joined by Reservists from 6 Rifles.



7 PERU

LIFE ON THE OPEN ROAD

A THREE-strong team of intrepid explorers are in the midst of an epic challenge to cycle the length of South America.

Pte Henry Jeffers (4 Para), 2Lt Morgan Bywater and OCdt Nathan Bell (both Leeds UOTC) began their 8,000-mile quest in October and have tackled deserts, mountains and jungles in a bid to raise money for Help for Heroes. They hope to complete the route in seven-and-a-half months and had reached Lima, in Peru, as this issue went to press.

“Riding through the city to our hostel definitely wasn’t one of the most enjoyable rides of the trip,” said Pte Jeffers.

“With the capital containing half of the country’s 20 million population you can only imagine the rows of traffic we had to try and weave our way in and out of to reach our destination.”

To donate to the cause visit www.justgiving.com/SouthAmerica





"The men are impressed by the girls who can match them"

– Integrated training tales, pages 41-43



NO LULL IN TRAINING

■ RESERVISTS from The Royal Wessex Yeomanry tested their skills on the Challenger 2 battle tank during a live firing exercise on Lulworth Ranges.

More than 160 personnel travelled to Dorset for the week-long package, which saw them take part in static shoots before engaging mobile targets and firing on the move.

The exercise culminated in the annual crew tests – the first time Reservist personnel have completed the same criteria as their Regular counterparts.

Commanding Officer Lt Col John Godfrey said: "Training on the Challenger 2 tank takes a great deal of determination and commitment.

"They have demonstrated what they are capable of this week and I could not be prouder of them."



Picture: Cpl Lee Goddard, RAF

Increasing Iraqi assistance Fallon pledges extra help for training effort

“
Now is the
time to
step up our
training of
Iraqi forces
”

BRITAIN has underlined its support to the Iraqi security forces taking the fight to Daesh by committing an additional 30 troops to various training efforts in the country.

The move will see personnel sharing their expertise in areas such as logistics and engineering, with specialist medical staff also joining the mission.

It will bring the total number of soldiers involved in training inside Iraq to more than 300, while around 1,000 British Servicemen and women are now in theatre.

The Iraqis have already benefited from infantry, counter-IED and weapons maintenance programmes – efforts that have helped with

recent ground operations such as the retaking of Ramadi.

On announcing the uplift, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said: "We've seen solid progress against Daesh in Iraq in recent months.

"Now is the time to step up our training of Iraqi forces as they prepare for operations in key cities such as Fallujah and Mosul.

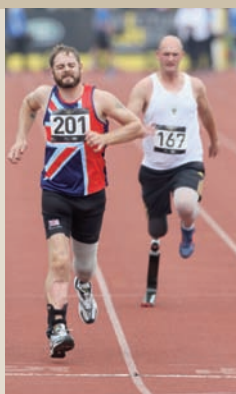
"Along with the trebling of UK air strikes, this underlines the crucial role our Armed Forces are playing in the fight against Daesh."

The Army has helped train more than 6,500 personnel in Iraq to date, while the Royal Air Force has flown around 2,200 missions over the country and Syria, carrying out an estimated 650 air strikes.

GOOD
DRILLS

SOLDIERS ANSWER INVICTUS CALL

AROUND 15 serving Army personnel are expected to be included in the UK team to compete at this year's Invictus Games. The squad will be announced on April 6, with the event taking place from May 8 to 12 in Orlando, Florida. The competition – staged for wounded and injured soldiers – features a host of sports, including athletics, powerlifting, archery and sitting volleyball.



BOFFINS at the US Army Armament Research Development and Engineering Centre have developed a "safe" bullet that travels for a certain distance before disintegrating in mid-air. Tiny pyrotechnic and explosive materials cause the projectile to ignite and become aerodynamically unstable, resulting in a reduction in collateral damage. It is currently being developed for heavy .50 calibre ammunition.



SAFETY STEPS UP

"When you are wearing that Army shirt you want to do well"

– Hockey stars thrash rivals, page 81



Pay rise cap continues

REGULAR and Reserve personnel will receive a one per cent rise in wages from this month under the 2016 Armed Forces Pay Award.

The move maintains the trend of recent years as public sector workers continue to have increases capped at this level amid a backdrop of financial constraint across government departments.

A one per cent rise will also be made in compensatory allowances, Reserve bounties, call-out gratuity and most recruitment and retention payment categories.

However, the rates paid to parachute jump instructors and mountain leaders will remain the same as 2015/16.

Elsewhere, the daily food charge for personnel who live in at non-pay as you dine sites will stay at £4.79, but the core meal charge

at pay as you dine facilities will increase to £5.75 from October 1.

This is a result of recommendations from the Armed Forces Pay Review Board (AFPRB) that suggested VAT should be added to the meal charge (rather than absorbed within) and that the additional money be used to improve the quality of ingredients.

In relation to changes to housing rates, charges for single living accommodation and furnished Service families accommodation will range from minus £1.95 to plus 16p per day in advance of the move to the new combined accommodation assessment system (CAAS).

The AFPRB has supported the introduction of this format but has criticised the national housing prime contract and the CAAS transitional arrangements.



TRADES CATEGORISED

■ FURTHER details have been published on how trades have been categorised under the new employment pay model.

The job evaluation process saw all trades classed under four supplements based on factors including the knowledge and skill required for the role, its complexity and the usual working environment of the soldier.

By replacing the high and low pay bands that led to "flip flopping" under the previous system, the new groupings will provide a more predictable through-career pay structure.

For a full explanation of trade scores read 2016DIB/08.

IN REVIEWS



"It is hard to see why such hype is deserved" – The 1975 disappoint

★★

PAGES 67-73



For further information on this year's pay award and how it will affect you see 2016DIB/10

CGS WANTS WOMEN

■ THE Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nick Carter, announced that he plans to recommend to ministers in June that they open up all roles in the Army – including those involving close quarter combat – to women.

He was speaking at an MoD event to mark International Women's Day.

Gen Carter also said it was time to increase the number of women in the Service.

"It makes no sense that the Army currently draws around ten per cent of its strength from 51 per cent of the population," the senior officer added.

● See page 21 for our special section on women in the Army.



TOO FAT TO FIGHT?



with some resorting to liposuction or diet pills to pass. The limit was increased from 22 to 26 per cent body fat for males and from 33 to 36 per cent for females. A spokesman said the service was not lowering standards but adjusting to a larger population generally.

THE US Navy has relaxed its body fat restrictions for troops after thousands of sailors repeatedly failed fitness tests,

REPUBLICAN presidential candidate Donald Trump has been expressing his praise for Saddam Hussein. The business mogul has repeatedly voiced his support for the former Iraqi dictator's approach to security, most recently at a rally in Ohio, where he admitted that Hussein was "not a nice person", but was "great at killing terrorists".



TRUMP SINGS SADDAM'S PRAISES

BAD DRILLS



"I've always tried to avoid that female tag"

– Senior officer speaks out, pages 34-36

BOUND FOR BRITAIN

■ THE rebasing and drawdown of British Forces Germany (BFG) continues in 2016 as four units – 5th Battalion, The Rifles, 1 and 6 Regiments, Royal Logistic Corps and the 99 Postal Courier and Movement Squadron – transfer to the UK, involving the relocation of around 470 families and more than 850 single soldiers.

BFG will close Princess Royal Barracks Gutersloh, Alanbrooke Barracks Paderborn, Tower Barracks Dulmen and Kiel Adventurous Training Centre for release to the German authorities.

Following these moves, around 3,600 personnel will remain in the country and together with UK-based civilians



and dependants, a community of some 8,700 staff will be staying on at Bielefeld, Paderborn and Gutersloh until the completion of the drawdown in 2019.

Meanwhile, work has started on brand new single living accommodation at Duke of Gloucester Barracks in South Cerney which is destined for troops returning from Germany.

The £8million project will provide 90 new bedrooms for junior ranks and senior non-commissioned officers.

The 99 Postal Courier and Movement Control Squadron is due to move there this year and 69 PM and MC Squadron, currently based at Bielefeld, will join them in 2019.

Development work such as the construction of a new gym, offices and storage space is still to be completed.

ADVICE FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL... FROM THE EXPERTS

PARTNER PRIVILEGE

INTEL BRIEF



It is not uncommon for people to be in a committed relationship but not actually marry or enter into a civil partnership – and both the AFPS 05 and AFPS 15 schemes recognise this. So what benefits are available to the partner of an unmarried Serviceman or woman in the event of their death in service?

Would my partner get a pension in the event of my death?

AFPS 75 will only pay a pension to an unmarried partner if your death is due to service and the partner can demonstrate their status. AFPS 05 and AFPS 15 will pay a pension if your partner meets the substantial partner test.

What is the test?

You must be living together and your partner must be financially dependent on or interdependent with you. Veterans UK will seek evidence of eligibility – they have to do this but they will do it sensitively. It makes no difference whether you are in a same-sex or heterosexual partnership, the test is simply based on cohabitation and your financial arrangements.

What sort of evidence is needed?

It could include proof of bill sharing, a joint rent book, joint bank account, a will or insurance policy, each naming the other as the beneficiary. This list gives just a few examples but something that is easy to do and which would help a lot is for you to

nominate your partner for your death-in-service lump sum. This is worth four times your pensionable pay.

How do I nominate my partner for this?

Download AFPS form 2 from the gov.uk website, complete it and post it to the address on the document.

If I don't nominate my partner, will the death-in-service lump sum be lost?

No, if Veterans UK agrees on other evidence that shows your partner is eligible to receive a pension, he or she will get the lump sum. However, the nomination reduces delay and helps prove eligibility.

Will my children be entitled to anything?

They will receive a share of 37.5 per cent of your pension, if eligible. They must be under 18 and financially dependent on you. Also entitled are under 23-year-olds still in full time education or vocational training as well as children unable to work due to physical or mental disability incurred before the age of 23. If an adult pension is in payment, no child can receive more than one quarter of your entitlement. If it's not and the children aren't living with a parent or step parent, the maximum claim is one third of your pension entitlement.

For details visit: www.forcespensionsociety.org



MARY PETLEY OF THE FORCES PENSION SOCIETY, EXPLAINS THE PENSION BENEFITS FOR PARTNERS OF UNMARRIED SERVICE PERSONNEL

First tank battle tribute 100 years on

THE Tank Museum in Bovington, Dorset is marking the centenary of the first tank attack in history with a new exhibition.

Tank Men: The Story of the First Crews looks at eight men who manned these vehicles during the First World War.

Exhibitions officer Sarah Lambert said: "These individuals were carefully chosen following extensive research in the museum's archives, allowing us to draw upon previously unseen materials – documents, images and supporting collections – to assemble their histories."

The display examines the wartime exploits of the troops, such as teenage tank commander Sydney Hadley (pictured right) and how they were eventually affected by the conflict.

Researchers traced surviving relatives of the featured soldiers and they were approached to provide personal insights into the men to add another dimension.

The museum is also redisplaying a selection of First World War tanks – including the only surviving example of the Mark 1 that saw action 100 years ago.



"I cannot tell you how much of a relief it is to finally receive a simple, accurate response to understanding my pension forecast."



FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES
AND THEIR FAMILIES

Matt Davies, FPS Member



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"Once I set my mind on something I will not stop until I get it"

– Dreaming of ice hockey's big league, page 87



SKILLS COMP SIGN UP

■ BRITISH units are being invited to prove themselves against their international counterparts in a military skills competition run by the German Bundeswehr.

Taking place in Moenchengladbach on June 18, the event pits teams of four against each other over a series of physical and knowledge-based tests, including shooting, orienteering, first aid and an assault course.

The contest is open to Regulars and Reserves and the closing date for registration is June 1.

For further details and an application form visit www.imm-bundeswehr.de



MARKING OP GRANBY

■ ARMED Forces personnel paid tribute to the Servicemen and women who fought in the first Gulf War during a series of events to mark the 25th anniversary of the conflict.

Among the commemorations was a service at St Paul's Cathedral, which was attended by veterans, family members and representatives from all three Services.

"It is right that we remember those who fought, and those who died, 25 years ago," said Capt John Rider (RA), who served on Op Granby.



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“
It is vital
that we
make a good
impression
with the
people we
entertain
”



Biscuits to battlefield

IN a bid to match the best practice of blue-chip companies the Army has created a strict code of conduct for entertaining guests at meetings and formal events.

The new Regulation on Refreshments sets out minimum requirements for the types of food and drink to be provided for different engagements ranging from making a cup of coffee for troops to hosting a VIP visit.

A key feature is the innovative system of ranking for biscuits and beverages, brought in to ensure that snacks provided correspond to the seniority of the recipient.

"The saying 'the Army marches on its stomach' is very true and that applies to supplying appropriate biscuits to prepare for business," said head of Army

networking and relationships Lt Col Diana Leibniz (REME).

"It's vital we make a good impression with the people we entertain."

Military researchers working with industry leaders found that "etiquette intelligence" has a positive impact on how business is conducted.

Soldiers are to be advised that biscuits fall into three categories: Other ranks; officers and stars – for when personnel ranked above brigadier are being catered for. Other ranks items include rich tea and plain digestive biscuits, while officers can have iced party rings and pink wafers.

Personnel will be issued with a pocket-sized version of the rules.

For a full explanation of the new regulation read **2016DIN04-001**.

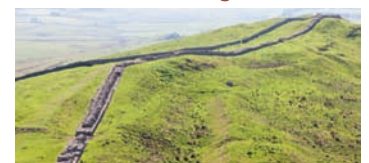
Fund raiser heads for the wall

ENDURANCE athlete Capt James Wadsworth (RLC) is embarking on a catalogue of punishing challenges throughout the year in a bid to raise £20,000 for The Felix Fund, which supports bomb disposal experts and their families.

Next month he will attempt the Dirty Weekend – a 20-mile course featuring 200 obstacles – and in June he will run along Hadrian's Wall – a distance of 69

miles. Other tests include the Bolton Ironman and a 200-mile mountain bike ride in the North of England.

To donate go to www.justgiving.com/Waddie-Challenge



Reservists set for South Pole test

TWO North London medics in the Army Reserve hope to make history as part of the first British team ever to ski unsupported and unassisted to the geographic South Pole.

Dr Alex Brazier and student doctor Ollie Stoten are part of a six-strong team taking part in the epic 85-day journey, which will cover 1,100 miles and gets underway in November.

"It's the last proper wilderness and probably the greatest endurance challenge out there," Brazier said.

The mission – known as South Pole Expedition Army Reserves – hopes to raise £10,000 for ABF The Soldiers' Charity.



"We have a group of exciting young players who are excellent prospects"

– Netball stars see positives in defeat, page 78



Assembly line set for production

Factory conversion creates workshop for new fleet of armoured vehicles

A DISUSED forklift truck factory in Wales has been converted into a specialist engineering hub for the Army's newest armoured vehicles.

Following a £390 million commitment to the Ajax programme by the MoD, General Dynamics UK decided to turn the Merthyr Tydfil site into an assembly, integration and testing centre for the machine.

The opening will create 250 new and highly skilled jobs, while sustaining

a further 300 positions within the company.

Assembly and testing of the first vehicle will get underway next year.

Minister for Defence Procurement Philip Dunne said: "The site will spring back into life as a significant centre of employment and bring in valuable skills with a lasting legacy for the entire region."

The Service will receive 589 Ajax platforms that will come in six variants and

supplement the Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) until that goes out of service in 2026.

It will offer troops enhanced intelligence, surveillance, protection, target acquisition and reconnaissance capabilities.

"Ajax builds on lessons from the battlefield and is able to tackle the world's toughest terrain while being highly resilient," said Maj Gen Robert Talbot-Rice, of the MoD's Defence Equipment and Support.



Army apparel

MILITARY historians will have spotted that last month's spine line clues were the names of those who held the position of Commander British Forces Middle East during the first Gulf War.

AVM Andrew Wilson, Lt Gen Sir Peter de la Billiere and Air Cdre Ian Macfadyen all occupied the high-profile role between September 1990 and March 1991.

This month, courtesy of our friends at Samurai Sportswear (www.samurai-sports.com), we have a men's and women's Army rugby union shirt to giveaway ahead of the annual Twickenham showdown against the Royal Navy.

To be in with a chance of winning one tell us what links the names on the side of this month's magazine.

Send your answers to the usual address or email comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by April 29.



Picture: Andrew Linnet, DE&S

GUNNERS GET SET FOR ACTION

● AROUND 350 soldiers from 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery took part in Exercise Mansergh Sabre at the Otterburn training area to prepare for potential multinational operations.

Battling extreme weather including wind and freezing temperatures, the soldiers were practising their drills on the AS 90 self-propelled gun.

Firing alongside the fearsome assets were the precision guided missile launchers of 132 Battery.

Used extensively in recent operations in southern Afghanistan, the weapon's long range and accuracy

made it a proven battle winner, while also reducing the risk to local civilians and infrastructure.

Commanding Officer, Lt Col Karl Harris, said the exercise combined honing his troops' artillery expertise with an arduous patrol challenge designed to develop basic soldiering skills and mental toughness.

He added: "The focus has been towards preparing the regiment for potential operations as part of Nato's high readiness forces."

"We will be ready to take on whatever challenges the world poses."



Picture: Cpl Timothy Jones

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"It has been great to use our skills as sappers to help Nepal"

– Gurkha personnel talk reconstruction, page 90



A PROBLEM THAT JUST WON'T GO AWAY

WE have recently been looking behind the headlines on the state of Army housing to try and find out what is really going on.

There has been a spike in enquiries to the AFF regarding repairs and maintenance since CarilionAmey took over the contract.

Issues relating to the move in and move out process were revealed in a survey last autumn and there were also complaints about the level of cleanliness and state of repair of the houses families were expected to reside in.

This is particularly galling for those who, on handing over a property, have to leave it spotless or pay hefty fines.

However, the long-term record on Service housing is not good.

As an organisation we were campaigning against sub-standard dwellings 30 years ago and the

number of enquiries regarding this important issue has been consistently high ever since.

To me, this indicates there is an overarching problem with investment levels.

Housing, whatever option you go for, costs money but accommodating soldiers has its benefits.

By passing on the burden that comes with home ownership or maintenance it frees the Army family to meet their promise to accept unlimited liability.

They commit to being ready for whatever, and whenever, they are needed.

Sometimes it is difficult to put a price on things but in a world of limited resources we have to.

What the AFF asks is that when we do, we have considered all the risks of setting that price too low.

“THE LONG-TERM RECORD ON SERVICE HOUSING IS NOT GOOD”

www.aff.org.uk



A PERSONAL VIEW FROM SARA BAADE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AT THE **ARMY FAMILIES FEDERATION...**



NEWS FROM NEPAL

■ **NEPAL** Television, the official state broadcaster in Nepal, is now being shown live on BFBS TV.

