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MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

+

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CONTENTS



FEATURES

- 26 **Chatty chatty bang bang**
Gunners on the ground in Grafenwohr
- 31 **Staying streetwise**
Future instructors master urban arts
- 35 **Fake news**
Searching for reality in today's media
- 40 **'I hope I never see it again'**
Veterans reflect on nuclear test era
- 44 **Muster rhymes**
Wannabe war poets shine

COVER STORY

REGULARS

- 7 **The Informer**
Top stories from across the Service
- 20 **Need to Know**
Essential tips for today's personnel
- 47 **Talkback**
Ruminations from the ranks
- 53 **Bullet Points**
Troops' intelligence assets
- 61 **Reviews**
Music, books, movies and games to fill your downtime
- 82 **Final Word**
Troops talk dream kit

SOLDIERSPORT

- 70 **Commonwealth Games**
Welsh call for dynamic duo
- 72 **Martial arts**
Kendo and tae kwon do in the spotlight
- 73 **Football**
Reds hit the goal trail in Services win
- 77 **Netball**
Court stars complete title defence
- 78 **Winter Paralympics**
Kehoe reflects on golden week
- 79 **Winter Olympics**
Bobsleigh pair vow to bounce back
- 80 **Hockey**
Mixed fortunes at Forces showdown



“
Every section commander should come down and do this
”

Staying streetwise – page 31



26



35



40



75



77

78

Past meets present



PUTTING this month's magazine together took on something of a surreal edge for the *Soldier* team.

If the Salisbury nerve agent attack and ensuing international row (page 7) didn't transport us all back to a different era – one in which the world felt an altogether more dangerous place – our interview with the nuclear test veterans (page 40) certainly did.

It proved to be a stark reminder that, all too easily, history repeats itself. But although this might ring true in political terms, military capability and training is evolving beyond all recognition for the modern British soldier.

To that end, it will be interesting to see how the chemical defence centre takes shape, and what new opportunities there will be for troops at Shrivenham's Defence Cyber School (page 11).

Enjoy the issue, and as ever please let us know what we've missed.

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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► Online

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TACTICAL



Pictures: Cpl Pete Brown, RLC

Specialists deployed to Salisbury

SPECIALIST soldiers have been lending their expertise to emergency services counterparts after the nerve agent attack in Salisbury that left three people seriously ill.

The MoD has confirmed that troops from the Royal Tank Regiment's Falcon Squadron and the Royal Logistic Corps have been among those taking part in Operation Morlop.

As this issue went to press 29 Explosive Ordnance Group was providing command and control functions. Instructors from the Defence CBRN Centre at Winterbourne Gunner were also involved along with members of the Royal Air Force Regiment and Royal Marines.

They have helped move vehicles and other objects from the affected areas in Salisbury.

The Morlop deployment follows the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia last month.

Both were found unconscious after visiting a restaurant and pub, and were still in a critical condition as this issue went to press.

Nick Bailey, a detective sergeant with Wiltshire Police, was also left seriously ill.

Examination of the substance at Porton Down found it was from the Russian Novichok nerve agent family. International experts have been in the UK to conduct their own investigation.

The British government has pointed the finger of blame for the attack squarely at the Kremlin in an escalating



row that has seen each country respectively expel 23 diplomats.

Officers from the Counter-Terrorism Policing Network are leading the criminal investigation into the poisoning and Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson stressed that Servicemen and women were playing an important role in backing up colleagues in the civilian authorities.

He added: "Our Armed Forces have stepped up to support the police, building on the vital expertise provided by scientists from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down.

"We have the right people with the right skills to assist with this crucial inquiry. My thoughts remain with the victims and their families."

● New chemical centre – page 11

“
We have the
right people
with the
right skills

”



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GLOBAL SITREP

1. USA

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

SOLDIERS from 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment trained alongside their US Army counterparts on Exercise Rattlesnake.

The package tested the combat readiness and adaptability of 16 Air Assault Brigade, as well as demonstrating the ever-closer relationship between both sides' militaries.

At Fort Polk in Louisiana troops from B Company took part in live firing with the 101st Airborne, while at Fort Bragg in North Carolina A Coy conducted ground training alongside the 82nd Airborne, followed by joint jumps from C-17s and C-130s.



2. CANADA

FIXER-UPPERS

SAPPERS from 52 Armoured Engineer Squadron braved temperatures as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius to prepare the expanses of British Army Training Unit Suffield for troops heading west this year.

The soldiers – part of 22 Engineer Regiment – spent two months in-country upgrading the urban warfare infrastructure at the Alberta facility as part of Exercise Warpaint, as well as having some well-earned downtime doing skiing, snowboarding and ice hockey.



3. UK

ARMoured ANTICS

A POTENT combination of troops from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment and armour from The Queen's Royal Hussars made for an intense urban operations training package.

Exercise Green Citadel saw the infantrymen use Challenger 2 main battle tanks for protection and fire support as they fought building-to-building through Copehill Down village on Salisbury Plain.

Urban fighting skills and drills are crucial for Colchester-based 3 Para, which is prepared to deploy and conduct ops anywhere in the world as part of the Air Assault Task Force.



4. ESTONIA

WALKING ON WATER



ROYAL Welsh soldiers serving on Operation Cabrit conducted an unusual interoperability exercise with their Estonian and Danish allies – crossing Europe's longest ice bridge on foot.

More than 100 members of Nato's enhanced forward presence battlegroup completed the nine-kilometre route from mainland Estonia, over the frozen Baltic Sea, to the island of Muhu.

Fus Rhys Nell admitted to having some misgivings ahead of the trek.

"I initially thought walking across was a silly idea," he said.

"For the first five minutes I constantly thought I was going to fall through the ice at any moment."

But his fears proved short lived and the troops arrived safely on the shore in roughly two hours.



“
They seek
to steal,
plant,
manipulate
”

Fake news exposed
– page 35

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

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Picture: Lcpl Adam Montero, US Marine Corps

3. UK

6. FRANCE

4. ESTONIA

A crack squad of digital experts will represent the British Army at an international cyber competition in Tallinn later this month. Competing against 20 other teams, the soldiers – predominantly from the Royal Signals – will build a network and defend it from hackers as part of the event, dubbed Exercise Lock Shields.

Picture: FreePK

5. AFGHANISTAN

7. BANGLADESH

IN NUMBERS

285

Troops from the Royal Lancers who were deploying to Nicosia, Cyprus for a six-month stint on Operation Tosca as this issue went to press. Operating as UN peacekeepers, they will patrol the buffer zone between the island's Turkish north and Greek south.

5. AFGHANISTAN

POLITICIAN'S PRAISE

RESOLUTE Service personnel deployed with the Kabul Security Force have received a top-level endorsement for their work providing support to British military mentors.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson thanked members of 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment when he visited the mission in Afghanistan for the first time.

The formation's troops have been operating as "guardian angels" in and around Kabul to ensure the UK mentoring teams working with the Afghan National Army can conduct their work safely.



Picture: Lt Col Samuel Humphris, Yorks



7. BANGLADESH

AILING AND ABETTING

SOLDIERS from 26 Engineer Regiment have taken part in a large-scale multinational peacekeeping manoeuvre.

Exercise Shanti Doot involved 1,000 personnel from 30 UN member states.

Among the serials staged during the two-week package was a security and assistance task at an aid distribution point.

The deployment was part of the regiment's defence engagement relationship with the South Asian country and 15 Bangladeshi soldiers were embedded in the British troop.

6. FRANCE

CHANNEL-HOPPING

BRITISH troops rehearsed a range of scenarios with their closest continental neighbours as the two countries continue to tighten up their joint working protocols.

Soldiers from 12th Armoured Infantry Brigade trained with counterparts from the French 1st Division on Exercise Citadel Guibert in Reims.

The combined-arms package also included personnel from other Nato member states



Picture: Cpl Sam Jenkins, RLC

and tested the way partners integrate and work together while deployed on stabilisation operations.

France and the UK form the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, which focuses on the whole spectrum of contingency operations, from disaster relief to war fighting.

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Cutting-edge chemical centre

CONSTRUCTION of a chemical weapons defence centre will begin this month.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced the move in a bid to bolster the UK's "world class" expertise in the area.

The MoD has confirmed that the £48 million facility – at Porton Down in Wiltshire (shown) – will consist of laboratories that will forensically analyse and identify any agent.

In addition it will create defensive measures to counter chemical weapons, develop medical treatments for those exposed and support UK authorities during incidents.

While there were currently no plans to increase numbers of staff working in the area, the MoD said this will be kept under review.

Mr Williamson, who was speaking at the Rolls-Royce factory in Bristol, said the centre would ensure the UK maintains its cutting edge in the face of new threats.

The politician said: "After 1990 we believed that the world would be both a better and safer place but as we have seen over the past few years, the



reality is changing."

Highlighting last month's nerve agent attack in Salisbury, he pointed the finger at Russia for "ripping up the rulebook" and upping the ante with its armed forces.

"At a time when its economy is under pressure, it is still prioritising military expenditure, investing in highly capable equipment across all domains," Mr Williamson explained.

He added that the Modernising Defence programme, to enhance intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, would also give Britain a valuable edge.

"We've arrived at a profound moment in our history, a crossroads where the choice is simple: sit back and let events overtake us or step forward," he said.

“
We've arrived
at a profound
moment
”

Ajax takes sensor stage

THE Army's next-generation armoured vehicle is to be given state-of-the-art protection.

The Ajax shot detection system made by Thales will see three special sensors fitted to each platform – providing the capability for crews to detect incoming enemy fire.

The equipment is based on sonar technology, which is already fitted to ships and submarines.

More than 730 systems are now on order in the £3.7 million deal.

The six variants in the Ajax medium vehicle programme are due to come into service in 2020.

Thales will install the equipment at its Templecombe factory in Somerset after signing a contract with Ajax's manufacturer, General Dynamics Land Systems UK.

Maj Gen Colin McLean, Director Land Equipment for Defence

Equipment and Support, said the vehicle suite would provide a "step change in versatility, agility and protection" for troops.

He added: "Integrating this new sensor onto our family of Ajax vehicles – which will provide critical situational awareness – is another innovation we are investing in to ensure soldiers have the best equipment to maintain their competitive edge on the battlefield."



REVIEWS

READY PLAYER ONE
HITS THE BIG SCREEN
MOVIES > PAGE 64



CYBER CENTRE CREATED

THE UK's ability to deal with a new generation of threats has been beefed up with the unveiling of a new Defence Cyber School at Shrivenham.

Opened by Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster, the facility will train more personnel in tackling attempts to destabilise UK peace and prosperity by hostile states.

Part of a joint investment between the MoD and the National Cyber Security Programme, Mr Lancaster said it would become a "state-of-the-art centre of excellence".



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

THE VALUE OF FACE TIME

RECENTLY visited British Army Training Unit Kenya.

As with all overseas trips, I met many families who were happy with their experience out there, viewing it as a fantastic two-year adventure in an amazing part of the world.

But at family forums in both Nanyuki and Nairobi, housing and education emerged as two big concerns.

A key issue was the lack of choice around schooling – something I know the Department for Children and Young People is investigating. I look forward to discussing this with them in more detail now that I have a better understanding of the realities.

The quality and availability of accommodation was another talking point, with many concerned about the rise in rent since the introduction of the combined accommodation assessment scheme in 2016.

Thanks to your evidence, we can investigate this and work with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation in a bid to resolve these issues around the fair use of banding criteria.

I was also approached about allowances – in particular, the get-you-home entitlement.

The AFF will now look at how this package can better support divorced troops with children in the UK, as well as foreign and Commonwealth personnel.

If you are serving abroad, please visit our website to share your experiences with us in our overseas survey.

www.aff.org.uk



Picture: Tottenham Hotspur FC

Premier support for Army personnel

“We're proud to be offering this”

TOTTENHAM Hotspur has launched the largest veteran recruitment scheme by any Premier League outfit as the club prepares for life in its new stadium.

A total of 50 full- and part-time positions will be offered to former Service personnel and successful candidates will take roles as stewards, security staff and hosts at the ground, which is due to open later this year.

It follows the club's partnership with military charity Sporting Force in a bid to offer more opportunities to ex-soldiers.

Those passing the interview stage will complete a training course, becoming fully qualified in time for the 2018/19 season.

“We are proud to be offering

meaningful, long-term employment opportunities to former personnel through our new stadium development scheme,” said Donna-Maria Cullen, executive director at the club.

Sporting Force founder Tommy Lowther added: “After leaving the military, adjusting to civilian life can be challenging. Many veterans are unable to find work and suffer financially.

“Working in partnership with Tottenham Hotspur is a brilliant opportunity to give ex-Servicemen and women a new sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging.”

The new ground will be the largest capacity football stadium in London, with seating for 62,062 fans.

To register your interest in a job visit www.sportingforce.org/register



Odds-on to win?

TICKET holders in the Army Sports Lottery have the chance to win more money after the weekly prize fund was increased from £25,000 to £30,000.

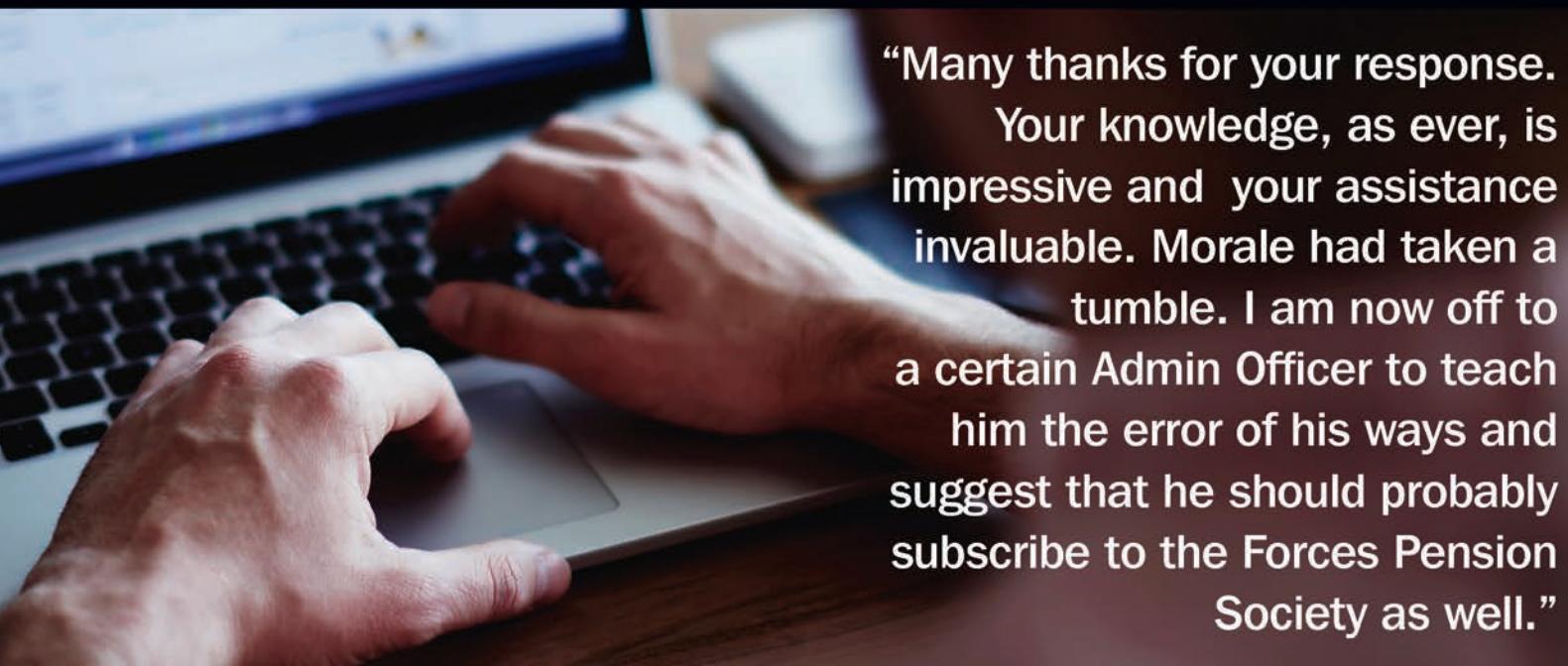
The move creates a new fourth prize of £3,000 and allows for a reorganisation of the consolation prizes – with two people winning £500, a further 15 claiming £200 and ten more receiving £100. The weekly jackpot remains £10,000.

“We are doing this because our membership is increasing,” Maj Gen (Retd) Shaun Burley, director of the Army Sport Control Board, told *Soldier*. “When I go round the Army and ask how many people have won, not many hands go up.”

“I don't want this to be seen as purely something soldiers contribute to in order to access funding for overseas trips. I want it to be an opportunity for them to win something and the odds of doing that are better than the National Lottery.”

Since its creation in 1993 the Army Sports Lottery has given £20 million in cash prizes and awarded more than £23 million in grants. Visit www.armysportslottery.com

An Officer asked for confirmation of the advice he had been given by his admin staff on the issue of accrued rights from AFPS75



“Many thanks for your response. Your knowledge, as ever, is impressive and your assistance invaluable. Morale had taken a tumble. I am now off to a certain Admin Officer to teach him the error of his ways and suggest that he should probably subscribe to the Forces Pension Society as well.”

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IN NUMBERS

A CHARITY that gives serving and medically-discharged personnel free entry to sport and music events has marked an impressive milestone:

1,000,000



free passes have now been given away by Tickets for Troops

LOGGIES FLY THE FLAG

■ MIDLANDS-based soldiers with 159 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps are expanding their Reserve presence – the unit now has a new B Troop at King's Heath in Birmingham.

Collocated with 202 Field Hospital, the outfit is an extension of a squadron based at West Bromwich and was due to start taking personnel as this issue went to press.

Commanding officer Lt Col Pat Allen said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to fly the flag of the largest corps in the Army."

HOLIDAY HELP

■ WONDERING how you're going to fund that dream trip this year?

A new online calculator has been set up to help soldiers save.

MoneyForce – a free cash advice service run by The Royal British Legion – has created a holiday planner in the tools section of its website.

Users enter the details of their trip, and the device works out how much should be put aside each month.

Visit www.moneyforce.org.uk



■ RESIDENTS took to the streets of Lisburn to welcome home members of 2nd Battalion, The Rifles from their six-month tour of Iraq. Around 500 personnel marched through the city centre in the presence of their royal colonel, Prince Edward. Read February's magazine for more on 2 Rifles in Northern Ireland.

