

# SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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OF TOMORROW

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**SHADER**  
IN YOUR  
WORDS

“SOCIETY DOESN'T CATER  
FOR **RISK** ANYMORE”

**Ant Middleton** talks  
survival, civvy street  
and missing combat

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MARCH 2017



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Picture: Graeme Main

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England's new breed prove too strong



Picture: Tinyposers.com

“ You shouldn't have to give up a career once you've had a child ”

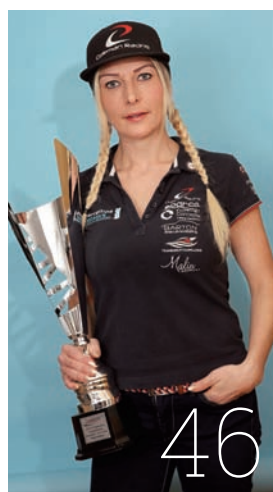
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“  
I wanted to  
get to the  
front, dictate  
the pace, then  
slow it down  
”

## The spice of life...



IF proof were ever needed of how varied – if not uncertain – life in the British Army is in 2017, this

magazine is it.

In addition to some high-octane action on the slopes and pitches, we bring you a warts-and-all look at the Op Shader tasking, the lessons of Copehill Down, a brand new laser weapon and life as a serving mother and carer.

Families' angst over the future of Service housing continues this month, so we quizzed the head of the Armed Forces (page 7).

And read on for vital updates about pensions, compensation and the future of e-blueys.

Add to that some words of wisdom from a famous face, and the usual selection of reviews and colourful *Talkback* letters, and you have yourself another action-packed issue, which we hope reflects what is happening in your world right now. ■

**Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor**

### Where to find *Soldier*

#### > Printed copies

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

#### > Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

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

#### > Online

DIGITAL versions of current and past editions are available on the Army website at [www.soldiermagazine.co.uk](http://www.soldiermagazine.co.uk). Just click on "read it now".

#### > Purchase

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



# YOU CAN'T VOTE.

In the local elections on 4 May 2017.  
**Unless you've registered by the deadline.**

The deadline for registering to vote in England and Wales is 13 April.  
The deadline for Scotland is 17 April.

It only takes a few minutes. Go to [gov.uk/register-to-vote-armed-forces](https://gov.uk/register-to-vote-armed-forces)



**YOUR VOTE MATTERS**

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**Survey results****97%** said good quality is the most important factor**44%** preferred the idea of owning their own home**17%** would choose to live in single living accommodation – a considerably lower number than the 49% who reside there

# No place like home

The results of a potentially life-changing survey are in, but not everyone is convinced there was any point running it...

**T**HE head of the Armed Forces has reassured soldiers that he understands just how critical any changes to their housing would be.

It follows a Ministry of Defence survey distributed to troops last year to gauge how they would feel about a new system that would see Service family accommodation (SFA) scaled right back.

The results (shown above) found that if the new arrangement was introduced, 44 per cent would opt to own their own home while 37 per cent would still prefer SFA.

But with almost half of respondents admitting that they didn't even understand what the future accommodation model is, critics have accused the MoD of a pointless exercise and of skewing the questionnaire in favour of change.

"With that in mind, we question how relevant and reliable the results are," said Army Families Federation Chief Executive Sara Baade.

Airing her views on Facebook, Army wife

Naomi Tagg commented: "It seems as if the MoD will scrap SFA right under everyone's noses by keeping personnel misinformed and only asking their opinions on the future accommodation model not on current provision."

In an interview with *Soldier*, Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chf Mshl Sir Stuart Peach responded to such worry.

"Even I don't know exactly how this model is going to turn out, and I'm responsible for it," he said. "That doesn't undermine the survey."

"We haven't made any decisions yet, but the results show people are very interested in what we're looking at."

"We are trying to do this right, and to offer more choice, and 55 per cent think that is attractive."

A pilot will be run next year to trial some of the MoD's specific ideas.

Focus groups will then be held to get more detail on soldiers' preferences and concerns.

"We are looking at a long transition period; possibly up to ten years," the Forces chief continued.

"It's about saving money, but about retention as well."



## IN A NUTSHELL

### WHAT IS THE FUTURE ACCOMMODATION MODEL?

A new way of housing personnel that aims to reduce Service family accommodation and instead help troops to get on the property ladder or rent privately.

The final plan is yet to be decided by the MoD and will take years to put in place, but the top brass are hoping it will help to make the Army an attractive career for more people as well as saving cash.

Critics are worried that breaking up the military patch could have a disastrous effect on welfare and morale.

## SOLDIER

**Editor** Sarah Goldthorpe  
01252 787096 (mil 94222 7096)  
sgoldthorpe@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Sports Editor** Richard Long  
01252 787098 (94222 7098)  
rlong@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Assistant Editor** Becky Clark  
01252 787099 (94222 7099)  
rclark@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Art Editor** Tudor Morgan  
01252 787100 (94222 7100)  
tmorgan@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Designer** Maddie Marchment  
01252 787101 (94222 7101)  
mmarchment@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Photographer** Graeme Main  
01252 787103 (94222 7103)  
gmain@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Photographer** Steve Dock  
01252 787103 (94222 7103)  
sdock@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Advertising** Heather Shekyls  
01252 787106 (94222 7106)  
advertising@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Subscriptions**  
01252 787107 (94222 7107)  
subs@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Managing Editor** Steven Muncey  
01252 787095 (94222 7095)  
smuncey@soldiermagazine.co.uk



## ARMY

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

**All enquiries:** 01252 787107 (94222 7107)  
**Fax:** 01252 787110 (94222 7110)  
**Email:** news@soldiermagazine.co.uk  
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

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A taste of Army events across the world

# GLOBAL SITREP

## 1. TIERRA DEL FUEGO TRANS-AMERICA TREK



SIX soldiers are taking on a 20,000-mile motorcycle trip along the world's longest road, the Pan-American Highway.

Starting this month, the expedition will see them travel from Tierra del Fuego at the tip of South America to Alaska's Prudhoe Bay via the infamous Darien Gap, a roadless swathe of rainforest between Panama and Colombia.

If successful, the Servicemen will become the first motorcyclists to ride the route in one continuous journey.

Follow the progress of the Trans Americas Expedition on Twitter and Facebook.

## 2. FALKLAND ISLANDS PROJECT PROGRESS

SAPPERS from 32 Engineer Regiment working on a major construction task will start the handover to their successor unit this month.

Project Anemoi is the programme to replace three accommodation blocks and with the superstructure now nearing completion, members of 39 Engineer Regiment will begin fitting out the buildings in the coming weeks.

Maj Saskia Hart (RE), officer commanding Military Construction Force (MCF) 2, said her troops had found their stint on-site challenging but rewarding.



"The MCF has experienced the harsh realities of constructing to a specified time, cost and quality, with all the limitations imposed by the weather and difficult logistics," she commented.

"The benefits to the corps are significant: by the end of the project hundreds of soldiers will have been involved, giving us a spread of individuals who can design, resource and build from first principles."

## Soldiers ski to victory in Meribel

Army shines on Inter-Services stage – page 78



IN NUMBERS:

28-17

Final score after the Army's rugby union stars took on the Russian national side in a match staged in Spain. Find out who came out on top on page 75

## 2. FALKLAND ISLANDS 1. TIERRA DEL FUEGO

## 3. SIERRA LEONE MENTORING MISSION

A TEAM of military medics will deploy to West Africa this month to mentor their counterparts in the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces.

A practical field exercise near the capital Freetown will see 13 personnel help to set-up a 36-bed tented hospital facility like the one on standby to deal with any future Ebola cases.

The three-week serial will see the Brits pass on the latest advice when it comes to dealing with an infection outbreak.

It will be the fourth visit by a short-term training team since the start of the initiative in 2015.



## INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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### 6. PALESTINE ACADEMY FIRST

BRITISH personnel have successfully delivered the first ever Palestinian Officers' Academy course.

Modelled on the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the programme focused on training the next generation of leaders as part of a wider mission to develop security forces in the region.

A second intake of students is expected in September and plans are also in place for a senior NCO cadre and a basic logistics officer course.

### 5. NORWAY ARCTIC AIRMEN

A TEAM of adventurers from the Army Air Corps will embark on a 60-peak challenge in the Arctic Circle this month.

Exercise Arctic Diamond will see 50 soldiers take part in the multi-stage ski touring expedition in northern Norway, which has been designed to mark the corps' 60th anniversary.

A host of ages, ranks and regiments will be represented in the test, with various teams completing different legs along the way.



Picture: Cpl Timothy Jones, RLC

### 4. IRAQ URBAN OP LAUNCHED

BRITISH soldiers training Iraqi forces in counter-IED skills are proving to be "vital" in the fight against Daesh, the MoD has said.

As this issue went to press the department announced that operations to liberate western Mosul from occupation by the jihadist group had begun.

Britain leads the coalition's training programme in the country, and so far UK personnel have helped to equip nearly 40,000 local troops with various military skills needed for the task, which includes disarming booby traps.

"This will be a more complex fight in a densely

populated urban environment," Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said of the operation.

"Britain will continue playing its part by providing precision strikes, vital intelligence and training Iraqi forces to deal with explosive devices."



Civilians flee the fighting in Mosul

Picture: World Press Photo/Sergey Ponomarev

“  
I FEEL  
PROUD  
THAT WE  
HELPED  
”

Op Shader up-close  
— pages 21-23



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Picture: Cpl Paul Jarvis, RLC

# Iraq probe finally shut down

**T**HE Iraq Historical Allegations Team (IHAT) is to be shut down this summer.

The outfit was set up in 2010 to pursue allegations of war crimes by British troops on Operation Telic.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon confirmed the news shortly after human rights lawyer Phil Shiner – who admitted to a string of wrongdoings including paying an agent to find clients – was struck off by the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal. "This will be a relief for our soldiers

who have had allegations hanging over them for too long," commented Mr Fallon.

Not one Serviceman or woman has been prosecuted and IHAT's caseload – once more than 3,000 – will be reduced to around 20 by the time the unit is shut.

The remaining cases will be taken up by the Royal Navy Police.

The MoD has also confirmed that the Royal Military Police is set to dismiss 90 per cent of the 675 abuse allegations from Afghanistan.

“  
This will be a  
relief for our  
soldiers  
”



Picture: Dominic King

■ MEMBERS of 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade tested their ability to move the HQ's location while planning and controlling a battle, for the first time since 2003. Operating from a fleet of 40 or so FV430 Bulldog troop carriers, staff made some nine moves around the Sennelager Training Area during the simulated brigade-scale operation, with the longest transit taking five hours.

## FOR THE KIDS

■ A PROJECT has begun to help Service children get the help they need at school.

The move comes after a survey by the charity Little Troopers found that a family moves six times on average and revealed that one 15-year-old had lived in 12 different homes.

For more on the Little Troopers at School initiative visit [www.littletroopers.net](http://www.littletroopers.net)

## REGULAR RESERVE TRIAL

■ A TRIAL of the Regular Reserve is due to get underway next month to test the capabilities of those who may be called upon in an emergency.

Formed of ex-soldiers and officers who voluntarily left the Army, it can be used to rapidly boost troop numbers if required.

But the last time such a call was made was in 2003 during Op Telic, and the chain of command now wants to understand how best to use this resource and encourage more voluntary participation.

1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards will look to attract around ten volunteers for a two- to three-day trial that will test their military drills and establish the level of skill fade since leaving.

A second, larger trial undertaken by 101 Logistic Brigade will follow in September to decide how to integrate Regular Reservists into formation-level training.

A survey is also being launched this month to find out how to incentivise people to undertake this role in future.

The document will be sent to pre-selected personnel via DII and should take five minutes to complete.

## INFANTRY CHANGES GO ON

■ FURTHER details have emerged on the refined Army structure since our report in the last issue.

In Scotland, 2nd and 3rd Battalions, The Royal Regiment of Scotland will move to a new location by 2032.

The sites have yet to be determined but they will remain in the country.

An as-yet-unnamed infantry battalion will replace 3rd Battalion, The Rifles in Edinburgh after it moves to Catterick in 2021 to be part of a new strike brigade.

And members of 101 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers will move from Wrexham to Bristol to merge with 105 Battalion.

The Household Cavalry Regiment, which is moving to Bulford, is to be replaced in Windsor by 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards.

Read last month's magazine for more details on the changes to the Army's fighting forces.



Struck off: Phil Shiner





## “I would rather have been running around”

– Troops tackle teaching, page 21

### ORIENTEERING CALL

■ THE Army Inter-Unit Orienteering Championships will be held in Thetford, Norfolk, on May 24 and 25.

Coinciding with World Orienteering Day, the event features a variety of classes with a revised format replacing the former major and minor units categories.

For details visit [www.baoc.info](http://www.baoc.info)



Picture: Cpl Georgina Coupe, RLC

### ‘AWESOME’ ADVANCE

■ A TWO-WEEK battle camp in Sennybridge has seen troops firing the full range of weapons they have at their disposal as part of the Army’s airborne rapid reaction force.

“It’s been an awesome exercise, with a lot of ammunition to fire,” said Pte Ben Shaughnessy during Exercise Blazing Steel.

The serial saw personnel from Support Company, 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment practise on the ranges before tackling realistic day and night scenarios.

### WATCH OUT, WALT

■ THE “Walter Mitty” bill proposed by Dartford MP Gareth Johnson has moved another step closer to becoming law.

The document, which aims to stop people wearing medals they have not earned with the intention to deceive, was due to be read in the House of Commons for a third time as this issue went to press.

Read our January issue for a full analysis of the Walter Mitty debate.



Could you survive this?

– page 36

“The once great British military is going down the pan”

Hitting the roof over housing

**TALKBACK**  
PAGE 49



Picture: Graeme Main

## Adventure on the menu

PERSONNEL have been assured that it is business as usual when it comes to planning overseas adventurous training expeditions at unit level.

Recent rumours suggested that trips scheduled for the next financial year could be shelved on the back of a study that looked into the possibility of removing public funding for such activities.

A concerned officer contacted *Soldier* to highlight the issue but Commander Adventurous Training Group (Army), Col Nicholas Richardson, confirmed that normal service will continue.

“Currently there are no plans to cancel adventurous training exercises planned for next year,” he said.



### FACELIFT FOR THE FUTURE

THE National Army Museum will reopen at the end of this month following a three-year, £24 million facelift.

Changes to the site in Royal Hospital Road, London include extra learning spaces and a new cafe, shop and children’s area.

The museum’s main display has also been rearranged into themes rather than running in chronological order.

“We hope personnel see themselves reflected in our new displays,” curator Rebecca Newell told *Soldier*.

“It’s all about connecting civilians with their story and we have packed in as many voices, past and present, as we can.”







# 'Don't be blue over mail', troops told

**T**HEY were a huge source of morale on Operations Telic and Herrick, but the e-blue is set to be scrapped at the end of this month.

The system sees loved ones and friends use a smartphone app to get messages to the front line, which are then printed out for troops to read.

At the height of combat in 2007 it saw some 100,000 messages per month being sent.

But with downloads dwindling to less than 3,000 per month, and the service costing around £1 million per year to run, more cost effective

means of communication are now being investigated.

"The situation has changed," said an Army spokesperson for the British Forces Post Office.

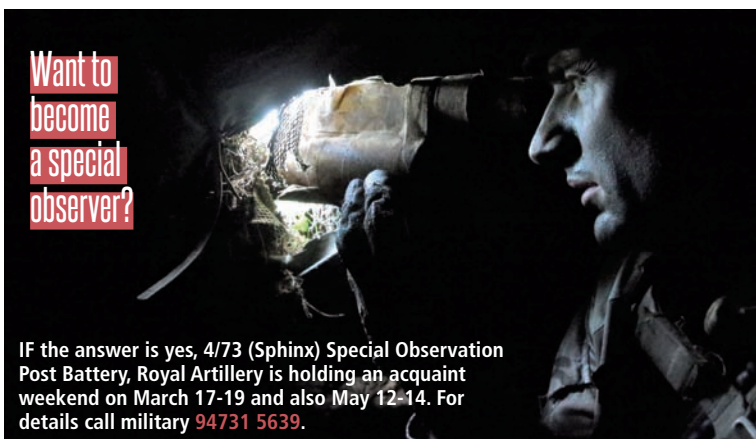
"It wasn't value for money and just wasn't the way forward."

With Skype and other similar technologies favoured by deployed troops, the MoD has reassured personnel that it is investing in "more innovative" ways of keeping in touch with family and friends.

Further details on this are expected over the coming weeks.



“It just wasn't the way forward”



Picture: Steve Dock

IF the answer is yes, 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery, Royal Artillery is holding an acquaint weekend on March 17-19 and also May 12-14. For details call military 94731 5639.



A personal view from Sara Baade, Chief Executive of the Army Families Federation...

## A PRETTY BIG CATCH IN THE PLAN?

**E** DUCATION is the solid foundation upon which a child's future life is built; from employment to socialisation and happiness.

It's something that parents are willing to bend over backwards for.

So it is high on our agenda when looking at the future accommodation model.

If the Army moves away from patch life to a rental allowance, families will have more freedom to choose where to live and the idea is that we will therefore get more freedom to choose schools.

But will the allowance take into consideration the hefty rental prices in catchment areas for "good" institutions?

They can be up to 12 per cent higher in these places.

So will the payment reflect this or will families end up spending more to ensure the best education or, worse still, sending their children to poorly performing schools because that is all they can afford?

Army families are required to move at short notice, so how will they source a property in "good" catchment areas in the short timescales that are so often given?

We have flagged these questions to the MoD.