The service has the same channel number as the former Nepali TV offering, meaning there will be no need to retune or make any changes to set-top boxes.

The channel offers news, entertainment and public service programmes.

CAMPAIGN PAYS OFF

■ **VETERANS** dying from an asbestos-related cancer caused by their time in the military are to receive a lump sum in compensation following a campaign by *The Independent* newspaper.

Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans, Mark Lancaster, supported the calls and said around 60 former personnel who have been diagnosed with mesothelioma will benefit.

He said: "It is right that we do more to support those affected by this condition – it is part of our commitment to the Armed Forces."

"This change will give them more choice and control."



VETERANS NO LONGER OUT OF POCKET

■ **FOLLOWING** a campaign by The Royal British Legion, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne has moved to help an estimated 4,000 injured veterans with the cost of personal care.

Currently, war veterans injured in action before 2005 receive compensation from the War Pensions Scheme but this income is included in a means test when they apply for council-funded social care.

In future, their pensions will not be included in the assessment process, saving these individuals £60 a week on average, or £3,120 a year.

Highlighting healthy lifestyles

■ **SOLDIERS** in sedentary roles are being targeted in a new campaign by the MoD and Public Health England.

The "One You" initiative aims to help personnel avoid ill health and disease by making simple but significant changes to their lifestyles.

"This is really aimed more at staff in desk jobs but very active young troops in combat units should take note as well," Brig John Donnelly, Director of Personal Services, told *Soldier*.

The campaign hopes to reduce the occurrence of preventable conditions such as diabetes, stroke, heart disease and cancer.

Information packs sent to commanding officers show troops how to connect with free apps and an online self-assessment that provide personalised recommendations and advice.







THE BIG PICTURE

> WELLINGTON BARRACKS, LONDON

NO PLACE TO HIDE

THE Army's public duties incremental companies and their bands were subjected to a rigorous inspection ahead of another busy ceremonial season. Minute attention to detail was the order of the day, with the judges – led by Maj Gen Edward Smyth-Osbourne, Major General Commanding The Household Division and London District – leaving no stone unturned in the pursuit of perfection.

Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

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Model featured is a new 16MY five door Range Rover Evoque Fuel economy figures in mpg (Coupe/five-door) Combined†: 68.8/65.6 - 36.2/36.2 Combined CO2 emissions g/km: 181 - 109. †All data subject to official tests and certification. A vehicle's actual fuel consumption may differ from that achieved in such tests and these figures are for comparative purposes only. *Finance is subject to status. Terms and conditions apply.

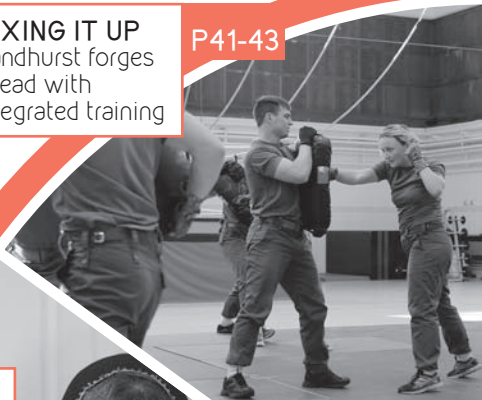
SERVICEWOMEN STEP UP

WITH the Army poised for a historic announcement on opening up close combat roles, we put female soldiers front and centre



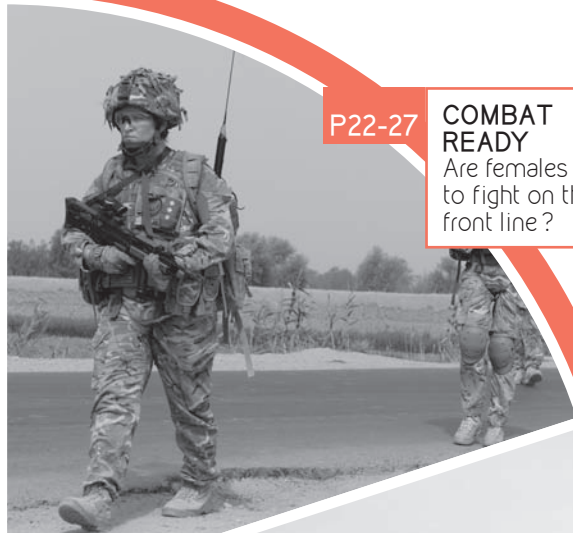
MIXING IT UP
Sandhurst forges ahead with integrated training

P41-43



P22-27

COMBAT READY
Are females set to fight on the front line?



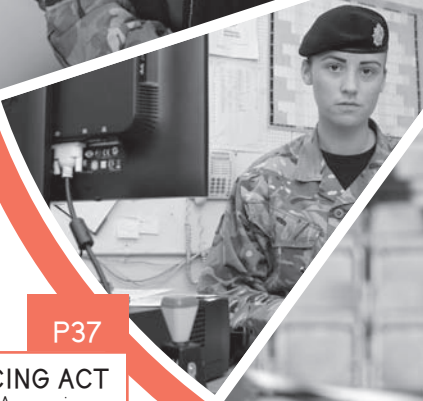
ENGENDERING CHANGE
Women make their mark in peace and security

P38-40



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BALANCING ACT
How the Army is becoming a more flexible employer



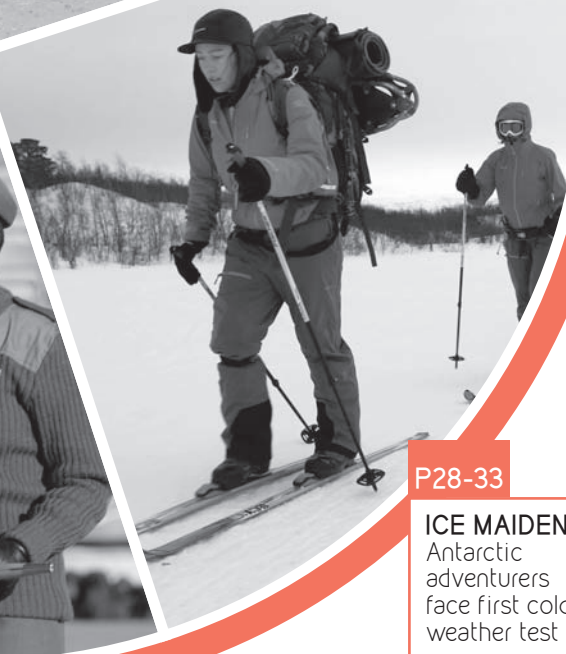
P34-36

BREAKING THE BRASS CEILING
Two top Servicewomen tell their stories



P28-33

ICE MAIDENS
Antarctic adventurers face first cold-weather test





STEPPING UP TO COMBAT

Why British women could soon be employed in front-line fighting roles

Report: Steve Muncey

Left: Officer cadets patrolling in an urban environment
Picture: Graeme Main

If you're from the school that says the fairer sex are too emotional, too physically weak, too nurturing to pull the trigger in the trenches, you may have to think again. And soon.

By the end of this year the look, feel and sound of Infantry, Royal Armoured Corps and Household Cavalry units might be radically different.

Women could be sprinkled throughout the ranks of these front-line formations for the first time in the British Army's long and distinguished history.

Prime Minister David Cameron has already confirmed the government's desire to lift the ban on women in ground close combat roles.

In addition, speaking at an International Women's Day event in London, Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, said: "I expect, subject to emerging findings of our scientific research that is underway at the moment, and usefully informed by the American and Australian experiences, that I will be recommending to ministers that all roles open up to women ... and that will be a positive moment."

But it's not a done deal because the final decision hinges on the results of the major tri-Service study CGS referred to, which will be delivered this summer.

It will declare whether it is feasible or not for women to be employed

in close combat by the Armed Forces – and the team putting the report together produced a preliminary review paper, published in December 2014, that proved inconclusive on the big question.

It recommended more research should be done on the physiological demands placed on women carrying out these roles – and that is still a work in progress.

"The key point was the Defence Secretary saying he was keen to take this forward but not without

There will be no lowering of training or qualifying levels if the exclusion on women is lifted

understanding the risks to our people," comments Lt Col Jonathan Kitson, head Infantry representative on the tri-Service women in ground close combat review group.

The officer and his team, which includes a range of experts drawn from academic, military and scientific backgrounds, such as the renowned Institute of Naval Medicine, are well aware of the septs' main concerns – and

on one controversial talking point, a potential change in professional standards, they are adamant.

"There will be no lowering of training or qualifying levels if the exclusion on women is eventually lifted," he says.

"It may not douse the cynicism out there right now but I can assure you that is the commitment; to ensure any alteration in policy does not diminish the existing criterion for those roles.

"I've met lots of women who could kick down a door just as well as or even better than the next man and in my opinion anybody who can make the grade and do the job should have the opportunity to do so," he adds.

But critics of a move to incorporate women into front-line fighting jobs will also be asking why the issue is being evaluated yet again after reviews in 2002 and 2010 both concluded that opening this avenue wouldn't benefit the Service.

"The analysis work for our 2014 report included, for the first time, comprehensive data on the performance of our personnel during extensive operations in Afghanistan," explains Lt Col Kitson.

"Women were employed in a wide range of jobs from stabilisation missions – winning the hearts and minds of the locals for example – up to close support roles in major combat operations.

"That's what has changed.

"The 2002 and 2010 reports both highlighted perceived effects on cohesion and combat effectiveness based on evidence at the time.

"But ten to 15 years of operations later, with women involved across virtually the whole spectrum of conflict, the benefits of having a diverse workforce have been well illustrated, and proven beyond doubt.

"It meant we had the best personnel in as many positions as was possible at that time.

"As a Service we want to maximise our talent so we must offer the best opportunities to the best people from the widest range of backgrounds, regardless of their race, gender or sexual orientation.

"This is why the team are examining opening up these close quarter combat roles."

But what about other data collected from Afghanistan that led to comments in the 2014 report about women being more susceptible to combat stress and having twice the chance of suffering musculoskeletal injury compared to men?

"Yes there are some specific physiological effects, clearly, and that is the central part of the scientific research," says Lt Col Kitson.

"The main focus of this summer's



As a service
we want to
maximise
our talent

review will be an assessment of the physical tasks associated with ground close combat roles and the standards that need to be set to preserve capability and health.

"It will also tie in options for mitigation strategies to prevent injury, including nutrition and training."

The review team have looked at other nations' experiences too, particularly those in Australia and the United States where policy has recently changed to include employing women in combat arms.

Lt Col Kitson adds: "We examined how they lifted the exclusions.

"The Americans conducted a physical demands study and a gender integration review that focused on the cultural changes required.

"They broadly align with our research and they have since moved forwards to integrate women fully."

The move to employ both sexes in the British Army's Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers happened a generation ago but the Service knows that if it is to do the same with the Infantry, RAC and Household Cavalry it must be achieved while seamlessly maintaining combat effectiveness – and that will throw up a unique set of challenges.

"We're all aware there will be issues that need to be addressed but part of our study is about identifying and understanding the risks and requirements and they will be highlighted and put into our recommendations this summer," comments Lt Col Kitson.

"Units may have to accept change but it is not that big a change, it has happened elsewhere in the Service.

"For now, our job is to make sure all the lessons that can be learned are taken on-board." ■



From top: Female officer attached to 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster Regiment in Helmand province; staff sergeant of the Afghan Female Engagement Team talks to local civilians.

Pictures: Sgt Barry Pope, Sgt Rupert Frere (RLC)



WOMEN OF THE WORLD

→ The UK could follow a group of countries where women can serve in close combat roles. They include: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, North Korea, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. However, some Western nations have had mixed results...

Australia - Infantry and special forces roles have been open to new female recruits since January. An Australian defence spokesman told us that, to date, there has been "limited interest from women to apply for these roles". Those who have joined are currently undergoing rigorous training.

Canada - Women have been allowed in combat roles since 1989 and around 100 are currently employed in infantry positions.

Denmark - Women have been able to serve with close combat units for three decades and around 80 served in Afghanistan, many alongside male British troops. However, females make up just four per cent of the Service and commanders are concerned about high attrition rates of around 80 per cent through training.

France - Nearly 20 per cent of Army personnel are female but very few elect to serve on the front line. Some research suggests that less than two per cent are infantry soldiers.

Germany - Women began joining combat units in 2001 and can even apply to join elite groups such as the marine commandos. Around 800 serve in infantry regiments currently.

Israel - Women in combat roles are restricted to serving in two light battalions assigned to guard the borders with Egypt and Jordan, the only Arab countries that have peace treaties with the country. It's estimated that less than four per cent of females are employed in combat positions.

New Zealand - Despite opening up its Army in 2001, it had just nine female gunners and three female infantry troops at the last count.

Norway - Opened combat roles to women in 1985 and extended mandatory military service to females a year ago but only 15 per cent of its 12,000 or so troops are female. The army has tested unisex dormitories and male personnel are now permitted to grow their hair long and keep it in a ponytail after a male officer had complained it wasn't fair that only women were allowed to have longer styles.

USA - Lifted its ban on women in close combat roles earlier this year. Three women have already passed the US Ranger School (similar to the All Arms Commando Course for the Royal Marines) and the first integrated training class is now underway.



Foreign female fighters tell us what they think, page 27



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ADVANCE



FIGHTING TALK

Female combat soldiers from Canada and Norway share their thoughts on life on the front line...

Maj Gerd Roedland Malme
Brigade North
Headquarters,
Norwegian Army

→ I thought an Army combat role would be perfect preparation for becoming a policewoman but after joining a mechanised infantry unit I loved it so much I stayed in, became a cavalry commander and served twice in Afghanistan.

Our entry standards are different for men and women.

We get one minute extra for a three-kilometre run, for instance. But when you train for your role you have to match the men.

Women deserve an equal opportunity because modern warfare is about more than muscles. The mental or intellectual side is vital so it is better to draw from the whole population to get the best people.

Women training to be combat soldiers should find mentors.

I felt lonely when I first joined because there were few women but finding a friend really helped.

WO Stephanie Cyr
Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada

→ **Standards were not dropped for females during training.** Fitness requirements were different on joining but in battle school they were the same.

My biggest challenge was to understand my own limitations and not try to be "one of the boys". Once I figured that out, it all fell into place.

Men treated me cautiously at first but once we got to know each other things smoothed

over. Now, gender is forgotten. While in Afghanistan we spent a few nights sleeping outside and I undid my hair, which is normally in a bun, and it stuck out of my sleeping blanket. One of my troop called out "who's the chick with us?" That soldier had forgotten that his warrant officer was a "chick".

Training is hard but it's mostly about mental toughness. The real problem is those soldiers, men and women, who give up when the going gets tough.

Sgt Amber Kase
7th Toronto Regiment,
Canadian Army

→ I probably wouldn't have joined the Army if combat roles weren't available to women. I believe it's important to serve your country and I'm so proud to now be a troop commander of a dismounted 81mm mortar battery.

There are women who are more than physically capable of being infantry soldiers. I

was always an athlete and have never been on a fitness course where I wasn't in the top 15 per cent – including men and women. We have an annual 50km Ironman race in combat boots carrying a 40-pound pack and at one stage have to single-handedly pick up a canoe and run a four-kilometre portage. Over 600 soldiers compete and there are always women in the top-20, so why on earth would they not be allowed to fight?

A woman shouldn't join a combat unit to prove a point.

Do it because you have a passion for the job. While you have to be tough to be in a front-line unit you don't have to lose your femininity.

Lt Tonje Nordengen
3 Assault Squadron, 1st Armoured
Battalion, Norwegian Army

→ **In my company I have seven women out of 100 soldiers.** The men never treat me differently – gender isn't even an issue.

My biggest challenge so far was passing a paratrooper's course. It was a huge task for me, physically and mentally, but I have a lot of determination and that is a quality all combat soldiers should have.

You should seek regular feedback from your superiors.

Work hard to be the best – if you have that attitude you will be accepted by your male colleagues and respected for your skills.

"We don't see a difference in gender in the Norwegian Army, we are all just soldiers together"

Vice Corporal Cecilie Hagen,
3 Assault Squadron, 1 Armoured
Battalion, Brigade North (pictured)

LIFE IN THE DEEP FREEZE



Next year six Servicewomen will launch a record-breaking bid to cross Antarctica. *Soldier* catches up with the Army's intrepid Ice Maidens...

Report: Becky Clark Pictures: Steve Dock



“

PEOPLE constantly underestimate what women – what I – am capable of and I love to prove them wrong.

“We have an awful lot to offer and there are some men who would look at this expedition and think ‘I can’t do that’.”

Strong words from Pte Rin Cobb (RAMC), who, along with 11 fellow Servicewomen, is hoping to become part of the first all-female military team to traverse Antarctica in 2017.

Exercise Ice Maiden, as the mission is dubbed, will see a squad of six cross from the Leverett Glacier on the Ross Ice Shelf to the Hercules Inlet on the Ronne Ice Shelf via the South Pole, a distance of 1,700km.

Spend any time with these women and it is clear that they have bags of attitude; and they will need every ounce of it as they take on perhaps the most daunting physical challenge that planet earth has to offer.

“Very few individuals have completed this particular crossing,” continued Pte Cobb, a combat medical technician in the Reserves.

“More people have walked on the moon, so that makes it very special.

“It’s not like climbing Everest, which is a massive achievement of course, but lots of people do it.

“Antarctica is such an extreme environment that even the smallest thing going wrong can make a huge difference to your outcomes.”

When the trek was first launched last year – by Army doctors, Maj Natalie Taylor and Capt Nics Wetherill (both RAMC) – more than 250 Servicewomen signed up.

The squad has since been whittled down through a series of selection events and the latest stage saw 22 personnel travel to Norway’s Arctic Circle to compete for the 12 remaining spaces.

Taking place in Porsangermoen on

the northernmost tip of the mainland, Exercise Ice Bambi gave the hopefuls some idea of the hardships to come as they underwent their first serious cold weather training under the watchful eye of Norwegian survival experts.

From skiing across frozen lakes to camping out in sub-zero temperatures or being dunked in frigid water to simulate a fall through the ice, the package was designed primarily to test the mental stamina of the group.

“Because of the nature of what we’re going to be doing you have to have your own coping mechanism

”

You have to have
that resilience
and that ability
to keep going

”

for getting up every day and doing that repetitive physical work,” Maj Taylor explained.

“You have to have that resilience and that ability to keep going despite feeling like crap because ultimately there’s no other way out of there if we don’t just keep moving forward.

“For example, this week we crossed a couple of lakes in the dark, in howling winds and you just put your hood up and dig deep.

“But it’s also about being able to look at your teammate and check they’re okay too, rather than merely concentrating on your own struggle to survive.”