Picture: Kellie Shattock

“This is a relatively new venture”

The battle against loneliness

■ CALL has gone out for soldiers willing to befriend lonely veterans on the south coast. Charity Age UK Portsmouth wants personnel to sign up for its Joining Forces initiative, which sees volunteers visit ex-troops at home (shown right) and help at events such as breakfast clubs to bring the community together.

Kandy Lucas, socialisation manager at the charity, said a few members of the Armed Forces had come forward, but none yet from the Army.

While Portsmouth is associated with the Royal Navy, there are still a number of ex-soldiers in the area and having people who understand their time in service is helpful.

"We're encouraging veterans to engage with their community by using peers and befrienders," Lucas added.

"Contact will normally be weekly or fortnightly, and lasts between one and two hours depending on the individual.

"Many former personnel have mobility issues or health problems."

Joining Forces Portsmouth was set up using cash from the Aged Veterans Fund in May last year and is focused



on both the city and surrounding areas.

Lucas continued: "I am conscious people have very busy professional lives, but it would be good if we could have a few soldiers to help us out.

"This is a relatively new venture, and I hope it will be a success."

Various befriending schemes exist elsewhere in the UK, many of which are looking for volunteers.

For details on the Portsmouth scheme email kandy.lucas@ageukportsmouth.org.uk or to volunteer as a befriendee elsewhere visit www.ageuk.org.uk

■ NEW research will try to discover which ex-soldiers are most likely to recognise they have an alcohol problem, and who goes on to find help.

The 15-month study by the University of Liverpool and King's College London is going ahead thanks to a £154,198 grant from the Forces in Mind Trust.

Ray Lock, chief executive of the trust, said: "This project will fill some of the important gaps in research."



Picture: Freepik



'Sort your civvy housing today'

Housing expert urges soldiers to start saving

PERSONNEL are being urged to think about where they might live after they leave the military.

The MoD's point of contact for civilian accommodation issues – the Joint Service Housing Advice Office – says that ignoring the issue until resettlement could mean soldiers are left financially unprepared.

Head Alison Shimmens said it was important that all troops book onto courses run by her office, which explain the move to civilian housing.

She added: "Personnel need to start saving the difference between their Service accommodation and civilian rent or mortgage as early as possible.

"If they don't, they are going to seriously struggle."

Leaving this type of decision until you are on resettlement is five years too late."

The warning comes as research commissioned by charity Stoll and social housing provider Riverside found that some veterans remain at risk of homelessness.

The study concluded that the MoD should ask all Service leavers about their housing options and offer bespoke advice to the vulnerable.



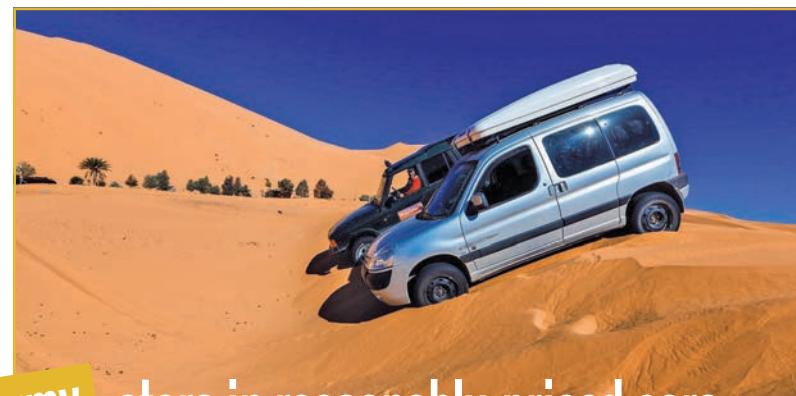
Its authors also said that resources should be coordinated more effectively and local authorities must better identify veterans.

Stoll chief executive Ed Tytherleigh pointed out that the problem could be tackled effectively, but insisted that a change of approach would be needed for this to happen.

He added: "We believe we can reduce the incidence of homelessness among veterans close to zero, but this will only happen if there is a significant shift in approach to the issue of housing ex-Service personnel.

"It is critical that veterans facing homelessness – and those supporting them – know where to turn to at the right time and get the correct advice."

**“
Resettlement
is too late
”**



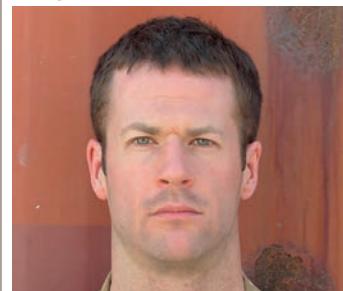
Army stars in reasonably-priced cars...

A DRIVEN group of veterans have been taking on a demanding *Top Gear*-style challenge in a fitting convoy of reasonably-priced cars.

The 12-strong group of Armed Forces personnel, who all have PTSD, are attempting to navigate part of the original Paris-Dakar rally route – taking their £500 Citroen Berlingos on a full circuit of Morocco to help their recovery and highlight the plight of fellow sufferers.

Organised by Driven to Extremes, an organisation that takes veterans with mental health issues on adventures, the event encompasses an arduous 1,000 miles of gravel, sand and rock. It was due to end as this issue hit the shelves.

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



James remembered

VICTORIA Loaiza-Bateman, whose husband was killed in Afghanistan, is looking to hit the right notes for a good cause with an evening of music and entertainment in his memory. The

James Bateman Memorial Ball will be held at the Honourable Artillery Company in London on June 16. LCpl Bateman (Para) died in 2008. For more details on the event email

jamesbatemanmemorialball@outlook.com



Cenotaph send-off

A VETERAN infantryman is dedicating the next two years of his life to walking around the world. Dave Mills (ex-RRF, shown) was waved off at the Cenotaph for the adventure-of-a-lifetime in aid of SSAFA. The journey will take him to

China, the USA and Peru, and will aim to raise funds for the wider military community.



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Dashboard dictator

SOLDIERS will soon benefit from new guidance on the road – care of a virtual co-driver.

Kit to measure diagnostics, location and speed is already installed in MoD vehicles, but drivers will now have a reassuring voice to give safety advice.

Using technology similar to that found in Amazon's Alexa, troops will be told when their driving falls below par – such as in cases of heavy braking or speeding.

Drivers currently have to rely on dashboard lights to flag mistakes.

In a bold move, the MoD's new Car Activated Comms Integrated Navigation and Safety System (Cacinass) also allows drivers to speak back to the kit.

This could prove useful in explaining situations – for example, where stepping hard on the brake avoids a rear-end shunt.

Initial tests have already proved promising – and the kit could be fully installed in all white fleet vehicles by the beginning of April 2019.

Army road safety chiefs have hailed Cacinass, which was designed and manufactured in-house by defence technicians, as a winner – claiming it offers enhanced potential to reward good roadcraft while clamping down on serial offenders.

An MoD spokesman said: "Our existing system is familiar to personnel, having been in service for some years, but Cacinass amounts to a virtual companion in the vehicle, which is a huge step forward.

"It provides immediate feedback, thus eliminating the element of surprise when the monthly safety report arrives from the master driver.

"It's also an opportunity for the person behind the wheel to justify their actions, with our black box beaming voice and video footage directly back to fleet professionals."

Other familiar services are also being beefed up – including an enhanced GPS to help the military chain of command address time management issues.

Cacinass's patented "Ranker" voice system sets the right tone based on the user's standing.

Officers, for example, can choose between the voices of Army heavyweights – including former chiefs of the general staff – while a comprehensive RSM line-up is on-hand for the NCO chain of command.

"I am confident Cacinass brings a great deal to the party," the spokesman concluded.

"We'll be watching the roll-out – and listening – with great interest."

It's an opportunity to justify actions

FAKE NEWS
- page 35

In this month's

**SOLDIER
SPORT**

» COMMONWEALTH GAMES P70



» FOOTBALL P73

» WINTER OLYMPICS P79



SPINE LINE COMPETITION

WIN
a pair of tickets to the Battle Proms

HAS *Game of Thrones* dominated your life since it first hit television screens?

If so, last month's spine lines competition will have proved no effort at all.

(Jon) Arryn, (Ramsay) Bolton, (Sandor) Clegane and (Samwell) Tarly are all characters in the hit series, which was filmed in Northern Ireland – the focus of March's Reserve feature.

This month *Soldier* has teamed up with the organisers of the spectacular Battle Proms concerts (www.battleproms.com) to offer three lucky readers a pair of tickets to attend at the venue of their choice – Burghley House in Lincolnshire, Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, Highclere Castle in Hampshire or Ragley Hall in Warwickshire.

Featuring live music, fireworks, Spitfires, cannon and cavalry, these open-air picnic shows are not to be missed.

To be in with a chance of scooping a pair of tickets, worth £88, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by April 30.



ROLE MODELS RALLY

■ PIONEERING Servicewomen who crossed Antarctica have been continuing to inspire the next generation months later.

Ice Maiden Capt Zanna Baker (RA, shown) addressed female students from Middlesbrough's Unity City and St Peter's Catholic Voluntary academies. Speaking afterwards, she said: "It's been a wonderful opportunity to get involved with girls at an age where I was quite unsure of where I was in life."



THE BIG PICTURE

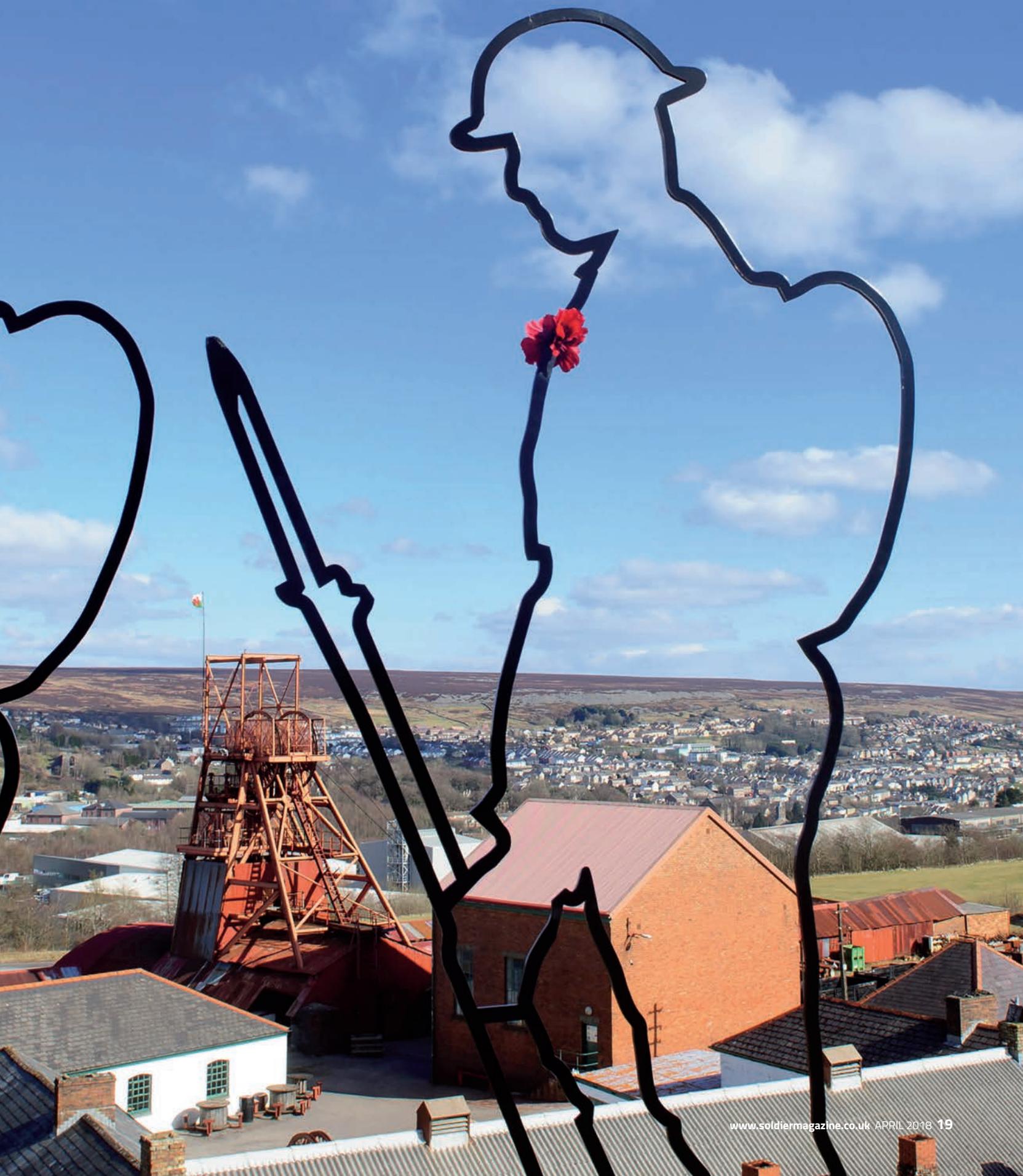
Big Pit National Coal Museum, South Wales

SOMBRE SILHOUETTES

A CHARITY campaign that has seen ghostly figures of First World War Tommies springing up around the country is set to raise millions of pounds for good causes. Organisers of the nationwide art installation *There But Not There* hope the sale of the six-foot aluminium figures, made by military veterans, will help to bring in a total of £15m by Remembrance Day, to be shared between a number of Forces and mental health charities. Visit www.therebutnotthere.org.uk for more on the campaign.

Picture: Mark Lewis





NEED TO KNOW

CASH / FITNESS

EXPERIENCE / NUTRITION

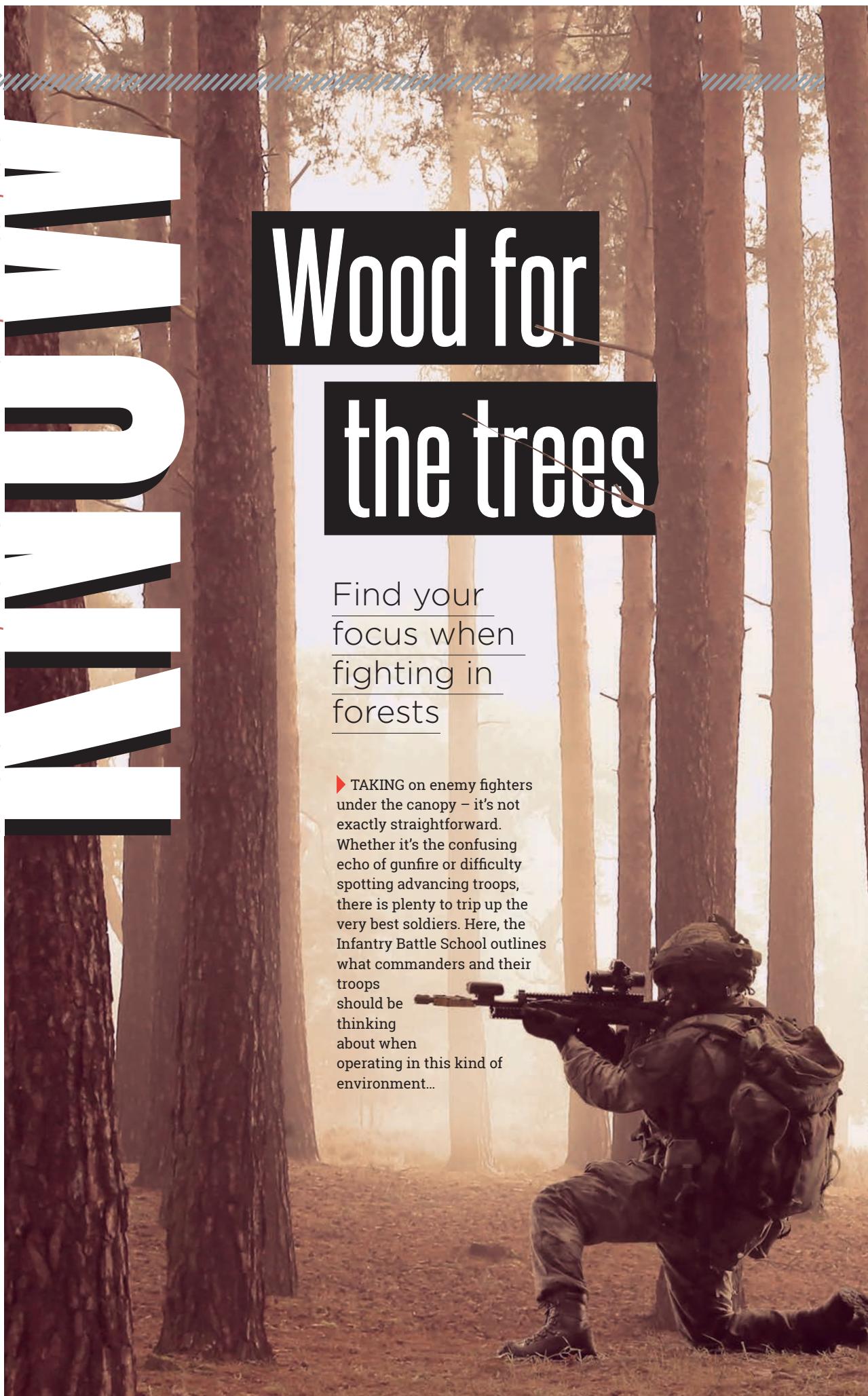
DRILLS

SKILLS & DRILLS

Wood for the trees

Find your
focus when
fighting in
forests

► TAKING on enemy fighters under the canopy – it's not exactly straightforward. Whether it's the confusing echo of gunfire or difficulty spotting advancing troops, there is plenty to trip up the very best soldiers. Here, the Infantry Battle School outlines what commanders and their troops should be thinking about when operating in this kind of environment...



Rehearsals

These allow everyone to understand their roles and responsibilities, and how the formation will operate in the woods. Short-contact drills in particular must be well rehearsed and come naturally.

Comms

Fighting in woodland is loud and confusing, so don't be afraid to revert to verbal commands and shouting. It can help to come up with some short, sharp commands in rehearsals.

Positions

Like public order drills, it helps for the platoon commander to be positioned quite far forward between his two sweeps, so he can control the bounds and ensure the baseline remains intact. Sentry positions generally need to be outside the wood so troops get early warning of advancing enemy.

Reserve

Forest fighting can be manpower-intensive, so be flexible with the generation of reserve. Be prepared to operate with one that is smaller-than-ideal.

Casevac

Consider all options. For example, if you have cleared three quarters of a wood it could make more sense to wait until the remaining quarter has been cleared and take casualties forward instead of back.

Battlefield discipline

Reduce your noise when clearing through and out of contact, to help achieve surprise. Ensure the platoon uses as much cover as possible.