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Ripon:	04 - 15 Sept	Wimbish:	18 - 29 Sept
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Ripon:	30 Oct - 03 Nov		

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Farnborough:	15 - 19 May	Farnborough:	04 - 08 Dec
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### NEBOSH Certificate in Construction Health and Safety (10-days)

Tidworth:	11 - 21 Apr	Farnborough:	05 - 16 Jun
Chatham:	21 - 25 Aug (Short)	Farnborough:	16 - 27 Oct

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Farnborough:	08 - 12 May	Farnborough:	05 - 09 Jun
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Picture: Cpl Mark Webster, RLC



# Dig deep for your pension

**A**ROUND £320 million-worth of pension payments are going unclaimed by Forces personnel. The shocking figure comes from Veterans UK, which is responsible for distributing the cash.

It has launched a campaign to get troops thinking about their pension before they leave service, and to warn them that they too could miss out if they don't update their JPA records with any change in circumstance.

Tools that can help soldiers plan ahead include the annual pension

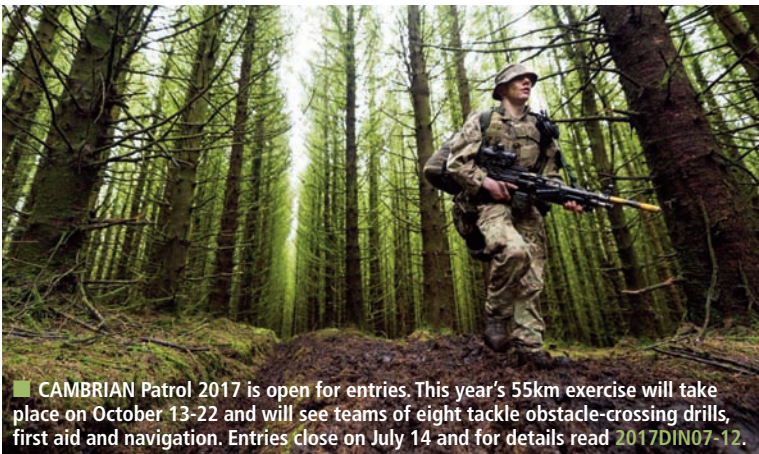
benefit information statement, one free pension forecast per year and the online Armed Forces pension calculator.

"Most people don't think too hard about it if they leave service well before pension age," said Janine Burnett of Veterans UK.

"Some may also expect us to seek them out, even though they're told they need to apply for it at the right stage and they might have moved address several times without updating us."

Call 0800 085 360 for assistance.

“Some may expect us to seek them out”



Picture: Cpl Paul Shaw, RLC

■ CAMBRIAN Patrol 2017 is open for entries. This year's 55km exercise will take place on October 13-22 and will see teams of eight tackle obstacle-crossing drills, first aid and navigation. Entries close on July 14 and for details read [2017DIN07-12](#).



## Infantryman takes up bombsuit challenge

ENDURANCE athlete Sgt Martin Wilson (PWRR) is tackling the Southampton Marathon next month. To add to the challenge, the 38-year-old will run the 26-mile course in a 33kg bomb suit. To make a donation towards his fundraising mission log on to [www.justgiving.com/blind-vets](http://www.justgiving.com/blind-vets)

## Join #TEAMBREYA

A PARATROOPER and his partner are trying to raise £250,000 to get their two-year-old daughter to the USA for potentially lifesaving cancer treatment. Visit [www.gofundme.com/teambreya](http://www.gofundme.com/teambreya) to donate to Sgt Ollie Ward's cause.

## Up for ascent

A SUMMIT of Helvellyn, England's third highest peak, is on the cards for those taking part in Walking With The Wounded's Cumbrian Challenge on May 13. Troops are invited to form teams of four with the aim of raising at least £1,000.

Visit: [www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk](http://www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk)







## “Live for the adrenalin”

– Life lessons, page 46

### FAMILIES: HAVE YOUR SAY

■ SERVICE families are being encouraged to have their say on key issues such as housing and education in the latest families continuous attitude survey.

Selected personnel will be emailed a link to the document, which should be forwarded to their partner for completion. A paper copy will also be available.

Responses will be used to show MoD policy makers where improvements can be made and how families can be supported.

The deadline for replies is May 9.

### BUILDING A FUTURE

■ A NETWORK has been launched to help Service leavers find construction jobs.

BuildForce offers free help with finding work, while assisting the trade with suitably qualified people.

Companies Balfour Beatty and Carillion have already signed up to the programme.

Visit [www.buildforce.org.uk](http://www.buildforce.org.uk)



**Saving a lengthy journey?** The MoD claims the new compensation scheme would speed up legal action for troops

Picture: Sgt Rupert Fiere, RLC

SPINE LINE COMPETITION



WIN

LAST month's spine line clues were inspired by our animal-themed issue.

Antis, Buster, Gander and Tich are all recipients of the PDSA's Dickin Medal, often referred to as the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross.

This month *Soldier* has teamed up with Aquapac ([www.aquapac.net](http://www.aquapac.net)) to offer one lucky reader a bundle of waterproof goodies worth more than £200.

The set includes a duffel bag, a super-rugged heavyweight dry bag and a 100 per cent waterproof smartphone case.

To be in with a chance of winning, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) by March 31.

“This will mean more generous payments”

## Future compensation claims to be kept away from court

A NEW compensation scheme is being created for those injured or killed in the course of combat.

Under the proposals, which have already gone out to consultation, troops would no longer be able to sue the MoD for negligence – even if the problem occurred away from the battlefield such as failure to provide adequate equipment.

Instead, compensation would be awarded by an assessor appointed by the department.

According to the government the new system would mean more handsome payments for those affected, while saving them and their families from lengthy and stressful legal action.

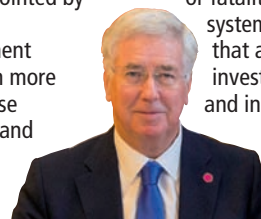
Due to come into force

in 2019, the reforms have been criticised by some who think the MoD is trying to protect itself from negligence claims.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon (pictured) said: “Our Armed Forces put their lives on the line to keep us safe.

“This new scheme will mean more generous payments.”

An MoD spokesman added: “Where there have been serious injuries or fatalities, we have robust systems and processes in place that allow us to record and investigate these accordingly, and in the unfortunate case of a death the requirement for an independent inquest to determine the cause will remain.”



■ EX-SOLDIER Guy Disney made history when he became the first amputee jockey to win at a professional racecourse in Britain. The former Light Dragoons captain, who lost his lower right leg when his vehicle was hit by a grenade in Afghanistan, rode Rathlin Rose to victory in the Royal Artillery Gold Cup at Sandown.



*"I received my tax-free lump sum last week and my first monthly pension payment. I wanted to thank you for your support and diligence to the plight I went through."*



**FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES  
AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Charlie Neve, FPS Member



**Charlie had an issue over recognition of his acting rank. Happily we were able to help him obtain a satisfactory resolution.**

**We deal with hundreds of such enquiries from our Members, helping them through the AFPS pension maze every month. Join us and see how we can help you. Or simply become a Member for the peace of mind of knowing we're here to help you when you need us. You'll be in good company; we have more than 46,000 Members.**

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At the Forces Pension Society, we value our independence. It enables us to serve the interests of our Members as the Armed Forces Pension watchdog. We hold governments of the day to account, arguing for better pensions and campaigning against unfairness in the schemes. For example, our 2015 campaign won the right for **all** widows to retain their pension on remarriage.

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# THE BIG PICTURE

WORLDWIDE

## WHEELS OF FIRE

THE Royal Signals motorbike display team, the White Helmets, is to be disbanded after more than 90 years. Formed in 1927 to showcase the expertise of the corps' dispatch riders, the outfit has travelled the world performing a range of daring stunts, including the famous human pyramid. Visit the team's Facebook page to find out where to catch them in their final season.

Pictures: *Soldier* archive (1946-2013)









ABF

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Image: Ben Rishon & family, Andy Garthwaite and Les Fryatt, Soldiers' Charity beneficiaries





# MILITARY masterclass

Operation Shader, in soldiers' own words...

LCpl Lawson Hadley (Rifles)

**W**HEN this infantryman discovered that he would be helping to combat Daesh in Iraq, delivering classroom lessons probably wasn't the tasking he was hoping for.

But over the last two years, as part of the UK's commitment to assist the Iraqi Army and Kurdish Peshmerga, that has been the responsibility heaped on hundreds of troops

So what's it like to deploy on Op Shader? And what can personnel expect from the deployment?

*Soldier travelled to the home of 1st Battalion, The Rifles in Chepstow to find out...*

## On making a difference. . .

"I HAD only done one course then found myself teaching the Kurdish Peshmerga," recalls LCpl Lawson Hadley, who was attached to the Royal Engineers to deliver counter-IED training in Erbil.

"And we were delivering pretty advanced stuff; a bit more than in Matt 9.

"Everything they learnt from me went straight on to the front line.

"At first I felt the pressure of that, but then you get used to it because you're teaching the lessons over and over, and you get more confident.

"You do feel like you've made a difference, obviously.

"These people had no training whatsoever in the first place, and were constantly talking to us about people they knew who had been killed by IEDs.

"So I do feel proud that we helped them save lives."





"It's obviously not what you signed up for"

Rfn Asa Chant (Rifles)

## → On being a trainer. . .

"IT'S frustrating because we wanted to see some combat; that's what you train for as infantry," admits LCpl Hadley.

"I would rather have been running about firing weapons. It's just not my ball game."

But the Serviceman concedes that the training he received beforehand boosted his own skill set.

"In Afghanistan counter-IED was a big deal, and if we go on any future tours where that is a factor, I would use it to effect," he adds.

## On working with the Iraqis. . .

"IT was mix-and-match," continues LCpl Hadley.

"You would get the ones who would chat when you're trying to teach, and the keen ones who wanted to learn.

"Then there would be some who got up and walked out during the lessons.

"You'd explain to them that we were there to help.

"But you can't go ballistic at them; you don't want to make them hate you.

"There were some that were pretty impressive and came a long way from what they were."

## On being on operations. . .

WHEN not providing force protection, Rfn Asa Chant was delivering lessons in low-level infantry skills alongside several other coalition nations.

"It's obviously not what you signed up for, but it's still doing something important in the real world as opposed to training," he comments.

"And the work wasn't so hard that you couldn't enjoy it.

"Not being on combat operations is more frustrating when you are back home than it is there.

"I don't know if it helped me in any particular sense, but the guys who hadn't been in long seemed more confident when they came back to the UK.

"All experience is good. And the food was alright too."

Rfn Brian Sutherland, who provided force protection for counter-

Rfn Brian Sutherland (Rifles)



"I feel proud to have helped"



30,000

Number of Iraqi troops trained by the 1 Rifles battlegroup during its 18-month commitment





IED packages near Baghdad, praises the pre-deployment training.

"If anything I got more from the PDT than the actual tour," he concedes. "We certainly felt prepared when we went out there."

He adds: "After doing this I would definitely be a lot more open to something similar in future. It was interesting working alongside the Spanish and good to see how a different army tackled the same issue."

"You come back to a nice bit of money too because you haven't spent anything while out there."

"If someone asked me to go again, I think I would."

## On the bigger picture. . .

"FOR me, I thought it was worthwhile," says training sergeant and force protection senior NCO Sjt Matthew Pascoe.

He helped to oversee the delivery of what was essentially a condensed version of the combat infantryman's course to Kurdish Peshmerga troops.

"But as to the output it had, I don't really know," he continues.

"There was this Peshmerga guy, a 52-year-old, who had joined up because his son had been killed. And there he was in 40- or 50-degree Celsius heat, running round with 19-year-old lads."

"But he was passionate because of what he had gone through."

Asked if he can see the advantages of such training, the Serviceman isn't too sure.

"Does what we are doing benefit us? Maybe, maybe not," he says.

"But when we were out there it did occur to me that I could have been training someone who potentially, ten years ago, was shooting at me on Op Telic."

He continues: "You are teaching people our rules but this is a culture that is 'an eye for an eye'."

"You can deliver it and hope they employ it when the time comes, but they are not bound by the same laws."

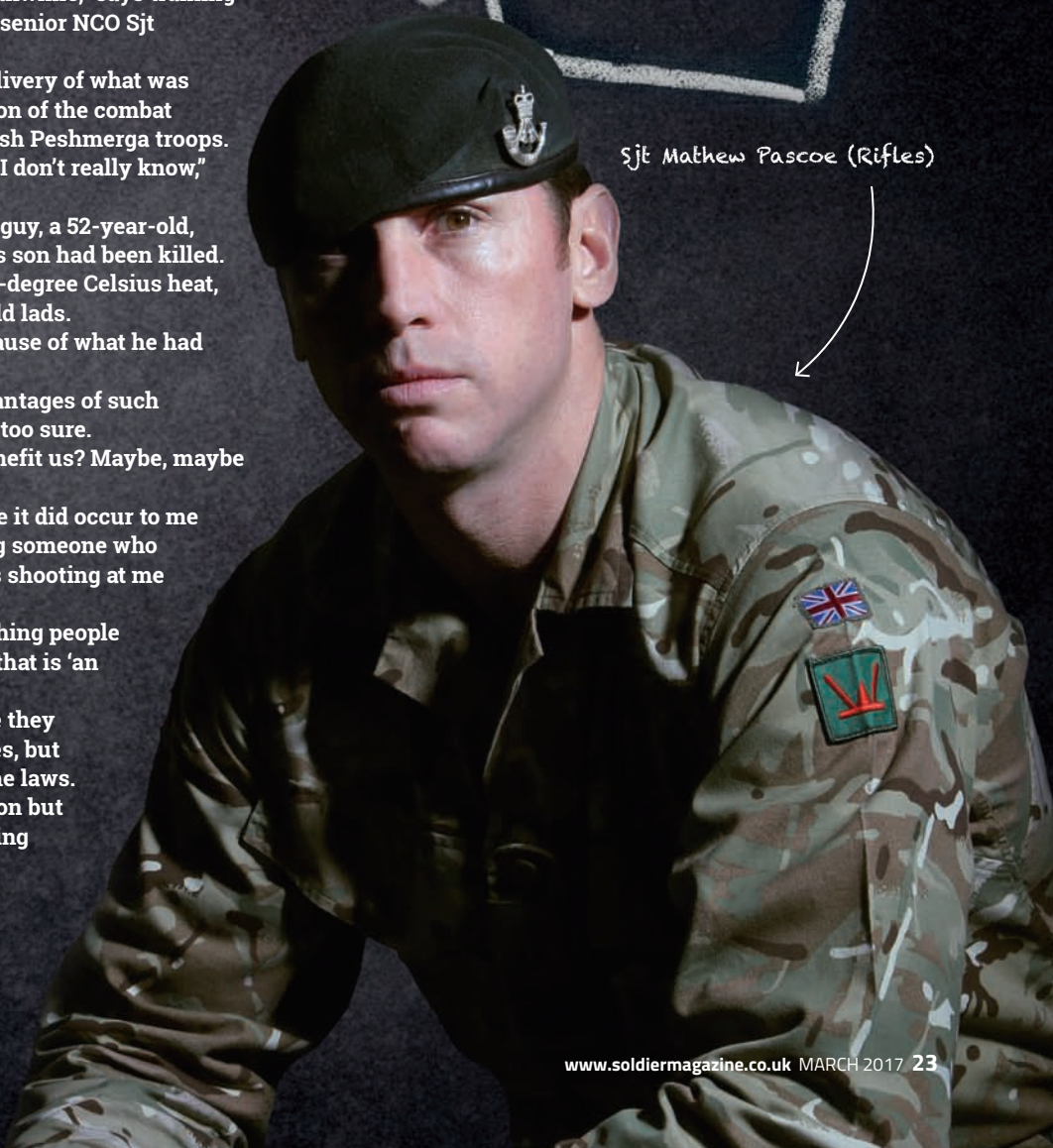
"It felt good passing things on but then you just think, what's going to happen ten years down the line?" ■

IRAQ

## Something we missed?

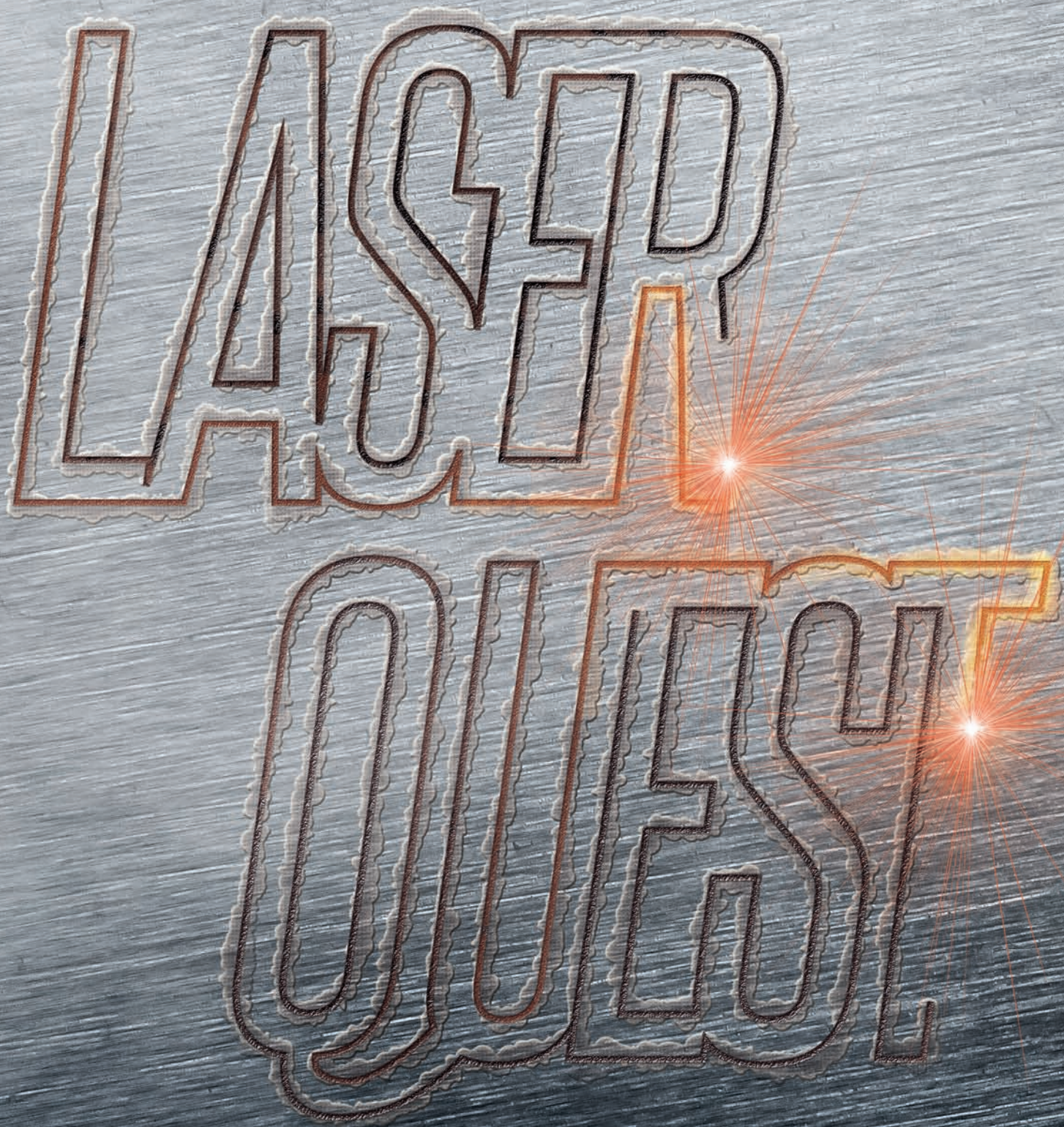
Give us your Op Shader feedback  
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Sjt Mathew Pascoe (Rifles)





# LASER QUEST

The title 'LASER QUEST' is rendered in a large, stylized, outlined font. The letters have a metallic, brushed-metal texture. The word 'LASER' is on the top line and 'QUEST' is on the bottom line. Two bright orange laser beams originate from the right side of the word 'LASER' and the right side of the word 'QUEST', creating a starburst effect. The background is a dark, textured surface with horizontal lines, resembling a metal plate or a wall.