Skiing for hours while hauling sledges and Bergens or spending all day digging out an emergency snow hole – all in the kind of biting cold that burns any exposed skin – demanded no small amount of physical endurance too.

Fueling the body in such

Treading carefully:
Two of the candidates
transport a pulk as
they conduct a 6km
ski route around a
frozen lake



conditions becomes a job in itself and Sgt Megan Lloyd (Int Corps) said this required a change in mindset.

"We're on Arctic rations, which contain about 4,000 calories," explained the 31-year-old.

"As women we're terrible – we'll go 'oh, this is a great opportunity to lose weight' and it's daunting when you're told to eat a breakfast of 500 calories but actually, if you don't take on enough food you'll go downhill and not only that, others will then have to help you.

"It's about making sure you take responsibility for yourself.

"A five-minute stop when you've been pulling a pulk for an hour is not much time at all – just enough for a handful of food and a drink and that's tough.

"But if you don't eat you'll feel faint and that's something I'll take forward for the rest of my career and certainly will monitor in my junior soldiers in the future."

A single mother, Sgt Lloyd has faced her fair share of challenges in the past year – including the death of her mother, a broken marriage and the threat of homelessness – but said that by taking part in the exercise she hoped to show other Servicewomen that anything is possible.

"It doesn't matter if life happens, you don't have to let anything hold you back," she added.

It is an approach that seems to be a common trend among this diverse group of females.

From privates to lieutenant colonels, newly joined Reservists to career soldiers, mothers, singletons, endurance athletes and more, its members hail from all walks of life and all corners of the Army.

Like many, Capt Sandra Hennis (R Signals) was attracted by the all-female make-up of the squad but the gruelling mission also has a very personal element for the Regular-turned-Reservist.

The 34-year-old applied to be part of the trek as a tribute to her late boyfriend, Capt Richard Holloway (RE), who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2013.

"I've been doing challenges in his memory, often with his friends and family" she explained.

"I did my first marathon, a coast-to-coast race and the Three Peaks, and this is another one because he was a really adventurous person and to me this is keeping his memory alive by pushing myself.

"It would mean a lot to make the final team. I'm sure if he could see me he'd say 'you go get it, go and do it'."

Every one of the Ice Maiden hopefuls exudes motivation, but what of the very real dangers that

Successful applicants:

- › Capt Nics Wetherill (RAMC) › Maj Natalie Taylor (RAMC) › LSgt Sophie Montagne (HAC)
- › Sgt Vikki McIndewar (Int Corps) › Pte Rin Cobb (RAMC) › Lt Rosanna Baker (RA)



From top: The team gets comfy in their new snow shelter or 'quincy'; candidates are plunged into near-freezing water to prepare them for falling through ice
Picture: Cpl Jamie Dudding (RLC)



It doesn't matter if life happens, you don't have to let anything hold you back

the expedition poses?

Despite leaps forward in communications and equipment in the century since Robert Falcon Scott and Roald Amundsen battled it out to reach the South Pole, any attempt to traverse Antarctica is still fraught with peril, as illustrated all too starkly by the recent death of retired officer and explorer Henry Worsley.

The former lieutenant colonel was rescued just days from completing his mission to cross the ice but sadly succumbed to peritonitis in hospital in Chile.

His demise sent shockwaves through the Ice Maiden camp; however, Maj Taylor insisted it had not changed their resolve.

"We've always been aware of the hazards and that's why everything we're doing is safety first, mitigating risk as much as possible," she said.

"And we've been completely honest with people about the dangers involved.

"I think what happened to Henry Worsley made us look at our plans again and go 'no, they're as robust as they can be'."

There is still much to do to make sure the team that travels to Antarctica next October is as well prepared as it possibly can be.

The 12 Servicewomen selected after Exercise Ice Bambi will take part in two further cold-weather packages before the final team of six is announced early next year.

Among those to get the nod this time was Pte Cobb, who said she was "chuffed" to survive the latest cut.

"The end goal has always seemed so far in the future and I've been taking every stage as it comes and trying not to dwell on it too much," said the 34-year-old.

"But I've really enjoyed myself being out in Norway and it has made me realise I definitely want to be a part of it.

"For me it's all about the camaraderie.

"It would be impossible to do this as a civilian because of the costs involved and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to do it in the context of this team of like-minded women, with all the support from the Army.

"I think we're starting to appreciate that we're part of something that's pretty big." ■



The cold is your ally

Norwegian cold weather expert shares words of wisdom

Above: Under the guidance of Capt Sefland candidates have a final practice at erecting the three man tents

→ FOR the prospective Antarctic adventurers, Exercise Ice Bambi was an opportunity to learn about winter survival from the very best.

One of the instructors on the package was Norwegian medic, Capt Vibeke Andrea Sefland (pictured above), of the Nato Centre of Excellence for Cold Weather Operations. Completely at home in sub-zero conditions, the 43-year-old lives in a tent all year round and believes the best way to master the cold is to embrace it.

Speaking to *Soldier* as the group prepared to make camp on a frozen lake, she explained her philosophy: "I really love being outside - it's all about getting used to being in this environment and making the cold your ally, not your enemy," she said.

"It has a lot to do with thinking ahead and knowing how your body reacts to the cold and taking those signs seriously and acting upon it as early as possible.

"For example, you need to make sure you don't sweat because if you do, you'll lose heat, so you can't wear your big jacket when you're working hard."

The Servicewoman's unusual living arrangement is a choice she made "out of conscience" to save money for expeditions and fund ongoing relief efforts in Nepal following last year's devastating earthquake.

A high-altitude mountaineer, she was climbing Everest when the quake struck. With eight operational tours under her belt she immediately decided she had to stay and put her experience of working in crisis zones to good use.

So she knows a thing or two about surviving in adverse conditions and took a back-to-basics approach with her lessons for the British personnel.

From correct layering to how to negotiate a toilet stop when the mercury drops - female explorers use a funnel-shaped device known as a "shewee" if you were wondering - Capt Sefland explained there is little margin for error in the unforgiving Antarctic environment.

"It's good they have another 18 months before the trip because there are a lot of things they need to put into place," she continued.

"I've told them they have to start now with everything. Small things like getting used to working with gloves on at home and running with face protection so they know how to breathe through it.

"Or seeing how long one pair of socks will last them - literally logging all the hours they wear them so they know how quickly they will go through them.

"You need to measure all of that so you know how many to take with you.

"But they are very determined and they have such good spirit so I believe in them." ■

PORSANGERMOEN PARTICULARS

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DEGREES
NORTH

-8.8°C
AVERAGE TEMPERATURE
DURING MARCH

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ARCTIC CIRCLE

Below: Capt Sandra Hennis (R Signals) who applied to be part of the trek as a tribute to her late boyfriend



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ADVENTUROUS INSPIRATION



FROM Scott and Shackleton in the early 1900s to the modern day, the history of Antarctic expeditions is littered with compelling accounts of triumph and disaster.

The team that embarks on Exercise Ice Maiden will be treading in some giant footsteps and many of the hopefuls have been swotting up on some of the famous heroes of polar exploration.

SSgt Susie Rotherforth (R Signals) said one of her inspirations was British adventurer Felicity Aston, who in 2012 became the first woman to ski solo across Antarctica.

"She's a pretty impressive person," explained the 35-year-old.

"She also took the first ever Foreign and Commonwealth team to the South Pole, some of whom had never even seen snow before.

"I met Ranulph Fiennes as well. I went to one of his lectures and made sure I arrived early so that I would have the chance to talk to him.

"He had heard about us, he knew who the Ice Maidens were, and that took me aback.

"His tips were to keep getting out of the tent every day and to beat the Norwegians if they're coming."

For Lt Col Rachel Emmerson (RLC), a tour of the Falkland Islands early in her career cemented a lifelong interest in polar exploration.

"When I was a junior officer about 15 years ago I went down to the Falklands for six months and was lucky enough to go to South Georgia on one of the naval ships that was

going down there," she said.

"We did a short crossing over one of the peninsulas and it completely confirmed my obsession with all things Antarctica.

"I saw Shackleton's grave and since then my ambition has been to get to the South Pole.

"These two weeks in Norway have made me go 'you know what, even if I don't get on this expedition I'll probably try and get there myself'."

Along with Shackleton, the 38-year-old cites British explorers Ann Daniels, Catherine Hartley and Richard Parks as some of her expeditionary role models.

"Ann Daniels was part of the first all-female teams that reached the North and South Poles," continued the officer.

"I went to see her speak, which was really inspiring.

"She got a space on an expedition in her late thirties and realised that was what she was good at.

"These are normal people, like us, and it's showing us that we can do this too.

"Look what the Army's letting us do and the opportunities it gives you.

"All the girls here are so motivated and impressive and if that's spreading out in to the rest of the Service then that's really positive." ■



Picture: David Ward

His tips were to
keep getting out
of the tent every
day and to beat the
Norwegians if
they're coming

STAYING POWER

What does it take to break the brass ceiling as a Servicewoman? Two of the Army's female high-flyers tell *Soldier* about cutting it at the top of their profession

“The Army's your oyster”

WO1 (RSM) Jules Simpson

REGIMENTAL sergeant majors have been striking fear into the hearts of British soldiers for hundreds of years but female personnel remain in the minority when it comes to wielding the legendary pace stick on parade.

Among a small cohort of Servicewomen to have climbed all

the way to the very top of the senior NCO ladder is WO1 Jules Simpson (REME), RSM of 1st Army Training Regiment, Pirbright.

The formation turns out some 1,500 new soldiers every year and while it is two decades since she stood in their boots, the 35-year-old tells her trainees it's never too soon to aim high.

“When I speak to the female recruits I ask them whether they



think they could be an RSM one day and no one ever puts their hand up," she says.

"I'm a middle-of-the-road person, from a very normal background. I wasn't the best in school or in basic training but I've managed, within less than 20 years, to get to be the most senior soldier within a regiment and a lot of females don't realise if they try, they can achieve anything.

"There are so many roles open to them. I tell them 'the Army's your oyster'."

At the age of 17 and newly qualified as a vehicle mechanic, WO1 Simpson found herself posted to The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, an armoured infantry battalion.

She describes the experience of being the only female in the unit's workshop as "eye opening."

Later assignments to The King's Royal Hussars and The Rifles would again see her very much in the minority but she says her willingness to "muck in" stood her in good stead.

"As long as you don't expect any different treatment because of your gender there isn't an issue," she continues.

"I think if you allow yourself to be segregated, you will be.

"So, if you don't pitch in with the boys to put up tents or fix vehicles or whatever, and you don't want to get your hands dirty – that's when you'll cause a problem for yourself.

"I deployed on Herrick with 4 Rifles and they were fantastic. They didn't single me out or treat me differently in any way.

"When we found ourselves in dangerous situations I never felt as if I was putting my colleagues at greater risk because I was the only female there.

"I always felt accepted as one of the lads."

At the same time, she believes being "one of the lads" needn't come at the expense of femininity.

"Some women think they have to be masculine to fit in but that's not true," she says.

"I'm actually quite girly – I like Christian Louboutin heels and Mulberry handbags as much as the next woman."

WO1 Simpson has done her time on operations – as well as Afghanistan she completed a tour of Iraq – but her CV also lists some other impressive milestones.

She was the first REME artificer to be selected as an instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, a feat that remains a high point of her career.

If all goes to plan when her stint at Pirbright is over, she hopes to become the REME's command sergeant major and, eventually, the Army sergeant major – the Service's top non-commissioned soldier.

There's no doubting her drive, but does she feel there is a trade-off between ambition and personal life?

"I've always put work ahead of everything else," she reflects.

"I don't have children. I was married; I'm not anymore. So I have put the Army first but I wouldn't say that is a regret.

"Anyone who's in my position, male or female, will have made some form of sacrifice.

"I don't think I would have been

able to give my job the same amount of effort if I'd been a mother because I would want to be at home for my children.

"In my opinion, you can't give 100 per cent to both.

"Like any mum who works full

time, something has to give."

Despite all she has achieved, WO1 Simpson insists she hasn't done anything remarkable – she puts her ascent up the ranks down to sheer hard graft.

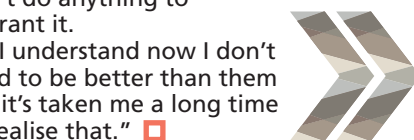
But she also urges Servicewomen not to fall into the trap of feeling they have to outshine their male peers to progress.

"It's only now that I know I'm completely on a par with the other RSMs at Pirbright and don't need to do anything in addition," she admits.

"But I think it's a natural instinct for women in all walks of life to think they have to do that little bit more, even if their male counterparts don't do anything to warrant it.

"I understand now I don't need to be better than them but it's taken me a long time to realise that." ■

"I think if you allow yourself to be segregated, you will be"





I've been
reluctant to
share my story

Brig Sharon Nesmith

WHEN 2Lt Sharon Moffat commissioned into the Army in 1992, times were very different.

The then 21-year-old signed a waiver to say she would leave the Service if she fell pregnant and on arrival at her first unit was told she couldn't deploy to Bosnia because of her gender.

Fast forward some 24 years and not only are such outdated rules long in the past, but Brig Nesmith, as she is now, is one of the military's highest ranking female officers.

As commander of 1 Signal Brigade she is in charge of 1,500 personnel, a role that – much to her discomfort – has seen her dubbed the “most powerful woman in the Army”.

“I've always tried to avoid that

female tag, as I imagine most Servicewomen do, because that's not what it's about,” she told *Soldier*.

“We joined up to do the same things our male colleagues are doing in every aspect but I've realised more recently that I have a role to play in showing that I've had a really great career and in that sense it's a good news story.”

Having accepted her part as a figurehead – albeit reluctantly – she now believes the Service should shout louder about its successes in the field of gender equality.

“I genuinely think we have come a huge way and we don't always celebrate that; we focus on the bits we haven't yet achieved which we are working hard to change.

“To put it into context, at my passing out parade I didn't hold a rifle, I held a stick for goodness sake, which shows how different things were then.”

In the end, Brig Nesmith did deploy to Bosnia – three times. Later she led 1st Mechanised Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron (215) on Operation Telic 10 and commanded 22 Signal Regiment.

But despite now being one of only five female brigadiers, she disagrees that there is a “brass ceiling” preventing other Servicewomen from climbing the ranks.

“There are particular roles or appointments that women haven't yet done but that's not the same thing as there being a brass ceiling,” she explained.

“My generation was the first to be cap badged on leaving Sandhurst instead of automatically joining the Women's Royal Army Corps and we are now just coming through to these senior officer appointments so it's actually the result of natural career progression.

“If you look at the cohort behind mine there are some really high quality women who will go on and

do all sorts of great things.”

A mother to two boys, aged eight and nine, Brig Nesmith describes juggling her job and a young family as a “a struggle everyday,” but credits her husband – a self-employed tree surgeon – and a supportive chain of command for helping her to make it possible.

“It's a very personal choice about how you manage that work-life balance and everyone looks at it in a slightly different way,” she adds.

“I don't think I've made any sacrifices that were different to my male contemporaries.

“Yes, I've made compromises but they will have too.”

Looking back on her years in uniform Brig Nesmith admits that in the early days she might

have put herself under unnecessary pressure to hold her own in a male-dominated environment, but today she says she has learnt to cut herself some slack.

Instead of worrying about coming under more scrutiny because of their gender, she thinks

Servicewomen should risk pushing their own personal boundaries.

“No one wants to let anyone they work with down, but I guess as females we do go out of our way to make sure we don't put ourselves in the position where [our mistakes] could be labelled.

“Over time I've learnt to beat myself up less and I'm more comfortable in my own skin.

“My message to other Servicewomen would be that they can achieve whatever they aspire to achieve and not to think of doors being closed to them.

“I've been reluctant to share my story and there are probably lots of female personnel who are the same because we don't want to be seen to be championing gender issues but actually we have some really fantastic opportunities and a lot to celebrate.” ■

IN NUMBERS

6

Servicewomen now hold the rank of brigadier or above

9

number of female RSMs currently serving



FLEXIBLE FORCE

New initiatives are making it easier for Servicewomen – and men – to manage the work-life balance



CURRENT statistics put the proportion of female personnel in the Army at 8.95 per cent.

Increasing this figure depends not only on recruiting more Servicewomen in the first place – the target is to raise the intake of female soldiers to 15 per cent by 2020 – but also retaining them once they join.

Data shows that the average length of service for a female soldier is a whisker under ten years compared to 12.6 years for their male counterparts.

While there are many reasons a female soldier might decide to leave the Army, it is clear that one potential area of conflict is the challenge of reconciling work and family life.

But a raft of new measures including flexible working and shared parental leave are offering personnel of both genders more choice in balancing their commitments.

Lt Col Colette MacDonald, SO1 Diversity and Inclusion at the Army's Manning Directorate, said that while such policies are not aimed specifically at women, working mums will be among those to welcome the changes.

"All of these schemes benefit Servicemen too, but are probably more beneficial to women, who still take responsibility for the majority of the childcare," she explained.

"Under national legislation personnel can now share up to 50 weeks of parental leave instead of just the mother taking time off.

"Flexible working will also assist those with children – not just single parents but also couples where one partner is deployed.

"The fact that you can now transition more easily between Regular and Reserve service is a very positive point too.

"If you decide you enjoy being in the Army but it just doesn't work with having children, or even because you have elderly parents to look after and you don't want that commitment to deploy, you can go to a full-time Reserve service home commitment post

and continue your career on different terms."

Currently in its trial phase, the flexible duties policy allows all personnel to limit their deployability and use up to 93 days unpaid leave annually to shorten their working week.

Among those taking part is mother of one, Pte Rebecca Duffy, from 4 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps (pictured above).

"My daughter is three and I sometimes have to come in a bit later in the morning and leave earlier in the afternoon," said the 26-year-old.

"It's only a few minutes here and there but you do worry that people will say you're trying to get out of stuff, which is upsetting and frustrating, so I feel like this policy has got my back a bit more.

"It's tough when you're a single parent, especially with last-minute things, like if you find out you have early morning ranges or when you go on exercise.

"I worry for my daughter and either have to try and find someone she knows to look after her or send her to stay with my mother.

"I think this scheme will make a big difference. There are more and more single parents – dads too – and they will appreciate the additional support from the Army."

For Lt Col MacDonald, making sure female personnel feel supported is key.