Aggression, aggression, aggression

This is key when fighting in this type of environment. Contacts are often only a short distance away.

Anti-fratricide measures

Sections need to be kept informed of the battle at all times. If there is a long contact on the left, for example, the right sweep needs to be informed to prevent any firing into that area.

Target indication

This can be difficult to get right under the canopy, so consider ways to do this.

NUTRITION

What's in a label?

Keep a check on what you're eating

► WE'VE all been there. You're hanging out after a long day, scouring the shelves for the quick and tasty option for tea. You spy something containing at least a few veg, and the words "natural", "light" or "low fat" on the front. Happy days. Or maybe not. According to the experts, labels like this could be leading us astray. After all, food claiming to be "light" could still be packed to the brim with sugar. If in doubt, check the traffic light label which is displayed by most big supermarkets and food manufacturers.

Use these to check if food is high (red), medium (amber) or low (green) in fat, saturated fat, sugars or salt. Here are a few things to consider when checking the labels...

Portion sizes

What does the manufacturer give as a portion size? Is this the amount that you will actually eat?

Go green

In general, more green on a label means healthier food.

Each portion contains



of an adult's reference intake

% intakes

These are based on an average-sized woman doing an average amount of physical activity.

So if you're in training for the exped-of-a-lifetime, for example, you might just be able to justify a little more per day.

Consider the alternatives

Even healthier ready meals may be higher in fat and energy than the homemade equivalent. If you make the meal yourself, you could save money as well.



Location v label

Research has shown that when people eat at a fast food chain they consider healthy, they *greatly underestimate* the calories in what they're eating.

Checking the nutritional info is the only way to guarantee you know what you're consuming.



number of decisions that we can make about our food intake each day, often without even realising it

'It's harder than soldiering'

Reservist dad-of-two Maj Alex Smith (RAMC) is serving on an additional duties commitment as officer commanding 22 Medical Squadron. The 55-year-old tells *Soldier* about life as a house husband...



“

AFTER being in the Regulars briefly, I had some regrets about leaving so when the opportunity to join the Army Reserve came up I went for it.

I was after a new challenge and wanted to soldier again.

My civilian job was in logistics but I gave that up completely when my daughter was born and my wife went back to work as a GP.

That was six years ago and we now have another 18-month-old daughter.

A normal day is getting up at 0500, doing a couple of hours' work on my computer, then preparing breakfast and getting the children ready for school and nursery.

Three days a week I go into the barracks until the afternoon school pick-up.

And I'll try to fit exercise in whenever I can – I even do a few press-ups while cooking family meals.

My wife works late so I do everything in the evening so she can spend some time playing with the kids before bedtime. It's pretty full-on.

My unit, 2 Medical Regiment, is a hybrid so we're very busy. We have guys going to Kenya on Askari Serpent, plus all the

usual taskings.

One weekend a month is Reserves weekend but there's also additional training, drill nights and annual camp as well as courses.

It's stressful and busy, but I'm not badly off.

A lot of Reserve OCs have full-time day jobs so I'm quite unusual in that way.

I also have more flexibility than a Regular but clearly I still need to plan everything around my family.

The main thing is keeping a balance between the military stuff and your home life; you have to juggle it all.

I worked all my life so when I decided to quit it was scary but being in the Reserve gave me that stability of still being in the work system.

I've never had any negative comments. Tumble Tots classes were a bit odd the first time as I was the only dad there, but I just got on with it.

Parenting is harder than soldiering as it is full-on with no breaks, and children don't always respond in the same way as soldiers. You can't just stop and have a break.

There are some transferrable skills, though – especially organisation and working to a timeline. Applying your leadership to the weekly schedule makes life a lot easier.

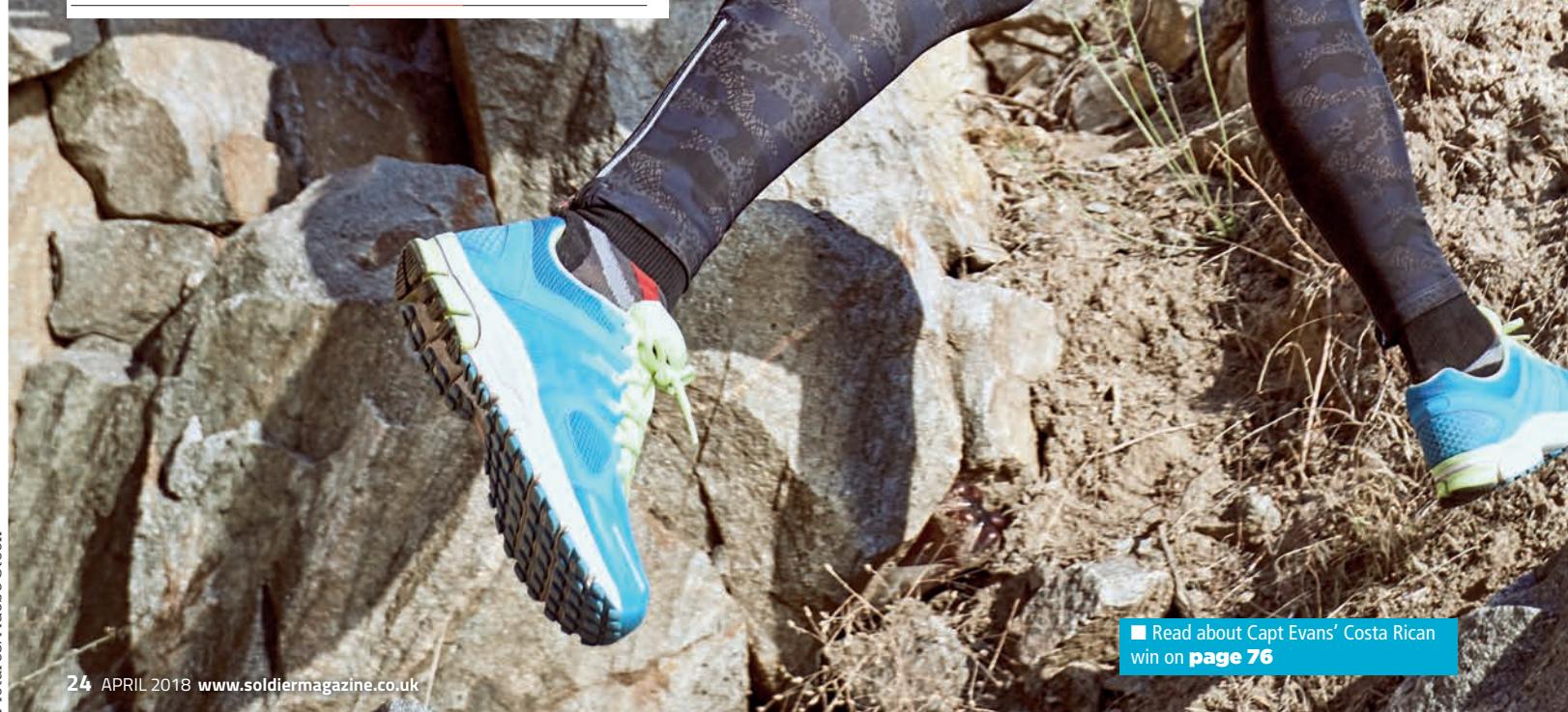
Things would be simpler if I just stopped the military side of life, but at the moment I like belonging to something and being effective. ■

”

Marathons proving mundane?



Endurance runner
Capt Tom Evans
(WG) shares some
expert advice on how to
progress from the 26-mile
mark to the **ultra** stage...



■ Read about Capt Evans' Costa Rican win on **page 76**

Strength and conditioning

Include two gym sessions in your training per week. Focus on ankle and knee stability, balance and core. This will help you keep the correct running posture in the race's closing stages.

Find a friend

It's great to have a group or a training partner to keep you company over the extended distances. There are good set-ups all over the country. A fellow athlete will also help you to dig deep when needed.

Don't neglect your speed

Gone are the days where you can be a competitive but slow ultra runner. Keep one or two high intensity sessions in your programme. For example, 8 x kilometre reps with two minutes' rest.

Progression is the key

Only increase your training by a maximum of ten per cent per week. You don't have to be smashing out 120-mile weeks to be an ultra runner. You should run within your limits.

Stay injury free

With an increased volume of training you have to be careful not to overdo it. There will be days when you feel stiff and don't want to run. You will become more in-tune with your body and, over time, know when to stop or lace up and carry on.



What should you do if you find yourself in debt?

Ben Nunn of RBL Moneyforce has some advice...

► KEEPING abreast of your finances is a key skill for Servicemen and women of all ranks. Planning ahead and ensuring your money lasts until payday are good disciplines that keep you in control of your life.

The best way of managing debt is, without doubt, to avoid it in the first place. RBL Moneyforce's budget planner is a great tool for doing this.

But if you do find yourself owing money, there are some practical things you can do...

► For more information visit www.moneyforce.org.uk

Face up to it

If you are in serious debt then you should **talk to somebody in your chain of command**. If the issue is likely to be short-term, you may be able to get an advance on your pay.

Prioritise payments

Look at what needs to be cleared first. A debt on a phone you no longer use, for example, is probably not what you need to look at initially. If you have two credit cards then the one with zero interest is less of a priority.

Don't add to the debt

Don't borrow more cash to pay off what you owe. Although it might seem like a good idea at the time, you are going to end up deeper in the red.

Keep talking

If you find yourself in long-term debt it makes sense to **negotiate with your creditors**. Don't block their numbers on your phone – you could come up with an affordable agreement and may even be able to get part of the debt written off.



“
I can see our guns
sitting right next to
another nation's and we
fire together
”

CHATTY CHATTY BANG BANG

What happens when fire support teams, command posts and gun crews from different countries talk to one another? Exercise Dynamic Front found out...

WHAT do you do if someone says "ogien dla efektu" in your earpiece? If you're involved in a serial where 100 artillery pieces from nine different countries are shooting 3,800 live shells – and there are 3,700 personnel out on the ground – you really need to know. It's Polish for "fire for effect".

The exercise in question was Dynamic Front – a US-led training package that brought together 26 Nato countries at Grafenwohr in Germany. And Europe's largest gathering of guns since the end of the Cold War.

The live-firing missions weren't tasked to different nations' batteries one after the other.

Instead, forces combined elements of their fire teams to create truly multinational strikes – with forward observers from one supplying data to the Joint Air Ground Integration Centre, which then formatted the information for another military's guns.

The aim was to get different nationalities working side-by-side across all artillery capabilities, from observers identifying strategic targets to the units taking aim on the ground.

It gave soldiers the chance to learn each other's protocols, while exercise planners assessed the procedural, human and technical challenges – including vital new digital tools (see page 30).

The British Army was represented by 1st Artillery



Brigade, which brought some 900 personnel, 20 guns, three multiple-launch rocket systems and three 81mm mortars, plus radar and surveillance equipment.

Embedded with them was a battery of Dana 152mm self-propelled howitzers from the Polish Army's 12th Mechanised Brigade, while a US Army airborne battery equipped with the American version of the light gun was integrated with 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery.

"This is the largest live-firing exercise that we take part in and higher control is being exercised too with interoperability at its heart," Col Hugh Baker, deputy commander of 1st Artillery Brigade, told *Soldier*.

"Our role is to support a US-led division but that is one of three such formations in a scenario where we are fighting a very large, well equipped enemy force."

"We have one Polish and two US artillery units under our command and they have been firing in support of one of our weapon-locating radars, picking up enemy fire."

"We also have Italian, German, and French regiments elsewhere which we could call upon."

For most of the gunners it was business as usual, but the sheer scale of proceedings impressed.

"I've been in the Army 16 years and I've never seen a show of force like this in one place before," said Bdr Frank Shaw (RHA), who was operating one of 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery's L118 light guns.

"In Afghanistan we found that other nations' observers might be working off different rules of engagement to ours."

"This exercise is all about connecting the dots and finding more effective ways of working together."

"The nitty gritty of command is being worked on all the time – it's a matter of progression and polishing that side of things off."

He added: "I can see our guns sitting right next to another nation's and we fire collectively."

"Bringing all of Nato together to create the firepower to defeat one large, common enemy makes a lot of sense to me."

With the organisation counting 29 members since Montenegro joined in 2017, the language barriers are potentially formidable.

But even when there are none, there can still be other lessons to learn.

Dynamic Front was kicked-off by 7 Para RHA dropping into the training area with the US Army's Assassin Battery from 4th Battalion, 319 Airborne Field Artillery Regiment.

"After landing we were tasked to support live fires and conduct a shoot-and-move serial," said Capt Brian Marek (US Army), officer commanding Assassin Battery.

"In the process we learnt a lot about the differences between the UK and the US in issuing fire orders."

"The way the UK does it is much more driven by the forward observers, who determine how many and what type of rounds are required for the target and pass that information up with their call for fires."

"By contrast, US observers provide a target description and our fire direction centre then decides what rounds are needed."

"So we had to decide how to translate a UK call for fire into a US order, and we got through that during rehearsals by putting our fire direction officers together with British forward observers so they could work out how they should be made."



For the UK's 1st Artillery Brigade, however, the high levels of interoperability on offer were not the only valuable dividend from this outing.

"It has been a perfect environment to develop commander Field Army's back to basics ethos and he's said to be very interested in the statistics we have recorded from this package," said Col Baker.

"The fact our soldiers have been operating in temperatures of minus 20 degrees Celsius while out here, when even our diesel was freezing up, is testament to the impressive levels of junior leadership we have."

"But we also moved our personnel and assets 1,500km in around 24 hours' driving time – including a Channel crossing – and that is an achievement too."

"An expeditionary type of deployment to this part of Europe in significant numbers reinforces the fact that Nato stands strong."

"It also reassures our belief that, as a brigade, we can deploy our many capabilities quickly to support allies on the continent, wherever they may be." ■



IN NUMBERS

1st Artillery Brigade on
Ex Dynamic Front

6

AS90s of 19
Regiment, RA

Light guns
from
3 RHA and
7 Para RHA

14

3 multiple-
launch rocket
systems from
19 Regiment,
RA

Desert Hawk
unmanned
aerial system
from 32
Regiment, RA

1

81mm mortars
operated by 2nd
Battalion, The
Mercian Regiment



“It’s been great working with the British Army. I have been asking a lot of questions about your rules of firing and computer maps because of the differences in the measurements so that if we had to use them when fighting together we could still hit the targets.”

Capt Pawel Lewandowski
12th Mechanised Brigade,
Polish Army



“I volunteered to supplement 176 Battery of 19 Regiment as a command post detachment commander, operating the multiple-launch rocket system. Deploying on these types of exercises makes sense – particularly as our battery works closely with Regular counterparts.”

Bdr Adam Falloon
101 Regiment, RA



“It’s been a learning curve; I’ve never been involved in such a multinational exercise before. Learning how our acoustic sensor posts work in different kinds of environments and weather was a challenge, especially in the cold conditions.”

Gnr Sarah Anderson
5th Regiment, RA

SHORT SHOTS

Did Exercise Dynamic Front hit the target?

“I’ve been in the Army for nine years and I’ve never been on an exercise with so many nations. I’ve been to Canada and Kenya, but we were just honing our own jobs so it’s good to test ourselves on an exercise of this size. The French artillery came over to see how our AS90s work and I like finding out more about other allied armies.”

Gnr Saeli Masere
19 Regiment, RA



“This is my first big exercise with 3 RHA and it’s been an eye-opener. Due to the scale of the package there’s been a lot of waiting around for live missions but then suddenly it’s all go. The interoperability angle has been interesting.”

Gnr Kirsten Robb
3rd Regiment, RHA

GIGABYTE GUNS

New digital communications are making joint artillery fires even more lethal

ONE of the major focuses of Exercise Dynamic Front was digital communications.

Virtually every army has a different fire control system, so if a Nato-wide artillery force is ever to achieve its potential more member countries must be able to combine their networks.

That process has already started thanks to a state-of-the-art software interface called the Artillery Systems Cooperation Activities (ASCA).

This allows different nations to fuse their field artillery and fire command and control networks, meaning joint fires can be coordinated purely digitally.

In turn, this makes them more efficient by mitigating language barriers and streamlining the process.

It also means each member nation's artillery elements – fire support teams, weapon locating units, command posts and guns – can potentially be combined to conduct a single fire mission.

Nato nations currently using ASCA include France, Germany, Italy, Turkey and the US.

Dynamic Front was vital in proving that the British Army's next-generation fire control system will be able to plug seamlessly into this network.

"This is the first exercise where we have live-fired using our concept demonstrator software and it's allowed us to be part of ASCA," Brig John Mead, commanding officer of 1st Artillery Brigade, told *Soldier*.

"The technology we have is now proven with simulated and live-firing scenarios, and the results from this week will be taken to our engineers to ensure our next fire control package is fully optimised when we start using it in 2019."

Britain committed to ASCA two years ago and from June it will be the lead nation for the system, which changes every year on a rotational basis.

"We will host the annual conference, assess who joins ASCA next and look at how to improve protocol," explained Brig Mead.

"More Nato nations want to be part of this system and an increasing number see the benefits of joining up fires in this way because collectively we have very significant capabilities.

"It's about the network." ■

“Collectively we have very significant capabilities”



STAYING STREETWISE

Urban ops
bolstered by
new-look
instructors'
course

IT'S a dangerous, personal game of life and death – and these troops must learn its nuances. Amid the thickening walls of smoke the exercising soldiers move rapidly towards the next group of buildings, their familiar silhouettes moulded into unusual shapes by the ladders and grappling irons they carry.

Then there is the shouting and the rattling exchange of mock rounds as they come under contact.

The drifting haze dissipates enough to see one team approach a downstairs window and begin their entry drills, disappearing one-by-one into the building.

The hollow echo of sporadic automatic rifle fire rings out as the skirmish continues unseen from room to room.

These manoeuvres on Sennybridge Training Area in mid-Wales show both the intensity and complex nature of fighting in towns.





“
These skills
are being
taken to a new
generation of
troops
”



As well as facing concealed foes, troops have a responsibility to prevent harm to civilians while protecting themselves and colleagues.

With current thinking suggesting that this type of fighting could be a feature of future conflict, it is crucial that soldiers are equipped for it.

Thankfully, this exercise – part of the newly rewritten urban operations instructors' course run by the Infantry Battle School – is embedding up-to-date tactics into the core of the Army.

The package brings NCOs and more junior officers from the teeth arms together, all of them learning crucial disciplines to pass on to colleagues in their units.

With the latest Nato doctrine at its heart, the training is firmly focused on working with allies.