A major new project could result in a revolutionary weapon being deployed before the end of the next decade



**I**T IS virtually impossible to find something mundane to say about the exciting project to develop futuristic laser guns for the British Armed Forces, but try this: Porton Down's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) have calculated that when they eventually produce firepower of this type for the Army, each shot would cost the taxpayer just 60 pence.

That's around £3 less than the price of each bullet fired in Afghanistan.

Dull? Yes. Important? Very.

In fact, it may be this reason above any other why the technology will eventually go into service.

But don't think this is all about making the MoD bean-counters happy; it's mainly about using the Army's resources to match a proliferating threat with an appropriate response.

"The old saying about not needing a sledgehammer to crack a nut comes to mind," says Maj Paul Cooper (Mercian), a military adviser with a PhD in atomic and laser physics who is attached to DSTL.

He is part of the team working with a group of private firms on the UK's laser directed energy weapon programme, called Dragonfire.

"One major application of this technology would be to counter the deployment of cheap unmanned aerial systems," he continues.

"We have already seen them being used widely in Syria and Ukraine.

"They are cheap, easy to get hold of and at the moment we have to ask ourselves what is the most efficient way of stopping them.

"Do we fire our very expensive missiles at them when the insurgents can simply go out and buy replacements for a hundred quid or so on the internet?"

Laser weaponry isn't entirely new to the military. A dazzle capability was reportedly deployed by the Royal Navy in the South Atlantic during the Falklands War, but it was never used.

The US Navy, meanwhile, fielded a basic laser gun for testing on-board *USS Ponce* during a deployment to the Arabian Gulf in 2014.

“  
This  
technology  
could counter  
unmanned  
aerial systems  
”

But if this latest project is deemed successful the first of a new generation of much more versatile and capable laser armaments could come into service with the British Army in the mid-2020s.

The weapon itself will probably look more like something shipped out of a white goods warehouse than the product of a film studio.

It won't be a Stormtrooper-style handheld gun but will likely resemble a large kitchen freezer mounted on a vehicle, or statically on an A-frame.

When it's fired you won't see a streak of red light coursing through the sky either because the beam is invisible to the naked eye.

However, there will be some similarities to the *Star Wars*-esque firepower we associate with lasers.

For instance, it will be able to cut through the metal skin of an aircraft, drone, ship or armoured vehicle and detonate fuels tanks or any arms behind it in the blink of an eye. And there'll be no need to reload the weapon when facing multiple targets.

The system's battlefield potential is undoubtedly huge but the Dragonfire team have a lot of work ahead of them to create a viable military tool.

"The output is important – a greater number of kilowatts and a high quality beam means a faster defeat time, a greater range and more heavily armoured targets can be overcome," the project's director at DSTL, Peter Cooper, tells *Soldier*.

"But there is a trade-off because generating more power takes a lot of complex equipment and that brings in other issues like logistics and cooling.

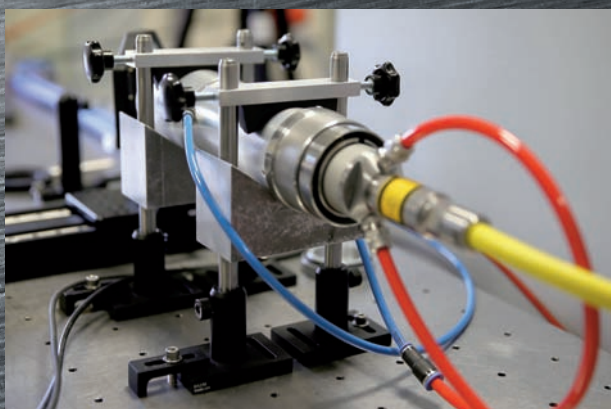
"If you need a massive truck, or maybe even two of them, to transport and cool it, that







- ◀ The Dragonfire project's test laser demonstrates cutting through a section of aircraft-grade aluminium
- ◀ The laser itself is delivered down an optical fibre, which is the thick yellow cable below
- ✓ Damage sustained to the metal casing of mortar rounds by the test laser



presents implications for its deployability.

"If you want to mount a version on a Warrior or Ajax vehicle it will have to be light and compact enough to enable cross-country mobility; it's got to be able to keep up.

"Anything so big and heavy it has to stick to tracks won't be as much use, so we are looking at what the Army wants in terms of agility and range."

The team has an ambition to produce a working demonstrator by 2019 and develop a concept for a highly sophisticated computerised track-and-lock system that allows the laser to neutralise various targets, including high velocity missiles, rockets and mortar rounds in mid-air, as well as slower moving larger objects, in different weather conditions.

"It should be technically possible because all you are doing is controlling the movements of the laser's set of mirrors and just a few small adjustments to these can send the beam right across the sky," explains Maj Cooper.

"It's a question of tying the various systems together to make it work."

Not only would such a weapon provide a cost-effective

option for destroying relatively cheap enemy ordnance but a relatively safe one, too – especially in the urban environment, which many forecasters say is the battleground of the future.

"At the moment we could use the Gatling gun-like Phalanx to shoot UAVs, rockets and mortars out of the air," adds the officer.

"But you might shower lots of hot lead on an area with a civilian population, and that's not good.

"In this situation the laser would be a great option but it won't be the answer to everything; it will merely be part of our weaponry and have certain advantages.

"It's a bit like a few years ago, when people were talking about attack helicopters replacing tanks and saying we wouldn't need anything else, but we have since realised that while those platforms are very useful they can't do everything.

"In another ten years or so I'm confident we'll be in a position to equip ourselves with lasers if we want them.

"For now, it's a question of exploring the technology itself and the capabilities it potentially has." ■



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# FIGHTING TALK

Servicewoman and Chelsea Pensioner go head-to-head in debate on females and front-line combat

**W**HEN the government announced that women will be free to serve in all ground close combat roles by the end of 2018, it created some lively discussions both inside and outside the military community. But it is not a change that everyone agrees with. *Soldier* paid a visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea to find out how one of its iconic residents Marjorie Cole views the overhaul. Accompanying us was serving soldier LCpl Holly Innes (REME), who is 50 years her junior. Needless to say, there was plenty to keep the pair chatting...



**Name:** Marjorie Cole (ex-WRAC)

**Age:** 72

**About:** The former staff sergeant served from 1961 to 1977, ending her career at the Army School of Catering. She has been living at the Royal Hospital Chelsea since 2009





**Name:** LCpl Holly Innes (REME)

**Age:** 22

**About:** A soldier since 2014, the Tidworth-based Servicewoman serves with 5 Force Support Battalion, REME

**Soldier:** Given the notable changes that female soldiers have faced in their careers over recent decades, we thought it would be good to get two generations together to give us their thoughts. Tell us how you both came to serve, and what you think about the plan for women to fight on the front line...

**Cole:** I wanted to do something different, rather than stay at home and get married at 16 or 17, so I joined the Army in 1961. I started off working in the bedding stores and ended up teaching at the Army School of Catering. Independence was the main thing that I took from my service.

**Innes:** That's why I did it as well – to get away from it all. I've been in the Army since 2014. A lot has changed over the years but I think the reasons that people join have stayed the same.

**Cole:** Oh yes, there's a lot more that you can do now as a woman. Of course, we couldn't go on the front

line. It was also a lot stricter back then and if a lady got pregnant they were sent out straight away and weren't allowed to serve. I don't like the idea of a wife with children going on to the front line, though, because if something bad was to happen, the child needs their mother. I know they need their father too, but the child needs their mother more.

**Innes:** Personally, I believe it's a natural instinct for men to look after women. If a woman goes down on the front line it might put people off doing their jobs. I also question whether women are strong enough. However, I do think it should be down to personal choice and if a woman is up for the job and she can pass all the tests that she needs to then I think the option should be there. The Army shouldn't make it easier for girls to do it – the levels should be the same for everyone, at a high standard.



“ I think women are more reluctant to put themselves forward ”





→ **Cole:** They've already had women at the front with the medics and they do a brilliant job. I think it's right that there is equality in that the choice is there but as long as it's only an option. I remember I came back from one tour and I was told that I was off to Northern Ireland and I said I didn't want to

go, but there was no choice. You shouldn't be forced to do anything. I've seen a lot of changes over the years and the dress is a big one. Now you see the women in combat kit most of the time, whereas for us we would've been in a skirt. Also the language is different; we weren't allowed to swear in my day.

**Innes:** I trained at Pirbright where we were shouted and sworn at and run ragged, but it's just to see who is mentally up for it. It's a military thing to break you down to build you up. It's all just a game really and everyone knows it but it still breaks some people, which I don't really understand.

**Cole:** I remember my training, we lived in wooden huts with 20 of us in them. Four bathrooms for everyone. I loved it. Gradually the accommodation changed.

**Innes:** In basic training for us it was 12 to a room.

**Cole:** That hasn't changed much then! I left school at 15 and I wanted to join the Royal Air Force but I didn't pass the test, so I thought I'd try the Army. My father said "you won't last six weeks" so I thought "don't dare me". I wanted to show him, and I did. Mostly I joined to get away from my father's strictness. I went from one strictness to another.

**Innes:** My mum was in the Army and I wanted to join when I was 16 but she wouldn't sign the

papers. After college I still wanted to sign up, so I did. I wanted the freedom, away from home. I just thought the Army offered a different kind of life. You've got the family at home but another family at work and I love the social side of it. You get to see a fair bit of the world as well.



**Cole:** I was in Singapore from 1965-67, helping to run the junior and senior ranks kitchen, working with all kinds of different nationalities and chefs – it was great. The Army has to be fed and those jobs are very important. I went back in 1969 until the British Forces came home. It was fantastic, it really was. If it hadn't been for the Army I would have probably stayed working at Auntie Betty's bakery in Hull.

**Innes:** I have ambitions too, I want to get a degree in electrical engineering but I take each day as it comes. I put my name down for everything and travel.

**Cole:** I think in time the Army will have women doing every job, although I may not be around to see that!

**Innes:** Women think differently to men. Men are more direct while women take a step back and take a moment to assess things before going straight in. In my battalion of about 300 personnel only five or six are females but you can see the different approaches that they have.

**Cole:** That's like me here. When I first came there were only three women and a few men who didn't like that. I used to say "we've done the same job". That's changed now and there are 13 of us. I do exactly as the men do; I don't want to be treated any differently. It's not about being a man or a woman – you're proud to be a Chelsea Pensioner. If there's a job to be done I would always give it a go. I've a feeling deep down in myself that I can do it.

**Innes:** I think women are a bit more reluctant to put themselves forward when blokes would probably put up their hands.

**Cole:** I would agree with that. Women want to know that they can do the job perfectly.

**Innes:** I would rather know that I could do a job well than just try my luck. When it comes to combat situations on the front line, if girls want to do the job then they will do it properly, 100 per cent.

**Cole:** When the Falklands War was on I was a civvy but I sat at home wanting to do something. I felt that I wanted get out there, even if



“ I don't want to be treated any differently ”



# FIGHTING TALK



**Soldier to soldier:** Former staff sergeant Marjorie Cole and LCpl Holly Innes (REME) at the Royal Hospital Chelsea

it was as a nurse or a cook. If it was combat I think I could do that too. Regardless of whether you are a male or female, I think it's about whether you are a military-type person. You either want to be a soldier or you don't, gender doesn't really come into that.



**Innes:** Absolutely, I would jump at the opportunity to get on operations. It's ingrained in you if you want to be in the Forces. Everyone has the same mindset, it doesn't matter if you're male or female – you're part of the Army. I would like to go on tour but I know that I won't be going to the front. I'd never be going on a patrol because my battalion is further back with the equipment. I fix the Bowman radios so that people have communications and I do appreciate that while my work can be dry at times it is vitally important.

**Cole:** When I was in we didn't have telephones, mobiles or anything like what you have now. We were still driving ambulances

with horses! But I suppose when I was a young soldier the older generation were saying similar things. In 40 years from now wars could be fought from desks. Gender certainly won't come into it then.

**Innes:** Looking ahead, I think we need to keep high standards. Sometimes I look at soldiers – men and women – and think "how are you serving?" because they're never on PT and constantly being medically downgraded. We need people who are active otherwise it's a waste of money. It's a fact that there is inequality in all areas of life and so far it has mainly been a man's Army but that is changing. There are a few people who don't like that. Sometimes there can be a perception that you might get bullied if you are a woman but the Army just runs on banter. In our office if someone thinks a joke has gone too far then they speak up and the other person apologises and that works well. Some

people may not know where to draw the line and people sometimes don't speak up, which makes things worse.

**Cole:** Here at the Royal Hospital Chelsea we don't have a drill sergeant, but perhaps we could do with a woman in charge!

## JOIN THE DEBATE

Got an idea for a discussion between a serving soldier and a veteran? Contact the *Soldier* team via [news@soldiarmagazine.co.uk](mailto:news@soldiarmagazine.co.uk)





# PERFECT STORM

Welsh Guards use annual serial to prepare for new roles

**F**OR the Welsh Guards there was an extra edge to training on this year's Exercise Wessex Storm.

They were using the package on Salisbury Plain to confirm that they are up to the job of leading a battlegroup.

But not just any old one; this regiment is part of the Joint Expeditionary Force and 11th Infantry Brigade which has just become the British Army's designated vanguard formation for 2017.

That means the battalion is required to be ready to deploy anywhere in the world at ten days' notice.

But these aren't the only exciting operational hats they'll be wearing this year.

"We're entering a really exciting period," said Lt Col Dai Bevan (WG), commanding officer of the battalion.

"We are also on standby for Nato's so-called Initial Follow-on Forces Group, which deploys quickly during a crisis to support the alliance's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.

"Then, in the summer, we are set to take part in Operation Temperer, to bolster the police force in countering the threat of terrorist attacks in the UK.

"At the same time we're penciled-in as the nation's resilience battalion, so we might be involved in flood relief efforts or whatever else comes our way over the autumn."

If that wasn't enough, towards the end of 2017 the Welsh Guards will also start to ramp up training for a rotation of Operation Toral.

This is Nato's support mission in Afghanistan to provide security for the country's armed forces and government.

"We're all really excited by that because this will be the first operational tour for around 60 per cent of the battalion and that's a real pull; it's fantastic for retention and recruiting,"

explained the officer.

"It provides a real opportunity for fulfilling the reasons why the men joined the Army in the first place, to make a difference and be a force for good."

With such a busy and varied year ahead of them, the Welsh Guards, along with supporting personnel from 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, 104 Regiment, Royal Artillery, 21 Engineer Regiment and 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, plus Reservists from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Welsh, used Wessex Storm to test their adaptability and flexibility to the full.

The exercise presented its 600 participants with an "enemy" that had aggressive ambitions and had crossed the border of a neighbouring country.

The battlegroup dug trenches around the mock village of Copehill Down to create a defensive line and sent out reconnaissance units before engaging with the opposition.

However, the settlement contained locals who sympathised with the aggressive neighbour and were prepared to subvert the British Army's presence.

So it was the soldiers' job to not only counter the invading army but win the hearts and minds of the locals – played by actors – and neutralise any threats on their doorstep.