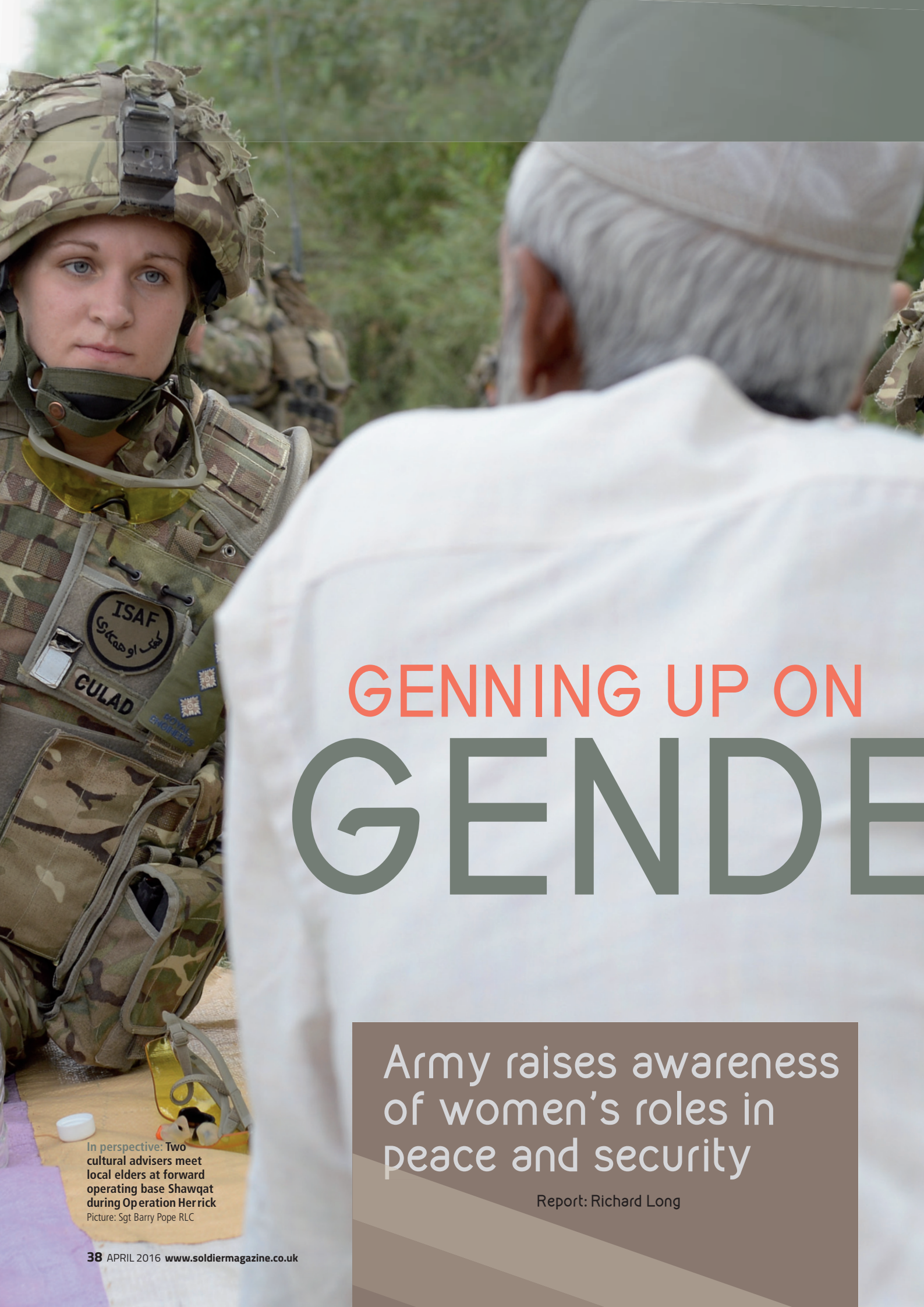
In addition to policy changes, the Service has launched a number of other initiatives to boost female participation, including the appointment of senior officers as so-called gender champions and the launch last year of the Army Servicewomen's Network.

"Everything we do in the field of diversity and inclusion goes back to the chief of the general staff's approach to maximising talent," she continued.

"It's absolutely not about positive discrimination, but identifying artificial barriers and the reasons people leave before they have to.

"Some people only ever want to serve for a few years but those who choose to stay on should be given every opportunity to progress and reach their full potential." ■

→ The flexible duties trial will continue until the policy officially starts in March 2017. For further information and to apply to take part read 2015DIN-01-200



GENNING UP ON GENDE

Army raises awareness
of women's roles in
peace and security

Report: Richard Long

In perspective: Two
cultural advisers meet
local elders at forward
operating base Shawqat
during Operation Herrick
Picture: Sgt Barry Pope RLC



AS global conflicts continue to stray down an unconventional path it seems as though the days of soldiering on a traditional battlefield could be numbered.

The campaign in Afghanistan saw the British Army adopt a "hearts and minds" philosophy aimed at gaining the trust of the local population and this humanitarian approach has since become a mainstay of the Service.

Peacekeeping missions and postings with short-term training teams can see personnel deployed to all corners of the world, where they are likely to encounter circumstances that are entirely different to those found on home soil.

One of the most pressing issues they now face is that of gender and the ways that acts of sexual violence – such as rape, forced pregnancy and sterilisation – can impact on the stability of different states.

To help soldiers grasp the importance of the subject the Army has introduced a new course covering the role of women in peace and security operations.

Held at Worthy Down, the train the trainer programme is designed to create greater awareness among Service personnel and organiser Lt Col Kathie Knell (AGC (ETS)) believes it is long overdue.

"The prevalence of these issues on the ground has made us realise that we need to do something," the officer told *Soldier*.

"When we deliver a stabilisation effect or deploy on peacekeeping operations we have to take into account that the host nation has 50 per cent women, or more.

"So we need to have a gender perspective in mind and look at conflict through the eyes of men and women, boys and girls.

"We will find instances of gender and sexual violence. In the majority of cases it is females who suffer, but males are victims as well.

"This course is about opening soldiers' eyes to the way conflict manifests itself and the important role they can play."

The British military had not previously delivered any formal gender training but with the UK being part of Nato – where the issue has become of prime importance – the situation had to change.

Instructors from Macedonia and

Montenegro – countries few would expect to be at the forefront of such matters – were brought in to help deliver the lessons and Lt Col Knell hopes the message will spread.

She added: "The information needs to cascade down so deploying troops know what response is appropriate on the ground.

"It is about understanding what their role is in relation to gender-based violence. Do they report it? Protect the population? Or refer it to a non-government organisation?

"It is about girls being taken by IS as sex slaves and young boys being recruited by various groups.

"But it is not just sexual violence. In Afghanistan we saw dancing boys

"This course is about opening soldiers' eyes to the way conflict manifests itself and the important role they can play"

brought out on a Thursday night.

"For a long time this was mistaken as being part of the local culture but that argument is not good enough any more. The Army is moving beyond that – these are human rights issues."

Maj Rachel Grimes (RLC) is another officer to champion the cause.

She has deployed to Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Canada, Iraq and Afghanistan in a Service career spanning more than 20 years and now works in the field of child protection and gender at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The role came on the back of a deployment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo as an intelligence analyst, where she realised the value of engaging with women in order to build a better picture of the issues in the field.

"My job is to make sure that the military gets better at supporting the UN Security Council resolutions relating to women in peace and security," said Maj Grimes, who has a Masters in international relations.

"There are 16 UN missions around the world involving some 120,000 troops but less than three per cent are female.

"Of that number only one per cent are in a



job where they can engage with fellow women. I believe 21st century operations require a better balance."

During her tour of Iraq in 2003 the 46-year-old served as a liaison officer at a detention centre, which at one point held 15,000 prisoners.

With lots of women coming to look for their husbands she had to communicate with them, via an interpreter, to pass on information to the Red Cross or see if the Army could help.

Maj Grimes later returned to the country as part of a training unit working alongside the Peshmerga and female engagement was at the forefront once more.

"My role was to teach Nato instructors and the Kurds what to do if they came across Yazidi or Christian women who had been held by Daesh," she explained.

"Some of the women, once they had escaped, were executed because

Talking the talk, Top: Maj Rachel Grimes trains soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to conduct female engagement Below: Maj Grimes, with Maj Gen Kristin Lund, Force Commander, UN Force in Cyprus at the MoD Celebration of Women's Role in War and Peace

they'd lost honour in the eyes of their communities.

"It was a tough job trying to explain things to some of the Nato personnel because they had never been taught or exposed to this aspect of warfare... it's a new area for many soldiers to work in."

Further experience of contrasting attitudes was garnered in DR Congo, where she was an adviser to a Brazilian general and took part in patrols with indigenous forces.

"Out there the role of a woman is to get water, cook food, to do everything – basically it's modern day slavery," the officer said.

"I spoke to a man and said 'why do you send your wife to get wood?' and he replied 'if she goes, she'll get

raped, but if I go I'll get killed.'

"It was soul-destroying. But they don't think about going as a group for protection, it's just accepted that there's this level of risk.

"Someone said that the job sounded maternal and there's a

If we do more UN peacekeeping it's critical that you can engage with both sides of the population

perception that it's girly, which I find very frustrating.

"By engaging with women we obtained so much information. They told us when and where they were getting attacked and we wouldn't have got such information if we hadn't done that.

"If we do more UN peacekeeping it's critical that you are able to engage with both sides of the population, otherwise you'll only get half the picture."

Although the Army is playing catch up the seeds for a more rounded view are now firmly in place.

And with more and more soldiers deploying to nations where attitudes and cultures differ vastly to our own it won't be long before this new approach bears fruit. ■





Sandhurst's
first female
commander
oversees
changing
times

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

MIXED MISSION

STEEPED as it is in military history and prestige, The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst is more synonymous with producing inspirational leaders than breaking new ground in the realm of diversity.

But, whether by design or not, the 110-year-old institution is now marking itself as a champion of equal opportunities.

Lt Col Lucy Giles (RLC) recently became the first female commander of New College, tasked with

managing 80 staff and preparing British Army officers for a career in the Service.

Another major step-change is the introduction of integrated commissioning courses, meaning men and women now train together.

"The key piece here is that we now have mixed platoons," explained Lt Col Giles.

"It makes complete sense to prepare as you will work.

"When you become an officer you are going into a mixed Army, so why would you not train that way?"

The former officer





commanding 47 Air Despatch Squadron, added: "The first integrated platoons on the Regular commissioning course

passed out last December.

"Prior to that, it had a single female platoon in one of the companies. Because of that we were probably shaping behaviours, with men and women not having an understanding of team cohesion or of how each other worked."

The course covers the progression of cadets in the broad areas of the military, academic study and physical development as well as learning social skills required for "an exemplary soldier".

With the motto "Serve to Lead" at the core of everything at Sandhurst, instructors have 44 weeks to instil the crucial values of moral courage, high standards, a strong work ethic and loyalty into their subjects.

Being male or female does not come into it.

The first integrated platoons saw 139 officers passing out, eight of whom were women. Of the current crop of 177 cadets, 16 are female.

One person with experience of instructing both single and mixed sex courses is Afghanistan veteran SSgt Alicia Jarman (R Signals), the commander of 16 Platoon Falklands Company at the establishment.

"I've been here two years and there have been no dramas at all with training becoming integrated," she said.

"I actually think the males bring the best out of the females because they want to prove the point that they are just as good."

"At the same time, the lads don't like to be beaten by the girls so they raise their game too."

The experienced Servicewoman added: "If you took their sex away and it was just a name on a piece of paper you would say they are all soldiers – some are stronger than others and some struggle."



Witnessing the daily trials put in front of the cadets, it becomes clear that the inclusion of females into platoons is just part of a wider integration, with the future officers coming from all over the world and from various backgrounds.

The common denominator is that everybody wants to commission and nobody wants to be last on any of the tests.

Physical training is streamed, based on performances on the Army's fitness assessment, so a female could find herself in the top tier and a male in the bottom and they will develop from there.

The training objectives remain unchanged, with the course focusing on leadership through various frameworks such as infantry tactics, sport, adventurous training and academic work.

OCdt Hannah Bisbas raises the point that although mixing the platoons has been a seamless process, it may have had unexpected effects.

"The boys just crack on as normal, although I would say that they are impressed by girls who can match them, which isn't necessarily a good thing," she said.

"In an all-female platoon these achievements would've been seen as the norm, not something special."

"We need to get to the stage where everyone is expected to achieve high standards."

The cadet, who is at the mid-point of her training, added: "I do think that men and women approach things in a different way."

"Females can have a slower, measured approach whereas men might act faster."

"That is a generalisation and it does come down to the individual but I think it holds true."



2Lt Keely Porterfield, (Transportation Corps, US Army), had another take on the merits of men and women working together.

"The US has now cleared it for women to serve in the infantry, which I am happy with if the qualifying standards remain the same," she said.

"Here at Sandhurst having a mixed platoon and the same requirements means the boys take you more seriously because they see you do the same training as them."

"It also prompts better communication between everyone."

On exercise, men and women carry the same weight and are expected to keep an identical pace.

For conditioning drills in the gym, both sexes throw punches and launch their elbows into pads held by a partner. There is no consideration of gender.

"The girls do everything the blokes do, including sparring against each other," commented Sgt Josh Shackleton, a physical training instructor at the academy.

"Initially, the lads will hold back in the boxing but once they're used to it, it's full-on."

One officer cadet, Steph Hislop, believes women honing their skills alongside men is not really an issue.

"Training has been challenging



"We need to get to the stage where everyone is expected to achieve high standards"

OCdt Hannah Bisbas

for sure, both physically and mentally but I haven't found it overly competitive with regards to boys against girls," she explained.

"When it comes to soldiering I think it's approached in a personal way and you apply your character, not your gender – this is especially true when it comes to leadership."

OCdt Hislop, who hopes to join the Royal Artillery, added: "I think there's a lot more focus about this 'women in the Army' thing than there needs to be."

"To ignore gender is unhelpful, but we don't need to make a song and dance about it."

That certainly seems to be the case with the male officers in training we spoke to, and from their perspective it seems to be business as usual.

"There is a competitive element but that is just a natural part of the training environment and it's not based on gender, it's a result of what we're all doing here," commented OCdt Edward Elston.


"People probably look too much at whether Service personnel are men or women; the fact is that the people who commission as officers are simply very good at what they do."

OCdt Philip Williams added: "There has been no accounting for females in any different way, it's just a case of cracking on with the job."

It seems integrated training was long overdue.

Now the individuals who will form the next generation of officers are measured purely on their talent and capability alone.

And the result is improved communication, better understanding, respect for each other and an enhanced readiness for a role that requires leading and working with both sexes. ■



We've been working hard but it's exciting to move the guns by helicopter and fire them

FIRING ON ALL

Airborne gunners put through their rapid reaction paces

PERSONNEL from 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery have completed intensive training to test their ability to operate in the early stages of a military operation.

The troops were launched into a 72-hour theatre entry mission, which required them to fire and move across a mock battlefield on Salisbury Plain by day and night.

While two 105mm Light Guns were positioned forward to simulate having been dropped by parachute, personnel were inserted into the field by Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters, with additional artillery assets, Pinzgauer vehicles and ammunition carried as underslung loads.

As part of the exercise the soldiers worked alongside specialist observers



Main picture: A 105mm Light Gun crew from G Para Bty, 7 RHA carry out a fire mission.
Below right: A Giraffe AMB (agile multi-beam) 3-D air-defence radar system



CYLINDERS

with air defence provided by high velocity missiles and Desert Hawk 3 unmanned systems.

Lt Col Matthew Birch, Commanding Officer of 7 Para, RHA, said: "Our batteries are busy across the year supporting The Parachute Regiment and Exercise Cypher Strike is our chance to come together as a regiment and work on our core artillery skills."

"It has been high tempo training to test how we would survive and operate with the minimum of equipment after deploying by air, the specialism that defines our role and character."

Gnr Tom Phipps (7 Para, RHA) added: "We've been working hard but it's exciting to move the guns by helicopter and fire them."

"When we get on the ground it's all about operating as a team to de-rig the gun and sort out the ammunition so it can fire as

quickly as possible."

The tough training for the 350-strong regiment was designed to prepare the soldiers for their role providing offensive fire support to 16 Air Assault Brigade, the Service's airborne rapid reaction force.

This month, F (Sphinx) Parachute Battery will take over from G (Mercer's Troop) Parachute Battery to serve in the Air Assault Task Force, which deploys anywhere in the world at short notice for contingency operations. ■



Back on



Nepal earthquake timeline

April 25, 2015

Just before midday local time the earthquake struck with a magnitude of 7.8 on the Richter scale. More than 8,000 people were killed and some 23,000 injured.

Hundreds of thousands of Nepalese were made homeless, the country's infrastructure was seriously damaged and Unesco World Heritage Sites in Kathmandu were destroyed.



level terms

How Gurkhas have been reconstructing devastated Nepalese communities

A year on from the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal and the resolve of the British Army personnel who are helping to rebuild the country remains undimmed.

Soldiers from 70 Gurkha Field Squadron, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE) have been working on behalf of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, the Gurkha Welfare Trust's (GWT) delivery arm in Nepal, which is providing the required materials, leaving the soldiers to get on with the building tasks.

Across four communities – Jiri, Netrakali, Jaubari and Pachok – the troops have constructed six school buildings with 25 classrooms in total, two community centres, an accommodation block for GWT staff and four houses for retired Gurkhas.

The community facilities are prefabricated buildings, while the pensioners' houses are constructed with traditional materials and techniques but made earthquake-resistant by using several reinforced concrete ring beams.

Maj Chris Elworthy, Officer Commanding 70 Gurkha Field Squadron, said: "Op Marmat 2 has seen the sappers apply the combat engineering principles of adapt, improvise and overcome to their maximum extent to help the people of Nepal.

"We have faced the challenges of

living under canvas through a Nepali winter, the logistical difficulties of resourcing task sites that are hours away from our base in Kathmandu over steep, rutted tracks, and we have adapted our skills to use local materials and techniques.

"We can all be immensely proud of our contribution to Nepal's reconstruction effort."

While conditions are austere, the QGE personnel have not required any motivation to give 100 per cent to the relief mission.

When the earthquake struck last April their concerns quickly shifted to what they could do – and they had the skills to help their country in its hour of need.

Within days elements from 36 Engineer Regiment were stepping off a C-17 at Kathmandu airport.

As part of Op Layland, the British military's support to humanitarian relief efforts, they set up water purification facilities and distributed food and temporary shelters.

Back in the UK some of the personnel got on their bicycles in Maidstone town centre to ride from there to Kathmandu, raising £22,000 towards the millions of pounds generated by GWT's major earthquake appeal.

As the focus moved to reconstruction, members of the formation went to Nepal to spend the money they had helped raise and help rebuild a number of remote communities.

Around 90 soldiers in total from 70 Squadron travelled out for the operation's second stage.