“Our students are in the second of their three weeks here and they are beginning to put into practice some of the theory they have learnt,” course chief instructor WO2 Mike Hughes (Gren Gds) tells *Soldier* during the manoeuvres.

“There are several cap badges attending – ranging from the Infantry and members of the Army Air Corps to tank commanders and gunners.

“All must integrate if operations are to be successful.

“There is also representation from the Infantry Training



Although we touched on the topic a little at Sandhurst, this is the first time I've really focused on operating in an urban environment. You might think fighting room-to-room is bread and butter infantry stuff, but it needs a combined arms approach. Bringing everyone together gives us an extra pool of knowledge and different perspectives.



Lt Toby Robinson, RHA



It's been great meeting other officers and NCOs, considering how to control urban operations and learning from one another. As an armoured reconnaissance regiment, the Royal Dragoon Guards often operates on its own.

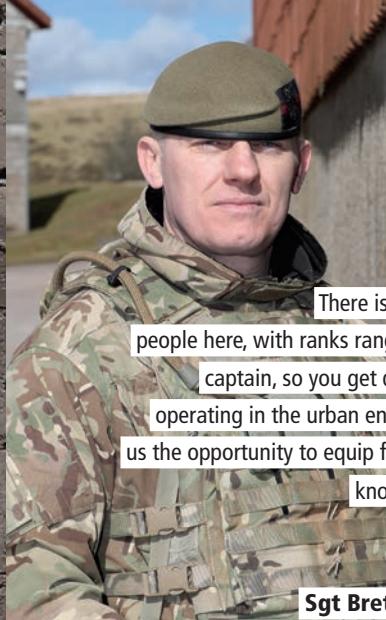


Lt Toby Fuller, RDG



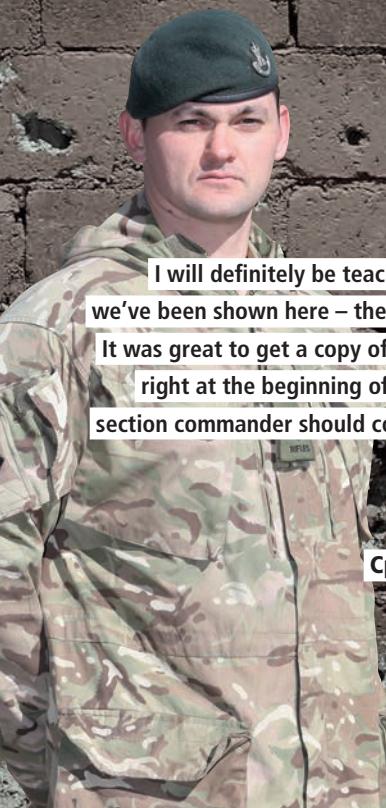
Up close and personal

Soldier asked students on the course what they were taking away from the urban ops training



There is a really mixed bunch of people here, with ranks ranging from corporal up to captain, so you get different perspectives on operating in the urban environment. This will give us the opportunity to equip future soldiers with fresh knowledge to take forward.

Sgt Brett Gunning, Gren Gds



I will definitely be teaching my soldiers what we've been shown here – the drills are really good. It was great to get a copy of the relevant doctrine right at the beginning of the course too. Every section commander should come down and do this – you learn a lot.

Cpl Jamie Johns, Rifles



FACT FILE Cilieni Village

Constructed
1988 - 1990

Location
Senta, Brecon

Features
Authentic European urban environment, TES capability, live-firing facilities

Recent upgrades
Rhino rig, cameras, structural enhancements



● Soldiers at Cilieni Village now have the opportunity to refine their manual method of entry techniques – care of a new piece of kit that was recently installed as part of an upgrade.

The Rhino rig features a door that can be adjusted to increasingly difficult levels of robustness – presenting a challenge for troops attempting to breach it.

Personnel can be confronted by obstacles as simple as improvised wooden jams to multiple locks, which require a decent technique and some serious elbow grease to dislodge them.

As well as giving troops a chance to hone their abilities, Rhino also demonstrates how simple enemy tactics to barricade themselves in can hold up those clearing a building.



Centre in Catterick, which means these skills are now being taken directly back to a new generation of troops."

The package is open to ranks from corporal to captain.

Students embark on several days of classroom lessons before heading to Cilieni Village – a fighting in built-up areas facility on the training ground – where they put their room and subterranean clearance drills into practice.

Officers are tested with an operational order during the second week and conduct a planning exercise using simulation.

All students then build on their learning by moving to Copehill Down – where Challenger 2 tanks and Warrior armoured vehicles add a further layer of complexity.

"We can accommodate all three Armed Forces on this course – we have already had the Royal Air Force here and interest from the Royal Marines," says WO2 Hughes.

"Our urban teams have also worked closely alongside French and German counterparts with both nations attending Brecon – in turn we then deployed to France last year after being invited to attend the military's close-quarter battle package."

The focus on building strength in depth throughout the British Army – and on interoperability with allies – is clear throughout the instructors' course, with its key thrust on developing a strong body of troops able to pass on their knowledge of urban operations.

WO2 Dale Bennison (Gren Gds) is due to take over as course chief instructor when this issue goes to press.

"We need to get the protocols into the veins of guys coming in," he says

It is a view shared by Infantry Battle School commanding officer Lt Col Shaun Chandler (RGR), who is equally confident the right approach is being taken.

"From little acorns, big trees will grow," he concludes. "We are definitely going in the right direction with this course." ■

Rhino holds its ground



You
Tube

Be (,feik 'nju:z)
noun: false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting

fake
news

How the information war could affect you on operations...

DID you hear the one about the morgue employee who was accidentally cremated while taking a nap? Or about the Tokyo restaurant that serves up human meat?

If you did, chances are it was enough to get your fake news antennae well and truly twitching.

They were just two among thousands of outlandish and often gruesome fictitious articles doing the rounds online in the past 12 months.

The phenomenon has become so familiar that *Collins Dictionary* even named the term its word of the year for 2017.

From cannibalism hoaxes and made-up celebrity scandals to reports designed to stir up racial hatred or push political agendas, it seems no sphere is immune.

And neither is the military.

In November 2016, a story appeared on social media that appeared to show British troops brawling in Latvia.



→ Defence sources reacting in the UK press suggested the incident had been set up in a deliberate attempt by Russian media to portray Nato personnel as thugs.

The following February rumours began circulating that German soldiers had gang-raped a Russian teenager while deployed in Lithuania.

When no evidence could be found that a crime had taken place the finger of suspicion was again pointed at the Kremlin.

Similar stories preceded Russia's incursion into the Ukraine in 2014.

False accounts spread that ethnic Russians were being targeted or harassed by Crimean citizens – an effort to justify Moscow's intervention as necessary for the protection of its nationals overseas.

In a sign of how seriously the government is taking the fake news threat, senior military figures have become more outspoken about the weaponization of information.

Speaking at the opening of the new Defence Cyber School at Shrivenham's Defence Academy (page 11), Gen Sir Chris Deverell, Commander Joint Forces Command, emphasised the onslaught of misinformation was just one strand of a sustained multi-pronged attack by Russia.

"What they seek to do is to steal, plant, manipulate, distort and destroy our information," he said.

"It's part of their doctrine.

"They seek an advantage over us – that's why they want to interfere in the US elections; that's why they have a tendency to spread propaganda and fake news; that's why they sponsor or conduct cyber attacks against regimes who oppose their ends.

"They are quite honestly capable of anything. We've got to be really on our guard and able to defend ourselves."

Peter Quentin, Research Fellow for Land Warfare at the Royal United Services Institute, agreed that churning out made-up stories was part of a broad programme of disruptive military and political activities designed to distract Russian audiences from domestic issues and restore the country's status as a great power.

"Russia's information warfare is just another front in a 'retro Cold War,'" he explained.

"But the current threat is more multi-dimensional, in both its location and approach, aiming not to seize territory but re-establish itself at the top table of international affairs.

"That is why Russia sows distrust within and between Western states, targeting those organisations like Nato which represent the status quo in global order.

"It is done by discrediting our democratic institutions with a barrage of fake news, the truth of which is irrelevant so long as it serves to make the public question them and disrupt our own cohesion.

"It's about undermining the very concept of objective truth.

"Everything is overblown, nothing is as it seems and the facts get lost – it's a white noise approach and it's very hard to defend against."

Fake news may be a trending topic, but the concept is far from new.

Psychological operations and deception have long been a

True lies?

Follow these tips from FullFact.org, the UK's independent fact-checking charity, if you're unsure about a story...



Be sceptical of headlines

False news stories often have catchy headlines, all in capital letters with exclamation marks. If shocking claims in the headline sound unbelievable, they probably are.

Watch for unusual formatting

Many false news sites have misspellings or awkward layouts. Read carefully if you see these things.

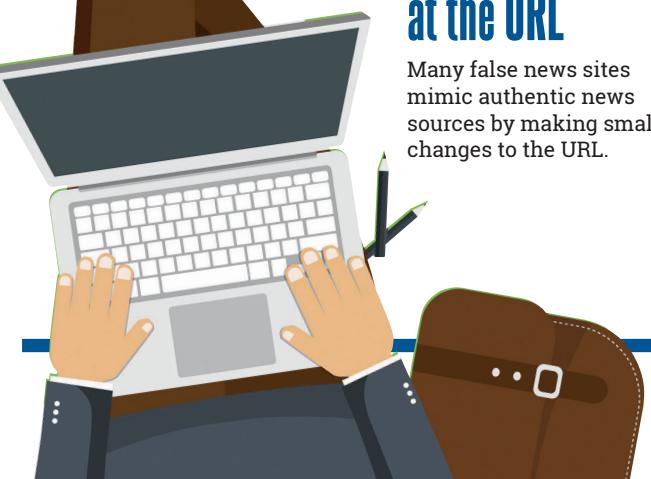


Inspect the dates

False news stories may contain timelines that make no sense, or even dates that have been altered.

Look closely at the URL

Many false news sites mimic authentic news sources by making small changes to the URL.



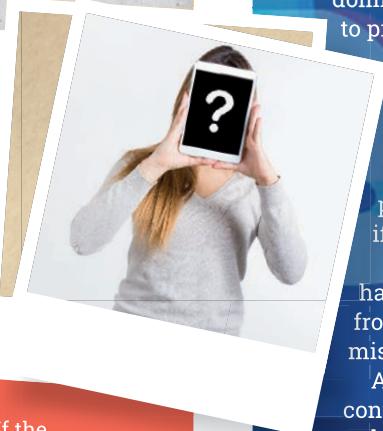


Is the story a joke?

Some false news stories are intentionally humorous or satirical but these can be hard to identify. Check whether the source is known for parody, and whether the report's details and tone suggest it may be just for fun.

Consider the photos

False news stories often contain manipulated images or videos, or authentic photos that have been taken out of context. Search for the picture to verify where it came from.



Look at other reports

If no other news source is reporting the same story, it may indicate that it is fake. If the details are reported by multiple sources you trust, it's more likely to be true.



Investigate the source

Ensure that the story is written by a source you trust, with a reputation for accuracy. If the report comes from an unfamiliar organisation, check their "about" section to learn more. Also, check the author's sources to confirm they are truthful. Lack of evidence or reliance on unnamed experts may indicate a false story.

Think critically about the stories you read, and only share news that you know to be credible.

core military tactic – think inflatable tanks distracting the Germans prior to the Normandy landings or even the famous Trojan horse of Greek mythology.

However, Quentin believes that what is different today is that the lines between the tactical and strategic, military and civilian have become blurred.

"All Service personnel are taught values and standards and the law of armed conflict as part of their mandatory training," he explained.

"That's the legal basis for everything the British Army does and covers principles such as military necessity, proportionality of force and protection of non-combatants.

"Fake news operates outside of those rules. It's not proportionate and no precautions are taken to minimise collateral damage – in the modern information environment, dominated by the Internet and smartphones, it is impossible to prevent non-target audiences being exposed.

"We tend to follow protocol and we put stock in truth.

"The reason the Russians are so effective at this is that they tend to act first and worry about begging forgiveness later.

"When I speak to troops they think the Russians are playing the same game as us, but actually they don't care if they create an outright lie."

To further complicate matters the term "fake news" has become a catch-all phrase to describe everything from propaganda, spin, conspiracy theories, journalistic mistakes or even reporting that people simply don't like.

And while some stories are quite obviously false, the more convincing ones blend fact and fiction to sow uncertainty and create an environment where it is increasingly hard to tell truth from lies.

A major in the Intelligence Corps, whose name and place of work we are withholding on security grounds, described fake news as a spectrum.

"You've got the whopping lies on one side, all the way down to what is essentially true but focusing on the negatives of a certain story, and everything in between," he said.

"So it becomes very difficult to define – you can look at certain news outlets and say those are fake news channels, depending on your politics.

"If you start to read into stuff and believe everything you see it dents the credibility of traditional news sources, and potentially peoples' faith and trust in the chain of command as well.

"And on an individual level, if you become susceptible to fake news then your decisions about things like which bank to deal with or what product to buy could be compromised – it's a gradual process."

Quentin agreed: "We're so used to having reliable media – especially in the UK – so we tend to swallow things whole and believe what we see in print.

"It's also not the case that the so-called digital natives are savvier.

"There are studies that suggest that when



→ you're younger you're more susceptible to such influences.

"We talk about the thinking soldier but that's no longer enough. Modern operations require a critical-thinking soldier. "Personnel must become more resilient and analytical and learn to question everything when they look at a story.

"Troops aren't just deployed in their military capacity these days, they are deployed for their values and standards; they are ambassadors as much as soldiers."

Efforts have been under way for some time to educate British troops about the risks of fake news.

Servicemen and women deploying to Eastern Europe as part of Nato's enhanced forward presence are now routinely warned during intelligence briefs about Russian attempts to subvert public opinion.

Cadets at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst are also made aware of misinformation and how to deal with it as part of Exercise Agile Influence.

The daylong package simulates a complex operation in which online, print and broadcast media publish a variety of material

— some of it more reliable than others.

But away from the fictional exercise scenario, the scale of the real-life phenomenon is sobering.

A recent study by scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that falsehoods spread faster and further on Twitter than facts.

In their analysis of 125,000 stories, tweeted more than 4.5 million times in total, the researchers discovered that reports classified as untrue by independent fact-checking organisations routinely diffused to between 1,000 and 100,000 people, whereas those categorised as genuine rarely reached more than 1,000 users.

In other words, made up stories are much more likely to end up going viral.

However, the challenge goes much deeper than simply alerting people to the existence of the problem.

As the Intelligence Corps officer added, denial can make audiences surprisingly stubborn.

"People really don't like being told they're being manipulated," he said.

"So it's often counterproductive to point out to someone that something is fabricated — they might respond in quite a defensive way.

"The only way you can fight it is to get people not wanting to be lied to in the first place; to get them thinking about what they're reading and fact-checking things. But that's difficult.

"It takes effort to analyse and be critical about what you see while you're scrolling quickly through your newsfeed."

The long-term impact of fake news may not yet be clear, nor is there an obvious solution as to how — or even if — it can be tackled effectively.

The government recently announced it is setting up a special unit to deal with the issue and a debate has been rumbling for some time about whether internet providers and platforms such as Facebook and YouTube should do more to prevent fake material spreading.

In the meantime it seems that we, as individuals, need to wise up to the threat and be more discerning when viewing or sharing news online. ■



“
Personnel must learn
to question everything
when they look at a story
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HOPE NEVER SEE IT AGAIN

Nuclear test veterans reflect on the lasting legacy of their Cold War mission





“
IT CAME UP
LIKE A PERFECT
MUSHROOM
AND ON TOP IT
WAS GLOWING
”

Main picture: The mushroom cloud of a hydrogen bomb ascends into the sky during a test over Christmas Island

Picture: Imperial War Museum

Interview: Becky Clark Pictures: Peter Davies and Martin Jones

THE photographs look like holiday snaps from a bygone era.

Young men relax on an idyllic beach fringed with palm trees; the surf is a vivid blue.

“Someone had just caught a fish there,” says Eric Barton (ex-RE, pictured below right) pointing to one of the grainy coloured images stored on his laptop.

“We would catch and cook them all the time.”

Another black and white picture shows a group of men posing with different musical instruments.

“That was the band we formed,” explains former Royal Navy chef Doug Hern (pictured below left).

“I played the guitar and we used to entertain the troops stationed on the island.”

But closer inspection of the collection reveals that all was not well in paradise.

Barton calls up another photo.

“That’s one of the explosions,” he continues.

On his computer screen a vast white mushroom cloud towers into the azure sky, dwarfing anything else in the frame.

The picture is as sinister as it is extraordinary, and the story it tells nothing short of remarkable.

In the 1950s and 60s Barton and Hern were among thousands of British troops sent to Christmas Island to take part in atomic testing as the UK, along with other Western allies, raced to develop its nuclear capabilities.

A vehicle mechanic by trade, Barton’s task was to ensure the smooth running of the generator and electrical systems during Operation Dominic, a series of American-led detonations in 1962.

He recalls how he arrived at the remote Pacific atoll straight out of training and with no idea of the sights he was about to witness.

“When the bomb went off you weren’t allowed to look at the actual flash,” he says.

“They would sit us behind our billets, facing the other way, but after the initial explosion you could stand up and watch this fantastic thing – it was unbelievable.

“I’d never seen anything like it before and I sincerely hope I never see it again.

“It came up like a perfect mushroom and on top it was glowing. It was just incredible.”

The experiments were designed to assess the effects of atomic radiation on equipment, infrastructure and provisions as well as personnel.

Hern was present for the first British tests in 1957 – codenamed Grapple – which ranged in size up to a maximum blast of 3.5 megatons.

Positioned on a spit of sand 19 miles away from ground zero, he and his comrades would turn their backs, adopt a foetal position and cover their eyes with their hands.

“The heat is like you’ve opened a baker’s oven and it hits you in the back,” he continues.

“But it gets hotter and hotter as it goes through your whole body until it’s unbearable on your shins – you’ve basically been microwaved.

“And even through your closed



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Above: Sappers on Christmas Island during the H-bomb trials, 1959 **Below right:** A soldier from the Army's Mobile Defence Corps dressed in protective clothing carries a contamination survey meter in 1956 and SSgt Mitch Meehan (RTR), an instructor at the Defence CBRN Centre, in current full protective clothing

Pictures: *Soldier* archive

eyes you could see your bones like a pink X-ray.

"With each detonation our clothing changed.

"I started out in blue overalls and anti-flash gear and by the time I saw the fifth I was in shorts, flip-flops and a bush hat."