For Capt James Marsden (WG), a veteran of Herrick 16, the value of this particular serial was immense.

"In Afghanistan we would have done a lot of this sort of training but now it's much rarer," he said.

"The majority of our personnel joined the Army after operations so we have to build a lot more of this into our preparations now because we need to be ready to deploy anywhere and for any task."

→ Fus Tristan Jones (R Welsh) during Exercise Wessex Storm





“This has  
been a real  
eye-opener”





"In Afghanistan I really enjoyed this sort of work, gauging the atmospherics, because it's amazing how quickly a situation can change and what you can pick up on; it might be the way people are looking at you or how much noise or chat is in the air.

"If you've been in a village for a period you get to know the regular routines and mood – if you feel yourself twitch then chances are there's a good reason for it."

He continued: "It's hard to replicate that here but the threat of snipers is present and the troops must patrol the streets and communicate with locals.

"The actors create markers – an individual will act suspiciously in some way – and it's our troops' job to pick that up."

For many personnel, it was the first time they'd ever faced such a complex set of challenges, whether on operations or during an exercise.

"I've only been a Reservist for a year but the training value here has been superb," commented Fus William Anderson (R Welsh).

"The package has been intense and demanding – as Reservists we are expected to perform as well as the Regulars – but this has been a real eye-opener."

Working as a battlegroup on such a scale proved to be revealing, even to more experienced personnel.

"We've done exercises approaching this size in Kenya before and we always get a lot out of them at company level," explained LSgt Peter Small (WG).

"But this serial is the first time in a long time our unit has had the chance to do battle drills along with building clearance tasks.

"We've used Copehill Down and a brilliant new facility on the Plain called New Zealand Farm, which has some buildings that are blacked out, while others have rat runs or ladders; it presents a variety of scenarios and it was really good for the lads to test themselves there."

The junior NCO also believes the chance to exploit the unit's mainstay vehicle, the Foxhound, has been invaluable and not just because of the important year ahead.

"We're still getting used to them because we only converted to a light mechanised infantry role in 2015 and this is the first time we've had the chance to test them in a battlegroup capacity," he added.

"We're still developing our methods; in the past they were employed like taxis, dropping off troops at the forming-up point.

"They're quick over ground but we're



finding out their limits – they can get stuck in the sort of heavy ground we have here, for example – so we're still working out how to get the best use out of them in our role.

"We're also getting a chance to put some work into the administration side of things in the back.

"It's quite cramped in there for six men with all their kit."

Overcoming a few challenges with the equipment doesn't seem to have dampened anyone's enthusiasm, though.

Most said they were buoyed by their new footing, especially as that requires a high tempo of training and will involve some foreign travel.

"The general mood is good; the boys are happy to be busy and because we are at high readiness we have a fair few exercises coming up that look really exciting," commented Gdsm Alex Bilkey (WG, pictured right).

"My company is going to Arizona at the end of the year to take part in Exercise Rattlesnake.

"We're also going to Romania in the summer and some training in Belize is on the cards. Then, going into 2018 we are off to Afghanistan.

→ **Dragon's Den:** The Welsh Guards took advantage of the facilities at Copehill Down to undertake various tasks, from trench warfare to urban clearance and winning hearts and minds





“Everybody’s  
keen to  
get going”



“It might not be the punchiest of tours from what I’ve heard, but for most of us it will be our first proper overseas operation so, personally, I’m really hoping that it stays in the pipeline.”

“I think a lot of our former personnel who’d been on Herrick tours and have now signed off would have stayed on for another one had they known it was coming up.

“I’m certainly looking forward to it and I’m glad I joined up because I have the chance to see Afghanistan for myself.

“Everybody’s really keen to get going.” ■



## CUTTING-EDGE COMPLEX

NEW Zealand Farm is now a cutting-edge facility thanks to the single biggest investment in a training camp on Salisbury Plain since Copehill Down village in the late 1980s.

The site itself has been in use since the Second World War but a £2.5 million injection last year saw it transformed to meet modern requirements.

Crucially, it now provides the flexibility to enable a variety of exercise scenarios to be staged there.

The 12 buildings that had stood on the site were demolished and replaced with 11 multi-functional structures that can be used as a forward operating base, a terrorist or refugee camp, a non-governmental organisation base or to create a complex manoeuvre environment that can be customised to meet a unit’s particular training needs.

The surrounding infrastructure was also improved, with tracks and hardstandings upgraded to support Challenger 2s, Warrior vehicles and the new Ajax fleet.

Street lighting and a new public address system have also been introduced along with a field electrical power supply generator.





# READY FOR

Fresh from their 1,100-mile trek across Antarctica, the Spear 17 team offer ten





# THIS?

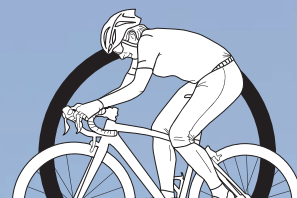
top tips for surviving the polar wilderness



## 1. SELECT THE BEST TEAM



Polar journeys are not for everyone and choosing the right people can prevent a lot of problems on the ice. Most important is character. The harsh environment and constant proximity can cause great stress to relationships. People who are easy going, flexible and willing to help others before themselves are crucial.



## 2. PHYS PHYS PHYS

Think about this immediately. The emphasis will be on the legs, core and back. Pulk-hauling is based on Nordic skiing technique but irregular terrain and weight will affect even the best skiers. Preparation training requires both endurance and strength work. With long sessions of tyre-hauling or cycling, verses heavy gym work of deadlifts and squats, it takes time and effort to build up your fitness.



Picture: Spear 17



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Official fuel consumption figures for the Range Rover Evoque Fuel economy figures in mpg (Coupé/five-door) Combined: 68.8/65.6 - 36.2/36.2 Combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions g/km: 181 - 109. Drive responsibly on and off-road.

The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation. 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 and only available to full time members of HM Forces and Ex full time Serving members qualify up to 5 years from date of termination, aged 18 and over resident in Mainland UK and N.Ireland. Indemnities may be required. This finance offer is available from Black Horse Limited trading as Jaguar Land Rover Financial Services, St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff, CF10 5BH. This offer is available on new Jaguar and Land Rover models at Marshall Military Sales only. Military on the road price includes: Tax Free for Export - Government First Registration Fee. Tax Paid for UK Government - First Registration Fee, 12 Months Vehicle Excise Duty and 20% VAT. Representative Example is based upon an annual mileage of 9,000 miles. Representative example is for the Range Rover Evoque Diesel 2.0 eD4 SE Tech 5 door 2WD. Prices and savings correct at time of going to press.







### 3. THINK NUTRITION

When you're expending up to 10,000 calories per day, the right nutrition is vital. There are many opinions about what is required on polar expeditions and there remains no definitive answer on what exactly is right. The exact requirement will depend on the mission and individual, but as a guide 6,000 calories a day should maintain the body for a prolonged period. Trial things and pick food that you will enjoy. There is no point carrying food you aren't going to eat.



### 8. HAVE PATIENCE

Nothing will ever go just as planned so every team member must be prepared to be delayed. From flights to hold-ups caused by severe weather or equipment breakages, your patience will be tested. Antarctica will continually push even the most tolerant person to their tipping point. Stress builds because any delay means less time to complete the expedition.



### 4. PACK THE RIGHT KIT

**Take equipment that you're familiar with and have tested on training expeditions. It's no use finding out your jacket isn't windproof, or your comms equipment can't survive low temperatures, when you're out on the Polar Plateau. Talk to people who have been before, find out what worked for them.**



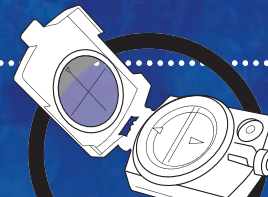
### 6. BE ADAPTABLE

Whether choosing a route through challenging terrain or fixing broken equipment, unexpected challenges will always crop up and it's important not to get frustrated by them and approach them with a clear and logical mindset.



### 9. TAKE SPARES

**Inevitably, over days or months, things will break. Make sure you have enough spare equipment to repair or improvise. Expect to spend some of your evening tent routine sewing, fixing or mending.**



### 5. NAVIGATE ACCURATELY

Walking a straight line on a bearing is tricky without any visual landmarks and it's even harder in a whiteout. When you have more than 1,000 miles to walk, meandering across Antarctica is not an option. Although crevasses and mountains will force you off the direct path, there are great expanses of whiteness that are best covered in as straight a line as possible. In a whiteout you have no choice but to keep your head to the compass.



### 7. REMEMBER ROBUSTNESS

**Over such a long and arduous trip it's very likely you will acquire various wear-and-tear injuries – everything from blisters to frostbite, tendonitis to minor infections. These may be painful but you can't allow them to become a hindrance. Push discomfort to the back of your mind. However, operating in the extreme cold also means being aware of your body and knowing what injuries will jeopardise the expedition if left to get worse.**



### 10. MIND YOUR ADMIN

A key part of our success came from having a structured routine that kept the team working to the same schedule. There were distinct phases to each day, beginning with the morning tent routine where the team would wake at 0700 and have two hours to melt snow for breakfast and drinking water while preparing clothing and equipment. With separate tents it is important to be ready to start at the same time so nobody is left waiting in the cold.

» Embarking on a cold-weather mission? Tell *Soldier* [news@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:news@soldiermagazine.co.uk) [@Soldiermagazine](https://twitter.com/Soldiermagazine)





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# IT'S PEOPLE'S WAY OF REBELLING

Elite operator-  
turned-TV star talks  
to *Soldier* about  
missing combat,  
civvy street and  
the rise of extreme  
reality shows →





**You've been out of the military for six years now, what do you miss most?**

The combat side of life. Everyone says you miss the lads and the banter, and you do, but I miss Afghanistan too. Don't get me wrong, it was scary. But whether it was the camaraderie, teamwork, excitement or adrenalin, I used to enjoy what I did. And I liked the person I was when I had my mates beside me and we were getting into the action.

**Was becoming an elite soldier always your aim?**

No, I never thought that was in my remit at all when I was younger. I got quite disheartened because I wasn't too good with weight on my back. I was skinny so I was a good runner, but I didn't really bulk out until I was about 25. I could have listened to the people who were telling me to choose a different path but I stuck with it. It's all a psychological battle. I say to any young soldier now, "listen, don't think you're going to be able to come off civvy street and put this mountain on your back, it doesn't work like that". You have to train your body and you have to train your mind.

**Why did you decide to get out?**

I've had a very privileged and exciting military career. I had done all the years of training and implemented it on tier one operations and it doesn't get any better than that. I didn't want to go back into a training role and I didn't want to find myself in an office job as I went up the ranks. I was young and fresh enough to make another career in civvy street.

**How did the TV gig come about?**

It kind of fell into my lap. I'd done some survival courses for the corporate world and my number got passed to Channel 4, who wanted to do a Special Forces selection process for civilians. There had been similar shows before – all we did was bring a fresher feel to it. It had to be authentic because we were putting our credibility on the line. I didn't realise how successful it would be. Some of the individuals who took part totally changed their mindset and turned their lives around. They didn't know they could push themselves that far and are out there smashing it now.

**NAME:** Ant Middleton

**AGE:** 36

**MILITARY CAREER:**

Served for four years in the Royal Engineers and later in the Royal Marines and Special Forces. Completed operational tours of Northern Ireland and Macedonia, as well as deploying to Afghanistan three times.

**PROFILE:** Co-host of Channel 4's *SAS: Who Dares Wins* and frontman of new six-part series *Mutiny*.







Ant Middleton's new show *Mutiny* starts March 6 on Channel 4

# “PSYCHOLOGICALLY IT WAS THE HARDEST THING I’VE EVER DONE”

## Tell us about the new show.

We’ve re-enacted the journey taken by Captain William Bligh after the mutiny on the *Bounty* in 1789. He and his crew were left for dead but to everyone’s surprise they turned up 46 days later at a trading post. We tried to stay as true to the story as possible. We sailed 4,000 miles from Tonga to Timor, island-hopping along the way in a 23ft open wooden boat. We had just under 400 calories of ship’s biscuit and biltong a day and just under a litre of water each a day.

## Sounds horrendous...

It was. Psychologically it was the hardest thing I’ve ever done. We were in a bad way. I lost 21 kilograms; one guy lost 25. I was playing Bligh so I had to keep the discipline and the structure. As a leader you can never have a bad day. Even though sometimes I wanted to head-butt the mast, I couldn’t let the blokes see me like that. I was confident I could get them through it, though. It’s amazing what you get out of going through extreme hardship. At the time they hated it but I was like, “relax, you’ve got this”.

## Survival shows seem to be having a bit of a moment. Why do you think that is?

People write the modern generation off but I wanted to prove they are just as tough as men were back then. Society doesn’t cater for risk anymore and people are fed up with being stuck in a health and safety bubble – that’s why they are going out and doing these Tough Mudders and stuff. It’s their way of rebelling.

## So what makes a good leader?

Your actions as a leader are more important than your orders if you want to gain respect. You can’t

command respect just through rank you have to earn it. A good leader leads from the front. There’s no way in a million years I would ask my men to do anything I hadn’t done myself.

## Any other projects on the go?

I’ve got my own series, *Escape*, coming out later this year and there’s another series of *SAS: Who Dares Wins* due out next year. I also do a lot with the military community. I’m an ambassador for the charity Pilgrim Bandits, who look after amputees. Once they’ve gone through rehab we push them into extreme tasks like canoeing around Greenland or climbing mountains. It’s tough love. I’m also an ambassador for the RNLI. Those guys are all volunteers, putting themselves at risk by rescuing people. They’re almost like the Special Forces in their own way.

## What’s your advice to other Service leavers when it comes to moving into civvy street?

Leaving the Forces is a massive step but Service personnel are clever people. They’ve trained their minds and bodies to be a certain way; to be smart, presentable and punctual. So they’re intelligent enough to coach themselves in something different, while taking all those things with them. Also, there are so many charities out there waiting for people to ask for help. You don’t have to fight alone. Swallow your pride or you could rapidly go downhill. I ended up in prison after I left. I thought I was untouchable but no one’s bigger than the law. I’ve made loads of mistakes but I have learnt from them over a long period of time. No one’s going to hand you a solution to your life on a table – you have to work for it. ■



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**S**HORTLY after the birth of their second son, SSgt Emma Hughes (AGC (RMP)) and her husband Lee were given the news that every parent dreads.

Chester had tested positive for cystic fibrosis, an incurable genetic condition that leads to a build-up of mucus in the respiratory and digestive systems.

Sufferers contract frequent lung infections, making day-to-day life very difficult and, ultimately, reducing life expectancy.

"We didn't in a million years expect anything like that," SSgt Hughes tell *Soldier*.

"Both parents have to carry the gene for the child to be affected but neither of us were aware it ran in our families.

"We have an older child, Oakley, who was fine so it came completely out of the blue."

Since that devastating diagnosis nearly two years ago, Chester's fluctuating health, which was further complicated by a blocked bowel, has seen him in hospital for weeks on end, while his parents have had to become experts at administering a strict routine of medicines and physiotherapy.

"A normal day is me getting up at six to give him a nebuliser and then waiting for that to work," explains the senior NCO.

"Then we do a kind of physio called percussion, which involves patting his sides and back for 25 minutes to help shift the mucus.

"After that he has another nebuliser and about eight medications with his breakfast – and that's all before the day has started."

Evenings involve a similar schedule and it is not uncommon for SSgt Hughes to be doing physiotherapy on Chester late at night while he sleeps.

But despite the challenges and the fact Lee works away from home, the Servicewoman stuck with her original decision to return to work at Donington-

based 36 Section, Special Investigations Branch once her maternity leave ended.

"So many people told me I wouldn't be able to go back but that made me more determined," says the 35-year-old.

"I got promoted just before I went on maternity leave so felt I needed to live up to it and be worthy of it.

"It's hard with all of his treatments and appointments, but work is really supportive and I have a strong network of friends and family who help a lot.

"I've had people say I'm mad to go back, or that I'm being selfish and should put my children first, but for me the fact our boys see us both working is important.

"Their welfare comes first but I love my job and don't see why I can't do both."

With more roles opening up to Servicewomen and the opportunity for parents to switch to flexible duties if circumstances allow, SSgt Hughes believes that the Army is more compatible with family life than ever before.

"These are very exciting times," she insists.

"In this day and age it shouldn't be a case of having to leave and give up a career once you've had a child, even with one who needs as much care as Chester.

"I think so long as you are willing to work hard and make some sacrifices then it can be done." ■

● Visit the Hughes family's Facebook page – Chester's CF Fight – and their fundraising page for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust at [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/someonespecial/chesterrhughes](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/someonespecial/chesterrhughes)

# WHY CAN'T WE DO BOTH?

When this Servicewoman's son was born with a chronic illness, friends said she'd never be able to juggle his care with the career she loved...





# Hard-won lessons

Interview: Joe Clapson Picture: Graeme Main

**This month a powerboating champion explains how taking opportunities and being a 'nerd' set her up for life**

**Name:** Daisy Coleman

**Age:** 30

**Dates of service:** 2004-2013

**Cap badge:** Royal Artillery

**Standout operations:** Serving with 32 Regiment on Ops Telic (Iraq) in 2005 and Herrick (Afghanistan) in 2009.

**Current status:** After being introduced to powerboating on a resettlement day with Mission Motorsport, Daisy was later scouted by ex-champion John Wilson and joined his team as a co-pilot in 2013. Last year her Pertemps team were crowned national champions. In-between races the ex-Servicewoman works as a training consultant.