Living in tents pitched in the foothills of the Himalayas, the



We have faced the challenges of living under canvas through a Nepali winter

April-May 2015

Op Layland

Within two weeks, 90 personnel built around 69 Gurkha Field Squadron were on the ground to support immediate relief efforts. Working out of Kathmandu and Pokhara, the sappers focused on providing supplies of clean water and assisting in the distribution of food and material to build temporary shelters.



1 May-July 2015

Op Marmat 1

Op Layland became Op Marmat as the focus shifted from relief to reconstruction. Working as a contractor for the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, troops built a school and community centre in Jiri before returning to the UK as the monsoon rains started.



troops built schools, community centres and houses in the villages of serving Gurkhas, their families and veterans.

Constructing stone walls using mud mortar is a far cry from the bricklaying taught at the Royal School of Military Engineering, while the engineers have also had to learn the art of putting up bamboo scaffolding.

At times, the challenges have stretched the personnel to their limits.

At one house in Jaubari – situated only 150 kilometres from Kathmandu, but six bruising hours away by truck – the road stops 100 metres below and short of the building site, forcing the sappers to carry every stone, timber and tool they need by doko basket.

SSgt Birendra Kambang explained: "It has been very hard to apply our trade skills to local materials and tools that are very different or do not meet the standards we are used to.

"It has also been very cold while we are working and living in tents and washing in the open air, which has taken its toll.

"Despite this, morale has been high because Nepal is our home country and we want to do all we can to help."

Spr Sahadev Magar added: "This is my first time back since joining the Army

and it is nice to be able to help my country when it is in need.

"I am a carpenter and the work has been an interesting test of my skills.

"The timber we are using is a very hard wood cut from the jungle and villagers have been showing us how they work it."

The sappers have also shared their building skills with local people and written a step-by-step plan to help build pensioners' houses, with 1,200 being constructed so far.

Personnel from 70 Squadron returned to the UK at the end of February and 69 Gurkha Field Squadron are continuing the project on Op Marmat 3, which began last month.

Before the monsoon season starts in June they will be overseeing local builders erecting 45 dwellings in Bhuji.

John White, deputy director of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, commented: "The Gurkhas have provided a massive boost to our work and cemented relations between the UK and Nepal.

"It sends a strong message that we do not just take boys from the hills to be soldiers, but we give something back."

● Final word – p90



Morale
has
been
high
because
Nepal
is our
home
country



October 2015 to
February 2016

Op Marmat 2

After the monsoon, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron deployed to build schools and community facilities and four houses for Gurkha pensioners in Jiri, Netrakali, Jaubari and Pachok.



March to June 2016

Op Marmat 3

69 Gurkha Field Squadron is back in Nepal to supervise a local workforce constructing 45 houses for Gurkha pensioners in Buji.



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TALKBACK

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

Pay reform is about 'penny pinching'

LISTENED closely with a mix of amusement and bemusement at a recent briefing about the New Employment Model for Armed Forces pay.

Lauded as a revolution, the message was that this is not a money-saving exercise – but it's not hard to see that this is a lie.

Firstly, "simplifying" the pay journeys from 128 streams to four is an extremely hollow boast. Individuals only care about their own, not the other 127.

The idea of preventing "flip-flopping", that sees many personnel change several times between high and low pay bands as they promote within their trade, is also pointless.

This merely reflects the workload that's carried out by the soldier in that rank – and in some trades senior NCO jobs are easier, less stressful or less dangerous than junior NCO roles, and vice versa.

And in a case of "overtaking", where someone goes into a rank at a higher scale than a colleague who promoted earlier, it should be remembered that those who stepped up first will be paid more overall because their salary increased earlier.

I did a comparison and found that a newly promoted corporal in my cap badge will be £10,000 worse off over five years under the new scheme compared to the old one.

By paying people less the MoD is putting smaller amounts into each soldier's pension pot. This is the second time in as many years that mine has been changed for the worse.

I won't hide my trade, I'm a Royal Military Policeman and this new model is a kick in the teeth for recruitment.

Why would anyone join us when you can go to the Royal Air Force Police and earn more over your career along with the potential to stay for 35-years in the job as well?

Will decisions made by the Joint Services Job Evaluation Team in placing trade groups ever be made public? And why is there to be no review for five years?

Surely it should be done every year to reflect the ever-changing commitments of the military.

No one would have cared if Pay 2000 had stayed in place but now some people are happy and others are fuming.

Morale in the Forces is getting lower by the day and this hasn't helped. – **Name and address supplied**

Brig Chris Ghika, Director Personnel Capability, replies: I can assure you this reform is not a money-saving exercise. If it was it would look radically different to the current model.

Under the new scheme all personnel



will move to a level that is equal to or higher than their current rate of pay and that will be protected for a minimum of three years so initially the Armed Forces' pay bill will rise.

With the retention of incremental progression and the continuation of annual pay awards, the overall package remains highly competitive.

One of the reasons for the change was to address many of the complexities and inequalities of the Pay 2000 scheme.

We received a considerable number of complaints about the structure – "flip-flopping" and "overtaking" were some of the most commonly cited problems.

The NEM model reduces the number of possible pay journeys to make it more efficient to manage and easier for individuals to predict future earnings. Personnel will also normally start on the lowest pay level for each rank.

We've rebalanced the structure by reducing possible future earnings for some and increasing it for others.

Referring to your example, an RMP lance corporal who promotes to corporal on April 1, 2016 will, over a five-year period (assuming they do not promote again), receive around £5,400 less than they would have done before.

This change is a result of the allocation of trades to one of four supplements after a rigorous job evaluation process.

You rightly ask for more details on this and the defence internal brief **2016DIB/08** will provide you with comprehensive information.

It will also publish the whole trade scores for each group within the four pay supplements.

Each Service had input into this process, which is why you can see a difference with the equivalent RAF Police position.

A rolling programme of re-evaluation is to be conducted, probably over a five-year period, so the structure can be altered.

However, the NEM pay model cannot be changed more frequently because it is based on a fixed cost base, so if one trade goes up another must fall.

Regarding the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 (AFPS 15), you are correct that it is calculated using career averages but one of the benefits of the new pay model is that supplement one is equal to or higher than the previous low band and as a result many

individuals will see an increase in income. Also, don't forget that AFPS 15 remains a non-contributory scheme and is still one of the very best public sector plans available today.

I DID A COMPARISON AND FOUND THAT A NEW CORPORAL IN MY CAP BADGE WILL BE TEN GRAND WORSE OFF OVER FIVE YEARS



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Your views from the web...



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#PAY

@forcesplan

Gen. Sir Nicholas Carter: "The NEM Pay Model announced today is good news for the Army. It is both contemporary and fair"

@AmandaG807075

@karren_brady @TheSun – fantastic – The British Army have equal pay, equal jobs, gender fair, gender free – if you cut it, you'll earn it!

#WOMEN IN COMBAT

@jonathanfaulds

Interesting to hear General Sir Nicholas Carter's comments on women serving in front-line combat roles

@colvks

India's military to allow women in combat roles. Are women officers ready for restricted facilities?

@_Jimothy

All for women in combat, just in separate units

#SPORT

@Manirio16 (Emmanuel Nartey)

Job done. Won the world cup and a major step to Rio. Thanks all @ArmySportsLTRY @UELSports @LBW @nafii97 @TeamBath

@Emorgan25

Countdown is on for @ArmyvNavyRugby in April, Twickers here we come #armyvsnavy

@YeovillLadiesFC

Congrats to development team player @TerriTrowbridge on receiving first cap for the Army football team #ytlfc #army

GOT A GRIPE?

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TALKBACK

Reserve centre mess

OUR Army Reserve Centre is a bespoke building, fully occupied by my unit for many years.

Each training weekend, in spite of having a live-in caretaker and cleaner, a significant amount of our time is devoted to thoroughly cleaning the site, including the main permanent staff kitchen, which is usually deemed out of bounds to Reservists.

As we can't use these facilities an old fridge, paper cups and a water boiler are sometimes available to us in the corporals' mess.

However, once the boiler is empty we can't refill it ourselves.

There are four separate welfare areas that are also regularly out of bounds to Reserve troops.

This is while another unit sharing our centre is shoe-horned into a few offices and rented portakabins.

Part of my civilian job involves ensuring that people at work on temporary construction sites have proper amenities such as hot and cold running water and adequate facilities to prepare hot meals.

Shouldn't there be similar standards for soldiers in Army Reserve Centres?
– Name and address supplied

Lt Col Stuart Grout, S01 Facilities Management Requirements, HQ Regional Command, replies: The cleaning of Reserve centres comes under the so-called super multi-activity contracts (SMACs), which can vary from place to place.

A programme called Hestia will consolidate these services into seven regional contracts and that

should mean that they are all pretty similar in future.

In most areas, offices, corridors and ablutions fall within these agreements but the kitchen is the responsibility of the unit and the caretaker usually looks after the drill hall.

If cleaning at a site is unsatisfactory the contractor should be asked what areas of the Reserve centre are covered by the SMAC and if they are not being cleaned properly then what is going to be done about it.

If the answers do not satisfy the permanent staff administration officer the matter should be raised with the brigade headquarters.

A meeting may then be held with relevant personnel from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to seek a resolution.

If there is still no satisfaction the matter can be raised at the infrastructure community monthly meeting that covers the region in which the centre is located.

The facilities management contract is not responsible for the provision of food or beverages at these establishments.

The use of facilities in Reserve centres can be problematic where there is multi-occupancy but the principle is that maximum use is made of the asset so they should be shared as much as possible.

“WE HAVE TO CLEAN THE MAIN STAFF KITCHEN WHICH IS OUT OF BOUNDS TO RESERVISTS”



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Why choose an independent school education for your child if you qualify for CEA? If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, academic results, a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, excellent sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects, first class confidence and self assurance. If you want the best for your child, and to stand a chance of achieving most of this list, we believe you would need to pick one of the top 10 UK Independent boarding schools as ranked by the Sunday Times. BUT, most importantly of all, we unashamedly also offer TLC - tender, loving care!

Co-ed	All types	UK's 2015 Top 20 Boarding Schools	
		Based on Sunday Times % A*/A A-Levels	% A*/A A-Levels
1	1	Wycombe Abbey School	85.7%
	2	Westminster School	85.4%
	3	Brighton College	85.1%
	4	Winchester College	84.2%
2	5	Sevenoaks School	82.9%
	6	Queen Ethelburga's College	82.5%
	7	St Paul's Boys School	81.4%
	8	Eton College	80.7%
4	9	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	80.2%
	10	Concord College	79.9%
5	11	Tonbridge School	78.0%
	12	St Mary's School Ascot	77.1%
	13	Cheltenham Ladies' College	74.5%
	14	Whitgift School	73.0%
6	15	Wellington College	72.8%
	16	Ruthin School	72.8%
	17	St Swithun's School	71.0%
8	18	City of London Freemen's	70.5%
	19	Downe House	70.4%
	20	Westbourne School	69.7%



Counting the cost:
The revised salary deal isn't flexible enough for Royal Artillery personnel, according to some



‘We need to shell out more for some gunners’

ON looking at the new pay scale I noticed that the majority of Royal Artillery personnel are placed in supplement one.

One thing that doesn't seem to have been accounted for is those who have undertaken an arduous course – primarily soldiers in 29 Commando Regiment, 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, and 4/73 Special Observation Post Battery.

Can someone in the know tell me if this was even considered when the New Employment Model (NEM) and the supplements were being worked out?

If those serving in these units were moved to supplement two, it would act as a brilliant recruiting incentive and also as a reward for

those who have a specialist role. – **Name and address supplied**

Brig Nick Cavanagh, Director Manning, (Army), replies: Royal Artillery trades sit in different bands under the existing Pay 2000 structure so this is not a new issue.

The formation had no influence over which supplements were allocated to its trades and the process was based on a rigorous job evaluation procedure, with whole trade scores being carefully compared before each one was then allocated a supplement.

The Gunners have trades in bands one and two, with the latter covering most of the personnel involved in working with

the Infantry's fighting elements.

Soldiers who undertake an arduous course gain additional benefits such as wider employability which can be career enhancing and therefore it brings opportunity for higher remuneration within the Royal Artillery and Army structures. For instance, those who are trained receive parachute pay when in eligible posts so there is a form of extra income already in place for some of these soldiers.

Currently, both 29 Cdo Regt and 7th Para, RHA are up to strength and the Royal Artillery does not consider the way trade supplements have been allocated under the NEM will affect recruitment.

SUPPORTING A SOLDIER'S CENSURE OF THE SLOTS

● I COMPLETELY agree with SSgt Mike Owen's letter in the March issue about slot machines being placed in hubs.

Lt Col Battey's reply claims monitoring takes place but there is none that I know of.

It should happen though because the sheer number of them situated throughout MoD sites is ridiculous in my opinion.

I have seen, first-hand, soldiers putting hundreds of pounds into these contraptions and getting absolutely nothing out of them in return.

They play day after day with the mindset of "it's due to pay out soon".

Not surprisingly, payday weekend is the busiest period for these machines.

They encourage gambling addiction so if the MoD is serious about reintegrating soldiers into civilian society in good health and minus any destructive habits these devices need to be removed. – **Name and address supplied**



● I HAVE never felt the need to respond to one of your articles, until now.

I have served in the Regular Army for 20 years and contrary to the reply to "Hubs are becoming gambling havens" in the March issue, I would like to state that in my time I have witnessed personnel and civilian workers alike piling huge amounts of money into these so-called entertainment facilities.

I have never had a brief on gambling or heard of a soldier being helped with gambling problems. I do appreciate this would be done with confidentiality but we all talk to our peers so we'd know if it had been offered.

Who actually monitors these machines anyway? You never see officers in these areas so perhaps the official doctrine on running gaming machines actually differs from the truth. How about a survey to find out if the masses want them? – **Name and address supplied**

“I feel let down by the lack of planning”

TALKBACK

'Op is holding me back'



Costly delay? RMP personnel are still waiting to deploy on an operation investigating the Afghanistan campaign

IN August last year I was offered a posting to Op Northmoor, the Royal Military Police investigation into cases of alleged unlawful killing and maltreatment during Britain's military campaign in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2013.

Since then, there has been no further information disseminated by my chain of command, either at company or regimental level.

My career is now at a standstill as a direct result of this.

I've been denied the opportunity to attend courses as my unit does not know how long I will remain in post.

Given that the Army has been instructed to run this operation and that it was supposed to be up and running before April 2016, why is it that soldiers across the RMP are still awaiting assignment more than six months after being informed that they will be involved?

This lack of management is having a direct and detrimental impact on both my career and home life.

My wife cannot plan her education because she does not know where we will be located.

I cannot enhance my qualifications because my unit will not support any course applications.

I have requested to have my name removed from the list because of the effect this is having.

I have even considered terminating

my service, especially following the new pay model.

I know that I am not the only person who is considering their future with the Army or has requested to withdraw from this assignment and feels completely let down by the lack of planning. – **Name and address supplied**

Col Nadine Parkes, Provost Marshal (Army) Headquarters, responds: It is unfortunate you feel you've not been supported by the chain of command.

Planning for Op Northmoor is complicated, which is why individuals have been given advanced warning of their involvement. Assignment orders are being issued in line with policy with a minimum of four months notice – and no one has been assigned without proper consideration of the impact on that individual.

The early warning provided should not have precluded individuals from undertaking any career enhancing courses and so no one should feel their career is adversely affected.

It is regrettable if communications have not reached you and this will be addressed through regimental career management officers.

MISJUDGING THE GENDER ISSUE?

● WITH reference to your article "Award for transgender sapper" in the March edition, I'm sure recognition of Cpl Christian Matthey (RE, pictured below) for his hard work in Reserves recruitment is very well deserved and I congratulate him.

Interestingly, he said: "If you can do your job that's all that's important. The rest should be irrelevant and I think eventually it will be."

Had Cpl Matthey not been transgender, would his award have been as worthy of note and if his being so should be an irrelevance why did it need to be mentioned at all in your news report?

In these enlightened times I hope that his sexual identity was not a consideration when determining whether he should get this award.

But by labelling him in such a way, you might have inadvertently misrepresented exactly why he received this accolade. – **Maj Terry Anderson, AGC (SPS)**



The managing editor replies: Cpl Matthey said "eventually" being transgender should be irrelevant, and that's an important distinction to make.

The soldier himself recognises that he's in a groundbreaking position, which is why he openly spoke about his personal journey.

And, yes, that made the story more newsworthy but our report made it explicitly clear that Cpl Matthey was being recognised specifically for his great recruitment work, nothing else.

His views on being a transgender soldier were added because they were interesting, insightful and very relevant to the Army's "maximising talent" push. I certainly don't feel we misrepresented the reasons he received the award in any way.

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DIARY

May 29-31: Solent Overlord 2016, The Lawns, Forest Road, Denmead. All day military spectacular with 300 vehicles, 500 re-enactors and trade stalls. Adults £10; children £5; family ticket £25. Free entry for Service personnel with MoD F90. For further information visit www.solentoverlord.co.uk

June 30-January 8, 2017: Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies at the Imperial War Museum London. Marking the 100th anniversary of the release of the film *The Battle of the Somme*. Using costumes, props, scripts and set designs, the exhibition goes behind the scenes of some of the most iconic war films. Adults £10; children (15 and under) £5; concessions £7.

