

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

INTERVIEW

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TAKING COMMAND

New Army Sergeant Major talks shop

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

A look back at 2018's highs and lows



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THE CONTINUOUS ATTITUDE SURVEYS (CASs)

AFCAS

75%

of Regulars report that they can rely on their team when things get difficult - can you?

RESCAS

53%

of Reserves are satisfied with their weekly unit activity - What's your week like in unit?

FAMCAS

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40% of your spouses did

15% wanted them to leave

46% were neutral

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The Continuous Attitude Surveys (CASs) provide this feedback from Regular and Reserve personnel, and regular personnel's families.



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- CLOSING 18TH FEBRUARY 19

RESCAS - For Reserve Personnel
LAUNCHES EARLY JANUARY
- CLOSING 18TH MARCH 19

FAMCAS - For Spouse/Civil Partner of Regular personnel
LAUNCHES LATE JANUARY
- CLOSING 29TH APRIL 19

LOOK OUT FOR FEBRUARY'S EDITION OF SOLDIER MAGAZINE
WHERE THERE WILL BE MORE INFORMATION ON YOUR FEEDBACK
TO THE ARMY AND WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

To find out more please email: ArmyPers-Strat-APRC-Survey@mod.gov.uk



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This exercise has been a great demonstration of UK strategic deployment at range

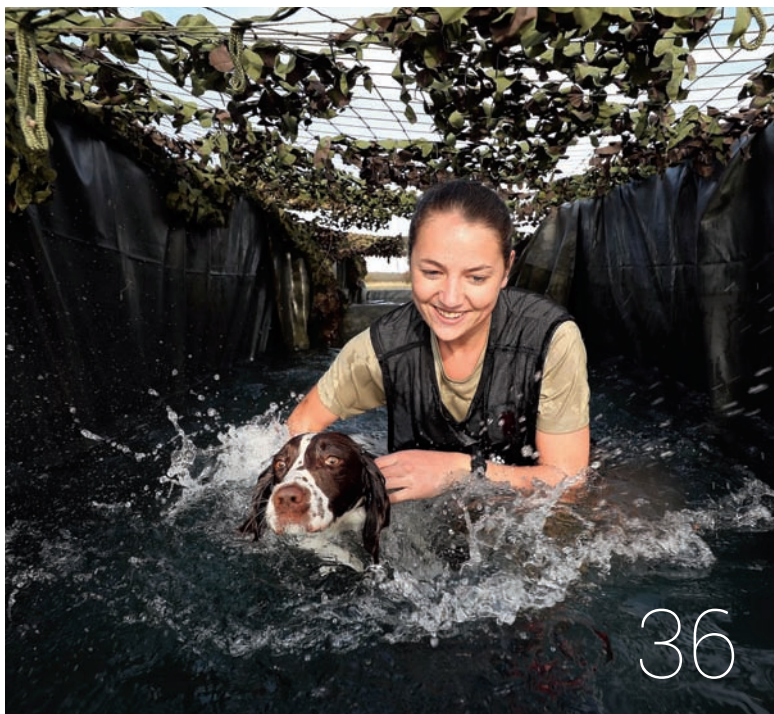
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Logistics success paves way for regular training in Oman – page 32





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Don't eat all the pies



'TIS the season to be merry – when those of us who are lucky enough not to have to work over the festive period

can meet up with friends and family, enjoy an eggnog or two and ruminate on what we're going to do with yet another jumbo pack of M&S socks or hankies.

For serving soldiers the Christmas holidays also call for a little restraint – and not only when it comes to falling out with annoying relatives.

As our Need to Know section (page 22) rather depressingly illustrates, in calorie terms just a few extra nibbles here and there can literally equate to an extra mile or three on the treadmill.

Thankfully, we've managed to unearth some great tips that will allow you to enjoy a little over-indulgence while stopping your physique becoming distinctly Santa-esque.

It may not all be welcome reading but you'll thank us for it when you have your first soldier conditioning review.

The rigorous twice-yearly fitness check that's being introduced early next year (page 12) is described as one of the most important PT changes in 20 years and will place a lot of emphasis on strength, endurance and mobility.

Enjoy your mince pies!