## **IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAKE CONNECTIONS WHILE SERVING.**

Every civilian job I've had was gained via LinkedIn. I've always kept my personal development record up-to-date, basically because I'm a bit of a nerd, but it's proved to be really helpful. I put everything on there. You might think things like arranging a mess function or managing a project aren't impressive, but they look good to employers.

## **MY ABILITY TO MULTITASK IS DOWN TO THE ARMY.**

Service personnel think outside of the box, solve problems and look to break new ground.

## **MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE.**

Powerboating is not "cheque-book" racing; we do all the marketing and advertising ourselves and we're not rolling in cash but we do look professional and that goes a long way.

## **REALISE WHERE YOU HAVE COME FROM AND WHAT YOU HAVE ACHIEVED.**

I was a bit of a tearaway as a teenager but joining the Army, going through training and then deploying to Iraq was a bit "wham-bam" and I soon grew up.

## **HAVE THE DRIVE TO GET ON WITH THINGS, REGARDLESS OF WHAT'S HAPPENED.**

In the last race of the season my team were leading when our gearbox blew 50 metres from the finish line. But we carried on anyway and secured second place. Army core values such as commitment really help to make you successful.

## **SUCCESS CAN BREED CONTEMPT AND IT'S LONELY AT THE TOP.**

My brother and I won the title in our debut season as a team and everyone else realised they needed to raise their game because of us. We've done well because we're not afraid to ruffle feathers.

## **LIVE FOR THE ADRENALIN.**

I don't do this sport for the money because you only really cover your costs.



[VETERAN INTERVIEW]

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## ‘Housing plan hitting hard’

**U**NDERSTAND the need for cost-cutting but the reduction to our Armed Forces is becoming ridiculous.

We are closing 51 barracks as well as Royal Navy and Royal Air Force stations and disbanding units or moving some to already-cramped locations under the MoD’s Better Defence Estate review.

That is having a harmful impact on many communities, with local businesses being hit hard.

With the future accommodation model being developed, I can see the government removing Service housing altogether and as a result we’ll be left to fend for ourselves.

Those who buy a property will then want to stay in the area, but will requests to extend with a unit be refused if “owning a home” is not considered a valid reason?

We now have limited opportunities to serve overseas or around the UK, have had negative changes to our pensions, the possible removal of our housing perks and reduced manning.

The once great British military is going down the pan and that will hurt Service personnel and the country as a whole. – **Name and address supplied**

**Col Nathan Sempala-Ntege, Army Personal Services, responds:** Improving military capability is at the heart of work to optimise our defence estate, which is currently inefficient and too often fails to meet our people’s needs.

By committing £4 billion over the next decade we will develop an estate designed around capability

and regional clusters that will give better employment opportunities for partners, more stable schooling for children and the ability to buy houses and put down roots.

The MoD will continue to work closely with local authorities impacted by site disposals and in many cases this could provide new economic opportunities.

Under the future accommodation model there is no intention to remove assistance to soldiers and their families in securing housing.

It will see greater choice through widening the eligibility for subsidised accommodation and offer a mobility package, enabling you to rent in the private sector, or a stability package that supports personnel who choose to buy.

There are many options under consideration, some of which retain Service family accommodation.

The development programme still has some way to run and no decisions have yet been taken.

Regarding incentives to join, we offer competitive pay; a non-contributory pension that is among the best in the private and public sector; heavily subsidised accommodation; an allowance structure that is superior to many other employers; outstanding education and development opportunities; challenging activity; and, most importantly, good people.

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fend for  
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”

“  
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“He has been a massive asset to every band”

# TALKBACK

## Irate at inspections



THOUGHT room inspections could not be carried out on personnel over the age of 35 but I cannot obtain confirmation of this anywhere.

I'm a 38-year-old and have nothing to hide in my room but strongly feel that soldiers like myself living in SLA should know their rights.

I've heard many stories where rooms were entered without permission, with the soldiers who live in them not being present, and the excuse usually given is that it's a fire safety inspection.

Surely, money paid for a room is a rental agreement and therefore any entry without consent is a case of breaking and entering. – **Cpl Stephen McCartan, RAVC**

**Col Nathan Sempala-Ntege, Army Personal Services, responds:** The guidelines for routine barrack inspections are included in the Queen's Regulations but there is no reference to age.

In chapter five it says the general tidiness and upkeep of accommodation is the responsibility of the occupier.

It also stipulates that inspections of rooms and grounds are to be carried out on a monthly basis.

Further guidance to the chain of command on exercising a duty of care towards our soldiers

through sensible barrack regimes is contained in **Army General Administrative Instruction 53**.

It's in the interests of the unit and the soldier to ensure that any fixtures requiring maintenance and repair are identified and reported as well as maintaining appropriate levels of cleanliness.

Occupants of SLA are licensees rather than tenants, nevertheless it is reasonable to expect appropriate prior notification of a room inspection or smoke detector test.

The opportunity for the occupant to be present should also be standard practice.

Details of the frequency of inspections are ordinarily part of a unit's routine standing orders.

If you feel that, due to your age and circumstances, there should have been more discretion applied you should take this up with your chain of command.

## GOT A GRIPE?

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

“I heard rooms had been entered without permission”

## ROARING FORTIES

● IN January's *Soldier* Cpl Nick Bryan (PWRR) said he didn't know any other Reservist who had served for 40 years.

Well, I do. The Waterloo Band of The Rifles is privileged to have Musn Colin Thompson (CAMUS) in its ranks.

He enlisted at just 15 years old (the earliest age possible back then) on July 27, 1971.

A skilful and experienced clarinet player, Musn Thompson has been a massive asset to every Reserve band he has been in, as a player, an educator and a friend.

His high-calibre standard of performance boosts all of the players around him, and he is always happy to teach anyone who is willing to listen.

The Serviceman's dedication was recognised with the recent award of the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate as well as a Volunteer Reserve Service Medal third clasp.

He is married to Helen who, together with their daughter Emma, are also members of the Waterloo Band. – **LCpl Terry Hissey, CAMUS**

● IN response to Cpl Bryan's comments, I enlisted as a driver with 43 Wessex Brigade headquarters in December 1959.

I served with many units and completed my time in uniform as a warrant officer with the Officer Training Corps at Bristol University in December 2001.

This amounts to 42 years of service. – **Brian Lapham, Bristol**

● AFTER reading the article on Cpl Bryan, I would like to point out that I signed up in 1975 with the Northumbria Band of 6th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

I also served with the Burma Band and Bugles of 7th (Durham) Battalion, Light Infantry and in 1999 went back to the Northumbria Band, which had moved to 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

I stayed there until 2015 and I'm now with Z Company, 5th Battalion working as a minibus driver among other things.

My military career comes to an end this month so I will therefore have served for more than 41 years. – **Fus Barry Aitchison, RRF**



# RANT OF THE MONTH



Get it off your chest  
and on social media



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

Last month's interview with  
ex-Royal Engineer Paul  
Wilkie about his companion  
dog Irma attracted more  
cheerful comments on our  
Facebook page



**Dave Cole**

With a Springer  
Spaniel on the team  
how can you go wrong?



**Stewarty Spurs**

So true, I got two and  
it helps such a lot –  
loyal friends!



**Bethan Lewis**

Paul you are both  
doing amazing. Truly  
your lifelong buddy.



**Robert Glide**

Dogs are amazing  
at interpretation of  
emotions.



**Jon Clegg**

Most dogs are better  
people than most  
people.



**Wayne French**

Love this guy – Paul  
Ian Wilkie you are  
stronger than you  
think and showing not-so-  
strong folks the way.



**Paul Ian Wilkie**

She's a cracking wee  
dog, never leaves my  
side, off to Soldiering  
On awards in March with  
Bravehound, who gave me  
Irma. Be nice to get your votes.

One rule should be  
applicable to all



## Navy's advantage unfair

**I** HAVE recently moved out of Service family accommodation after purchasing a house.

Due to a number of reasons the process took considerably longer than hoped, which meant I could no longer apply for the over-37 package as I moved more than six months after an assignment order.

I am now serving voluntarily separated but have to pay for my substitute single Service accommodation while my flatmate, who serves in the Royal Navy, does not.

There are a number of colleagues in a similar situation to me within Defence Equipment and Support, not to mention the wider Army.

It would appear Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel do not pay single living accommodation charges when they opt to serve voluntarily separated.

The cost to an individual, who can also be paying a mortgage, is approximately £2,750 over a two-year posting – not an insignificant sum.

As retention is key at this time I feel one rule should be applicable to all.

– WO1 Ian Lynch, REME

**Lt Col Ross Noott, SO1 Army Remuneration Policy, replies:** The Army over-37 provision aims to provide stability to the families of those Service personnel who are approaching the end of a 22-year engagement.

The package was designed to smooth transition in the last three years of service by allowing personnel to buy a property, settle their family and begin the process of entering civilian life.

They could then serve voluntarily unaccompanied without being

charged for SLA.

Funding is delegated to and provided by the single Services and the differences in individual policies have their roots in the manner in which each one operates.

The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force do not offer an over-37 package; their rules allow all personal status category one and two personnel to serve voluntarily unaccompanied and waive charges for SLA.

The Army allowance specifically aims to support the families of its personnel and eligibility is set accordingly; they must be married or have primary parental responsibility for a child and, as it is designed for the later stages of a career, an additional qualifying criteria is to be aged 37 or over.

A further stipulation to qualify is that the application must be made within six months of either a change of personal status category to one or two; a permanent assignment or change of location due to a unit move; or on reaching the age of 37 during a tour of duty.

Without these firm eligibility boundaries the provision would simply not be affordable.

Since a larger percentage of personnel are now homeowners the Army's policy for applying a waiver to SLA charges (and its substitutes) is currently under review as part of the development of the future accommodation model.

While this does not solve your issue in the short term, I hope it provides reassurance that the Army is seeking to make emerging policy relevant to the needs of all future soldiers.

I could  
no longer  
apply  
for the  
over-37  
package

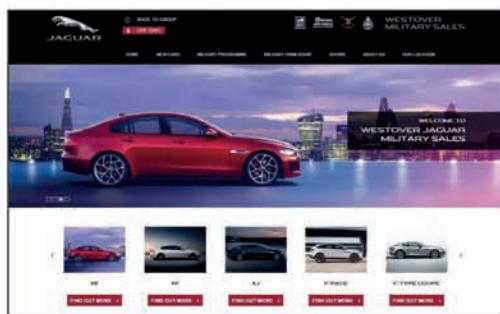




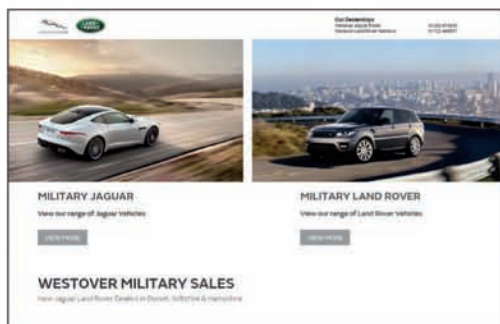
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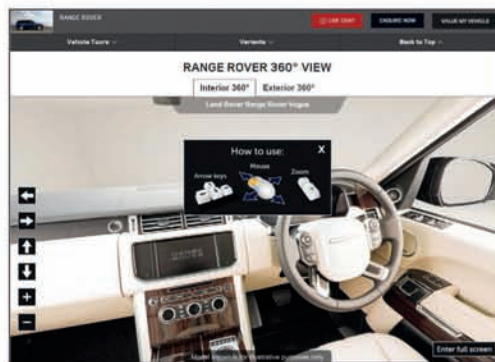
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# BULLET POINTS

Bite-sized data to keep you in the know



## COMPETITIONS

**Spine line winner:** Cpl Pauline Daniels, AFCC, Redruth, Cornwall.



## DIARY

**March 8: Open day at Teesside University**, one of the largest providers of part-time courses in the country. Run from 1400 to 1900, the event is aimed at anyone thinking of studying a part-time course at the Middlesbrough-based institution.

**March 15: Job fair at Tidworth Garrison Theatre** from 1000 to 1500. Service leavers, veterans and spouses all welcome. Free entry.

**March 30: The National Army Museum reopens** in London after a three-year, £23.8 million redevelopment.

**April 6-7: National Employment and Careers Fair** at Catterick Leisure Centre. A free event with more than 4,000 jobs available. Visit [www.bfrss.org.uk](http://www.bfrss.org.uk) to register your attendance

**April 22: St George's Day concert** in aid of Combat Stress at Cadogan Hall, London from 1930. The evening will include the Band of the Coldstream Guards and the Commonwealth Children's Choir. For details log on to [www.cadoganhall.com](http://www.cadoganhall.com)

**May 27-28: Duxford Air Festival.** The first of three shows at IWM Duxford in its centenary year. Tickets must be booked in advance. Visit [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)



## DIRECTORY

**ABF The Soldiers' Charity:**  
0845 241 4820

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

**Armed Forces Christian Union:**  
01252 311221; [www.afcu.org.uk](http://www.afcu.org.uk)

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

**Armed Services Advice Project:**  
0808 800 1007; [www.adviceasap.org.uk](http://www.adviceasap.org.uk)

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

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

**Army Libraries:** 01252 340094

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

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

**Big White Wall:**  
[www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com)

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

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

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

**Career Transition Partnership:**  
020 7469 6661

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

**Combat Stress:**  
01372 841600;  
[www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)

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

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

**Family Escort Service:**  
020 7463 9249

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

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

**Forces Pension Society:**  
020 7820 9988

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

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

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

**Joint Service Housing Advice Office:**  
01722 436575

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

**Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group):**  
[www.mutualsupport.org.uk](http://www.mutualsupport.org.uk)

**National Ex-Services Association:**  
[www.nesa.org.uk](http://www.nesa.org.uk)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Stoll (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation):**  
020 7385 2110; [info@stoll.org.uk](mailto:info@stoll.org.uk); [www.stoll.org.uk](http://www.stoll.org.uk)

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

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



## INTELLIGENCE

The following Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs and Defence Information Notices can be found online at [www.armynet.mod.uk](http://www.armynet.mod.uk)

**ABN 26/17:** New definition for Army Regular and Army Reserve trained strength

**ABN 25/17:** Exceptional arrangements for travel and accommodation for Army Reservists employed on man training days

**ABN 24/17:** Command leadership and management, part three – change in priority to attend

**ABN 23/17:** Land equipment mean variance between failure 2017

**ABN 22/17:** Medical record creation for Army Reserves

**ABN 21/17:** Armed Forces Muslim Moral Leadership Conference

**ABN 20/17:** Grand Military Gold Cup – March 10

**ABN 19/17:** Changes to eyesight standards for individuals wishing to join the AAC Reserve

**ABN 18/17:** Introduction of senior health adviser (Army) policy letter

**ABN 17/17:** Adoption of a new and common posting preference pro forma

**ABN 16/17:** Army Marksmanship Training Centre Troops to Target scheme

**ABN 15/17:** Medical record creation for Army Reserves

**ABN 14/17:** Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support versatile engagement (full) offer

**ABN 13/17:** 2017 Army families continuous attitude survey

**ABN 12/17:** Launch of the Centre for Army Leadership and the Army leadership doctrine

**ABN 11/17:** New year's honours 2017

**ABN 10/17:** Reserves Day 2017

**ABN 09/17:** Change in nomenclature of support weapons to specialist weapon school

**ABN 08/17:** Change to routine hearing test

**ABN 07/17:** 2017 Army Reserve continuous attitude survey

**ABN 06/17:** Employer Recognition Scheme awards 2017

**ABN 05/17:** AGC (SPS) military personnel administrator voluntary transferees

**ABN 04/17:** National soldier recruiting campaign

**ABN 03/17:** Army Reserve officers training, additional module B training courses in 2017

**ABN 02/17:** Terms and conditions of service for the pre-conditioning course at Army Training Centre Pirbright

**ABN 01/17:** Amendment to the career employment group for the Small Arms School Corps

**2017DIN01-002:** Joint personnel administration electronic continuity of education allowance eligibility certificate

**2017DIN01-001:** Increased terms of service agility within full-time Reserve service employment

**2017DIN03-002:** Army international branch inward visits procedure

**2017DIN03-001:** Procedures for all



official duty visitors to the senior British military adviser to US Central Command

**2017DIN04-013:** Declaration of obsolete CB300 series box bodies

**2017DIN04-012:** Introduction into Naval service of CAM-XTR

**2017DIN04-011:** Special storage instructions for aircraft fibreoptic cable

**2017DIN04-010:** Declaration of obsolete truck aircraft baggage conveyor 4x2 LHD

**2017DIN04-009:** Chinook PT – relocation

**2017DIN04-008:** Fentanyl lozenge 800 micrograms 3 pack – replacement of current in-service morphine autoinjector in med modules, Naval service, RFA platforms

**2017DIN04-007:** Notification of obsolescence of CAEP and EOD earplugs and replacement by THPS

**2017DIN04-006:** Declaration of obsolescence Chelton HF NVIS Naval loop antenna NSN 5985-14-546-0697

**2017DIN04-005:** Declaration of obsolete DMC personal interfaced hearing protection

**2017DIN04-004:** Declaration of obsolete respirator voice tube NSN 5965-99-664-9722

**2017DIN04-003:** Drill (inert) prepared demolition charges – removal from service

**2017DIN04-002:** Disposal of Overtask equipment

**2017DIN05-003:** The process and priorities for the provision of A4 Air Combat Service Support Unit assistance

**2017DIN05-002:** Records management – the 20-year rule

**2017DIN06-002:** DSA generic duty holder course

**2017DIN06-001:** Amendment to DAP 110N-0300-1

**2017DIN07-013:** Adventurous Training Group Army course and concentration schedule 2017/18

**2017DIN07-012:** Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2017, October 13-22

**2017DIN07-011:** Nijmegen Marches 2017

**2017DIN07-010:** Defence Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Centre course schedule training year 2017/18

**2017DIN07-009:** 2017 Inter-Services cyber network defence challenge

**2017DIN07-008:** Commercial off-the-shelf remotely piloted air systems multi-rotor operations and remote pilot training

**2017DIN07-007:** City and Guilds professional recognition awards in leadership and management for RAF personnel

**2017DIN07-006:** Royal Navy Warfare Training Group air defence, ASW, EW, IW and Sky Siren courses open to a joint audience 2017/18

**2017DIN07-005:** Defence Centre of Training Support courses April 2017 to March 2018

**2017DIN07-004:** Defence recovery capability employment training courses, schedule April 2017 to March 2018

**2017DIN07-003:** Applications for courses at the Empire Test Pilots' School

**2017DIN07-002:** Exercise Highland Express 2017

**2017DIN07-001:** Royal Air Force Centre of Aviation Medicine course details April 2017-March 2018

**2017DIN09-002:** Attendance at royal investitures

**2017DIN09-001:** Multinational force and observers medal

**2017DIN10-008:** Army Sports Lottery

**2017DIN10-007:** Army Rifle Association target shooting courses, January-December

**2017DIN10-006:** Berlin Infantry Brigade Memorial Trust Fund

**2017DIN10-005:** RN Lawn Tennis Association – Wimbledon tickets 2017

**2017DIN10-004:** Army level golf events organised by the AGA in 2017

**2017DIN10-003:** Army Support Command South Climbing Competition 2017

**2017DIN10-002:** Travel for representative sport from overseas locations

**2017DIN10-001:** Army Golf skills training weeks

**DIB 03/17:** Publication of the 2016 future accommodation model survey results

**DIB 02/17:** New employment model: Flexible duties trial

**DIB 01/17:** New employment model: Programme update



## ROADSHOWS

The Army Engagement Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a reception, is followed by a presentation, questions and culminates with refreshments. There will be a range of military personnel on hand to answer any of your questions. Call 01276 412880 or email your name and address to [armymediacomm-aeg-mailbox@mod.uk](mailto:armymediacomm-aeg-mailbox@mod.uk) with the event you are interested in attending.