Despite being a trained cook, Hern found himself employed as a fisherman, obtaining samples from the sea for the scientists to test.

Part of his role also saw him cleaning up a sector of the coast, sometimes wading up to his waist in dead fish and birds that had washed ashore after the blasts.

According to Hern, if troops happened to cut themselves while on the island they would experience flu-like symptoms, nausea and headaches, and the site of the wound would ulcerate and turn blue.

And in the 60 or so years since, many of the veterans have reported a range of perplexing health problems, not just in themselves but in their children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren.

Barton, now aged 76, has also had cancer and was diagnosed with epilepsy.

Hern's daughter died of a rare form of cancer in 1977, aged 13.

Of the 22,500 personnel who took part in the tests, some 3,000 are still alive today.

Hern and Barton are part of the British Nuclear Test Veterans' Association, a charity that supports those affected by the missions, as well as promoting research and public education.

They feel there is little acknowledgment of what they went through – a campaign for compensation

has so far been unsuccessful and they continue to push for official medallic recognition.

"We are the only people other than the Japanese and the other nationalities who took part, who stood there and witnessed and felt the power of one of these detonations," emphasises Hern.

"Even from a distance it's not a pleasant experience.

"It doesn't leave you. You carry it with you for the whole of your life."

Fortunately for humankind, these weapons of mass destruction – many times more powerful than the detonations at Hiroshima and Nagasaki – were never deployed in anger.

Following the tests various sections of Christmas Island were sealed off for decades and as late as 2006 military debris was still being removed.

This month a group of British veterans will return to the atoll to dedicate a memorial to the soldiers of all nations who were put in harm's way in the name of scientific progress.

Even today, nearly 30 years after the end of the Cold War, their stories must surely stand as a stark reminder for those in power to consign the dark days of nuclear brinkmanship to the past. ■

PAST MEETS PRESENT

▲ THE British nuclear test veterans may feel like their contribution to the arms race has largely been forgotten, but their legacy lives on in the skills and drills of the men and women serving today.

SSgt Mitch Meehan (RTR) is an instructor at the Defence Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centre at Winterbourne Gunner in Wiltshire.

"I learnt about the history in training and we still teach it now," says the 38-year-old.

"From the very first tests to Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the later experiments in the Cold War, all of that helped to develop the knowledge we have today about safety and the characteristics and effects of a nuclear explosion."

The senior NCO adds that the idea of putting people, even with modern protective clothing, anywhere near an atomic blast is, of course, completely alien today.

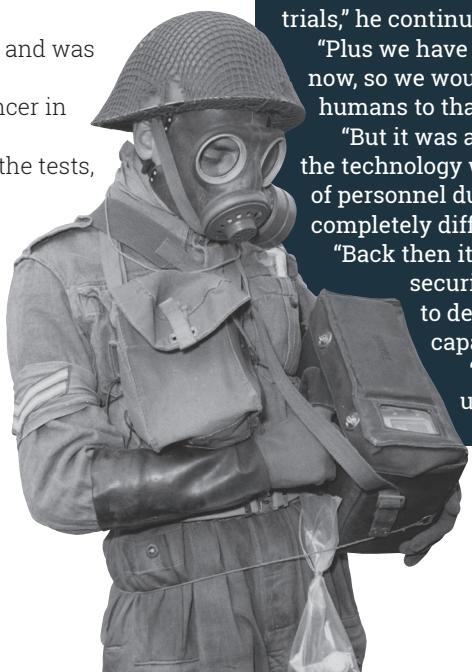
"We understand so much more thanks to those trials," he continues.

"Plus we have sensors, cameras and detectors now, so we would never need to subject humans to that kind of exposure."

"But it was a different era. For a start the technology wasn't there but the mindset of personnel during that period was also completely different."

"Back then it was vital to national security; they were helping to develop our weapons capability."

"They're really the unsung heroes."



MUSTER RHYMES

Soldiers showcase their lyrical brilliance

THE results of the British Army Poetry Competition have been released – and its organisers say the initiative has raised the curtain on some promising new wordsmiths.

More than 600 entries were received – providing a tough task for judges shortlisting the work, who were impressed with both serving and civilian scribes.

Aspiring poets were asked to submit their words on the theme of "writing Armistice" to coincide with the centenary of the end of the First World War.

Poetry has long been used as a way for soldiers to convey the highs and lows of military life, and the work of writers like Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen is among the defining literature of the last century.

Army arts engagement lead Lt Col Jo Young (RLC), whose team organised the competition with sponsorship from the Museum of Army Medicine, said entrants had ranged from first-timers

to veteran writers.

She told *Soldier*: "We had poems put through from children as young as eight.

"Across the board the quality has been good – and it's impressive that all of the entrants, regardless of age, had something to say on the subject."

The contest had three categories – under 18s, over 18s and serving personnel.

There was also a special commendation for a poem about military medicine.

Lt Col Young said the event, due to be repeated, heralded greater collaboration between the Service and the arts community.

She added that the *Five Soldiers* dance tour (shown right), first performed at last year's Edinburgh Fringe, had already attracted interest from other venues.

The Aldershot-based Reservist continued: "We are looking at further collaboration with theatre groups, dance groups and literary festivals.

"Our aim is to reach areas of society that might not engage as fully with us.

"We have some talented people serving – for example, great photographers and musicians as well.

"So we want to see how the arts can benefit the 21st century Army."

The prizegiving will be held on April 28 at the National Army Museum, London. ■



Lt Col Jo Young, RLC





ARMY POETRY COMPETITION: THE WINNERS

Under 18s:

Lucie Stanfield
Truce

Over 18s:

Isabel Palmer
Shell Shock

Serving soldier (including Reservists):

Pte Thomas Waghorn (RAVC)
Through the Mud, Through the Rain and Falling Snow

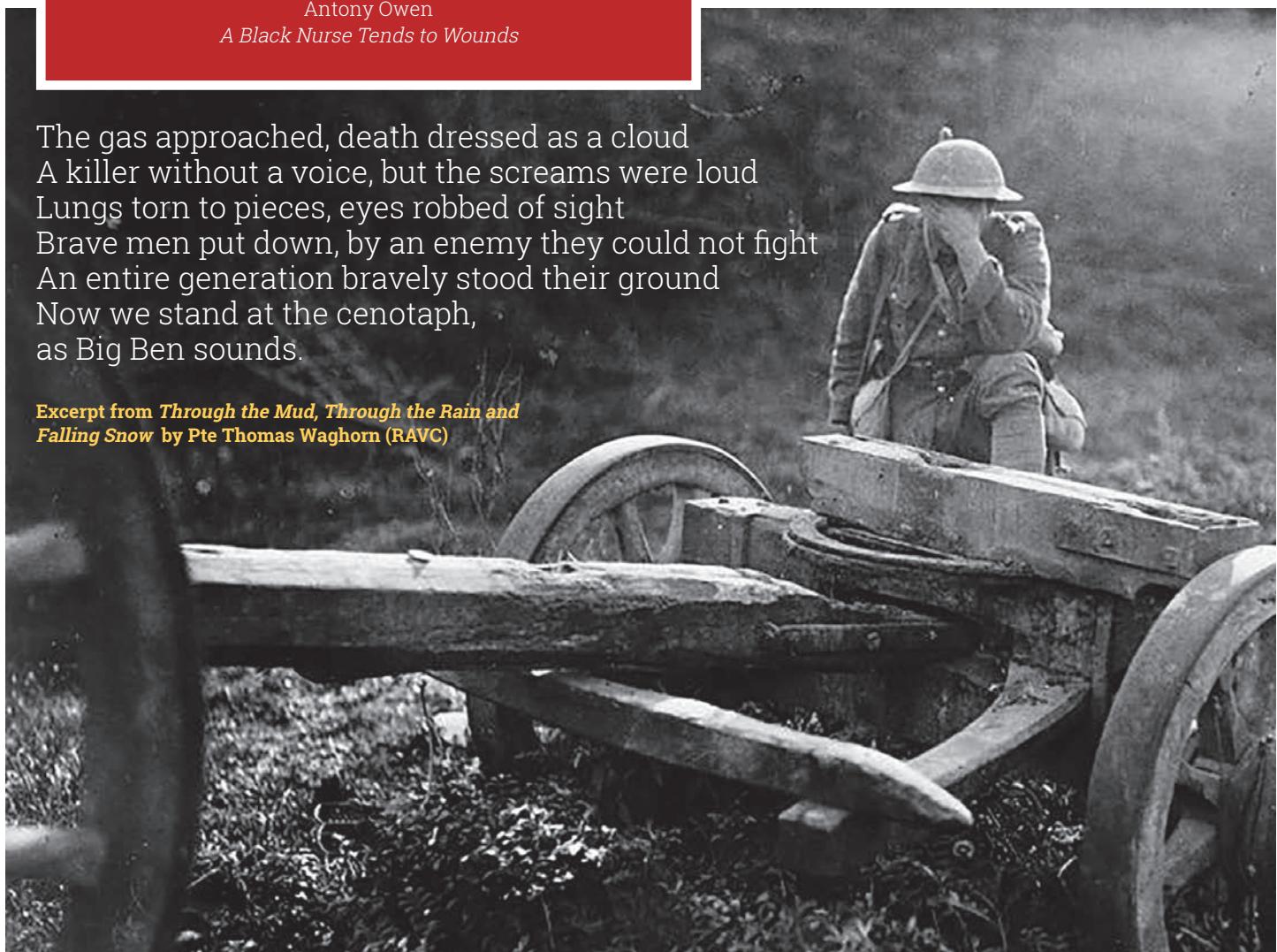
Special commendation:

Antony Owen
A Black Nurse Tends to Wounds



The gas approached, death dressed as a cloud
A killer without a voice, but the screams were loud
Lungs torn to pieces, eyes robbed of sight
Brave men put down, by an enemy they could not fight
An entire generation bravely stood their ground
Now we stand at the cenotaph,
as Big Ben sounds.

Excerpt from *Through the Mud, Through the Rain and Falling Snow* by Pte Thomas Waghorn (RAVC)





'Why can't I bridge the gap?'

AFTER 26 years of service I left the Corps of Royal Engineers in 2014. I would never have left the Army if I'd had the opportunity to stay but my time was served and that was it.

Fortunately, I managed to remain in uniform on full-time Reserve service (FTRS) and was then informed that former Regular personnel could rejoin certain corps and trades.

I was delighted to see the post of Royal Engineer logistics specialist – supervisor OR7 advertised, but was soon brought back down to earth as it said applicants had to be medically fully deployable.

I left the Army as medically limited deployable (MLD) and probably served on more tours and operations in this state than when fully fit.

Personnel who are qualified to do this job aren't growing on trees and I still have plenty to offer, so why am I being penalised because of a medical status and injury sustained while serving?

Surely, if I was able to complete half of my career in this condition I'm still able to serve now? – SSgt John Williams, RE

Maj Ali Smith, SO2 Soldier Policy, Department of Manning (Army), replies: It is always good to hear from soldiers who've enjoyed their Regular service, especially when they feel they have more to offer before they hang up their uniform.

Under current Manning policy personnel who serve for 24 years are classed as having completed a full career. Only a small number of troops, normally with specialist skills, will be offered further service and this depends on the prevailing situation at the time.

Full details on the mechanisms for granting this can be found in

2017DIN01-109.

There remains the possibility of former Regular soldiers who have completed a full career rejoining and completing the balance of a 30-year engagement, subject to a vacancy and successful application.

Over the last few years FTRS personnel have sometimes been used to mitigate areas where there has been manning pressure, which can be beneficial for both the Army and the individual.

Recently, there has been a drive to increase the numbers of Regular rejoinders, including introducing a £10,000 bounty to be given to those returning to specific cohorts of trades.

Additionally, the official Army vacancies list on the Army homepage of the defence intranet is updated monthly to advertise transfer opportunities within the Regular Army as it is preferable for a soldier to move to a different role than leave the Service.

The specific criteria required to either rejoin or transfer applicants for each trade is subject to individual cap badge policy.

The Corps of Royal Engineers require logistic specialist transfer or rejoin applicants to be fully deployable for the role in which they will be employed.

However, it is possible that there are other positions in the Army which would accept MLD applicants, especially if individuals are prepared to rejoin at a lower rank than previously held.

These policies are subject to periodic revision, so may change in the future.

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Footwear request given the boot

AFTER three deployments I have a good selection of desert footwear and a decent overview of types of boots available in brown.

I dislike models with a Gore-Tex lining which I can only tolerate in the coldest, wettest conditions as my feet usually overheat and become prickly.

When I went to our quartermaster to be issued with new brown boots, I requested a pair of the cheapest unlined Magnum Desert Patrols, the same as the quartermaster was wearing, but was informed I was not entitled and given a pair of more expensive Gore-Tex-lined Haix instead.

I explained my problem and was told there was no alternative available and if I needed special issue boots I would have to produce a medical certificate.

Where's the sense in that? – **Maj Keith Tween, RLC**

Lt Col Simon Blake, S01 Logistic Commodities, Logistic Support, Army Headquarters, replies: Constructive feedback on clothing and footwear is always welcome.

To assist all Service personnel, there is a formally recognised process of fault reporting using the **MoD F1197 Defect Report** where it has been found that an item is not fit for purpose.

Defence Equipment and Support are constantly under pressure to procure value-for-money items for Servicemen and women, balanced against any compromise to both capability and usability.

In this case, both types of issued temperate weather high liability combat boots are virtually identical in cost.

The unit quartermaster department was clearly not stocked or had insufficient time to provide the alternative Altberg Defender.

The staff, however, were correct in stating that warm weather low liability boots are only issued to entitled individuals or units deploying into warm or hot weather environments overseas.

This footwear is less costly but, importantly, not designed for the rigours of the UK climate.

Also, it's not recommended practice for officers and soldiers to use boots passed on by colleagues because their integrity, performance and fit cannot be guaranteed.

The full combat boot range has undergone extensive field trialling and is broadly supported across the Field Army.

The next procurement round of this kit will be less expensive and so will deliver even more cost benefits to defence – and they will have been subjected to extensive testing.

“
There
was no
alternative
”

‘MY RESETTLEMENT IS UNSETTLING ME’

● I HAVE completed nearly 20 years of service and as I'm on versatile engagement I've been told I cannot start my resettlement process until my 23-year point.

This means I miss out on two years' worth of resettlement, a factor that wasn't pointed out to me when I signed up for this – and everybody else I have spoken to who is in the same boat has a similar opinion.

Why don't we receive the identical resettlement time to people serving 22 years?

Surely we shouldn't be punished for serving an extra period. – **Sgt Matthew French, RE**

Maj Ali Smith, S02 Soldier Policy, Department of Manning (Army), replies: Entitlement to resettlement provisions begins two years before leaving the Army. As a result, soldiers who remain on legacy 22-year engagements may commence resettlement after 20 years of service, and those on the versatile engagement (full) 24-year arrangements may do so after 22 years of service.

Hence, the time available to take advantage of resettlement activities is the same for soldiers on both engagements.

For those who choose to terminate early, the resettlement entitlement depends on length of service, and in normal circumstances is completed within the notice period.

Full details of this policy are contained in **JSP 534**.

COURSE CORRECTION FOR A REGULAR-TURNED-RESERVIST

● I WAS a Regular soldier for 22 years and reached the rank of warrant officer, leaving in November 2010. In April 2013 I joined the Reserve as a staff sergeant and have been told I must attend the warrant officer command, leadership and management (CLM) part one course if I wish to become a substantive WO2.

On JPA it can be seen that I attended and passed both parts of this package while I was a Regular.

To do it again would be a waste of time for me, the instructors and my civilian employer. – **SSgt Shaun Neath, RLC**

Maj Jim Crompton, S02 Soldier Policy, Individual Development Branch, responds:

Field Army Command Group issued direction on February 14, 2018 to all units confirming that, once an individual has completed CLM part one successfully in the Regular or Reserve and completion has been recorded as a competency on JPA, the individual is qualified for substantive promotion and does not need to re-attend training.

If you have this proof you do not need to do this course again.



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Lost your account card? No worries! Speak to your admin officer who will be able to provide you with your WelComE account number and a password to reset your PIN.

A Spitfire fighter plane is shown flying through a clear blue sky with white clouds. The plane is angled upwards, showing its underside and the cockpit where two figures are visible. The aircraft has a camouflage paint scheme with red, blue, and yellow markings on the tail and wings. The registration 'G-B27' is visible on the side.

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Feeling exposed:
Reservist's tour in
Afghanistan is not
recognised for ELC

“Where is the ‘one Army’ ethos?”

AM a Reservist almost nine months into a three-year full-time Reserve service (FTRS) stint at RAF Wyton following two years based at Chicksands.

Prior to that I served on Op Herrick.

My total mobilised service, including post-operational tour leave, is just under 12 months.

I recently enquired whether I would be entitled to enhanced learning credits (ELC) at the end of my current posting, on the basis that my total service would by then be around six years and recognising that I will surely need to reskill prior to returning to civilian life.

I was shocked to discover that while my FTRS service does indeed count towards ELC eligibility, the time spent on operations in Afghanistan does not, despite the fact that I was serving with the Regular Army during my mobilisation.

A Regular soldier would not be discriminated against in this manner.

Standard learning credits will be insufficient to provide me with the level of retraining needed after such a significant break from civilian life.

Can somebody please explain this anomaly as well as how it fits with the “one Army” ethos. – **Cpl John Wells, Int Corps**

Maj Carolyn Silva, Individual Development Branch, Army Headquarters, responds: Reserve personnel have different terms and conditions of service to their Regular counterparts and only FTRS personnel, non-Regular permanent staff (NRPS) and members of the Military Provost Guard Service

(MPGS) are eligible to accrue their time serving for ELC entitlement.

This scheme enables Regular troops to conduct personal and professional development throughout their career that not only enhances the value added to the Army but also allows them to develop skills they may not have had the opportunity to acquire by way of being in the Armed Forces.

The ELC programme recognises that with Reservists the Army is not the primary employer and those personnel are free to pursue development opportunities through their civilian role.

Your FTRS service is recognised by the ELC scheme but your time on Op Herrick is considered to be mobilised Reserve service and therefore in accordance with **JSP 822** does not count towards eligibility.

Part 1, section 6.5, paragraph 8 of that publication states: “FTRS, MPGS and NRPS may have elected to join the ELC scheme in the expectation of meeting the eligibility requirements, noting that:

- Eligibility calculations will only include that time on active service after April 1, 2000.
- Qualifying service may include a mix of Regular and non-Regular service periods and need not be continuous. It should be recorded on the non-continuous service form on the Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Services website and submitted with the registration application and with each ELC claim.”