July 1: Over The Top, remember The Battle of The Somme and watch football at Surrey Sports Park, Guildford. Twenty teams – military and civilian, male and female, adults and youth – will play each other to honour the sacrifices made by local men who 100 years earlier kicked footballs “over the top” to encourage an advance. Chelsea, Southampton and Aldershot are among the clubs taking part. For details email Fred Hughes via se-comms@rfca.org.uk

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INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 27/16: Taxation of beneficial loans

ABN 26/16: Non-pattern Service light weapons and operational memorabilia

ABN 25/16: Management of trade competences

ABN 24/16: Army Photographic Competition

ABN 23/16: Employer recognition scheme

ABN 22/16: One You campaign

ABN 21/16: Management of controlled and accountable drugs

ABN 20/16: Families continuous attitude survey 2016

ABN 19/16: CGS fraud policy statement

ABN 18/16: Reserves Day directive

DIN 2016DIN01-036: Civilian attendance at dual workplaces and taxation

DIN 2016DIN01-035: Difficult Post Allowance change of review date 2017

DIN 2016DIN01-034: Performance management – civilian medical practitioners

DIN 2016DIN01-033: MoD Armed Forces support to The Prince's Trust Team programme; appeal for short-term volunteer leaders

DIN 2016DIN01-032: Armed Forces Buddhist (spiritual and moral leadership) Conference June 10-12, 2016

DIN 2016DIN01-031: Civilian travel to interviews and taxation

DIN 2016DIN01-030: Late Entry commission in the Royal Corps of Signals

DIN 2016DIN01-028: Lifetime allowance – transitional protection

DIN 2016DIN01-027: MoD civilian dental practitioners' revised pay structure and 2015 pay award

DIN 2016DIN01-026: Diplomatic clearance procedures for the Benelux countries

DIN 2016DIN01-025: Civil Service pensions – purchasing added pension

DIN 2016DIN01-024: Transfer of command for Headquarters Defence Medical Services Whittington

DIN 2016DIN01-023: 58th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes

DIN 2016DIN01-022: Information

and Knowledge Excellence Awards 2016

DIN 2016DIN01-021: Recruitment of volunteers for training as Army welfare workers

DIN 2016DIN01-020: Civilian travel and subsistence changes in March 2016

DIN 2016DIN01-019: Taxation of payments deemed to be beneficial loans

DIN 2016DIN01-018: Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum

DIN 2016DIN01-016: Launch of finance competence framework

DIN 2016DIN01-015: Selection board procedure for OF3 and OF4 air engineering professional command assignments

DIN 2016DIN01-014: Revision of Army Reserve command primacy policy

DIN 2016DIN03-012: Procedures for all official duty visitors to the USA

DIN 2016DIN03-011: MoD strategic detention policy

DIN 2016DIN03-010: International agreements – governance arrangements in MoD

DIN 2016DIN03-009: New JSP 945 – *MoD Policy for Configuration Management*

DIN 2016DIN03-008: New JSP 940 – *MoD Policy for Quality*

DIN 2016DIN03-007: Provision of meteorological and oceanographic support to MoD exercises and operations

DIN 2016DIN03-006: The handling of flying complaints from members of the public in the UK

DIN 2016DIN04-037: Withdrawal from service of munition packs containing PE7 and the introduction of munition packs containing PE8

DIN 2016DIN04-036: Declaration of obsolete: Mk6 General Service combat helmet, lightweight parachutist's helmet and Mk1 sniper helmet, withdrawal from service and disposal instructions

DIN 2016DIN04-035: Single meal ration

DIN 2016DIN04-034: Requesting technical working environment

DIN 2016DIN04-033: Declaration of obsolete: Endura laptop

DIN 2016DIN04-032: Operational ration heater

DIN 2016DIN04-031: Marine fuel supply arrangements for ports in the UK and overseas

DIN 2016DIN04-030: Unit maintenance management system – guidance for equipment

DIN 2016DIN04-029: Notification of contract DC0/04071: civilian foul weather clothing

DIN 2016DIN04-028: Military level packaging – changes to Services packaging instruction sheet

DIN 2016DIN04-027: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – February 2016

DIN 2016DIN04-026: Declaration of ALC obsolete equipment

DIN 2016DIN04-025: Declaration of ALC obsolete equipment

DIN 2016DIN04-024: The withdrawal from service of ADAC 51677-02 (cartridge bird scaring 12 bore number five, mark two)

DIN 2016DIN04-023: Declaration of out of service date has been extended for the L104A2 riot gun 37mm; DMC:

RIOTG, NSN 1095-99-423-5671

DIN 2016DIN04-022: Tricat blank database implementation

DIN 2016DIN04-021: Interim policy directive: Periodicity variation of electrically powered medical dental and veterinary equipment

DIN 2016DIN04-020: Authority to demand prescription-only medicines under wholesale dealer's license

DIN 2016DIN04-019: Declaration of NSNs as obsolete and deletion of misc NSNs within DMC GRENL

DIN 2016DIN04-018: Explosive kit cratering rapid L1A1 and initiating kit RCK L1A1

DIN 2016DIN04-017: Defence munition publications for demolition munitions

DIN 2016DIN05-009: Governance and endorsement of Defence Medical Services applied concepts

DIN 2016DIN05-008: 77th Brigade formation

DIN 2016DIN05-007: Print management arrangements

DIN 2016DIN05-006: MoD basic grade messaging (email) address routing changes

DIN 2016DIN06-004: Cross-government contract with Specsavers for corporate eye care, eyesight tests and spectacles

DIN 2016DIN06-003: Introduction of the defence health, safety and environmental protection job family and job codes

DIN 2016DIN07-042: Joining instructions for personnel attending a course at military training element HMS *Excellent*

DIN 2016DIN07-041: Defence

unit fire safety managers, warden, extinguisher maintenance awareness trainer

DIN 2016DIN07-038: Joining instructions for personnel attending Maritime Warfare School courses at Phoenix Training Group

DIN 2016DIN07-035: Enhanced learning credits for Service personnel

DIN 2016DIN07-034: Joint Service adventure training in paragliding, parachuting and gliding – course schedules 2016/17

DIN 2016DIN07-033: Issue of Pamphlet 21 – *Training regulations for armoured fighting vehicles, infantry weapon systems and pyrotechnics* (January 2016 edition)

DIN 2016DIN07-032: Removal of GPMG (light role), GMG and HMG as distributed training cadres to in-unit training not requiring authorisation

DIN 2016DIN07-031: School of Aerospace Battle Management courses

DIN 2016DIN07-030: Part-time post graduate masters level studies at Defence Academy delivered by Cranfield University

DIN 2016DIN07-028: The Defence Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Extraction Training Organisation

DIN 2016DIN07-026: Joint Information Activities Group training provision 2016/17

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REVIEWS

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MUSIC

TOP GEAR

STYLE AT A STRETCH

This latest addition to the range means you can now buy a Mini that is anything but

DEDICATED Mini fans cannot fail to notice that the brand now offers a model for every day of the week, from the entry-level three-door car through the sporty Paceman, convertible, five-door hatchback, Countryman all-wheel drive to the completely new Clubman, tested here.



TOP GEAR



This latest offering is 73mm wider and 270mm longer than the standard version. In fact, it shares the same platform as the 2 Series Grand Tourer from BMW, the German manufacturer that owns the British icon.

The new model brings a huge dose of practicality and space to the range while bringing BMW build quality and Mini's characteristic good looks. It's a combination that should appeal strongly to those who love the brand's distinctive appearance but can't live with the compact internal dimensions of the other varieties.

Inside you know you're in a Mini because of the familiar oversized central speedo, pod-like rev counter and rocker switches for the lights, while the materials also feel solid and well made.

The interior and trim can be customised to your taste and our test car was fitted with optional quilted indigo leather and useful features such as fog lights, LED headlamps, heated seats and electronic parking aids.

At the rear, the Clubman keeps its signature split rear doors and if your hands are full you can just wiggle your foot under the rear bumper and they open automatically – as long as you have the key in your pocket.

There is a choice of petrol and diesel engines and transmissions to choose from and once on the move you can select a driving mode to suit your mood. "Sport" gives you the trademark "go-kart" experience while "Economy" optimises the engine and gearbox settings for maximum fuel efficiency.

Overall, we found it a fun car to drive and usefully practical too. However, those looks come at a bit of a price compared to some more spacious rivals.

The Clubman comes in Cooper, Cooper D, Cooper S, Cooper SD and new ALL4 four-wheel drive versions but prices start at £19,995 on the road and it's easy to rack up thousands on optional extras to make it the car you want. For example, the "Chili Pack" on our model, although adding lots of extra kit, costs £2,785.

However, emissions are as low as 109g/km and the makers claim you can achieve 68.9 mpg under certain driving conditions.

A wide range of colours is available and you can build your own car online before you buy. ■

REVIEW: MELISSA TERRY



VERDICT:

Its looks may win your heart but there are plenty of rivals that offer more space for fewer bucks

★★★★★





MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH:

DRONE WARFARE UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

A stellar cast with a tight script highlight some tough moral questions

WHAT WE LIKE:

- **Four full-sized doors** give easy access to the cabin and more room inside means it now easily seats five.
- **Automatic 8-speed steptronic transmission**, available as an option on the higher-spec models. Gear changes are super-smooth and it improves economy over the manual version.
- **New equipment such as full electric seat adjustment, electronic parking brake, atmospheric lighting and online services** that can stream your favourite music from the internet.
- **Easy entry option** allows you to open the doors without pressing the key fob.

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:

- **Long clutch travel** in the manual version.
- **Small instrument binnacles** can be difficult to read to begin with.
- **Small boot** for such a large car. All the extra room has been created in the passenger area.

THE much-anticipated *Eye In The Sky*, which centres on the controversial issue of armed drones, hits screens on April 15.

Under the stewardship of director Gavin Hood the movie tackles tough moral dilemmas head-on as an undercover operative tracks terrorists on the ground in Nairobi.

The operation is being masterminded remotely in London using cutting edge surveillance technology while the US provides and controls unmanned aerial systems to monitor suspects from its base in Nevada.

Initially the plan is to capture the terrorists but as the mission unfolds it becomes clear that the targets are moments from a suicide bombing strike and the job escalates to a "kill" operation.

Starring Helen Mirren (*The Queen*), Aaron Paul (*Breaking Bad*), Alan Rickman (*Harry Potter*) and Barkhad Abdi (*Captain Phillips*) there is no shortage of acting talent to portray the contemporary scenario.

"What you see in the film is an accurate reflection of what's going on in the real world of

drone warfare today – from a military, political and legal point of view," said Hood.

"By presenting a controversial and complex situation with no easy answers, I hope we have made a film that will make a strong contribution to an important conversation."

The concept of the "kill chain", from the trigger operator up to the prime minister is laid bare and the movie does well to make the complex process of life-or-death decision-making palatable to the layman.

At the very moment that drone pilot Steve Watts (Paul) is set to unleash a lethal Hellfire missile on to the target's house, a young girl enters the so-called kill-zone.

Essentially this is the crux of the film – as politicians debate whether to give permission to fire, the clock is ticking. Do they sanction the drone strike and kill an innocent infant?

Or do they hold off and risk a suicide attack that could result in mass slaughter?

Speaking about the British intelligence officer Col Katherine Powell, played by Mirren, Hood revealed that the character was originally written as a male but he





VERDICT:
A thought-provoking look at the modern battlefield
★★★★★

persuaded the screenwriter Guy Hibbert to change it to a woman. "He was a little sceptical at first, but I did a lot of research into women in the military and sent him references of British and American female officers and pretty soon he was won over.

"I really felt that the film would appeal strongly to both men and women and I didn't want it to seem like just a war movie for men.

"The arguments about whether to strike using the missile system are compelling and should be debated by intelligent people of both sexes."

The director added: "When Helen agreed to play Col Powell, I was beyond thrilled.

"She's ferocious, determined, highly intelligent and completely grounded. She has real acting chops and the grit you need to play this character."

As far as Barkhad Abdi is concerned the movie not only raises important, topical issues but also brings back painful memories of being trapped in the middle of a war zone as a seven-year-old in Mogadishu, Somalia.

"I think it's a very important story and a very sensitive one that needs to be told and it's about how innocent people get caught up in a conflict," said the actor.

"I was stuck in a war with my family but our situation was much better because in that war you could hear the guns and we could see where it was going.

"But with drones the whole game changes completely and you don't know anything.

"They can strike from above and you don't know when it's coming."

Rather than rely on special effects or an unrealistic Hollywood plot line, the movie succeeds by presenting real issues and posing pertinent questions surrounding the morality and ethics of drone warfare.

"A great tag line for the film would be, 'What would you do?'" said Hood. ■

WORDS: JOE CLAPSON

SOLDIER SELECTS



Steve Jobs out now

AS UNEXCITING as a movie about three computer product launches might sound **Danny Boyle's** biopic about the Apple guru Steve Jobs is gripping.

The content is non-revelatory but with **Michael Fassbender** as the main man the in-house fighting, grandiose orations and a non-acceptance of fatherhood are brought to life.

Joe Clapson, Soldier



Against The Sun out now

DESPITE its low budget this movie packs a serious punch. A trio of US aviators, played admirably by **Tom Felton, Jake Abel** and **Garret Dillahunt**, are

forced to ditch at sea in the Second World War and tasked to survive in treacherous conditions without food or water. The film is compelling and the fact that it's true makes it awe-inspiring.

Becky Clark, Soldier



Criminal Activity out now

ACTION heavyweight **John Travolta** returns to the big screen with this dynamic crime caper. It is a story of big investments gone wrong in a

murky world of ruthless gangs and violence. There are nods to **Tarantino** from first-time director **Jackie Earle Haley** but the movie is certainly no *Pulp Fiction* or *Reservoir Dogs*.

Tom Jackson, civvy

BOOKS



PICK OF THE MONTH:

BREAKDOWN

The crisis of shell shock on The Somme, 1916

THE timing of this book's publication in the 100th anniversary year of the Battle of The Somme is no coincidence but the subtitle doesn't convey its full scope.

Yes, it contains numerous vignettes relating to the campaign but it is not an account of the battle.

Taylor Downing's main thread is the incidence of mental breakdown attributable to the various deprivations of the conflict and, most significantly, to the effect on soldiers of sustained exposure to artillery fire.

This theme is examined from a variety of different angles including the creation of pals' battalions and the attendant difficulties of training and hardening what was in effect a citizens' army, as well as the realities of fighting a continental war in the 20th Century – something that the British Services were singularly ill-prepared for.

Those charged with planning and conducting The Somme campaign had served their apprenticeships in colonial wars or low intensity operations and for them to be embroiled in a cataclysmic conflict in which new technologies were being introduced remorselessly often exposed their limitations.

The efficacy of the Army's medical services at the start of the war reflected both recent operational experiences and the low priority given to implementing advances in medicine, particularly in the field of psychiatry.



SOLDIER SELECTS



Swarm Troopers by David Hambling

NEW technology is changing the face of warfare as we know it. This book deals with the introduction of drones and forces the reader to think about the application of this new weapon both in offensive and defensive scenarios. The author poses some interesting questions. For instance, a drone hovering over your position is definitely a nuisance and a dangerous one at that, but what if there were 100 or a 1,000 of these relatively cheap items; how do you deal with them or use them yourself? Military readers the world over should find this a highly relevant title.

Andy Kay, ex-RS

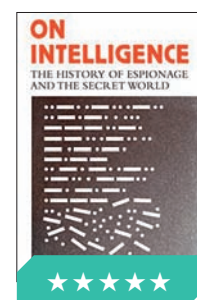


Verdun 1916 by William F. Buckingham

THE 1916 Battle of Verdun saw French troops embroiled in one of the deadliest campaigns of the First World War. I found the account a compelling read as this

episode of the conflict is less frequently written about by English language authors. It is a very sad eye-opener to the awfulness of war. Each page draws you into the mindset of the French soldiers in the trenches, their fear of the German artillery and the trepidation among the reinforcements sent to prop up the town's crumbling defences. To this day some 160 square miles of French countryside show the scars of the battle.

Tony David, ex-RE



On Intelligence by John Hughes-Wilson

OFTEN the unsung hero when things go right and always the whipping boy when things go wrong, military intelligence is the shadowy force behind many of the

world's greatest victories. Here, John Hughes-Wilson provides a fantastic insight into blunders and successes from Alexander the Great up to the modern era. He has trawled the twentieth century archives of the CIA, KGB and British SIS to produce an impressive dossier of little-known informers, renegades and rogues who have caused unknown trouble to their respective governments, turning the tides of modern politics and, very occasionally, bringing down entire regimes.

LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

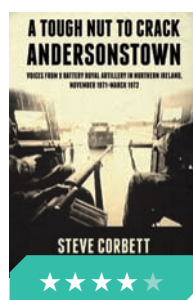


Wait for the Whistle by Hywel Lewis

FORTUNATELY cover images have little influence on the contents of books. If that had not been the case, this offering could be easily overlooked. Set amidst

the backdrop of the First World War, the story follows four young miners on their journey from the Welsh pits to the front line. This blend of fact and fiction results in a gripping page-turner, as our heroes battle two foes – the Germans and a despicable British officer. However, it also serves up a hefty slice of reality as the naivety of young men desperate to serve their country is swiftly crushed by the horror of conflict.

Richard Long, *Soldier*



A Tough Nut to Crack: Andersonstown by Steve Corbett

ONE hundred years after the Easter Rising, this historical gem captures street-level "kinetic" operations in Belfast. In an illicit diary Gnr Steve

Corbett faithfully recorded 9 Plassey Battery's every patrol on the fraught streets of Andersonstown, the epicentre of IRA activity. He has turned that into an absorbing account of a particularly punchy tour in Northern Ireland, including a moment in the Troubles when the violence went from severe to catastrophic after Bloody Sunday in January 1972. Remarkably, the troops of 12 Light Air Defence Regiment were doing the jobs of infantrymen and had just come off ceremonial duties at Buckingham Palace.

Thomas Harding, ex-Para

Downing cites many instances of doctors and medical staff officers having fundamental disagreements both amongst themselves and with the chain of command as to how best to deal with soldiers apparently suffering from battle-induced neuroses.

He covers this aspect comprehensively but I believe it is a little unfair to simply paint senior commanders as unfeeling and remote.

In a war of attrition when politicians were demanding success but remained deaf to pleas for additional manpower Haig and his peers were in an invidious position.

They feared that, unless checked promptly, the ever-increasing number of shell-shocked casualties could become a contagion.

As a result, they used every tool at their disposal – including draconian punishment – as an antidote.

The latter part of the book provides considerable detail on post-war issues such as treatment, rehabilitation, pensions and employment, all of which is illuminating and thought-provoking.

Although this text lacks any discernible structure, it is well researched and readable and provides a good understanding of how psychologically damaged veterans were treated prior to the identification of post traumatic stress disorder. ■

REVIEW: GEORGE ROBEY, EX-GH

VERDICT:

An eye-opening examination of mental healthcare – or lack thereof – in the First World War

★★★★★

GAMES



PICK OF THE MONTH:

FAR CRY PRIMAL

Out now for Xbox, Playstation and PC

➤ VISUALLY, this is a very impressive game.

If you're familiar with this top-selling franchise there's not a great deal to explain. It's *Far Cry 4* – but set in 10,000BC and you're a caveman.

So there are no guns, helicopters or mobile phones, but pretty much everything else is as you would expect.

You're Takkar, a member of the Wenja tribe, who, by way of some quite elaborate storytelling, are the good guys. Any other being with a pulse is pure evil, making it perfectly acceptable to brutally slay them on sight.

Our hero is tasked with gathering the tribe and returning them home, while at the same time taking down the leaders of the enemy horde.

The core missions feature the usual mix of rescue/escort/defend challenges, animal hunts, cave explorations and random events to save fellow Wenja members.

There are also millions of collectables to discover and hundreds of areas to search throughout the various lands.

If this were not enough the game has included crafting and gathering options, allowing you to develop sharper spears and more deadly clubs that kill in fewer swings.

Even with the fresh gameplay additions the core of this game is based on its predecessor and is as fun as ever.

There is just enough new stuff to make it feel like you are not treading on old ground. I spent a lot of time with *Far Cry 4* and didn't find myself getting bored by this latest variant.