Steve Muncey • Managing Editor

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

> Online

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> Purchase

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SOLDIER

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

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

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

Assistant Editor Cliff Caswell
01252 787097 (94222 7097)
ccaswell@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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

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

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

Photographer Peter Davies
01252 787103 (94222 7103)
pdavies@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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

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

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



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

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

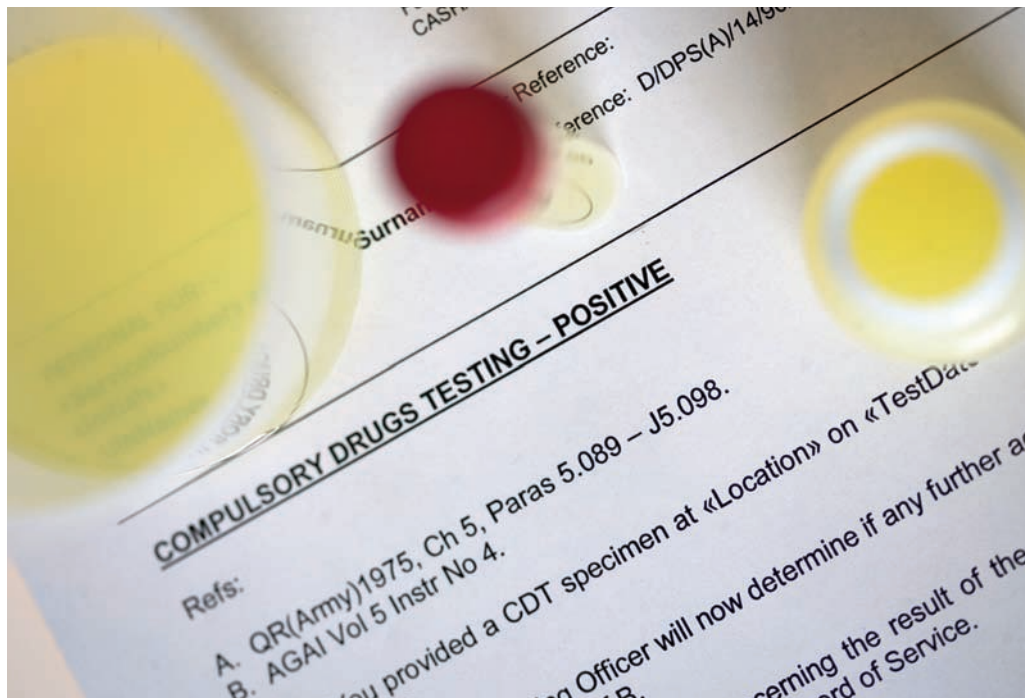
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Picture: Graeme Main

The truth about drugs

Top officer reveals reasons behind policy changes

THE Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Lt Gen Nick Pope, has said that a revision to the Service's drugs misuse policy was not a reaction to adverse publicity.

This follows a statement from the MoD declaring that personnel failing a drugs test or caught with illegal drugs are to be dismissed and not allowed to rejoin the Armed Forces.

Numerous articles in the national media in recent months have alleged that soldiers with specialist skills who'd been kicked out of the Army for taking illegal substances were being lured back with payments of up to £10,000.

"The press added two and two together and made five," Lt Gen Pope (pictured right) told *Soldier*.

"It is true that we offered bounties in some specialist trade groups to see if this was a viable way of attracting people with certain skills back into the Army.

"What's not true is that we were using this avenue to bring back drug offenders into the Service.

"None of the personnel who received a bounty to return had been sacked from the Army for substance abuse; it (the erroneous press coverage) was a case of certain people conflating two separate issues and then coming up with a totally wrong conclusion."

However, following the MoD's announcement, the Service's policy on such behaviour has been amended to, among other things, clarify the fact that personnel found guilty of taking illicit drugs will not be re-admitted under any circumstances.

JSP 835 has been updated and had all references to retention removed while Army General and Administrative Instruction 64, which covers dealing with incidents of substance misuse, has also been revised (see side panel).

Lt Gen Pope said these alterations were in line with the Service's standing ambition to



continued on p11

In Short...

The new rules

● Commanding officers' discretion on retaining personnel after a positive CDT no longer applies.

● 'No breach, no sanction' rule (where a soldier has not recklessly or intentionally taken drugs, despite a positive CDT) is amended. Cases now submitted to Army Personnel Services. DCGS makes final decision.