RANT OF THE MONTH

Get it off your chest
and on social media



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

CBRN troops in Salisbury
have been in the spotlight on
Facebook...



Michael Haggan

Imagine what it would be like if this was a larger scale incident... or if they had been using a more extreme weapon. I just hope that the country is prepared to handle all situations with current and future funding.



Chrissy Lindsley

Thank God for the Army. You may not agree with recent wars we have become embroiled in but they are always there when we need them.



Les Pickering

Even when not in a theatre of war, our lads and lasses in the Armed Forces are still putting their lives on the line.



Martin Gough

Whenever Britain needs rescuing it is the military who are called in to sort out the mess. First class job – well done to all.



Jennifer Wiggins

Whenever there is a dirty job to be done it is the military who are called in to clean it up, regardless of the risks to their own lives. Well done and thank you.



Robert E. Bell

Great job lads and lasses.

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

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

Other Schools Results

5 QE College 85%

17 Faculty of QE 77%

68 Christ's Hospital Sch 57%

81 Monmouth School 55%

Cheltenham College 55%

Bromsgrove School 54%

Dauntsey's School 50%

Dean Close School 49%

114 Kingswood School 48%

143 Kingham Hill School 45%

Monkton Combe 42%

Gordon's School 36%

King's School Bruton 34%

Welbeck College 34%

239 King's Coll Taunton 31%

Stamford School 30%

Millfield School 25%

Barnard Castle School 21%

Licensed Vict Ascot 16%

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 Daily Telegraph. BUT, most importantly of all, we unashamedly also offer TLC - tender, loving care!



UK's Top 20 Independent Schools 2017 - % A*/A A-Level (Daily Telegraph)

Ranking of Schools taking boarders

Nationally Ranking all type schools

% A* / A A-Level

1	1	Cardiff Sixth Form College	91%
2	3	Perse School, Cambridge	87%
2	4	Westminster School, London	86%
3	5	King's College School (KCS)	86%
3	5	Queen Ethelburga's College	85%
6	6	Guildford Girls High School	85%
4	7	Concord College, Shrewsbury	84%
8	8	City of London Girls School	84%
9	9	Haberdashers' Aske's Boys	84%
10	10	St John's College, Cardiff	83%
11	11	King Edward's Birmingham,	82%
12	12	Magdalen College, Oxford	80%
13	13	North London Collegiate Sch	79%
14	14	Royal Grammar, Guildford	78%
15	15	Alleyn's School, Dulwich	77%
16	16	Haberdashers' Aske's Girls	77%
5	17	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	77%
6	18	Brighton College, Brighton	76%
7	19	St Mary's School Ascot, Ascot	75%
20	20	Hampton School, Hampton	73%



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winners: Martyn Bowen, 75 Engr Regt, Failsworth; Frank Johnstone, Worcester; Maria Lester, Droylsden; William Smith, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire; John Brooks, Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham.



DIARY

April 29: New memorial stone to be unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum, dedicated to those who served in The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire and its antecedents The West Yorkshire Regiment and The East Yorkshire Regiment. Tickets available via the regimental association.

May 5: Stoke-on-Trent Military Tattoo in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity at King's Hall, Kingsway. Doors open at 1730. Tickets are £10 from Music Mania, Hanley on 01782 206000. Information on VIP packages available on 01952 674323.

May 22 and 27: Guided walk at the National Memorial Arboretum National Forest Walking Festival. Admission £3.

June 2: Royal Military Police annual remembrance service and parade at the National Memorial Arboretum.

June 3: Ferryhill Veterans' Charity Show at Mainsforth Cricket Complex, Morrison Terrace, County Durham from 0900 to 1800.

June 15: Honourable Artillery Company flank companies' ball at Armoury House, City Rd, London EC1Y 2BQ. The theme is Shanghai Nights and guests are welcome by invite of HAC members. For more details visit www.hac.org.uk



DIRECTORY

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

Armed Forces Buddhist Society:
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www.afbs-uk.org

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

Armed Forces Muslim Association:
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Armed Services Advice Project:
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www.adviceasap.org.uk

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

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

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Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

Blesma, The Limbless Veterans:
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www.blesma.org

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

Care After Combat:
www.careaftercombat.org

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Forces Pension Society:
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Help for Heroes:
0845 673 1760 or 01980 846 459;
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Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
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Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01252 787574

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

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

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

PoppyScotland: 0131 557 2782;
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Regular Forces' Employment Association:
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Royal British Legion Scotland:
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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

ABN 26/18: The Windsor Leadership Trust

ABN 25/18: Race at Work Survey

DIN 2018DIN01-041: Short-term sickness absence management trial

DIN 2018DIN01-040: Civilian attendance at the advanced command and staff course

DIN 2018DIN01-038: Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr 2018

DIN 2018DIN01-037: Scottish rates of income tax

DIN 2018DIN01-036: Defence Pride

DIN 2018DIN01-034: The 12th annual 'Chardi Kala' Sikh resilience moral development course (June 7-9) calling notice

DIN 2018DIN01-031: Amendment to schedule 2 of the Armed Forces Act 2006 – a change to the investigation of sexual offences in the Armed Forces

DIN 2018DIN01-030: The provision of assistance with making a claim under the Armed Forces compensation scheme for injury sustained on or after April 6, 2005 or for a claim at the point of service termination for those who are eligible under the war pensions scheme for injury sustained up to April 5, 2005

DIN 2018DIN01-029: Voter registration for May 2018 local elections

DIN 2018DIN01-028: Live entertainment on operations and overseas deployment

DIN 2018DIN03-004: Overseas security and justice assistance MoD departmental guidance

DIN 2018DIN04-038: Signal kit pyrotechnic pistol 16mm No 1 Mk 3 – obsolete

DIN 2018DIN04-035: Declaration of obsolescent Virtus 45L commanders'

Continued on page 54

daysack and Virtus radio cover

DIN 2018DIN04-034: Declaration of cryptographic equipment BID/470 as being obsolete by Crypto Services for Defence

DIN 2018DIN04-033: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – inclusion of B Braun pump infuser volumetric enteral feeding

DIN 2018DIN04-032: Amendments to Role 3 ward operational medical modules 308-311

DIN 2018DIN04-031: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – December 17 to January 2018

DIN 2018DIN04-030: Obsolete and out-of-service equipment across DMC CH, CLB, CN, NBC, PLCE, W10, X1, X4, Virtus and X5

DIN 2018DIN04-029: Approval of Virtus helmet subsystem for public order

DIN 2018DIN04-028: Enhanced combat body armour plates 2D barcoding instruction

DIN 2018DIN04-027: Notification of the temporary closure of the photographic contract procurement and finance catalogue

DIN 2018DIN04-026: Confirmation of remaining life of mortar barrels L16A1 and L16A2

DIN 2018DIN05-010: Historical child sexual abuse inquiries – changes to the preservation and retention order

DIN 2018DIN05-009: MoD basic grade

messaging (X400) move to SMTP

DIN 2018DIN05-007: Land Systems Reference Centre 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN05-006: Defence Attaché and Loan Service Wing, Defence Engagement School

DIN 2018DIN06-015: Amendment to JSP 800, vol 4a *Dangerous Goods by Air Regulations, Version 4 (Supplements)*

DIN 2018DIN07-040: Defence unit fire safety managers, fire trainer extinguisher maintenance

DIN 2018DIN07-039: RLC logistic specialist (supply) class 2 Regular and Reserve upgrade

DIN 2018DIN07-037: Tactical Medical Wing course schedule training year 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN07-036: Temporary employed elsewhere staff (formerly incremental staff) required for Adventurous Training Group (Army)

DIN 2018DIN07-035: Troop insertion and extraction system instructor training

DIN 2018DIN07-034: Junior officers' leadership programme 3 and MA courses 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN07-033: 2018/19 Defence cyber education and training

DIN 2018DIN07-032: Joint Service adventure training air activities paragliding, parachuting and gliding – course schedules 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN08-003: Food expenditure

and income – changes to use of local project codes

DIN 2018DIN09-003: The Professional Engineering Institution Churchill Medal Award 2017/18

DIN 2018DIN10-014: Army Inter-Unit Cricket Cup Competition 2018

DIN 2018DIN10-013: Military participation in the Invictus Games

DIN 2018DIN10-010: Army Inter-Unit Tennis Competition 2018



REUNIONS

Army Dog Unit NI (RAVC) Association annual general meeting and reunion in Burton-on-Trent on May 26-27. To register contact johnatucker70@yahoo.com or 07734 113077.

Artillery Clerks' Association reunion and dinner at the Royal Artillery sergeants' mess, Larkhill on June 8-10. Visit www.artyclerkassn.org to request a place.

Mess reunion for serving and retired commando gunner officers from 3 Commando Brigade on June 9 at the Royal Citadel, Plymouth. Details from jameswalleywork@gmail.com

16 Regiment RA Old Comrades' Association reunion at the Wortley House Hotel, Rowland Road, Scunthorpe on July 28 from 1900. Cost £25 per head. Payment in advance to treasurer Guss Goodall at 18 Dunstan Hill, Kirton in Lindsey, DN22 4DU.

Annual reunion of the Association of Harrogate Apprentices, October 5-6 at the Army Foundation College, Harrogate. Contact Len Morland on 01892 523987

8 Regiment RASC/RCT/RLC 17th anniversary reunion weekend and dinner, October 19-20. For details email jimmyasp@hotmail.com



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 queries. Call 01276 412880 or email your name and address to armymediocomm-aeg-mailbox@mod.uk with the event you are interested in attending.

April: 17, Inverness; 18, Aberdeen; 19, Dunfermline; 26, Brighton

May: 1, Preston (employer engagement event); 2, Manchester; 14, Croydon; 15, Ipswich; 16, Derby



SEARCHLINE

Worthing-based charity Care for Veterans is looking for a pianist to accompany its new choir. Call 01903 218444 to find out more.

NO. 917 JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed in this picture of a drummer from the Band of the Household Cavalry rehearsing for the Major General's Inspection in Hyde Park Barracks, Knightsbridge. Circle all the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 917, Soldier, Ordnance**

Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU with your contact details, including email address, no later than April 30.

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

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REVIEWS

MUSIC

HART ATTACK

Soldier builds on musical momentum with second solo effort

WITH a successful debut EP to his name Army musician Cpl Matt Hart (CAMUS) has returned to the spotlight with his much-anticipated follow-up offering. *Chaos Rising 2* maintains the conceptual approach adopted on his first record, released in 2017, and explores the notion of a world taken over by machines in which humanity survives in the shadows, waiting to fight back.



P62

BOOKS

P64

MOVIES

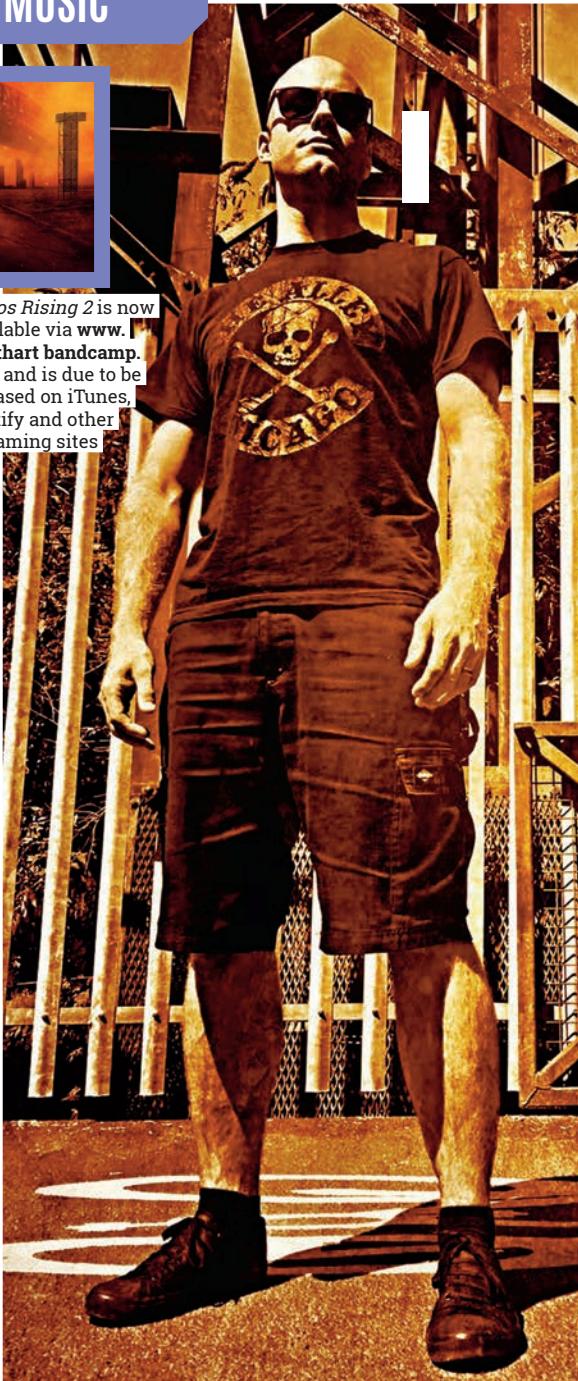
P66

GAMES

MUSIC



Chaos Rising 2 is now available via www.mathhart.bandcamp.com and is due to be released on iTunes, Spotify and other streaming sites



➤ The industrial tone of the material is in stark contrast to Hart's day job, in which he performs classical music, but he believes the military setting has helped boost his fledgling career.

"I'm surrounded by music and the creativity is always flowing," the 36-year-old told *Soldier*.

"This is the polar opposite to what I do with CAMUS but I have been into industrial music for more than 20 years.

"These songs reflect a post-apocalyptic existence, which is very much a continuation of that original concept.

"The idea is to finish the trilogy later this year so all three parts come together.

"The first EP was pretty well received in terms of CD sales and digital downloads and I have kept writing new music so things are going well."

Hart was due to play his first live UK gig as this issue went to press and he already has further plans in the pipeline for later in the year.

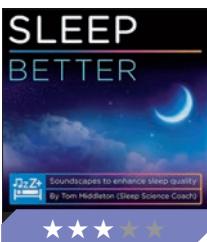
But with the musical industry continuing to evolve he is also plotting a path away from the traditional route.

"If you wait long enough to do the 12 tracks needed for an album you can almost lose the interest of the audience," he explained.

"This way I can release five songs every few months and keep things ticking over. I will probably continue with that approach, after that there could be a few singles or even a compilation record." ■

INTERVIEW: RICHARD LONG, *SOLDIER*

MUSIC RELEASES



Sleep Better by Tom Middleton

YOU know you're getting old when the electronic producers of your youth start churning out ambient background music. But that is what DJ-turned-sleep science coach **Tom Middleton** has done here. After years of collaborating with the likes of **Aphex Twin** and **Mark Pritchard**, perhaps the 46-year-old is making amends for keeping ravers up all night. But whatever his motivation, the result is a bizarrely calming hum I could barely keep my eyes open to – not usually an indication of a five-star album. This oddly spellbinding creation is definitely one to avoid at the wheel. But for insomniacs it is certainly worth a punt.

Sarah Goldthorpe, Soldier

BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH:

1983: THE WORLD AT THE BRINK

Cold War confrontation prompts sense of déjà vu

➤ NOVEMBER 9, 1983 was a normal day in the office for Taylor Downing.

Like everyone else innocently going about their business that Wednesday, the then TV executive was blissfully unaware that thousands of miles away, Soviet fingers were hovering over the nuclear button.

The cause of their alarm was a Nato exercise called Able Archer, which the Russians mistook as a real-life mobilisation for war and almost launched a pre-emptive strike.

Fast-forward nearly 30 years and Downing – who has since published numerous titles on military history – is examining the near miss in his new book, *1983: The World at the Brink*.

Having previously written about the wider Cold War, the author decided to return to the events of that year in more detail following the declassification of important US government documentation.

"It's normally thought that the Cuban missile crisis was the most dangerous moment in the Cold War," he told *Soldier*.

"That was very public and a lot has been written and studied about it, but what took place in November 1983 was absolutely not known about and barely features in most accounts from the era.

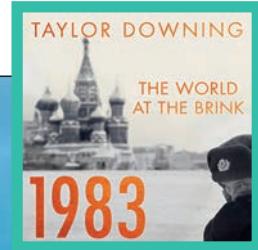
"A great deal has been revealed in the last three years that has meant we really can tell the story in full for the first time."

First-hand testimonies from those involved shows how rampant suspicion and mistrust brought the world to the edge of Armageddon.

Ronald Reagan was determined to rid the world of nuclear weapons but his hawkish language and the instigation of the Strategic Defence Initiative – also dubbed *Star Wars* after the plan to put a missile shield in

**VERDICT:**

A terrifying look at Armageddon averted – not one for anxious types

**BOOKS**

space – only served to heighten the Soviets' already-extreme paranoia over US technological superiority.

A president with a background in entertainment, a war of words, a culture of mutual distrust and the looming threat of weapons of mass destruction – reading the book from the perspective of 2018 evokes a strong sense of déjà vu.

Downing admits to being concerned by the parallels.

"Frankly I thought we'd no longer be worrying about nuclear war, but it seems depressingly like we're returning to a Cold War confrontation," he continued.

"I suppose the lesson from 1983 is how quickly situations can get out of hand.

"So far as we know Russia has very sophisticated protocols for the use of nuclear weapons to prevent accidental detonations and mistakes.

"But at the end there is always a human being interpreting this – in the States it's the president and his security team.

"So in the end it all comes down to human response and understanding or misunderstanding what's happening."

Speaking to *Soldier* on the very day that Russian diplomats were being expelled from the UK in the wake of the nerve agent attack in Salisbury, he said that the current spat is a case in point.

"Nobody in London is understanding Moscow's view on the nerve agent," he added.

"And in the Russian capital no one can comprehend why Britain is behaving as strangely as we appear to be to them.

"Within those sorts of misunderstandings, tremendous crises and accidents can unfold and that's a message everyone should take on board."

As Nick Ross used to say on *Crimewatch*: "Don't have nightmares, do sleep well."

INTERVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*

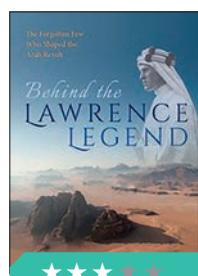
Picture: US Army
1983: The World at the Brink, by Taylor Downing, is published on April 26 by Little Brown, priced £20

BOOK RELEASES

Under Fire
by Henri Barbusse

FIRST published in French at the height of the First World War, this novel combined fact and fiction to paint a graphic picture of conflict for civilians thirsty for news of the front. Now reprinted by the Folio Society, this special edition is beautifully presented and comes complete with a new foreword from military historian Hew Strachan and haunting photographs from the trenches. Modern readers may struggle with the old-fashioned prose but this classic is worth persevering with to gain a fresh perspective on the struggles of combatants on the French side.