Disappointingly, there is no co-op mode which was one of the most entertaining features on its sister title. Yet with this in mind *Primal* satisfies the urge to explore a world before guns, medicine and smartphones and I equally and genuinely enjoyed the collection and crafting elements.

If you liked the previous offerings in the series you will probably love this as there are just enough innovations and additions to keep hardened players entertained.

That said there is limited scope as to how many times the developers can keep flogging this game and they won't be able to release similar formats without making some more fundamental changes pretty soon.

If you loved *Far Cry 4* this gets a firm thumbs up, but if it was not your cup of tea it could well be one to avoid. ■

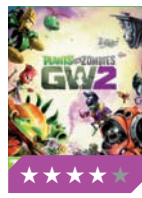
REVIEW: SSGT LEE GIBBS, REME

VERDICT:

Caveman carnage at its finest

★★★★★

SOLDIER SELECTS



Plants vs Zombies Garden Warfare 2
Playstation, Xbox and PC

THIS sequel to 2014's surprise hit builds on the original's quirky charms to offer a great third-person shooter. The game retains the cartoon look of its predecessor but boasts a host of new features. The roster of characters is expanded to 14 with three new plants and three new zombies included, with variations of each to unlock along the way.

While online multiplayer is the main attraction, with its unique take on conventional modes, a host of other game types are available. There is a series of missions to complete for each side – which forms the main campaign – while Garden/Graveyard Ops sees you fighting off waves of enemies. There's even a large hub area – the Backyard Battleground – where you can free-roam and battle AI and online opponents.

Its colourful characters and graphics suggest this is aimed at a younger audience, however the many options available and the sheer fun in playing them mean this can be recommended for all ages.

Stephen Smith, civvy



Tom Clancy's The Division
Playstation, Xbox and PC

AFTER a mutated version of the smallpox virus decimates New York City, it's up to a small contingent of US government operatives, collectively called The Division, to restore order and help uncover the people behind it.

This is Ubisoft's take on the persistent online shooter genre, previously dominated by Bungie's *Destiny*, and right from the off you get to experience a truly spectacular recreation of the Big Apple where shafts of sunlight cascade from skyscrapers into the darker recesses of the city. It's fair to say the visuals are sublime but it's not all about gazing wistfully at the environment.

The developers have created a superb title with a well-crafted storyline. Missions can be enjoyed in single player mode or with friends and there is also the lawless Dark Zone to explore, where players can fight each other or team up to survive.

David McDougall, civvy

MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH:

STUCK IN THE 80s

I Like It When You Sleep, For You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware Of It by The 1975

➤ ALTERNATIVE outfit The 1975 made a head-turning impact when their self-titled debut album entered the UK charts at number one.

The record went on to sell more than a million copies and with 500,000 tickets snapped up for the accompanying shows and tours it seemed as though the quartet were staking a claim as one of the biggest breakthrough acts of the past decade.

Singer Matthew Healy described such success as a "delirious ascent" and these impressive numbers formed the backdrop for some lofty ambitions second time round.

Follow-up offering *I Like It When You Sleep, For You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware Of It* may boast a title that hardly trips off the tongue but the frontman believes the new material will spark another whirlwind adventure for the group.

"This is the beginning of a new chapter for The 1975," he said. "Our new record signifies the start of a new world for us,



a more colourful world, a less colourful world.

"We want to play shows that are a real shared experience. We want to play huge shows that we never thought were possible. We want to play sets at festivals that people talk about for ages because it was fun and the music and weather was perfect.

"We want to be honest, otherwise what's the point?"

There's no doubting Healy's ability to talk the talk but from listening to this underwhelming effort it is hard to see how the band can walk the walk on such a grand stage.

Their choice of name has prompted raised eyebrows in some quarters and, given their affinity to all things 80s, The 1985 has been mooted as a more suitable alternative for the band.

It is hard to disagree with such a notion as early tracks *UGH!*, *A Change of Heart* and *She's American* drew instant comparisons to the likes of Duran Duran and Robert Palmer.

This makes for a less than encouraging opening and from here the album detours through a succession of slow-burning, uninspiring tunes more akin to a funeral procession than the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury, before the trend is finally broken on the more upbeat *The Ballad of Me and My Brain*.

However, the over reliance on synthesisers, drum machines and distorted vocals soon wears thin and with 17 tracks on the playlist it is hard not to yearn for an early end to proceedings.

As with an increasing number of bands emerging in recent times it is hard to see why such hype is deserved.

This is distinctly middle-of-the-road fare that lacks bite and drive. As a pastiche of 80s pop it may attract a few nostalgic glances but seeking inspiration from one of the blandest decades in recent musical history does not pay off here. ■

VERDICT:
Don't believe
the hype
★★★★★

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG

SOLDIER SELECTS



Good Grief by Lucius

FOLLOWING on from debut release *Wildewoman*, **Lucius'** highly anticipated new album *Good Grief* sadly left me very disappointed. Nothing stands out in this production despite the efforts of collaborations with Shawn Everett (**Weezer**), Bob Ezrin (**Alice Cooper**) and Tom Elmhurst (**Adele**). It works well as background music as you entertain friends or for relaxation while trying to sleep at night, but that's as thrilling as it gets. Next month will see their long-awaited tour of the British Isles – let's hope the concerts are more exciting and engaging.
Janet Dornan, ex R-Signals



Good Thing by Paul Young

AFTER a 20-year absence, **Paul Young** is most definitely back. This album is a collection of classic soul covers and sees the singer returning to the sound that catapulted him to worldwide fame back in the 80s. The tracks have been carefully chosen to create a superb selection, with Memphis soul the starting point. It is an absolutely cracking offering from start to finish and Young proves he can more than hold his own against any music – and any artist – around today. His sound has hardly changed.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



Painting of a Panic Attack by Frightened Rabbit

SELKIRK'S **Frightened Rabbit** are back with their fifth studio album *Painting of a Panic Attack*. Following on from 2013's acclaimed and successful *Pedestrian Verse*, the record begins with the startlingly beautiful *Death Dream* – a piano-led lament that builds into a crescendo finish. *Get Out* is an upbeat surefire single and is reminiscent of fellow countrymen **Aztec Camera**. Vocalist **Scott Hutchison** is on fine form and his lyrics are very personal. His melancholy outlook on life shines through on *An Otherwise Disappointing Life* and *Blood Under the Bridge*, before the gentle strains of *Die Like a Rich Boy* close proceedings in style.
Damian Hern, ex-AGC (SPS)



Wake Up by Boy Jumps Ship

NOW this is what you call an impressive debut. **Boy Jumps Ship** are a young British band who won a grant from the PRS Foundation to fulfill their musical dream and *Wake Up* is the outcome. As an alternative rock act they play very much in the style of **Black Sabbath** and this record is extremely well put together with some brilliant tracks. It hits the nail right on the head on so many levels and wonderful riffs and heavy drumming illuminate this offering. We need more bands like this, who can produce albums rich in the heavy rock style of days gone by.
Tony David, ex-RE



Warrior Sound by The Qemists

THOSE who thought the rap/rock genre died in 2004 are in for a shock. Fortunately, unlike the later offerings of **Limp Bizkit**, this album isn't a total disaster – far from it. With real heavy guitar riffs and ear-splitting but completely understandable rap this really is something to behold. Opener *Our World* has a creepy spoken word intro that leads straight into *Jungle*, which is pure drum and bass. The following tracks continue in the same way and before you know it you're screaming along. So get in the gym, turn up the stereo to ten and get at it!
LCpl Scott Roberts (Rifles)

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SOLDIERSPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long

Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock

Fit to fight: The Army's rugby stars warmed up for this month's Inter-Services by thrashing their French counterparts. Read about the match on page 86...



SPORT SHORTS



Setback for Hobbs

» **LIGHT** heavyweight prospect Sig Chris Hobbs (R Signals) saw his return to professional boxing ended by a dislocated shoulder.

The fighter was in the third round of his bout with Kelvin Young when injury struck, leaving the referee with no option but to award the contest to his opponent.

Hobbs was hoping to use the clash as a stepping stone to the southern area title but is now contemplating his future in the sport.

"It is not the first time I've had this injury and I'll find out soon if surgery is needed," he said.

"If it is this could be the end, if not I'll be looking for a rematch."



Players wanted

» **AN** appeal has been made for more players to join the women's rugby league set-up ahead of this season's Inter-Services campaign.

The Army have dominated in recent years but want fresh blood – regardless of experience – to sign up.

For details email carina.reeves440@mod.uk



Nine years of pain laid to rest

Inter-Services football

Army 1
Royal Navy 0

Royal Air Force 0
Army 2

AN unwanted losing record stretching back nine years was banished by the Army's footballers as they finally got their hands on football's Inter-Services trophy.

Having endured their fair share of misery in recent times – none more so than in last year's defeat to the Royal Navy – the soldiers made no mistake this time round as back-to-back wins over their rivals secured the silverware.

The Reds made the perfect start to their campaign with

a 1-0 victory over defending champions the Senior Service.

LCpl Calum Wilkinson (RLC) sealed the contest from the penalty spot midway through the second half but the hosts should have enjoyed a bigger winning margin given their dominance on the night.

Wilkinson was the first to threaten when he connected with Pte Shaun Wooley's (RLC) free kick but the striker saw his header cannon off the cross bar, with the rebound sailing over.

Wooley was in the thick of the action moments later when his low cross found Spr Dan Stoneman (RE) at the far post but the winger was denied by an excellent save from POPT Matt Short.

The stopper then thwarted Pte Matt Glass (RLC) from point-blank range as the sides headed to the break at 0-0.

Short continued his fine

form in the second period with a stunning save from Army skipper LCpl Rob Farkins (R Signals) before the Reds finally made the breakthrough.

Having survived a strong penalty appeal just minutes earlier the visitors were not so lucky when Glass tiptoed his way to the goal line and was fouled by POET Rob Lakin.

Wilkinson converted from the spot and the soldiers continued to press, with Glass seeing a close-range effort saved by the feet of Short.

However, a single goal proved decisive and the result meant a draw with the Royal Air Force would be enough to win the trophy.

It seemed as though a point was on the cards after a tight opening period but second-half goals from LCpl Ryan Paddock and substitute Sig Luke Noble (both R Signals) saw the Army run out 2-0 winners. ■



Match stats

Army

Shots: 10 On target: 6
Offside: 3 Corners: 5
Goal: Wilkinson (pen)

Royal Navy

Shots: 1 On target: 1
Offside: 4 Corners: 2





Title number six ticked off

Inter-Services women's football

Army 1
Royal Navy 1

Royal Air Force 0
Army 5

A THUMPING 5-0 win over the Royal Air Force secured a sixth straight Inter-Services football crown for the Army women.

Having drawn their opening match the Reds needed to win by two clear goals in the decider but there was little sign of nerves as they raced into a 3-0 lead at the break.

With the job seemingly done they added two further

goals after the interval as the competition ended on a high.

LCpl Rachel Rigby (RLC) bagged a brace, with further strikes from Sig Laura Murray (R Signals) and Cfn Jemma Dinning (REME). The RAF added to their downfall with an own goal.

The mathematical conundrum came about after the soldiers drew 1-1 with the Royal Navy, who had previously beaten the light blues 3-2.

The Senior Service started the Aldershot clash in confident mood – despite the driving afternoon rain.

Striker AB Nadina Green found space inside the area and her shot drew a smart save from home keeper Pte Teri Brown (AMS). With Reds defenders desperately trying to get back the ball dropped to

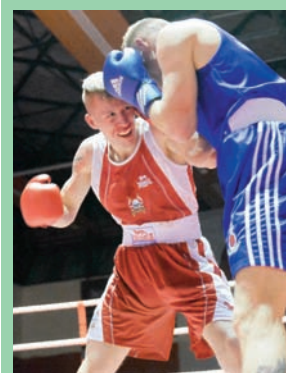
LPT Nat Bavister but she put the rebound wide with the goal at her mercy.

The Army's first real opportunity came in the 25th minute as skipper Cpl Jody Baxter (RLC) found Dinning on the edge of the area but she fired straight at stopper L/H Louise Worsfold.

The hosts were made to pay moments later as MA Susan Badger broke clear on the right and AET Emma Field converted her low cross.

But the Army hit back in spectacular style as Rigby showed neat footwork to cut inside from the left touchline before drilling an unstoppable shot into the top corner.

With conditions deteriorating chances were at a premium in the second half and the match ended all square. ■



LANCERS LEAD CAVALRY CHARGE

» THE Army's top up-and-coming fighters are starting to dream of silverware as the Inter-Unit Boxing Championships move into the semi-final stages.

One team to catch the eye this season has been The Royal Lancers.

The Catterick-based outfit celebrated victory over The Royal Welsh to earn a place in the quarter-finals but their winning run came to an end with a 5-2 defeat to 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment.

"I think this is the first Cavalry regiment to be involved in the competition for around three decades and they deserve a lot of credit," said coach SSgt Tony Davis.

The semi-finals will see 2 R Anglian take on 2 Para, while 1 RRF will lock horns with 7 Regt, RLC in the other tie.

BROWN JOINS THE 100 CLUB



» ARMY football stalwart SSgt Juliette Brown (RLC) celebrated a major milestone on the pitch during the Inter-Services opener against the Royal Navy.

The central defender made her 100th appearance for the women's side in the 1-1 draw following her debut way back in 1997.

In a career featuring many highlights the veteran has skippered both the Army and Combined Services teams; has toured Canada, Holland, the USA and Germany; and met members of the England national squad during a trip to Brazil.

"It is a great achievement," Brown told *SoldierSport*. "When I first started out I never thought I'd be still be playing in a 19th season at the age of 38, running around with a group of 20-year-olds."

"I've got three years left in the Army and I'm sure I'll be playing for a while yet."

Brown said Servicewomen have always shown a keen interest in football but an investment in coaching and facilities has seen the standard improve in recent years.

"We are seeing individuals with real talent and technical ability and they deserve their chance," she added.

Inter-Services
NetballArmy 23
Royal Navy 32Army 33
Royal Air Force 18

A COMPREHENSIVE defeat at the hands of the Royal Navy saw the Army relinquish their grip on the Inter-Services netball crown during a disappointing week at RAF Cosford.

With five successive titles to their name and a new coaching structure in place the Reds were considered firm favourites ahead of the tournament but the Senior Service shattered their hopes of further glory in the opening fixture.

The challengers enjoyed an electrifying early spell and their accuracy in front of goal saw them race into a 5-1 lead before the soldiers steadied the ship to trail 10-9 at the end of a tight first quarter.

Sgt Ellie Nawele spearheaded her side's bid with a succession of well-taken goals but a combination of stray passes and unforced errors saw the Navy maintain their lead.

The third quarter proved decisive as the advantage stretched to 27-20 and

despite a spirited start to the final period there was no coming back and their rivals went on to secure a 32-23 win – their first victory over the Army in 23 years.

The absence of defensive linchpin Pte Fern Davies (RLC) through injury was keenly felt and coach Capt Jo Vann (AAC) conceded the better team won on the day.

She told *SoldierSport*: "We are disappointed with the loss but credit has to go to the Navy for producing a strong performance across the board.

"We made a number of unforced errors but heading into the final quarter we were still in the game. However, they were too strong and deserved to win.

"Expectations are different every year as the squad is always changing. We now have a group of exciting young players who are excellent prospects for the future.

"We will reflect on this but the girls have worked really hard and we cannot fault their effort on the court."

The Army followed the loss with a 33-18 victory over the Royal Air Force. The Navy downed the same opposition to take the overall title.

However, it was not all doom and gloom as the development team won back-to-back matches to triumph in their competition. ■

TOUGH TEST
FOR NEW-LOOK REDS

BACK IN THE BIG TIME



» AS well as offering her expertise as part of the Army coaching set-up, former England international Vann has come out of retirement to star for Team Bath in the national Netball Super League.

The officer returned to action after a five-year absence and with the sport enjoying surging interest levels and increased media coverage she is delighted to be involved once more.

"It is great to be back," Vann told *SoldierSport*. "There is a lot of talent in the squad and we have an exciting coaching team.

"The league is so competitive and there are a lot of international players taking part. The table is looking really tight and the results so far reflect that.

"It is brilliant that female sport is in the spotlight. The quality of the game is outstanding and the level of training, combined with the performances, is pushing towards the standards of professional athletes."



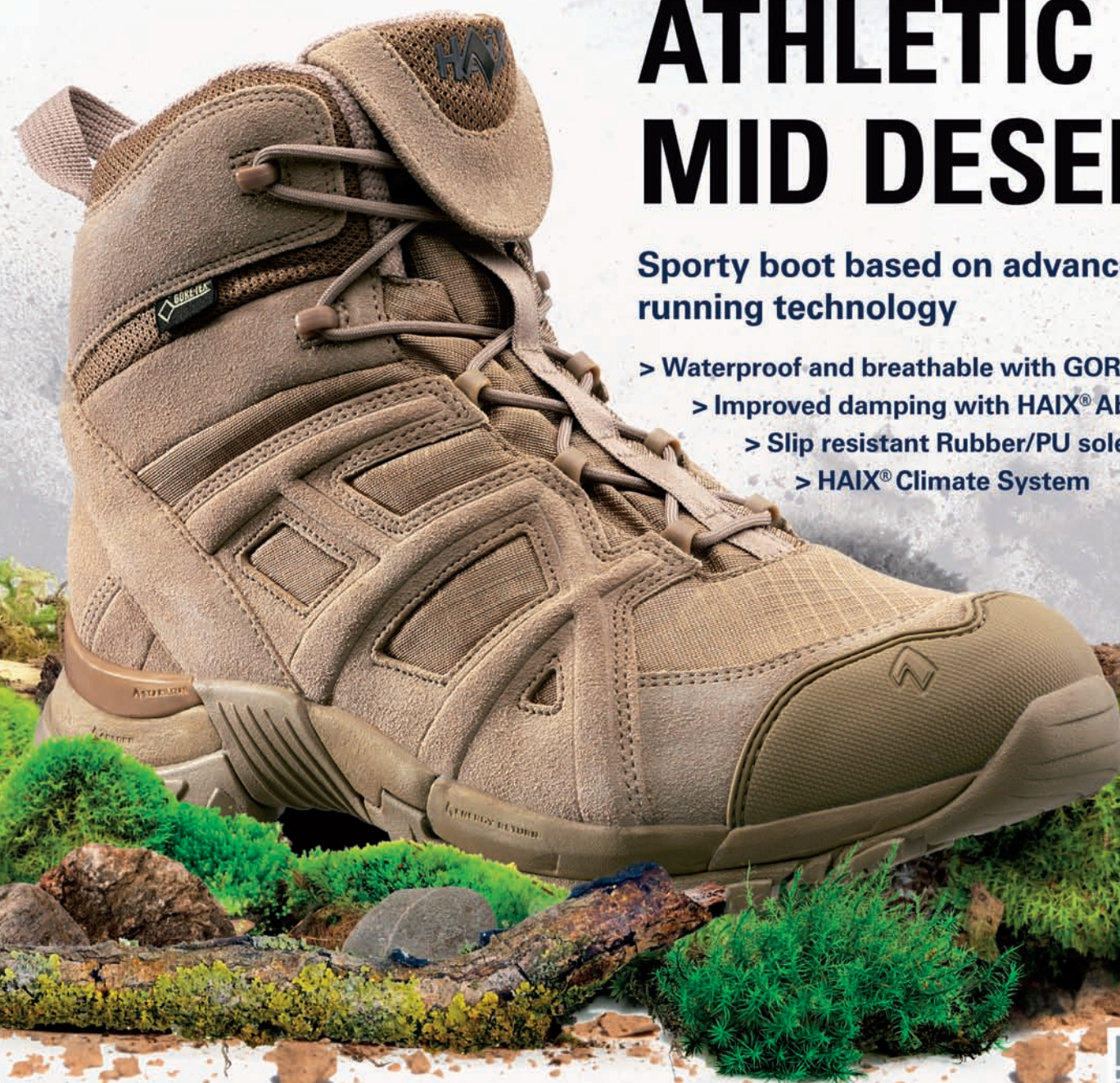
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Reds romp to Services title

Women's Inter-Services Hockey

Army 15
Royal Navy 1

Army 10
Royal Air Force 0

THE Army women hit the goal trail as they mounted an emphatic defence of their Inter-Services hockey crown in Aldershot.