**March:** 1, Barnsley; 2, Harrogate; 14, Paisley.



## SEARCHLINE

Free photography workshops available to Service personnel or veterans in Devon and Cornwall living with mental illness as a result of their service. For further details on the scheme visit [www.positivefocus.org.uk](http://www.positivefocus.org.uk)

## NO. 904 JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

**WIN** a £100 voucher for male skincare  
[www.fitskincare.co.uk](http://www.fitskincare.co.uk)



TEN details have been changed in this picture of members of The Royal Tank Regiment in a Challenger 2 looking on as an RAF Chinook delivers the Royal Wessex Yeomanry's Wolf Scout Land Rovers during an exercise on Salisbury Plain Training Area.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 904, Soldier**, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU no later than March 31.

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

First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win a £100 voucher for Fit skincare products. The winner will be announced in the May issue. Usual rules apply.

**January's winner:** Matt Finnigan, HQ SWS, Waterloo Lines, Warminster.







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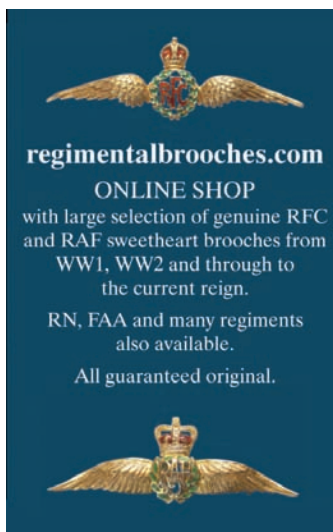
## Soldier magazine back copies.

All 1962, some slight damage in the form of pencil marks. £50 ono; All 1963, good condition. £60 ono; 1961 except Feb/ Aug. £40 ono. Sold as sets as stated. Tel: 01270 876335. Email [m.wakelin23@gmail.com](mailto:m.wakelin23@gmail.com)

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## → Our boarding facilities are the best in Europe. No one else even comes close.

All bedrooms have private bathroom plus phone, voice mail, large plasma TV/DVD player + gaming port (on timer), a Sony PS3, fridge, microwave, trouser press and hot drinks facilities. House staff are friendly and caring.

## → A vast amount of fun filled activities and trips out.

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## → More British Forces children than any other boarding school - because we care.

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### UK's 2016 Top 20 Independent Schools % A\*/A A level (Sunday Times)

Ranking of Schools taking boarders		
Nationally Ranking all type schools		
		%age A*/A at A level
1	St Paul's Girls' School	93.8
2	Magdalen College School	88.7
3	North London Collegiate	88.5
4	Westminster School	88.0
5	Queen Ethelburga's College	86.9
6	Winchester College	86.1
7	Wycombe Abbey School	86.0
8	King Edward's, Birmingham	85.6
9	Sevenoaks School	85.2
10	St Paul's School	84.7
11	Guildford High School Girls	84.3
12	Haberdashers' Aske's Girls	83.8
13	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	83.7
14	James Allen's Girls' School	82.5
15	Eton College	81.9
16	Withington Girls' School	81.4
17	Godolphin & Latymer Sch	80.2
18	St John's College, Cardiff	80.2
19	Brighton College	79.8
20	Haberdashers' Aske's Boys'	79.6

## → £100m invested in new facilities in the last 8 years.

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

If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, top ten academics, a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, amazing sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects and 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!

### Other Schools' Results % A\*/A A level (Sunday Times)

5	QE College	87%
13	Faculty of QE	84%
76	Kingswood School	61%
94	Bromsgrove School	56%
136	Monmouth School	51%
n/a	Gordon's School	48%
171	Cheltenham College	47%
177	Dauntsey's School	47%
209	Kingham Hill School	44%
245	Dean Close School	41%
277	King's Sch Bruton	37%
288	Monkton Combe	36%
n/a	Welbeck College	34%
317	King's Coll Taunton	31%
328	Stamford School	30%
336	Millfield School	28%
349	Warminster School	26%
375	Royal Hospital Sch	21%
376	Licensed Vict Ascot	20%
378	Barnard Castle Sch	19%



# REVIEWS

## MOVIES

### MAN DOWN

Post-apocalyptic war film  
turns up the heat

OUT in cinemas on March 31, *Man Down* is a film that I would like to show to any civilian who has made a snap judgement about soldiers, or any politician who has deemed it acceptable to claim creatively on their expenses while military families bear the brunt of defence cuts. »

**P63**

GAMES

**P63**

TOP GEAR

**P64**

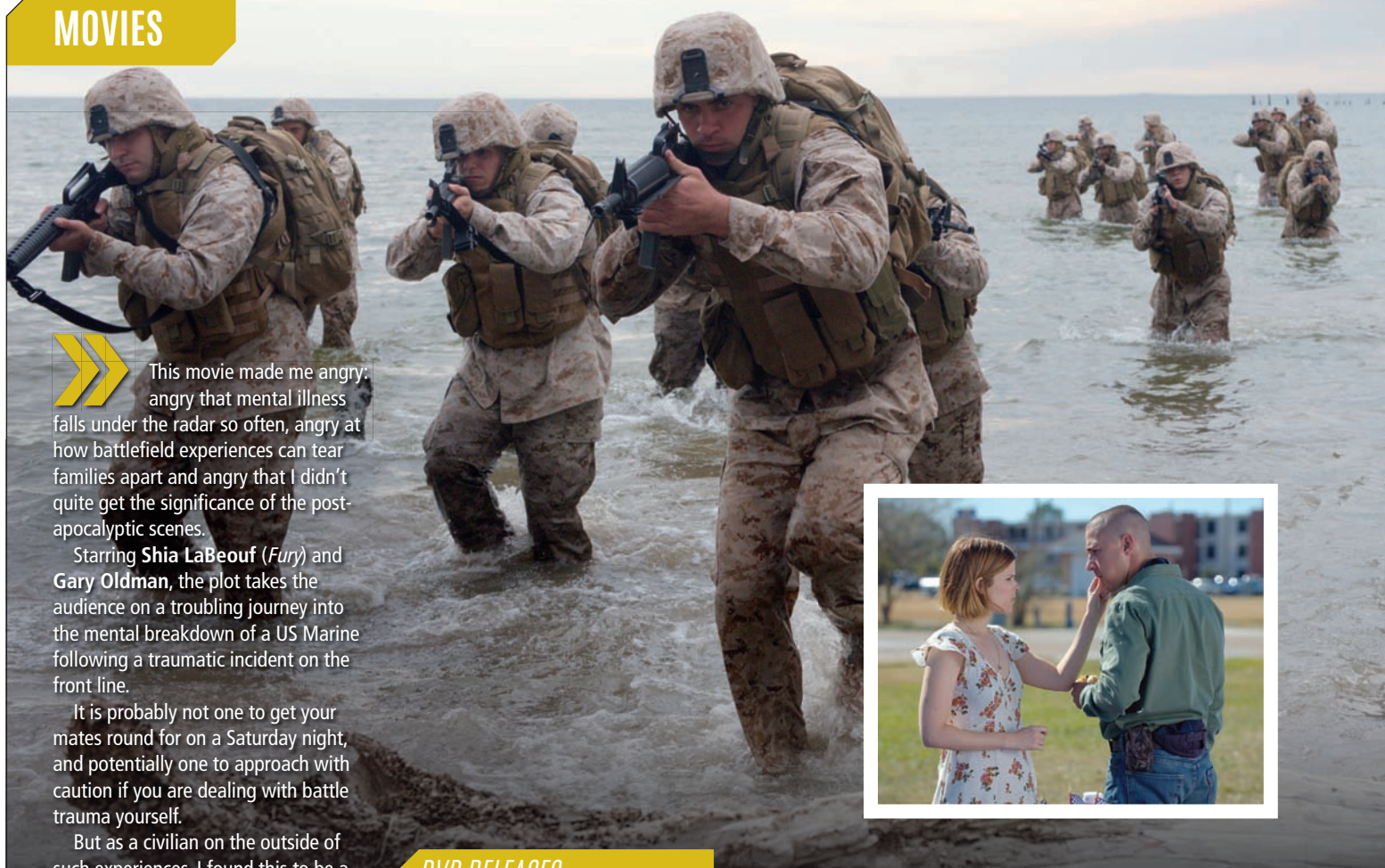
BOOKS

**P66**

MUSIC



## MOVIES



This movie made me angry: angry that mental illness falls under the radar so often, angry at how battlefield experiences can tear families apart and angry that I didn't quite get the significance of the post-apocalyptic scenes.

Starring **Shia LaBeouf** (*Fury*) and **Gary Oldman**, the plot takes the audience on a troubling journey into the mental breakdown of a US Marine following a traumatic incident on the front line.

It is probably not one to get your mates round for on a Saturday night, and potentially one to approach with caution if you are dealing with battle trauma yourself.

But as a civilian on the outside of such experiences, I found this to be a moving, surreal and insightful film.

The viewer is taken into the protagonist's past via a debrief with his military counsellor, and gradually we learn the details of what he has endured, and the ultimate betrayal suffered on the home front.

"What happened was real," is a phrase that is repeated by LaBeouf's character, over and over, as the plot reaches a dramatic conclusion.

And although a bit odd at times, *Man Down* does indeed feel "real" in the way it portrays the chaos and brutality of unravelling mental health.

To that end, I would recommend watching this. ■

REVIEW: SARAH GOLDTHORPE, *SOLDIER*

### VERDICT:

A powerful film best avoided if happy endings are your thing

★★★★★

## DVD RELEASES



### Hacksaw Ridge Out now

A SECOND World War story with plenty of

blood and guts, this **Mel Gibson** offering is based on the true story of American combat medic Desmond Doss, who served during the Battle of Okinawa and became the first conscientious objector to receive the Medal of Honor. The movie is a typical Hollywood title in many ways, bearing some semblance to *Pearl Harbor's* plot, and effectively showing the hardships involved on both sides of the war in what was one of the deadliest battles in the Pacific. This title is recommended.

WO2 Paul Tremain, SASC



### Operation Avalanche Out March 20

THIS is a mockumentary about CIA agents posing

as documentary makers in order to infiltrate Nasa and expose a mole, but who instead end up producing a fake film of the moon landings to convince the Russians that America had won the space race. To add to the confusion, and in a case of life imitating art, the director of this movie told Nasa he was filming a student project to gain access to the site. The result is a realistic "found-footage"-style offering, complete with annoying shaky camera work. It takes a while to get going but the plot comes together quite nicely, if not plausibly.

SSgt Mike Owens, RE



### Jack Reacher: Never Go Back Out now

TOM Cruise returns

to solve another military-related injustice in this action-packed sequel. I found the first film a disappointment, and this instalment has done nothing to make me reconsider. It's watchable, but it's not going to change your life. My parents swear by the **Lee Child** books, so possibly reading those would change my opinion. But the bar is set high with so many great Tom Cruise movies, this just can't compete. Better than staggering on, but that's it.

Cpl Adam Jackson, Para



## GAMES



PICK OF THE MONTH:

## LEGO DIMENSIONS

Features and humour score well

➤ UNLIKE Skylanders and Disney Infinity, which don't seem to be releasing anything new in the near future, Lego Dimensions isn't letting up.

The *Lego Batman Movie Story Pack* is the newest release and closely follows the plot set out in the film, so make sure you watch it on the big screen before playing to avoid any spoilers.

The game itself is thoroughly entertaining, with a plentiful supply of humour for young and mature audiences alike.

And that's what sets the Lego offerings apart from the competition. You'll understand this once you equip Batman with the merch-gun, which fires out *Caped Crusader*-themed merchandise and stuns anyone who is in the way.

There are plenty of features and hurdles in-game, though it has to be said that the original Dimensions title is probably better.

But as this is a story pack I can understand why it lacks the punch found in the original base game.

Overall, it's probably better than the recent *Ghostbusters* and *Fantastic Beasts* offerings, with more useable features and humour as well. ■

REVIEW: DAVID MCDUGALL, CIVVY

### VERDICT:

A new dimension for the Lego franchise

★★★★★

## TOP GEAR



PICK OF THE MONTH:

## BEST BEATS

In the market for some headphones that stay put while you're training? *Soldier* sorts the best from the rest...

▲ Sennheiser OCX 686i Sport

A WEEK-LONG Army athletics training camp in Cyprus provided the ideal opportunity to test this impressive kit.

The marketing material states that its ergonomic ear clips provide a comfortable, secure fit, which is an issue I have encountered with other products on the market.

This model's over-ear hook provides an extremely tight fit and the headphones remain in place when running at speed over different terrain.

But while the buds are comfortable – even on runs over an hour – the hook can cause a bit of soreness after a period of time.

The other problem I've had with previous headphones is sweat and water stopping them from working.

This is particularly noticeable while training on the treadmill: midway through a run the devices would stop after sweat built up.

There was no rain in Cyprus so the water-resistant capabilities could not be reviewed, but in 30-degree Celsius heat they certainly stood the test of some sweaty outings.

Even after the toughest of training

sessions on the road they were still functioning as normal.

Furthermore, the sound quality is excellent.

The tough pyramid-shaped cables prevent them from becoming tangled and significantly reduce background noise, producing a clear sound.

This product is a solid piece of kit that provides decent sound quality and stays put in the ear.

Water-resistant buds and tangle-free leads make them fit for the worst of weathers and toughest of sports.

However, despite all this I have to admit that the convenience of wireless headphones is still very appealing to me – especially considering the small difference in cost. ■

REVIEW: CAPT PAUL MOLYNEUX, RAMC

### VERDICT:

Not quite enough to convert me from wireless

★★★★★

<http://en-uk.sennheiser.com>



£79.99



## TOP GEAR



£109.99



★★★★★

### ^ Plantronics BackBeat Fit

CUSTOM-built for an active lifestyle, and promising excellent stereo performance via a Bluetooth connection that frees users of irritating tangled cords, these headphones sounded like the perfect solution to my existing ones that drive me mad when out jogging.

Unfortunately, though, on getting them out of the box and charging them they offered nothing – literally. That's right, they were defunct.

It's a shame – not least because it means I must award them zero marks.

I'm sure a working pair would have fared better.

**Sarah Goldthorpe, *Soldier***

[www.plantronics.com](http://www.plantronics.com)



£59.99



★★★★★

### ^ Urbanista Boston

THESE earphones are quite simply amazing.

The sound quality is very good, the moulds are extremely comfortable in the ear and they don't come off your head easily.

The powerpack is nice and small so it doesn't get in the way, and the headphones are easily storable with the pouch they come with – or simply in your pocket.

And with no long wires they don't get tangled.

**Pte Alfie Foscett, PWRR**

[www.urbanista.com](http://www.urbanista.com)



£49.95



★★★★★

### ^ AfterShokz Sportz

DESPITE having almost 20 years of running to my name, I've rarely used headphones while clocking up the miles out on the road.

But I felt comfortable taking the AfterShokz out near traffic because you can still hear everyday sounds clearly when wearing them.

They are well made and fit to the head neatly, although they do shift slightly with sudden movements.

My daughter also tells me that they have a nice bass line.

The only downside is the fact they made my ears sore during the first few runs and occasionally got caught on my collar.

But, on the whole, this has created a revolution in my training and I would recommend these headphones to the casual jogger or serious runner.

A top piece of kit.