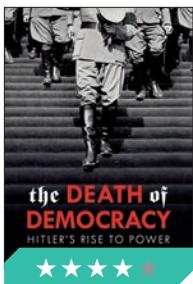
Becky Clark, *Soldier*



Behind the Lawrence Legend
by Philip Walker

PAINSTAKINGLY researched and full of interesting background to the Arab Revolt, this title is not easy going but will appeal to those with more than a passing interest in the TE Lawrence mystique. Much of the narrative focuses on Col Cyril Wilson, who it is claimed, undertook much of the diplomatic and intelligence work that enabled Lawrence's attacks on the railways of the Middle East at the time. More of an academic read than a fun one, it is probably not one to be ingested in a single go but the story is well told and adds detail to the legend.

Sqn Ldr Paul Merry, RAF

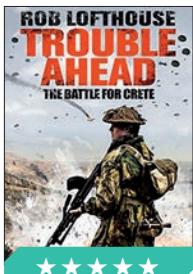


The Death of Democracy
by Benjamin Carter Hett

THE story of Hitler's rise to power, his time in jail and events such as Kristallnacht are

well documented and probably familiar to most readers. This informative book, however, is not about the Führer. As far as this title is concerned he is but a bit player, mentioned as the narrative moves along. Instead, what the author sets out very clearly is the path that was laid to enable Hitler to shut down all opposition. It shows, chillingly, how those who thought they could use him then discard him at their convenience, made grave errors when judging his character.

Andy Kay, ex-RS



Trouble Ahead: The Battle for Crete
by Rob Lofthouse

NOT normally a fan of historical-fiction, I was pleasantly

surprised if not downright impressed with this offering. The plot follows a Fallschirmjaeger hauptmann and a British infantry captain, charting their parallel struggles with troublesome families and their respective chains of command. Throw in the battles for Greece and Crete and it's a nonstop action ride from start to finish, with a few surprises thrown in along the way for good measure. With the campaign eventually coming to a close the two stories converge into a deadly confrontation leaving you wondering who will come out alive.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

Want to join our review team?
Email reviews@soldiermagazine.co.uk

MOVIES

PICK OF THE MONTH:

READY PLAYER ONE

Sci-fi novel gets Spielberg treatment

► "IF Willy Wonka was a videogame designer instead of a candy maker, and he held his golden ticket contest inside the world's greatest videogame, that's the essence of what the story is."

So says **Ernest Cline** (pictured below) of his science fiction novel's transfer to the big screen courtesy of director **Steven Spielberg** and a host of other household names including **Tye Sheridan, Simon Pegg and Mark Rylance**.

Heading for cinema release as this issue went to press, the tale centres on the year 2045, with the world on the brink of collapse and chaos.

Not an entirely unimaginable scenario given political events of late, the title transports viewers to a virtual reality world that sees its users escape their miserable lives by taking part in a contest to find a digital Easter egg.

The feature proves to be an unapologetic mashup of various characters from popular culture, with Lara Croft, Chucky and Freddy Krueger all making appearances.

So it certainly couldn't have been easy getting all the right permissions for those elements.

But having a three-time Oscar winner leading the charge will always move things along nicely in that respect.

"Having Steven Spielberg attached to the project helped," Cline explained.

"Every company we went to said yes because he was directing the movie."

So could *Ready Player One* be the first chapter in the next big sci-fi series?

"I always thought this could be a book franchise, which is the reason I bought the domain names for both *Ready Player Two* and *Ready Player Three* before the first book came out," Cline added.





And the author is already producing a sequel.

"I figured I better have a second instalment for them to adapt if they wanted to make another movie," the self-confessed nerd added.

"There's no better inspiration for a writer to return to a world they've already worked on than when they're watching Steven Spielberg bring that world to life."

Cline concluded: "I think *Ready Player One* is just gonna shock people."

"There are so many things in this that if it had been another director would have been impossible."

"It really is the first of its kind." ■

PREVIEW: SARAH GOLDSHORPE, SOLDIER

DVD/DIGITAL RELEASES

Star Wars: The Last Jedi

Out April 9



THE *Star Wars* franchise has been given a welcome rebirth following its purchase by Disney in 2012.

First instalment *The Force Awakens* was a fine addition to the fold. But the magic touch seems to be missing in this second chapter, which proves more annoying than enjoyable. Irritating characters, particularly the gung-ho Poe Dameron, are difficult to warm to and the heavy helping of Disney "magic" is tough to digest at times. The biggest gripe is with the treatment of original hero Luke Skywalker, who is portrayed as a grumpy old man stuck on an island rather than a true Jedi master. At two-and-a-half hours long this is a marathon effort and it is easy to spot scenes that could be cut. Enjoyable moments but a lukewarm offering at best.

Richard Long, Soldier

GAMES



PICK OF THE MONTH:

FIGHTING IN THE SHADOWS

Colossal encounters await in fantasy adventure

► REVAMPED for the PS4, *Shadow of the Colossus* is unlike any game I've played before. It's entertaining and visually stunning but also deeply thought provoking.

Set in a fantasy environment, the title begins with a horse trotting along a long path carrying its rider and the body of the woman he loves. His task is a complex one; kill the 16 colossi to revive her.

This differs from your typical offering in several key areas.

The first is with the way the story is told. Very little of the world is revealed so don't expect this to be plot laden with insights into the life of those who live here. It's not *Skyrim*.

Another aspect is with the art direction. The Forbidden Land, as it's known in the game, is a vast area presented in eerie, moving and sombre tones – the whole look is one weighted with emotion.

And that leads me on to the final standout point – the colossi. Unlike

VERDICT:
A fine example of fantasy fighting
★★★★★



boss battles in other releases, where finally vanquishing what is usually a ridiculously powerful threat is a moment to celebrate, grab some goodies and carry on, *Shadow of the Colossus* paints a very different picture.

Killing each foe feels like going round and bringing about the extinction of some last remaining creature found nowhere else: it doesn't feel good.

The colossi themselves are certainly challenging, with each one requiring a different approach in order to defeat it.

Some are vast, two-legged giants, another is a huge fish-like creature, but all are truly colossal in size. The first time you encounter one is a visceral experience, designed to inject that fight or flight instinct.

This is a truly beautiful game with a touching story that is set in a wondrous land. The catch? It's only available on the PS4. ■

REVIEW: DAVID McDougall, CIVVY

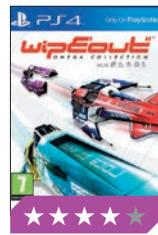
GAME RELEASES



Player Unknown's Battlegrounds
Xbox One and PC

THIS game plunges you into an online environment with 99 other players and you have to fight in true "last man standing" style. Unlike other releases that pit teams against one another or force you to go it alone, *Battlegrounds* challenges you to fight no matter what. Spawning inside a C130 Hercules high above the map, your task is to parachute down, gather supplies, body armour, weapons and even vehicles in order to increase your chances of survival. A truly heart-thumping title, only let down by the poor visuals. But they're constantly being updated.

David McDougall, civvy



Wipeout Omega Collection
PS4

THE *Wipeout* games have always been good. They feature fast and frenetic gameplay that's centred on a racing series involving anti-gravity ships or craft. Each one is different in terms of speed, acceleration and resilience and this release is no different. The *Omega Collection* picks up from the previous titles and deservedly places the action where it should be – in your hands. The gameplay is superb, the visuals a blur and the soundtrack a delight. And if you have the PlayStation Music app you can use the *Best of Wipeout* Spotify list from previous offerings.

David McDougall, civvy

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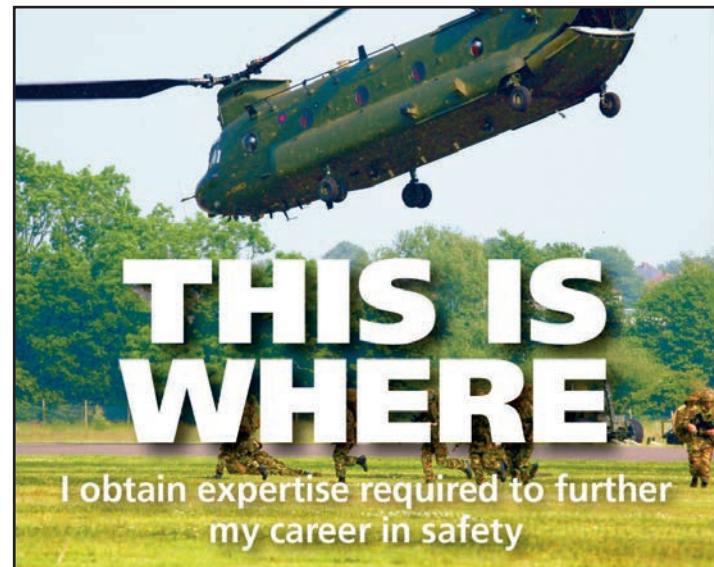
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SOLDIER SPORT



GOLDEN GIRLS

WINTER sports star Capt Jen Kehoe (RE, left) secured a bumper medal haul at the Paralympics, where she acted as the guide for Menna Fitzpatrick in the visually impaired skiing. Read about their success on page 78...

Picture: British Paralympic Association



ARMY'S SPORTING ELITE ANSWER WELSH CALL

WALES have called upon the talents of two further Army athletes as preparations for this month's Commonwealth Games in Australia near completion.

Rugby union star Capt Gemma Rowland (RA) has been named in the country's sevens squad, while LCpl Fern Davies (RLC) will take to the court for what promises to be a highly competitive netball tournament.

Defensive player Davies has been a regular fixture in the set-up in recent times and refused to take anything for granted ahead of the team's official announcement in March.

But with her place confirmed the soldier has set her sights on helping Wales finish as high as possible in an event that will feature netball's biggest hitters.

"There was a mixture of shock and pride," Davies told *SoldierSport* after being named in the group.

"I was just waiting for that final seal of approval but the long squad is so strong that selection is never guaranteed.

"I've been working towards these Games for 15 years so I am thrilled to be included.

"We've got a new coach and have greater focus, we are also getting fitter and stronger.

"We want to be more consistent. At present we are ranked seventh in the world and the top six is our aim."

Wales face challenging pool games against England and New Zealand but the soldier is confident the team can do well.

She has also praised the support of the Service in helping her achieve her sporting dream.

"My unit allowed me to take a more part-time role in the lead up to selection and that has really helped," she added.

"I was going to sign off from the Army but have decided to come back in as the



**"THERE
WAS A
MIX OF
SHOCK
AND
PRIDE"**

opportunities for sport are just so good."

Rowland's selection comes at the end of a year-long campaign to help Wales qualify for the Games and cement her place in the team.

Fortunately, the officer has achieved both goals but is unable to fully focus on the Games as the squad faces a crucial World Series qualifier in the week leading up to the Australian showpiece.

"It is going to be a testing time," Rowland told *SoldierSport*. "We want to win that qualifier and earn a spot on next year's World Series before jumping on the plane to Brisbane.

"We will go in as underdogs and will be the lowest seeds in the tournament, so there are no expectations on us.

"The Commonwealth Games are an anomaly. We don't usually play at a tournament where other sports are involved. There

will be lots of distractions that may cause problems for others. Hopefully we can come in and do well."

Rowland and Wales played tournaments in Dubai and Brisbane either side of Christmas and the soldier admitted she underperformed in the former before hitting full gear down under.

And with the fight for places proving particularly fierce she was delighted when the call to arms was made.

"It is an amazing opportunity and an absolute honour to be named," she added. "It is the culmination of a lot of hard work over the past 12 months.

"It has been a hugely competitive environment. We qualified on the back of the Rugby Europe Championships in July and since then we've had a nine-month period of training as individuals and as a team.

"I wasn't happy with how I played in Dubai. I had some things to work on and over Christmas and the new year I made sure I didn't take my foot off the gas.

"I went to Brisbane to put those wrongs right and was really pleased with my performance."

The duo join shooter Spr Michael Bamsey (RE) in the Welsh team. Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) will represent England in the pistol shooting, while fellow marksman Cpl Stuart Hill (R Irish) and boxer Cpl Alanna Nihell (RLC) have been included in the Northern Ireland squad.

LCpl Jo Nayacavou (Scots) added to the Army contingent when he was named in the Scotland rugby sevens squad. ■



GAMES IN NUMBERS

SOLDIERS
SELECTED
TO COMPETE
AT THE
EVENT ON
THE GOLD
COAST

7

NATIONS
REPRESENTED
BY THE ARMY
ATHLETES

3

CAPS WON
BY CAPT
GEMMA
ROWLAND
FOR THE
SENIOR
WALES
TEAM

17

AGE OF
LCPL FERN
DAVIES
WHEN SHE
MADE HER
WALES
DEBUT
FOR THE
UNDER-19
SIDE

15



ENGLAND'S LOGISTICAL LEAD

WHILE Army athletes push themselves on the field of play the Service's expertise will also be tested in other areas at the Commonwealth Games.

Maj Craig Dower (RAMC) will be an integral part of Team England's logistical effort, with his principle role focused on the movement of more than 600 athletes and staff across 32 different flights from the UK to Australia's Gold Coast.

Fortunately, the officer has a wealth of experience to call upon and this will be his third Commonwealth Games campaign. He was also involved in the London 2012 Olympics and the 2015 European Games in the city of Baku, Azerbaijan.

"I was originally in the Royal Logistic Corps before transferring so that background has helped," he told *SoldierSport*.

"In many ways it is like a



unit move but all the admin that would be done in camp has to be completed within the space of 14 days.

"It has to happen and we are the team behind that."

Dower is the sole military representative in a 12-strong logistical group that will support England's largest contingent to date.

He added: "Everything is going to plan so far and there seems to be a really good feeling among the team.

"There is a huge sense of pride in what we do – this is my country. I'm also a performance manager for Team England shooting so hopefully I can get across to some of those competitions."

Dower's work will continue in Australia, where he will be responsible for the movement of athletes from the village to venues while managing their accommodation.

He then faces the prospect of getting everyone home. ■



ARTISTS FLOURISH IN TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

ATHLETES from the Army's kendo and WTF tae kwon do set-ups descended on Aldershot for a weeklong training camp ahead of the Service's annual Martial Arts Championships.

Both disciplines are continuing to flourish within a competitive field – and with a host of competitions to come there will be opportunities to build on the momentum at military and international level.

The WTF team boasts an array of talent from novices through to seasoned campaigners and the full spectrum was on show at the recent camp.

Among those taking part was LCpl Jonny Hainsworth (Yorks), a member of the Great Britain poomsae (patterns) squad.

He is currently on the road to recovery after injury but believes the Army offers the perfect platform to progress.

"The standard at international

level is very high," Hainsworth told *SoldierSport*. "It has been a new experience for me but when I got the injury my movement was restricted and that meant I couldn't compete at my best.

"I'm looking to make my return at the end of April. The World Championships follow later this year but I think they may be a little too soon for me.

"The standard is unreal but with more time and training I think I can get there.

"Being in the Army means I get time off to train and camps like this are a real bonus. I also get to name the British Army as my club when I'm competing and that is a real honour."

Hainsworth, winner of the male dan poomsae at the Army Championships, has been competing in the sport for 14 years and, having just entered GB's under-40 division, he has the best part of a decade to make his mark.



**"IT
WOULD
BE
GREAT
TO SEE
MORE
PEOPLE
HERE"**

Reservist Pte Sophie Bladék (AGC (SPS)) is another soldier with an impressive pedigree having succeeded in the sport's ITF and WTF disciplines.

She only joined the military a year ago and secured double gold medals at the Army and Inter-Services competitions in 2017.

Bladék, who started in the sport as a nine-year-old, added two further top prizes to her haul last month and has ranked highly at this year's GTI British Championships and the PUMA International Championships.

"The Army courses are excellent," she said. "It would be great to see more people here in the future and we have everyone from black belts to novices."

"It would be an absolute dream to become a coach for the Army. I need to compete in more civilian contests and do some more courses and once I have that experience it will be something I can look at."



AT THE DOUBLE: STAR STRIKER CPL CALUM WILKINSON (RLC) BAGGED A BRACE IN THE 4-1 WIN OVER THE RAF

A healthy contingent also took to the mat for kendo's training camp and Army competition.

Officer in charge Maj Chris Jones (RAMC) told *SoldierSport* how the discipline differs from other martial arts and that it forms an attractive proposition for those in the latter stages of their sporting careers.

"This course is a way of attracting newcomers," he explained. "It builds towards the Army Championships.

"But kendo does not categorise by age or ability. The Army champion could be up against a complete beginner, it's all about the luck of the draw.

"This is a skill-focused martial art and it takes time to develop. The flip side of that means you can remain competitive at national level into your fifties."

Jones was crowned Army kendo champion last month and, together with Capt John O'Neill (AGC (RMP)), added the kata title to his medal haul. LCpl Scott Brown (Int Corps) was victorious in the novice competition.

The Inter-Services will follow in July and recent performances will go a long way to determining the squad for the tournament.

"The Army Championships are one of the main ways we go about selection," Jones added.

"The Army has dominated in recent times and we have won the kendo team events for the past five years. We are looking for more of the same in 2018." ■



SENIOR SERVICE PUT TO THE SWORD

INTER-SERVICES FOOTBALL
ARMY

7
NAVY
3



A N emphatic 7-3 win over the Royal Navy set the Army on their way to a convincing defence of their Inter-Services crown.

A hat-trick from substitute LCpl Adam Wakely (Rifles, pictured above) proved to be the headline act but it was far from plain sailing for the Reds in the early stages as they fell behind on two occasions before eventually stamping their authority on the contest.

They sealed the title with a 4-1 win against the Royal Air Force in Shrewsbury.

The soldiers headed into the tournament in confident mood but they suffered an early blow in their opening match as ET Alan Sneddon fired the Senior Service ahead after a defensive mix-up.

The ever-reliable Cpl Calum Wilkinson (RLC) drew the sides level when he converted from the penalty spot but the Army were punished again as they failed to clear a corner and centre back POPT Ben Booker headed home.

Wilkinson played a pivotal role in his side's second equaliser by playing in LCpl Luke Noble (R Signals) and the

forward drilled the ball into the bottom corner.

Wakely then sprang the offside trap to finish off a slick passing move and the hosts headed into the break with a slender lead.