Having dominated the tournament in recent seasons there appeared to be little sign of an upset as the soldiers plundered 25 goals against their Forces rivals to record two comfortable wins.

A tight opening spell against the Royal Navy masked the carnage that was to come as the Reds effortlessly moved

through the gears and surged to a 15-1 victory.

An early strike from skipper WO2 Sharon Stones (REME) started the rout but the Senior Service found parity from a penalty corner.

However, the successful conversion proved to be a rare foray downfield for the visitors as Capt Cheryl Valentine (AMS, pictured above) set about building a lead.

The officer hit a 15-minute hat-trick to put her side firmly in control and further strikes from Sgt Amanda Potgeiter (REME) and Capt Emma Lee-Smith (AAC) saw the defending champions open a 6-1 advantage at the break.

The onslaught continued in the second half as Valentine took her tally to six, while Lee-Smith completed her hat-trick with some clinical finishing from the edge of the D.

A brace from Maj Nic

George (R Signals) and further goals from Stones and Potgeiter completed the win.

"This game gave us the chance to develop some of the things we have been working on in training," Stones told *SoldierSport* at full-time.

"The Navy came at us pretty strong in the first ten minutes but a lot of our girls are now playing regular civvy hockey so we knew we would be okay.

"There were a few people who were experiencing the Inter-Services competition for the first time and they did not look out of place.

"Although we have won well today we have not been complacent. We come into this tournament with the same attitude every season; when you are wearing that Army shirt you want to do well."

The players downed the Royal Air Force 10-0 a day later to retain their title. ■



Soldiers suffer

Men's Inter-Services Hockey

Army 2
Royal Navy 1

Army 1
Royal Air Force 3

» WHILE the women clinched their silverware in style it was a case of so near yet so far for the men's side.

A battling performance on the opening day saw them secure a 2-1 win over defending champions the Navy but they saw their title hopes end with a 3-1 defeat at the hands of eventual victors the RAF.

However, there was better news for the under-25s as they beat the Navy 6-3 and RAF 6-1 to lift the development trophy.





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MONTH in sport

April's key fixtures...



WHAT: Inter-Services Rugby Union – RAF v Army

WHEN: Wednesday, April 6

WHERE: RAF Halton (1500)

COMMENTS: The airmen recorded a major upset as they defeated the Army on their way to winning last season's Inter-Services title. The Reds travel to Halton looking for revenge



WHAT: Combined Services Boxing Championships

WHEN: Wednesday, April 13

WHERE: Combat Sports Centre, Aldershot

COMMENTS: The Army's fighters will be hoping to maintain their focus after the annual Services showdown was postponed last month



WHAT: Inter-Services Table Tennis Championships

WHEN: April 14-15

WHERE: Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre

COMMENTS: A record number of entries at the recent Army Championships highlighted the sport's growth and the soldiers will be hoping for success here



Picture: Cpl Jonathan Lee van Zyl, RLC

MEDALS MOUNT ON THE MAT

THE Army's Brazilian jiu-jitsu team returned from the European Championships in Portugal with a haul of four medals.

A squad of ten soldiers tested themselves among a field of more than 3,500 competitors and Maj Don Macintyre (Int Corps) led the charge by winning gold in the purple belt medium heavyweight class.

The fighter continued his fine form to claim silver in the open weight category.

"To compete internationally for the Army is a big thing and

it feels great to win," he said.

"I did a lot of training for this and sacrificed a lot of family time so it's nice to be successful at the end."

Development officer Maj Shamus Kelly (1 RRF) narrowly missed out on a bronze medal and explained how the Portuguese trip was the first time the Service had competed as a team on the international stage.

He added: "It's almost like we're pioneering and setting a path for others to build on and supersede the achievements we made out there."

"Everyone was really chuffed to be part of the group."

The outfit's next international test will come in August, when the soldiers travel to Las Vegas to compete at the World Masters Championships.

"It is a fantastic opportunity to build on the success that we've achieved at European level," added Kelly.

The Brazilian jiu-jitsu set-up holds weekly sessions at Aldershot's Combat Sports Centre from 1330 every Wednesday. New members are welcome. ■

TAE KWON DO TAKES FLIGHT

ATHLETES from the WTF tae kwon do fold maintained their upward trajectory during a successful training week and grading in Aldershot.

A host of athletes managed to boost their credentials, while soldiers from other martial arts disciplines added to their skill sets.

The sessions came at a busy time for the group, which is due to compete at the Yorkshire Open later this month before linking up with the Team GB squad in May.

"We believe we have some real talent in the team and this a chance for the British coaches to qualify that," said manager Cpl Clive Hunter (REME).

"Our goal is to have at least one of our guys progress to elite-level training. That is the path we are looking to go down."



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CRAVING CONSISTENCY

THE British Army Race Car Team has returned to the track on a mission to maintain their elite position in the ever-expanding Armed Forces challenge.

Staged across four weekends, the event sees military drivers testing their skills at some of the country's most famous circuits and with numbers on the rise this year's grid promises to be more competitive than ever.

But unlike other motorsport disciplines speed is not the key to success as lap-time consistency determines the overall winner.

The system allows a supercharged Mitsubishi

Evo to compete alongside a relatively tranquil Ford Fiesta, meaning the sport is accessible to those who do not have an endless flow of cash to invest in fine-tuning their vehicles.

The soldiers have been the team to beat in recent times and with six newcomers taking to the start line in 2016 the future is bright.

"We have been doing this for four years now but it has been relatively low key," explained spokesman WO2 Gary Vincent-Pink (RLC).

"This is going to be our biggest season yet. We have got lots of sponsors and the sport is getting a real push.

"The biggest stumbling block is the fact that motorsport is expensive to get into. The Army can help with race fees, which can be quite costly, so the major outlay is the car.

"This isn't something you can just have a go at, these are guys who have been interested in racing from a young age.

"A vehicle can be bought relatively cheaply and from that we can build a race car. We need to install things like roll cages, electric cut-off switches and fire extinguishers but that is where our sponsors help out."

The first event of the

season was staged at Donington as this issue went to press but with further rounds at May Croft, Snetterton and Rockingham there is no shortage of action to come.

"This is something that will really appeal to petrol heads," added Vincent-Pink. "Racing at such circuits is something they would not normally do. Lap consistency is what we are looking for but once that flag goes up it is every man for himself – we want to race.

"A lot of track days are done on old airfields so to compete on some of the best-known circuits in the country is such a thrill." ■



Game brief

Date: March 16, 2016

Competition: International friendly

Venue: Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot

Army

Reeves 1	Austin 2	Budgen 3
Llewellyn 4		Bates 5
Lennox 6	Boladau 8	Dawson 7
Farrell 9	Prasad 10	
Wessels 12	Leatham 13	
Sema 11	Wilson 15	Watkins 14

Subs: Banfield, Titchard-Jones, Smith, Laqekoro, Koroiyadi, Evans, Boginisoko, O'Reilly, Simpson, Whittaker

Army tries: Watkins, Austin, Budgen (2), Wessels, penalty try, Llewellyn, Leatham (2)

Conversions: Wilson (4) Farrell (2)



Capt Rob Lennox (Scots)

Captain's comments

“We were on the wrong end of a result like this a few weeks ago so it was great to see the boys come back and put in a performance like that. We are really excited for the Inter-Services campaign. We underestimated the RAF last season but we will not be repeating that mistake this year.”



A new dawn: The Army blooded a number of fresh faces in their commanding victory over the French in Aldershot

Young and old show the way

Friendly fixture

Army 57
French Army 3

THE Army's rugby stars warmed up for this month's Inter-Services campaign with a thumping win against their French rivals.

An exciting blend of youth and experience paved the way for a 57-3 victory and the Reds now look well set for a revenge mission after relinquishing their title to the Royal Air Force last season.

Cpl Chris Budgen (R Welsh), LCpl Gerhard Wessels (RE) and Pte Jack Prasad (Scots) rolled back the years to spearhead the soldiers' assault, while a clutch of academy stars caught the eye as they took a successful step

into the senior fold.

Having seen the French take the lead from an early penalty the hosts seized control as LCpl Scott Watkins (R Signals) touched down in the corner before LBdr Pete Austin (RA) powered home for a converted score.

Budgen added to the tally as the forwards flexed their muscles and Wessels rounded off a superb team move that saw the mercurial Prasad wreak havoc in the French defence.

A penalty try on the stroke of half-time edged the Army further ahead and LSgt Paul Llewellyn (R Welsh) added to the tally when he crashed over from a line-out shortly after the restart.

The tempo then dipped as a succession of French injuries disrupted play before front-row star Budgen brought the game back to life with his

second try of the evening.

Rgr Chris Leatham (R Irish) was the next to prosper as replacement LCpl Maku Koroiyadi (RE) punched a hole in the visitors' lines. With players in quick support the ball was shifted wide and the centre was on hand to score.

And he doubled his tally moments later as a storming run from Gnr Connor O'Reilly (7 Para, RHA) fired the Reds downfield and created the platform for Leatham to profit.

"I'm pleased with the way things are going but there is more to come from this team," head coach Maj Andy Sanger (RE) said afterwards.

"We are finalising the squad for the Inter-Services and I already know 12 or 13 of the starting line-up for that tournament. There are some strong players to come back into the fold so we are in a good position." ■





Life in the big league

NET minder Pte Kyle Tharratt (RLC) is eyeing a career in the professional game having left the Service to pursue his sporting dream.

After walking away from life as a Regular the player joined the Reserves so he could continue representing the Army having established himself in the starting line-up over the past three years.

Tharratt is now waiting for the chance to impress at some of the country's top clubs once the next round of trials comes up.

"I'm training every day on the ice and am also working in the gym," he told *SoldierSport*.

"It is going to be tough though. I've wanted this for a while and once I set my mind on something I will not stop until I get it.

"Competing with the other net minders will be a challenge but I believe I can match them and be even better after a few training sessions."



STARS SHINE IN ICE SHOWDOWN

THE Service's ice hockey players showcased their growing talent pool during a keenly contested Army Championships.

With the Royal Engineers, Royal Logistic Corps, Adjutant General's Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers all in the mix there was no shortage of action but it was a team comprising the best of the rest that eventually took the spoils.

The Army All Stars boast players from corps including the Royal Signals and Infantry and their collective efforts

saw them record a slender 1-0 win over the loggies in the tournament final.

Capt Ross Walker (R Welsh), manager of the Service squad, was keeping a keen eye on proceedings ahead of this summer's Forces showdown and told *SoldierSport* the standard of play has improved dramatically in recent years.

"The sport is developing well," he added. "Most corps are now fielding A and B sides and a lot of our strength comes from guys who have previously played in junior systems in England

and Scotland.

"The Army set-up is probably on a par with the majority of national league outfits; we've played some of those teams in exhibition matches and have done well.

"Standards are improving. The All Stars have 54 guys on their books and can field two teams.

"The AGC have not been here for a couple of years but they're back now.

"So on the whole, things are looking up."

For details on how to get involved in the sport visit www.rlcchiefs.teamapp.com

Paddlers push for honours at Westminster

ARMY canoeists were testing themselves in one of the most punishing events in their sport as this issue went to press.

A total of 32 crews were competing in the annual Devises to Westminster Race – a contest that sees athletes covering a 125-mile stretch of the River Thames in the quickest time possible.

The Service has earned a fearsome reputation following its efforts in recent times and this year's contingent hails from a variety of cap badges.

"They came to the camp as complete

novices and we have helped them progress to competition standard," said team OC Maj Luke Wilson (RE).

"It has gone really well and we have developed some great crews with strong paddlers.

"But no matter how much they prepare it eventually becomes a mental race. When you reach 60 miles and realise you are only half way you just have to keep going.

"We are aiming to be the fastest team in the race but we also want to get all 32 boats to the finish line."





Table scene continues to grow

Army Table Tennis Championships

Men's winner –
Rfn Bibek Karki

Women's winner –
Rev Nicola Frail

A RECORD number of entries took to the floor during a highly competitive Army Table Tennis Championships in Aldershot.

With the standard of play ranging from beginner to national league level, the 42 Servicemen and women involved formed the perfect

showcase for the sport.

Elite performance coach and former England number one Alison Broe was on hand to guide the soldiers through a two-day training programme ahead of the contest, which featured a succession of closely fought matches.

Newcomer Rfn Bibek Karki (1 RGR, pictured) triumphed in the men's final, while Rev Nicola Frail (RACHD) claimed the women's title.

The pairing of LCpl Michael Kwan (REME) and Rfn Abinash Limbu (2 RGR) was victorious in the doubles competition.

The emergence of Karki and teammate Rfn Samir Thapa (1 RGR), who have previously competed at the

Nepalese Championships, has been well received and the duo are expected to feature prominently in the Army squad at the Inter-Services showdown later this month.

Further praise was extended to rising star Capt Daisy Pelton (RE), who was named the tournament's most improved player.

The set-up is actively recruiting female members and novices are welcome to get involved.

f For more details visit the British Army Table Tennis page on Facebook or follow @Army_TTA on Twitter

» **ROWER** Capt Olly Clark (RE) has been celebrating success at sea after winning the pairs class in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge. Competing alongside teammate Dan Parsons, the officer completed the route from the Canary Islands to Antigua in 42 days, 17 hours and 59 minutes. The duo raised more than £80,000 for Prostate Cancer UK and ABF The Soldiers' Charity. "During our darkest times we maintained morale by reading messages from family and friends," said Clark. "We could not have completed this without that support."



SPORT SHORTS



Indoor action

» **THE** Army Indoor Rowing Championships will be held at Prince Phillip Barracks, MoD Lyneham on Wednesday, April 20.

Featuring 2,000- and 5,000-metre races, the event includes heavyweight and lightweight categories for male and female athletes, with adapted races and team challenges also available.

Email armyrowing@googlemail.com

IN NUMBERS

80

personnel competed in the Tri-Service Scottish Ski Championships. Held in the Cairngorms, the event featured snowboarding and Alpine racing and was open to Regulars, Reserves and officer cadets



Waves on the web

» **THE** Army Surfing Union has launched a new website charting all the news, results and upcoming events for the Service sport.

For more details visit www.armysurfing.org



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Final word

Personnel deployed on Op Marmat describe the standout moments of helping Nepal rebuild its communities after the earthquake last April



LCpl Poshan Tamang, QGE

We're using really basic building techniques and different materials, so we've been stone-walling with mud mortar rather than using bricks and cement. It's been challenging, but improvising is what being a combat engineer is about. Building a house was my first project as a task commander. I am very proud to be back in Nepal using my skills for my country when it really needs help.



Cpl Bhesh Gurung, QGE

I deployed in the days after the earthquake and our main task then was providing water and distributing aid in Kathmandu. It's very important for me to come back to the villages and help with the rebuilding phase as the country continues to recover. We've been working hard but we're all very happy to be helping Nepal.



LCpl Samir Thebe, QGE

The work has been challenging because it's so different. Constructing prefabricated buildings and stone houses are not things we've done before and we've had to adapt and learn a lot. It is been great to use our skills as sappers to help Nepal and I plan to come back later in life to see the work we have done in these villages.



Pte Reyamar Robinson, RAMC

It's been very rewarding to come out with the Gurkhas and help the Nepalese people get back on their feet. We went to the opening of a school we built and seeing the look on the children's faces made it all worthwhile. I'm here to provide medical support, but the Gurkhas are very robust and safety conscious so I haven't had any issues to deal with. I've been getting involved with mixing mortar and laying stones on the sites, which has been a steep learning curve.

Cpl Letsa Whyte, RAMC

It's been a great experience to support the Gurkhas. As an environmental health technician, my role is about ensuring the soldiers are fit and healthy to do the job, so I'm looking at disease prevention, food safety, water quality and hygiene. I retrained last year and volunteered for this tour to put my new skills into practice. When I've got free moments I've been pushing wheelbarrows and painting.



Spr Lucan Stuble, RE

The lads have been desperate to come out to Nepal and help their home country after the earthquake. I'm the only non-Gurkha in the troop so working here has given me more understanding of the culture and traditions of the people I'm serving with. It has been hard work and the living conditions are tough but we're thriving.



LCpl Arjun Gurung, QGE

We haven't done any stone-walling before which has been an interesting challenge. The villagers have been working with us to show how they do it and we've adapted our bricklaying skills to use the different materials. As a Gurkha it's really important for us to help Nepal after the earthquake, and the schools we have built are providing something for the next generation.



Spr Santaraj Magar, QGE

It has been particularly rewarding to build schools because when we arrived the children in the villages didn't have buildings to sit down and learn in. Seeing the kids in proper classrooms has meant we can see the tangible difference we've made to help the people here.

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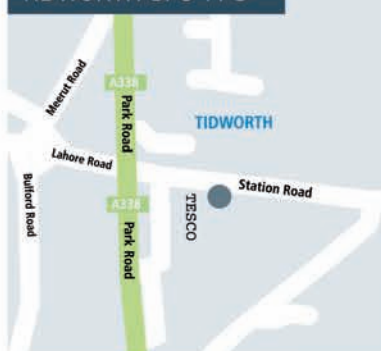
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