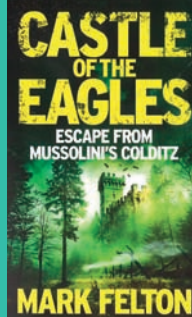
**WO2 Dave Branfoot (AGC)**

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LIGHTWEIGHT and comfortable, the Trekz headphones have been designed with athletes in mind. An open-ear design and bone conduction technology make this kit, which retails at £109.99, the perfect companion for those seeking crystal clear music as they work out. *Soldier* has teamed up with manufacturer AfterShokz ([www.aftershokz.co.uk](http://www.aftershokz.co.uk)) to give five sets away. To be in with a chance of winning a pair, tell us which athlete won gold in both the 5,000 and 10,000 metres at the Rio Olympics. Answers to [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) by March 31.

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*Castle of the Eagles* is published by Icon Books, priced £16.99

## PICK OF THE MONTH:

# CASTLE OF THE EAGLES

## Middle-aged officers' wartime prison break revealed

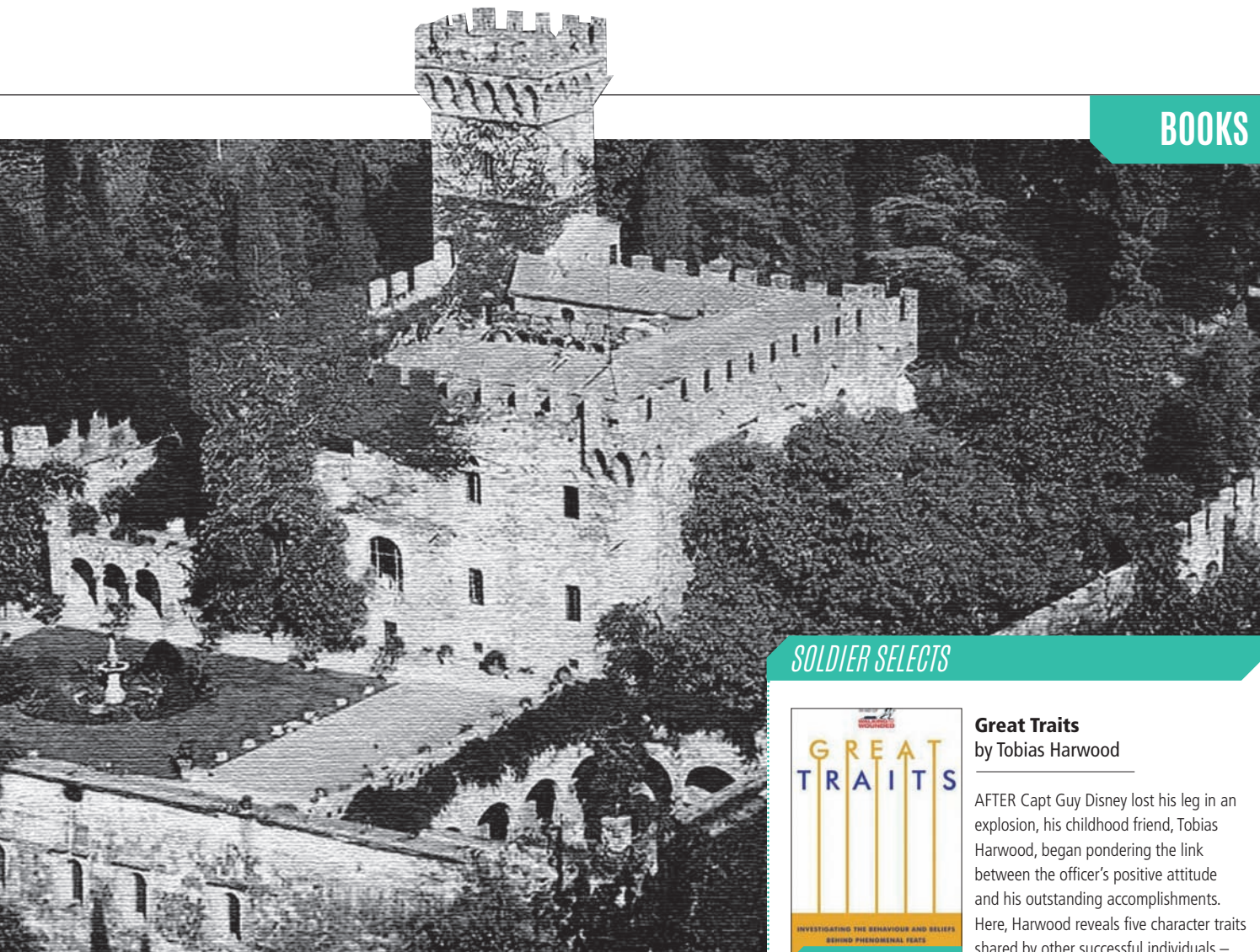
► SITUATED five miles from the Italian city of Florence sits a reconstructed Neo-Gothic fortress called Vincigliata Castle, which was also known as Mussolini's Colditz, and at one time held 12 senior British and Commonwealth officers as prisoners of war.

In *Castle of the Eagles* Mark Felton brings their story to life with style.

Captured mainly during the North African Campaign, these weren't just any old officers.

They ranged in rank from brigadier up to air vice marshal and lieutenant





general and included two knights of the realm, two Victoria Cross holders, a lord and a count.

"Il Duce" had the castle specially adapted to hold these distinguished soldiers but in March 1943, after more than two years in captivity, six of them planned and executed an escape, aiming for neutral Switzerland some 200 miles away.

Drawing on sources written by the veterans themselves, this compelling book reveals the inner strength these men possessed, not only to climb the ranks but to contemplate one of the most audacious escapes from an internment camp during the Second World War.

Their stories are not as well published as other prison breaks, but what makes theirs so different and interesting is the age factor – the youngest among the group was 48

years old and the oldest 63.

One was missing a hand and an eye, and one had a dodgy hip.

They may have been living in relative luxury compared to many of their compatriots in similar situations throughout Italy and Germany but this didn't stop them from doing what comes naturally to born leaders when deprived of their freedom.

This title is another excellent example of the author's growing library of sensational true war stories. ■

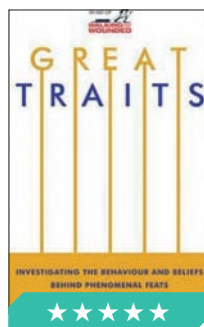
REVIEW: TONY DAVID, EX-RE

#### VERDICT:

A great read that proves you can't keep good men down

★★★★★

## SOLDIER SELECTS



### Great Traits

by Tobias Harwood

AFTER Capt Guy Disney lost his leg in an explosion, his childhood friend, Tobias Harwood, began pondering the link between the officer's positive attitude and his outstanding accomplishments.

Here, Harwood reveals five character traits shared by other successful individuals – passion, grit, competitiveness, boldness and

constructive consciousness – with examples for each from every walk of life. At only 152 pages long, the book is a concise, straightforward read. The case studies reach out to the reader on a human level, making it easier for us to identify with these remarkable subjects. All the proceeds from this inspirational title go to Walking With The Wounded.

Janet Dornan, ex-R Signals



### Airborne

by Robert Radcliffe

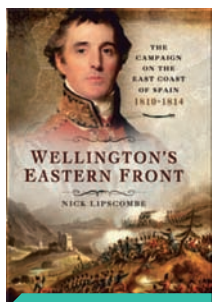
THIS novel sketches the birth of The Parachute Regiment through the exploits of Theodore Trickey who, after being caught in the surrender of the 51st Division at St Valery, escapes back to England to become a parachutist. Next comes Operation Colossus, the first British airborne drop in Italy. Part of the story is also told by a medical officer

at Arnhem. The mixture of fiction and fact provides a good look at real events. There are some small mistakes – I don't think the British infantry fired mortars with nine-inch shells – but overall it is well written and readable. I look forward to the next book in the series.

Andy Kay, ex-RS



## BOOK RELEASES CONTINUED



### Wellington's Eastern Front by Nick Lipscombe

THE author behind this title is an established authority on the Peninsular War

and a gifted battlefield guide. In this volume Lipscombe provides a clear description and analysis of a neglected part of the war against Napoleon. Well-chosen quotations from Wellington's dispatches illustrate not only the Iron Duke's strategic and political grasp, but also the importance of these campaigns to his major thrusts in 1812 and 1813, when he advanced to victory at Salamanca and Vitoria. The text rightly highlights the Royal Navy's key role in supporting the allied armies against one of Napoleon's ablest commanders, Louis-Gabriel Suchet. Not to be missed by students of the Peninsular War.

**Dr Rodney Atwood, military historian**



### Danish Leopards in Helmand by Thomas Antonsen

THIS offering provides an insight into the role of the Danish crews

who deployed with their Leopard tanks to Afghanistan between 2007 and 2014. The author details their actions on contact and illustrates their way of life through their six-month tours through copious high-quality imagery. British infantrymen will be reminded of the overwatch role the Danish armour played whilst patrolling around Helmand – and probably be thankful for their presence. One thing that is repeatedly made very clear is that a Taliban rocket propelled grenade really isn't much of a match against a DM-12 high explosive anti-tank round. The book is interesting, but don't expect a riveting read.

**WO1 Dave Henley, Int Corps**

Want to join our review team?  
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## PICK OF THE MONTH:

# HUMAN TOUCH

### Rag 'n' Bone Man makes promising debut

➤ AS the latest winner of the Brits Critics' Choice award it would be no surprise to see **Rag 'n' Bone Man** follow a similar path to previous recipients **Adele** and **Sam Smith** as his career unfolds.

Hit single *Human* has generated significant hype for the Brighton native, whose real name is Rory Graham, and this was further heightened with the release of his debut album.

But this is no overnight success story. In fact, it is more than a decade in the making.

At the age of 15 he became MC for a drum 'n' bass crew and regularly tested his rap skills at hip hop open-mic nights.

Graham then formed **The Rum Committee**, who supported the likes of **Pharoahe Monch** and **KRS-One**, while also developing his potential as a singer – a path that was influenced by his father's old blues records.

"I'd found my voice through that style of music," he explained. "So when I started trying to write my own material it all sounded like **Muddy Waters**, because that's the stuff I had grown up with.

"Blues is infectious. No-one has ever listened to the blues and said 'no, I don't like that'. Nobody has listened to **BB King** and gone 'that's rubbish'.

"They haven't – and if they did, they're mugs."

A self-released EP soon followed but Graham was not entirely happy with the final product.

He said: "My voice didn't sound that great and it was pretty badly recorded but, surprisingly, it got a lot of love."

Further hard work, EPs and festival appearances followed and by summer 2016 Rag 'n' Bone Man was primed to become a household name.

Those who have heard the track *Human* will know what to expect here and it is the power of the musician's voice that proves to be the star of the show.

Blues, roots and hints of gospel underpin each track and his style forms the perfect accompaniment for the array of beats and moody production that fulfil a supporting role.

*Human* is the undoubted highlight but the likes of *Grace*, with its sweeping chorus, and *Arrow*, which has drawn comparisons with **Amy Winehouse**, also shine.

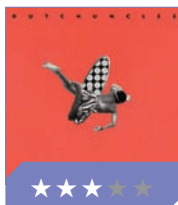
With such a promising debut to his name, Rag 'n' Bone Man could well be worth such hype. ■

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, **SOLDIER**





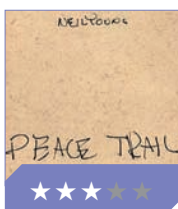
## MUSIC RELEASES


**Big Balloon**  
by Dutch  
Uncles

YOU may think I could be a bit biased and

give this a good review as **Dutch Uncles** hail from my home town. Unfortunately, they have delivered a confusing album. This release sees them trying too hard to be different rather than sticking to simple formulas and the outcome results in a baffling, and at times frustrating, experience. The title track kicks off proceedings in style: a big chorus follows an infectious groove. But *Combo Box* and *Oh Yeah* see the band change pace with some seventies foot-stomping glam. From here it gets even more confusing before final track *Overton* with its beautiful soaring melodrama offers us a glimpse into Dutch Uncles' future. Here's hoping.

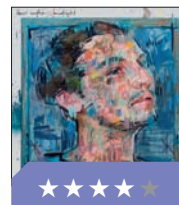
**Damian Hern, ex-AGC (SPS)**


**Peace Trail**  
by Neil Young

WHATEVER the underlying style of music you cannot fail to identify the

voice of **Neil Young**. Some of his former offerings have had a country and western vibe, which I did not like, but *Peace Trail* would not be out of place on a Woodstock album given the protest content of the lyrics. Despite the older feel, Young manages to create an almost contemporary sound by using a vocoder and even autotune. This release is a must-have for dedicated fans but there is one thing that almost ruins his efforts – the harmonica. This instrument appears from nowhere on at least half of the tracks but it sounds as though it has been passed through a million distortion pedals. Oh, how my woofers protested.

**Martyn Timmis, civvy**


**Midnight**  
by Lewis Watson

THIS is a hauntingly tranquil collection of tracks with simple acoustics

and emotive lyrics. Final track *Slumber*, featuring vocals from the delightful **Lucy Rose**, is such a melodic love song, while the more upbeat *Give Me Life* offers the perfect contrast to such a sedate feel. Watson also wears his heart on his sleeve in the superb *Little Light*. Amazingly, he never actually had guitar lessons and only started playing after receiving one for his 16th birthday. He has come a long way since the days of uploading pop covers on his still active YouTube channel, HolyLoowis. This is a sensitively composed album that should appeal to those of us wishing to slow down and savour life, and it points to some equally amazing live performances.

**Janet Dorman, ex-R Signals**


**Lemon Memory**  
by Menace  
Beach

WITH wah-wah guitars and crazy

keyboards the best way to sum up *Lemon Memory* is psychedelia versus pop rock. However, it's not all fantastic. You'll soon become annoyed with the nasal singing, last heard coming from **Liam Gallagher's** mouth, especially on *Maybe We'll Drown* and *Lemon Memory*. *Owl* isn't much better either. Fortunately, it's not all that bad with some redemption gained with *Give Blood*, which opens the album with a sixties-esque nod to the likes of **The Who** and **The Kinks**. The guitars are better on *Darlatroid*, though, which is by far and away the best song on offer. Overall, this is not a bad effort but hardly an alt-rock groundbreaker.

**LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles**

**VERDICT:**

The first step on the path to greatness

★★★★★

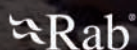


A man with a beard and short brown hair is running on a rocky, uneven trail. He is wearing a dark blue and orange high-visibility jacket with a blue zipper, blue shorts, and black running shoes with orange laces. The background shows dry, brushy vegetation and a clear sky.

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# SOLDIER SPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long  
Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock



## ON THE PISTE

THE slopes of Meribel welcomed the military's skiers and snowboarders for the Inter-Services Snow Sports Championships. Find out how the Army fared on page 78...

Picture: Sgt Mike O'Neill, RLC



**>> SKIING**



Picture: Anthony Kinsella





KEEP IN THE LOOP: FOR MORE DETAILS AND RESULTS CHECK OUT THE ARMED FORCES PARA SNOWSPORT TEAM FACEBOOK PAGE OR [WWW.AFPST.CO.UK](http://WWW.AFPST.CO.UK)

# STARS OF THE SNOW

## INJURED TROOPS FORGE PIONEERING PATH AS QUEST FOR PARALYMPIC PLACES GATHERS PACE

**W**ITH wounded personnel making an impact at both the summer and winter Paralympics in recent years it appears the Service's conveyor belt of sporting talent is reaching top speed.

The physical and mental attributes that make soldiers so successful in the day job are ideally suited to the world of elite competition – a point that was perfectly illustrated when Dave Henson, a former captain in the Royal Engineers, took bronze on the Rio track in 2016.

Another Games cycle – this time on snow and ice – is now in full swing and the spotlight will again turn to the military community for a new clutch of medal contenders when the action starts in 12 months' time.

The Alpine ski disciplines are already well catered for but a new Nordic programme is giving troops the chance to shine and, so far, it is proving to be an opportunity to relish.

Headed up by Maj Elizabeth Winfield (RLC) as part of the Armed Forces Para Snowsports Team, the initiative was run as a pilot scheme last year and boasts a mix of performance athletes and foundation skiers who will be testing themselves in a hectic run of fixtures in the coming weeks.

A six-strong contingent competed at a World Cup event in the Ukraine and February started with a training camp in Ruhpolding ahead of one of

the season's major events – the World Championships.

Invictus Games veterans Scott Meenagh (pictured left), who served in The Parachute Regiment, and former Royal Engineer Steve Arnold will lead the team's charge alongside returning star Terry Aherns.

A former lance corporal in The Queen's Royal Lancers, he competed at the 1998 Paralympics and is plotting a return to the Games' spotlight next year.

"There is no Team GB set-up for the Nordic events so we are pioneering this," Winfield told *SoldierSport*. "Their focus is on Alpine and snowboarding.

"This isn't offered anywhere else in the country. We have taken civilians with us to different events and training camps and while we cannot fund them we can help with coaching and support services.

"The momentum is there and we are in a very good place.

"Scott has already achieved the Olympic qualifying criteria and Steve races for the first time this month. He comes from a natural sporting background so he should do really well.

"At first we tried to get Terry on-board as a coach but once he got involved he wanted to compete again.

"His technical ability and shooting skills are amazing but he hasn't done this in a long time so we now have to work on his fitness.



**"IF THEY  
THINK,  
TRAIN  
AND  
EAT LIKE  
SKIERS  
THEY  
CAN  
MAKE AN  
IMPACT"**

"He knows the process of being an athlete and needs a programme of full-time training, but he will be fine."

The Nordic events are made up of biathlon and cross-country skiing and Winfield said team members have swiftly mastered the skills needed for such disciplines.

"The sitting skiers can make the transition quite quickly," she added. "If they already think, eat and train like athletes they can really make an impact."