The tempo dipped in the early exchanges of the second period but the excellent Wakely injected some much-needed energy in the 66th minute as he curled a low effort into the bottom corner.

Spr Sam Atkinson (RE) added a stunning long-range strike to effectively seal the contest and Noble bundled home his second goal of the night after his initial effort was saved.

Wakely completed his hat-trick with a simple tap in before the Navy grabbed a consolation with an injury-time penalty.

"It was nice to come back after falling behind," head coach WO1 Simon Bell (RE) told *SoldierSport*.

"A score like that doesn't happen very often. I've been on the wrong side of a hammering from the Navy as a player so it is great to get the win." ■



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SIGN UP: THE ARMY IS LOOKING FOR NOVICE AND OPEN CLASS FIGHTERS TO JOIN THE SQUAD. EMAIL JAMES.ALLEN785@MOD.UK

» BOXING



TITLE RECLAIMED

A LACK of goals saw the Army women fall short last season but there were no such worries this year as back-to-back victories over their rivals saw them reclaim football's Inter-Services crown.

The Reds made a stuttering start to their campaign and found themselves trailing the Royal Navy in their opening fixture after Cpl Lucy Foreman (AGC (RMP)) suffered the misfortune of heading into her own net.

But the soldiers turned the game around in the space of three second-half minutes as Spr Shannon Weston (RE) fired a shot in off the crossbar before Cfn Kelly Aldridge (REME) calmly converted from the penalty spot after being fouled in the box.

With their opponents being limited to half chances, the champions-elect held firm to secure a deserved 2-1 win.

It was far from plain sailing a week later against the Royal Air Force, who squandered a host of clear-cut chances in the first half.

Cpl Libby Dixon (AGC (SPS)) edged the Army ahead early in the second period before the hosts deservedly equalised.

However, a free kick from range by Sgt Zoe Stewart (AGC (SPS)) settled the contest.



RING REIGN COMES TO AN END

INTER-SERVICES BOXING

NAVY

4

ARMY

3

RAF

2



ONE of the longest and most impressive winning runs in Forces sport came crashing to a halt as the Army's boxers relinquished their grip on the Inter-Services title.

Having won the trophy for 34 consecutive seasons the Reds saw their reign ended by a resurgent Royal Navy outfit that won four of the eight bouts contested on the night.

A walkover for heavyweight LCpl Natty Ngwenya (Gren Gds) helped the soldiers' cause but LCpl John Marvin and LCpl Chez Nihell (both PWRR) were the only victors in the ring as the Senior Service claimed their first team prize since 1983.

But there was an element of controversy surrounding the Army's defeat as former skipper LBdr Ryan Fillingham (RA) suffered a surprise loss at the hands of DVR Robbie Matthews.

The light welterweight looked the superior fighter over the course of three rounds, with his left jab and punishing body shots forming potent weapons. However, the bout was awarded to Matthews on a split decision

– much to the astonishment of the crowd.

The result proved pivotal as the Navy headed into the interval needing just two wins to claim the silverware and they duly delivered as Mne Jack Stringer defeated Gdsm Josh Plummer (Coldm Gds) before LCpl Mason Holmes (RLC) succumbed to the talents of Mne Kallum Radley.

"I'm gutted," Army coach Sgt James Allen (REME) told *SoldierSport* afterwards.

"I've only been in the job two months and we've lost something we have retained for 34 years – I'm embarrassed.

"The only result I questioned tonight was that of Ryan's; he deserved to win.

"We will now focus on the Amateur Boxing Association Elite Championships. Natty and Chez are at the standard where they can really compete at that level and I expect Chez to go there and take that title."

The Royal Air Force also had a successful night by claiming the honours in the bantamweight and lightweight divisions. ■

SPORT SHORTS



Kells kill cup hopes

AMATEUR outfit Kells ended the Army's run in this season's Challenge Cup as they recorded a comprehensive 30-4 victory on home turf.

The Reds were looking to progress to the fourth round of rugby league's knockout competition for the first time in their history but they fell short on a disappointing afternoon in Cumbria.

The hosts opened a 14-0 lead at the break and stretched their advantage before the soldiers scored a consolation try late on.

"It's been a great effort from the lads," said head coach WO2 Ben Taylor (REME). "We've shown a lot of guts and determination to get here."



Reserves on the road

THE inaugural Army Reserve Cycling Championships will be staged at Baker Barracks, on Thorney Island, on Saturday, April 21.

Featuring male, female and novice races, the event is open to all Reserve personnel and organisers are keen to attract as many athletes as possible.

It is hoped the event will capitalise on the continuing growth of a sport that already features a full road series comprised of 12 rounds – the first of which gets under way on April 25.

For more information on the various Reserve races call 0208 7813360 or email nrhqra-hqtrgmovelk@mod.uk

EVANS CLAIMS COASTAL GOLD

ENDURANCE runner Capt Tom Evans (WG) continued his rapid elevation in the sport by winning The Coastal Challenge in Costa Rica in record time.

The multi-stage event was set over a gruelling 230-kilometre route that stretched along jungle and rainforest trails as well as coastal ranges.

Evans opened a lead over pre-race favourite Hayden Hawks on the first day and gradually extended his advantage to finish in a time of 21hr 44min 11sec – breaking the previous record by around 45 minutes.

"It was an incredible race," the officer told *SoldierSport* after his victory.

"The thing that I loved most was the variety. One minute you are running on beautiful sandy beaches, the next you're tackling jungle trails.

"I was four-and-a-half minutes ahead of the favourite on the first day, from then on it was about running tactically to extend that lead."

"I went out there knowing it would be a hard race. I hadn't set any targets, I just wanted to have a really good week and learn more about myself."

"It is still early in the season so things are looking really positive."

Evans' form has seen him selected for the Great Britain team that will compete in next month's World Trail Running Championships in Spain. ■



"I
WANTED
TO
LEARN
MORE
ABOUT
MYSELF"



BOXING sensation LCpl John Marvin (PWRR) received further recognition for his exploits at the South East Asia Games at the annual Philippines Sports Awards.

The Army fighter, who won gold in the light heavyweight division, received a special honour to mark his achievement during a glitzy ceremony at the Manila Hotel in the nation's capital.

Marvin recently completed a two-month training camp in the Philippines and Thailand as part of his preparations for this summer's Asian Games in Jakarta.

MONTH IN SPORT

April's key fixtures...



WHAT: Army v Royal Air Force rugby union
WHEN: April 11
WHERE: Halton
NEED TO KNOW: The 2018 Inter-Services

campaign gets underway in the RAF's backyard and the men's and women's teams will be looking for positive starts as they defend their titles from 2017



WHAT: Corps Cup Finals Day – football
WHEN: April 18
WHERE: Aldershot Military Stadium
NEED TO KNOW: Defending champions the Royal Engineers will be looking to claim further silverware as they face the Adjutant General's Corps in the men's final. The women's showpiece will be played on the same day



WHAT: Amateur Boxing Association finals
WHEN: April 20-22
WHERE: York Hall, London
NEED TO KNOW: The Army had 12 fighters in the latter stages of last season's competition, with Cpl Steph Wroe (REME) and Spr Ebonie Jones (RE) both claiming top honours. Who will prevail in 2018?



GOALS GALORE IN TITLE TRIUMPH



THE Army's netball stars hit the goal trail in Portsmouth as they mounted a stunning defence of their Inter-Services title.

A thumping 49-19 victory over the Royal Air Force was followed by an equally convincing win against the Royal Navy as the Reds underlined their status as the military's premier outfit.

Success against the light blues ensured the defending champions started their 2018 campaign in style and the Senior Service were emphatically dispatched on the final day.

The Army opened a 14-6 lead at the end of the first quarter and extended their advantage to 22-15 at the halfway stage.

Goal scoring duo Sgt Ellie Nawale (AGC) and LCpl Melissa Price (R Signals) upped the tempo after the interval and their accuracy at the net proved decisive as they stretched the scoreline to 33-19.

And the punishment continued in the final stages as the soldiers added 17 goals to the

tally, while conceding just one, as the match ended 50-20.

While Nawale and Price starred at the net it was teammate LCpl Dee Bolakoro (RE) who was named player of the tournament thanks to some inspiring displays in defence.

"The players did really well," head coach Maggie Jackson told *SoldierSport*. "They have really progressed and that is all down to sheer hard work.

"We have great respect for the RAF and Navy, they are improving as well, so I was a little surprised by the margin of our victories.

"The score might not suggest it but the Navy pushed us hard. We managed to convert our goals and win the turnovers."

Bolakoro and Nawale have been on the books of Netball Superleague franchises this season and civilian Jackson, who has served as England assistant and interim head coach, believes more soldiers can follow suit.

"I've mentioned a few names to the coaches and hopefully they can progress," she added. ■



MEDALS MOUNT FOR DYNAMIC DUO

SKIER Capt Jen Kehoe (RE) arrived in Pyeongchang with the hope of winning a medal; she returned home as one of Team GB's most decorated Winter Paralympians.

Acting as the guide for Menna Fitzpatrick in the visually impaired skiing, the officer won gold in the slalom, silver in both the super combined and giant slalom, as well as bronze in the super-G – meaning the duo secured four of the seven medals claimed by British athletes.

There was little sign of the glory to come when the pair crashed out of their opening downhill race but they soon returned to form before peaking in their final event.

"This has absolutely exceeded our expectations," Kehoe told *SoldierSport*. "We set out with the goal of winning one medal.

"Crashing in the downhill was a huge disappointment but we had to get our heads together, reset and go again the next day.

"The emotion and relief of getting over the finish line in the super-G was incredible. Finishing our first race took a lot of pressure off; it was self-induced pressure as we wanted to perform at our best."

Two silver medals followed before the duo defeated the Slovakian pairing of Henrieta Farkasova and Natalia Subrtova to top the podium in the slalom.

"They are phenomenal athletes," Kehoe added. "We defeated them earlier in the season but did not think it would necessarily happen here."

"However, we looked at the times from the slalom in the super combined and noticed we were faster."

"So there was a small chance we could do it. But we just wanted to have fun; in the end that was good enough to win."

After becoming GB's most decorated athletes, Kehoe and Fitzpatrick then had the honour of carrying their country's flag at the closing ceremony.

"We are really proud to have had such success and in many ways it hasn't really sunk in yet," the officer said.

"Carrying the flag was such a privilege and that was a great way to end a fantastic week."

"We could not have done this without our amazing coaches and staff. I also have to thank the Army and Army Sport Control Board – they have been so supportive throughout." ■



**"WE
HAD TO
RESET
AND GO
AGAIN
THE
NEXT
DAY"**



EYES ON BEIJING

FORMER paratrooper Scott Meenagh became the first man in 20 years to represent Great Britain in the Para Nordic skiing at the Paralympic Games.

The double amputee missed out on a podium place but has already set his sights on a return to action – as well as a medal – in Beijing in four years' time.

Speaking after his campaign came to a close, the ex-soldier said: "I wouldn't be here if I didn't dare to dream and I am seeing what it takes to be at the top of this sport."

"I'm inspired for life now and I am not going anywhere until I have given an absolute account of myself and I am on that podium."

Owen Pick, who served in The Royal Anglian Regiment, made history by becoming one of the first snowboarders to represent Team GB at the Paralympics.

He was part of a three-man team that took to the slopes and, like Meenagh, is targeting the next Games after missing out on a medal this year.

"I'll definitely go again for sure," he said. "I'm one of those people who sets themselves a goal and I haven't achieved that. I'll be back."



SPORT SHORTS

Picture: Align Photography



French force flattened

THE Army rugby union team continued to build momentum ahead of this month's Inter-Services opener with a convincing 46-12 win over their French counterparts.

Staged at the French Military Centre of Sport in Fontainbleau, the match proved to be a one-sided affair as the Reds ran in five tries to cap another dominant display.

Cpl James Dixon (RE, pictured) produced his trademark accuracy from the tee with a succession of penalties.



And the award goes to...

ARMY athletes enjoyed a triumphant day at the UK Armed Forces Sports Awards as they claimed three of the prizes on offer.

Cyclist Capt Ejay Harris (RAMC) was named sportswoman of the year following a fantastic 12 months on the bike that included victory in the National Women's Road Race Series.

The team honours were presented to the Army women's swimming squad who claimed a 20th successive Inter-Services title and secured 28 medals at the World Masters Games.

And former boxing coach SSgt Jason Browning (RAPTC, pictured) was named official of the year after his fighters won another Forces crown, as well as seven national titles.



Picture: Andy J Ryan/Team GB

NO EXCUSES AS CREWS FALL SHORT



**"WE
GAVE IT
ALL WE
HAD"**

HERE was huge disappointment for bobsleigh stars LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) and Pte Nick Gleeson (Para) as they finished down the field in the Winter Olympics' four-man competition.

After heading into the event with an outside chance of a medal, Team GB's number one crew – piloted by Deen – claimed a lowly 18th place as they clocked a time of 3min 18.29sec from their four runs.

In a sport of the finest margins, their efforts saw them finish more than two seconds behind Francisco Friedrich and the champion team from Germany.

Deen had won a silver medal at the World Cup event in Whistler earlier this season but failed to replicate such form.

"We're not looking for excuses – we just had a bad day and it's unlucky that it was at the

Olympics," the soldier said.

"We've had success this season. We've beaten every single person who is racing here; we've set track records and know we can do it."

Olympic failure has now prompted speculation that bobsleigh funding could be cut by UK Sport but Deen is anxious for that not to be the case.

He added: "Hopefully they will look upon the potential we have and what we've done in the season itself."

"We've had two pilots 11th and 12th in the world rankings so we know we are competitive."

Gleeson (pictured left) was part of the second GB team that finished three hundredths of a second ahead of Deen in 17th spot. "We went out and gave it all we had right up until the last run," he said. "We're determined to come back stronger." ■

POINTS were at a premium in the final of rugby union's Inter-Corps Championship as the Royal Logistic Corps claimed a narrow win. The loggies scored the only try of the match to seal a 7-3 win over the Royal Artillery. The Royal Armoured Corps triumphed in the league two final, defeating the Adjutant General's Corps 31-19.





HIGHS AND LOWS

THIS year's Inter-Services Hockey Championships proved to be a campaign to forget for the Army men's senior side as they finished bottom of the pile.

An 8-2 thrashing at the hands of eventual champions the Royal Air Force ensured their title bid started in the worst possible style but they made a spirited return in their match with the Royal Navy, where a late goal cruelly robbed them of a positive result.

The Senior Service looked set for a comfortable win as they opened a 2-0 lead at half-time but the rejuvenated soldiers dominated the second period and deservedly drew level at 2-2.

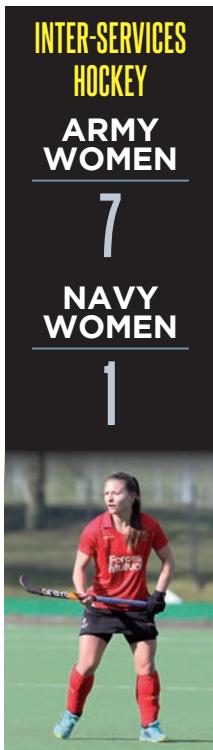
However, their rivals struck a decisive blow at the death and with time swiftly running out they slipped to a 3-2 defeat.

There was further disappointment for the under-25s, who drew 1-1 with the RAF before losing 4-1 to the Navy.

The Army were victorious in the men's masters tournament, while the RAF claimed the honours in the women's equivalent.



REDS MAINTAIN DOMINANT FORM



T was business as usual for the Army women at this season's Inter-Services Hockey Championships as back-to-back wins over their Forces rivals secured yet another title.

A 5-2 victory over an improving Royal Air Force side set the tone for another triumphant campaign and they sealed the silverware with a controlled performance against the Royal Navy in the tournament's final fixture.

After a cagey opening the Reds opened their account in the tenth minute as Sig Heidi Devey (R Signals) converted from a penalty corner after her initial shot was blocked.

The routine yielded further reward as smart play between Maj Cheryl Valentine (RAMC) and Capt Emma Lee-Smith (AAC) created the platform for Sgt Amanda Potgieter (REME) to double the lead.

But further goals failed to follow in the first half as the Senior Service held firm.

WO1 Sharon Stones (REME) continued the scoring early

in the second period before the Navy made a rare foray downfield to reduce the arrears.

Devey notched a second goal following a swift break on the right flank and the game was effectively over when Valentine dispatched a penalty stroke.

The punishment continued as Cpl Shelly Hodgson (REME) rounded off a flowing counter-attack and Devey completed her hat-trick as the Navy failed to clear a penalty corner, allowing the soldier to flick the ball high into the net.

The 7-1 triumph secured the trophy for the all-conquering Army side but skipper Valentine (pictured above) said the players made hard work of the job.

"It was not our best performance but coming away with the victory was the main thing," she told *SoldierSport*.

"The RAF made life difficult for us and the Navy defended very well. But we have got a lot of experience and talent in our side and we know other teams will struggle to cope with that over the course of 70 minutes."

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Final Word



Probably Challenger 2. I was torn between joining the Royal Artillery or the Royal Tank Regiment and I plumped for the former but I still like the idea of Challenger's speed and manoeuvrability as well as operating closer to the front line.

Gnr Jack Dudman, RA



The French Caesar self-propelled 155mm gun looks really good. It's mounted on the back of a wheeled vehicle and very quick to manoeuvre, which I think would make it ideal for when we move over to the strike brigade concept.

LBdr Stephen Davies, RHA

I'd like to be a Wildcat pilot – it's actually a future career aspiration for me. Being employed in a surveillance and target acquisition role, I think I'd fit in pretty well because it's a formidable Istar asset. It's also employed in an attack role, so it would be exciting to fly.

Bdr Marcus Box, RA



A quadcopter called Indigo. It's light and quiet, and flies in all weathers

LBdr Adam Britton, RA



I'd love to operate an F-16 – there's been quite a few flying over this week. But as the British Army don't have them I'll go for a Bulldog – that'd look wicked on my front drive.

Cpl Shawn Jacobs, RLC



Wish list

Soldier asked personnel on Exercise Dynamic Front what piece of kit they'd love to get their hands on...



My unit, 3rd Regiment, switched from AS90s to the light gun just as I joined so I've always fancied operating that weapon system. It's very effective, scary, and creates a lot of damage.

Bdr Peter Maina, RHA

I'd like to use the light gun. I'm with a weapon locating battery, so I'd like to see the other side to Royal Artillery life. It's a pity we can't do half and half, working on guns and radar, so we can fully appreciate each other's roles.

Gnr Sarah Anderson, RA





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