With the correct mentality in place the athletes have been further boosted by an expert coaching set-up that is led by Sgt Simon Allanson (RA), who was part of the management team that helped the British biathlon squad at Sochi 2014.

Winfield has also worked with the national team in the past and while she is excited about the prospects for next year she is also focusing on what the long-term future has in store.

"We have other athletes who are looking at the 2022 Games," the officer said. "Ideally, we want Team GB to take this on so we can have a foundation team that feeds into what they do.

"It has been an exciting project so far and I really want to move this forward." ■



**HARD RUNNING:** HALL WAS TARGETING A TOP-TEN FINISH AT THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS BEFORE COMPETING IN THE EUROPEAN CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS AS THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS



## SEASON IN SWING

**CHAMPION** Capt Lauren Hall (REME, pictured) led the way in a field of 123 athletes in the women's race.

The figure maintained the strong female presence seen in recent years, although the men's event saw a drop of around 100 entrants compared to 2016.

Runners from 13 Air Assault Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps secured the major units prize, while personnel from ATR Winchester scooped the minor units equivalent.

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst triumphed on home soil to win the women's team title.

The top-ranked individuals went on to represent the Army at the Inter-Services in Plymouth.

Despite enjoying another successful competition those at the top of the sport are seeking fresh talent to help the team challenge the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy in cross country, road running and athletics.

Warm weather training camps are held throughout the year to help personnel progress and the set-up is open to novice and experienced athletes alike.

For more details on how to get involved visit [www.armyathletics.org](http://www.armyathletics.org)



# COUNTRY STARS SHINE



**"I TRAIN  
HARD  
AND  
EXPECT  
TO DO  
WELL"**

**F**AMILIAR faces headed the field at the Army Cross Country Championships as the Service's athletes hit top form at the start of a busy month of action.

Maj Ady Whitwam (RLC) won a fourth successive title in the men's race while Capt Lauren Hall (REME) produced a dominant display to triumph in the women's event.

Having suffered with a sickness bug in the build-up, victory was far from guaranteed for the defending champion but he put the setback behind him to lead from the outset.

"I knew I would feel comfortable after the first couple of miles but I had someone with me up until the last mile or so," Whitwam told *SoldierSport* afterwards.

"I've won this event for four years now and it is always nice to come back and race.

"I put pressure on myself; I train hard and expect to do well. There are lots of youngsters coming through and the University Officer Training Corps are now involved so it is unfair to discount them.

"I always respect the opposition and not knowing what new talent is out there adds to the pressure."

Hall returned to Sandhurst in determined mood after missing out on top spot last year and she made short work of the 4.5-kilometre course.

"I was really happy with my form coming into the race," she explained. "I wanted to get to the front, dictate the pace and then slow it down later on.

"I wasn't in good shape last season and knew I wouldn't be in contention. Today I really thought about the course and where I could gain ground and it paid off." ■



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## TEAM TALK



» **STRIKER** Cpl Calum Wilkinson (RLC) hit the goal trail in a prolific three-week spell that saw him notch hat-tricks in five successive matches.

The forward started his run with a treble in the Army's 5-1 win over Middlesex in the Southern Counties Cup and then repeated the feat as 7 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps beat 1 Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery in the Challenge Cup.

Three further goals followed as the loggies downed the Army Air Corps 7-1 in the Massey Trophy and he bagged three more in his unit's next match.

Wilkinson completed his achievement as the Army triumphed 5-0 against the Army Reserve in Aldershot.



» **THE** senior Inter-Services campaign gets underway this month with the Army hosting the Royal Air Force on Wednesday, March 15.

Aldershot Town's EBB Stadium will stage the women's clash from 1500 before the action switches to the Aldershot Military Stadium for the men's match at 1900.

The teams face their Royal Navy rivals in Yeovil a week later.



# REDS UNDONE IN TITLE DEFENCE

INTER-SERVICES  
UNDER-23  
FOOTBALL  
ARMY

2

NAVY

4



**T**HE Army Under-23s mounted a disappointing defence of their Inter-Services crown as back-to-back defeats against their Forces rivals saw the title slip from their grasp.

A 1-0 loss to the Royal Air Force left the Reds needing a convincing win against the Royal Navy but their hopes were cruelly dashed on a miserable afternoon in Aldershot.

The hosts received an early boost when WTR Matthew Dawson was dismissed following a wild two-footed tackle but they were unable to make their numerical advantage count.

Speculative efforts from Cfn Sean Thompson (REME) and LCpl Liam Laidler (RLC) failed to test keeper Mne Thomas Davis and the Navy took full advantage when Mne Laurie Donald converted from the spot.

The soldiers were dealt another blow as they squandered possession and allowed AET Daniel Earl to race into the area

and fire into the bottom corner.

Laidler reduced the arrears as he bundled home from a corner on the stroke of half-time before Earl came close to a second as he outpaced Rfn Tyler Hudson (Rifles) and drew a smart save from Tpr Sam Jepson (RAC).

The Army continued to press after the break and Gnr Jason Barnes (RA) spurned a gilt-edged opportunity when Davis parried a half-volley from Thompson.

Their efforts were rewarded midway through the half as striker Cpl Jack May (R Signals) converted from close range and it appeared as if they would go on to seal the win.

But, having absorbed the pressure, the Senior Service hit back as the outstanding Earl broke clear on the left and cut the ball back to AB David Parker for a simple tap-in.

Skipper Spr Rob Ridley (RE) received his marching orders moments later and Parker sealed the Army's fate with a stunning free kick from 30 yards. ■



# MONTH IN SPORT

## March's key fixtures...



« **WHAT:** Inter-Services Hockey  
**WHEN:** March 7 and 8  
**WHERE:** Portsmouth  
**NEED TO KNOW:** The Army women are

the dominant force in this tournament and will be looking to add another title to their haul, while the men will hope to reverse some disappointing recent results



« **WHAT:** Inter-Services Netball  
**WHEN:** March 29 to 31  
**WHERE:** Aldershot Garrison Gym  
**NEED TO KNOW:** The Royal Navy upset the form book in 2016 to deny the Army a sixth successive trophy. They beat the Reds 32-23 on their way to claiming the crown and the soldiers will be looking for revenge on home turf



« **WHAT:** Inter-Services Boxing  
**WHEN:** March 30  
**WHERE:** RMTC Lympstone  
**NEED TO KNOW:**

The soldiers head to the home of Royal Marine training on a mission to maintain one of the longest winning runs in Forces sport. The 7-2 win from last season will be the target to beat but the hosts will have other ideas

## RUGBY IN NUMBERS

POINTS  
KICKED BY  
LCPL JAMES  
DIXON VS  
THE POLICE

18

NEW CAPS  
VS RUSSIA

9

POINTS  
SCORED BY  
THE ARMY  
A TEAM IN  
THEIR WIN  
AGAINST  
THE FRENCH  
ARMY

15

GAMES IN  
TWO WEEKS

3

MATCHES IN  
MARCH

2



## SERVICES TITLE IN SIGHT

**P**REPARATIONS for this season's Inter-Services campaign stepped up a gear as the Army's rugby union stars embarked on a run of three games in two weeks.

A superb performance from the forwards formed the platform for a 32-5 win over Oxford University before the Reds travelled to Spain for a fixture with Russia.

The match appeared to be a step too far for the soldiers as they trailed 21-0 after just 15 minutes but having adapted to the intensity of the occasion they fought their way back into the contest.

Tries from Pte Junior Bulumakau (Scots) and Gnr

Shane Nayalo (RA) saw the Army outscore their rivals 14-7 in the second period, meaning there were plenty of positives in a 28-17 defeat.

A rain-soaked night in Stourbridge provided the next challenge and the boot of LCpl James Dixon (RE) fired his side to an 18-5 triumph over the British Police.

"I've been pleased with the ways things are going," said coach Maj Andy Sanger (RE). "We have seen some real development in the forwards, where there has been a big change in personnel.

"On another day we could have beaten Russia but we are building nicely." ■

● ARMY women's skipper Capt Gemma Rowland (RA) was named on the bench for the first two matches of Wales' Six Nations campaign. The team opened their account with a 20-8 win over Italy but then suffered a thumping 63-0 defeat at the hands of England in their second match at Cardiff Arms Park.



Picture: RAF News





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## GAME BRIEF

**DATE:** February 18, 2017  
**COMPETITION:** Southern Counties Cup  
**VENUE:** Army Military Stadium, Aldershot

### ARMY



**SUBS:** Brown, Burnfield, Gwilliam, Dinning, Keane

## COACH'S COMMENTS:

**"THE PLAYERS DID EXACTLY WHAT WE ASKED OF THEM IN TRAINING AND WE DOMINATED FROM THE FIRST WHISTLE"**



# SOLDIERS SET FOR CUP GLORY

**SOUTHERN  
COUNTIES CUP  
FOOTBALL  
ARMY**

**4**

**KENT**

**0**



**T**HE Army women maintained their unbeaten start to the season with an emphatic win over Kent in the Southern Counties Cup.

A brace from Cpl Libby Dixon (AGC (SPS)) was the highlight of a 4-0 triumph for the ruthless Reds, who will secure the title with victory over Sussex later in the campaign.

In truth, Kent offered little threat to the soldiers who dominated possession and created a host of clear-cut chances on a rain-swept night.

The hosts opened their account in the 16th minute as Dixon (pictured left) raced into the area and rifled a shot past keeper Kelly Amer.

Sig Laura Murray (R Signals) was the next to threaten with a rasping low drive that was well saved but the attacker went on to double her side's advantage with a sweet strike that found the bottom corner.

The contest was effectively

over on the stroke of half-time as Dixon converted a simple tap-in after Amer spilled a cross from left back Cpl Mandy Kidd (R Signals).

With both sides making changes after the break the game lost some fluency but the Reds were able to add to their tally when LCpl Mica Taylor bundled the ball home following a strong run and cross from Cpl Terri Trowbridge (AGC (SPS)) on the right.

Further opportunities came late on as Cpl Hayley Sloan (AMS) glanced a header just wide before Cpl Lucy Foreman (AGC (RMP)) went close from a corner. Sloan then drew a superb save from Amer with a stinging shot from another cross by Kidd.

Attention now turns to this month's Inter-Services showdown and with coach WO2 Mags McAteer (AAC) welcoming star striker Cfn Kelly Aldridge (REME) back into the fold the Reds will start as favourites. ■



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## WINTER SPORTS

# SPORT SHORTS



### Fighters hit the title trail

ARMY boxers stepped up the pace ahead of this month's Inter-Services with a trophy-laden month in February.

LCpl Shamim Khan (RLC) and Gnr Ryan Fillingham (RA) both claimed England title belts (pictured) during a show at the Rotherham Magna Centre, where LCpl Natty Ngwenya (Gren Gds) also secured a southern area title.

Their success followed hot on the heels of LCpl Ollie Knight (RRF) winning southern area honours two weeks earlier.

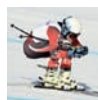


### Davies faces Silver Ferns

NETBALL ace Pte Fern Davies (RLC) returned to the international stage with Wales during her country's two-test series against New Zealand last month.

The Silver Ferns underlined their status as one of the world's top sides with a 92-27 victory in the opening match. The Welsh produced an improved display in the second game but their rivals proved too strong and won 72-39.

Speaking about representing her nation, Davies said: "It's been an honour and I've cherished every second."



WINTER RUN: THE ACTION CONTINUES THIS MONTH AT THE TRI-SERVICE SCOTTISH SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS AND INTER-SERVICES ICE SPORTS CHAMPIONSHIPS IN NORWAY



Pictures: Sgt Mike O'Neill, RLC

# CONQUERING THE ALPS



**"IF YOU TAKE A TUMBLE IT IS HARD TO RECOVER FROM"**

ARMY athletes returned from Meribel with a clutch of prizes following a successful run at the 2017 Inter-Services Snow Sports Championships.

The Alpine disciplines proved to be a happy hunting ground for the male skiers as they claimed the team honours in the downhill, super giant slalom, giant slalom and slalom – an effort that saw them crowned combined champions.

The soldiers also dominated the individual standings, with Spr Euan Kick (RE, pictured) taking gold in the downhill, super giant slalom and giant slalom, while Spr Duncan Kuvall (RE) won the slalom.

Success for the women was harder to come by as the Royal Air Force proved difficult to beat – although they did secure team prizes in the super giant slalom and giant slalom.

The Royal Navy came to the fore in the telemark events as

they completed a clean sweep of the individual and collective awards but the snowboarding competition developed into a keenly contested affair.

LCpl Shonagh Kinnear (QARANC) won the women's individual parallel giant slalom, with Cpl Chris Gregory (RE) securing the men's equivalent, and Maj Jessica Drew (RE) was named best newcomer.

The Army women's team were crowned combined champions and they took top spot in the snowboard cross and parallel giant slalom – an event also won by the men's squad.

Championship secretary Lt Col Mark Whittle (RA) told *SoldierSport*: "People can make mistakes at key moments; if you take a tumble it is hard to recover from and that made for some great action."

"There were some newcomers on the Alpine side who were really good. The standard has been set for others to follow."





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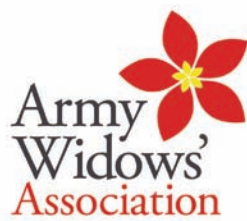
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UP NEXT: THE REDS FACE THE UK NOMADS ON MARCH 18 IN THEIR FINAL MATCH AHEAD OF THE INTER-SERVICES

## RUGBY UNION



# YOUNG GUNS ON THE CHARGE

**A**SLICK England Under-20s outfit proved too hot to handle for the Army women in their latest match with the nation's young guns.

The contest has become a regular entry on the Reds' fixture list and while they showed some encouraging signs they failed to break the stranglehold of their rivals, who ran out 38-15 winners.

After an early midfield battle it was the hosts who opened the scoring from their first venture into the opposition 22.

The soldiers flexed their muscles at some strong set plays before shifting the ball infield, where the pacey Gnr Jess McAuley-Roberts (RA) capitalised on a numerical advantage to ghost home.

England missed an opportunity to post an immediate response as Zoe Harrison missed from the tee and they had to wait another 15 minutes to open their account.

Sophie Tandy broke through

the Army lines and with players in support the visitors were able to roll through the phases until Zoe Aldcroft touched down.

A second try followed on the stroke of half-time as Harrison glided through the defence and another came early in the second period as Catriona McNaney profited from a rampaging run by the superb Aldcroft.

The shell-shocked Reds suffered a further blow moments later as the England pack rumbled forward, allowing hooker Leah Bartlett to score.

The contest was effectively over in the 56th minute as Ella Wyrwas ran in under the posts but the soldiers refused to surrender and Sgt Bianca Dawson (AGC) doubled her side's tally when she powered home just after the hour mark.

Wyrwas notched again before the soldiers rounded off proceedings in style as Pte Ellie Gattlin (RLC) dived for the line to cap an excellent team move. ■

RUGBY UNION  
FRIENDLY  
FIXTURE

ARMY

15

ENG  
U20s

38



## GAME BRIEF

**DATE:** February 16, 2017

**COMPETITION:** Army women v England Under-20s – rugby union friendly

**VENUE:** Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot

### ARMY

Batley 1	Metters 2	Dawson 3
Gattlin 4		Snead 5
Mills 6	Hardy 8	McGlade 7
Stonebridge-Smith 9		Hancock 10
Dodd 12		Roberts 13
McAuley-Roberts 11	Rowland (c) 15	Mullen 14

**SUBS:** Lewis, Smith, Robinson, Silcox, Joubert, White, Gilbert, Clemes

## CAPTAIN'S COMMENTS:

"**ENGLAND CAPITALISED ON OUR MISTAKES TO TAKE THE LEAD BUT I'M REALLY PROUD OF THE WAY WE FOUGHT BACK**"



# Final word

Interviews: Chris Fletcher  
Pictures: Cpl Timothy Jones, RLC



**LCpl Jon Berry, RE**

I've done a lot of combat engineering tasks here, mostly erecting Hesco Bastion walls. I think the most challenging part's been getting used to the temperatures; when we came out it was about 45 degrees Celsius and now in the mornings it gets down to minus four or five.



**Sjt Tom Rumble, Rifles**

I've been part of the building partnership capacity. Although we seem to be just a cog in a huge machine, it's having a big effect and is helping the Iraqi Army's 7th Division in Mosul. They've seen the most offensive action.



**LCpl Stephen Moxon, Rifles**

This has been so different from the Afghan tour I did. Providing all this training has been a big step up. The lads in the Iraqi Army are even calling me Moxy now.



**Cfn Lee Church, REME**

I'm busy repairing the Mastiffs, Ridgebacks and other protected mobility vehicles we have out here. The most testing thing is never knowing what's coming next. I like using my own ingenuity to get the vehicles straight back out.

**Rfn Toby Bench, Rifles**

I looked forward to deploying out here. I've been working as a guardian angel with the Iraqi Border Guard Police. It's been a good insight into how other people and cultures operate. I guess the hardest part was getting to grips with the extreme temperatures we've had.



## What's a stint on Op Shader really like?

*Soldier asked personnel based at the Al Asad airbase what it has been like to provide training to Iraqi troops in the fight against Daesh*



**Spr Andrew Hewitt, RE**

I've spent the last two months away from my normal job, which has been a superb experience and I've learnt lots of new things. When we got here, I'd never been so hot in my life!

**LCpl Chloe-Rose Jones, RAMC**

It's been great teaching the Iraqis first aid, which is a completely new concept to them and something they've really seemed to enjoy. Being a girl, they are so much more attentive – they don't want to mess up in front of me. I'd say the highlight of my tour here has been the gratitude shown by the Iraqi forces.







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