● When a soldier admits to taking drugs but CDT is negative, CO can still apply for discharge.

● Personnel discharged because of drugs misuse cannot rejoin the Army (Regular or Reserve).

GLOBAL SITREP



1. BELIZE GOING GREEN

PERSONNEL at the British Army Training Support Unit Belize have been granted access to a new area of jungle and have become key conservationists in the process.

The troops have started working with local environmental agencies to preserve a precious patch of land and its wildlife. Read next month's edition for a full report.

2. VIRGINIA VETERAN SPIRIT

A FORMER Army Air Corps duo have become the first British veterans to take part in an American scheme dedicated to bringing new blood into the tech sector.

Aviation communications specialist Aidan Gray and



ex-flight ops manager Ryan Dix graduated from the NS2 Serves initiative after enrolling with MoD backing.

The three-month training programme aims to provide veterans with technical and soft business skills in addition to recognised qualifications.

They marked their completion of the course at a ceremony held in Maryland.



3. FRANCE INTO THE DROP ZONE

CHANNEL-hopping troops from 16 Air Assault Brigade met up with their continental counterparts for a test of deployment protocols.

Exercise Falcon Amarante flexed the muscles of the Airborne Combined Joint Expeditionary Force – a partnership between the British and French forces providing airborne rapid reaction troops for their countries.

Some 650 UK personnel, centred on the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment Battlegroup, took part in the two-week package.

4. LITHUANIA ENEMY ACTION

RESERVISTS joined colleagues from eight other nations to rehearse their core infantry skills.

Exercise Iron Wolf saw troops from 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, join a contingent of UK personnel playing the opposing force in an eventful two-week package near the capital Vilnius.

The manoeuvres formed part of Nato's enhanced forward presence in the Baltic states and provided a key opportunity to work alongside allies from different countries.



“
This is a
demanding
place
”

Norway tests troops' mettle – page 28



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5. PORTUGAL ROAD TO RECOVERY



EX-SOLDIERS took on mountainous terrain, sand dunes and muddy bogs during an off-roading expedition across the Iberian Peninsula.

Travelling in a fleet of Land Rovers and camping along the way, the 11-strong group covered more than 2,200 kilometres in Spain and northern Portugal.

The trip was organised by VetRun180, a new charity that offers adventure therapy as an alternative to traditional PTSD treatments.

"It feels like it has given me something to live for," said former Royal Engineer Rob Burgess, whose mental health struggles cost him his home and marriage. He added: "It has been so good to get away and do all the things I used to do with a group of like-minded lads."

6. OMAN STRONG AND STABLE

TRAINING packages to the Gulf will become a regular thing after it was confirmed a new base is to be set up in the region.

Soldiers will start using the joint facility in Oman in 2019 – where they will exercise alongside counterparts from the host country's armed forces for years to come.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said the new project signified that Oman and Britain would stand as a "beacon of stability in the region". The news was confirmed in the wake of Exercise Saif Sareea (page 32).



Paw patrol



Nato dog handlers go head to head – page 36

7. CYPRUS SAPPER SUCCESS

MEMBERS of 71 Engineer Regiment became the first Reservists to design and deliver a joint force enabling exercise in Cyprus.

Condensing what would have been a three-month Regular package into two weeks, they carried out a range of construction tasks across the garrison before finishing with a stint in the field.

Maj Mick Stewart, officer commanding 102 Field Squadron, said Exercise Pinestick had tested more than the troops' engineering skills. He explained: "From planning, overseas deployment, basic combat skills and communication across a 70-mile footprint we were able to get a huge amount of training value that we would struggle to replicate in the UK."



Picture: Cpl Ben Maher, RLC

8. PAKISTAN CEMENTING OLD TIES

CAVALRY troops who were involved in a successful exchange initiative are poised to return the favour when they host Asian counterparts early in the new year.

Members of The Royal Dragoon Guards recently travelled to Pakistan, where they joined members of the 15th (Baloch) Lancers in Multan to reinforce historical links between the two units.

The trip provided an opportunity to see the working life of an armoured regiment in the Pakistani Army.

There was also an exhibition polo match. Pakistani personnel are set for a return visit to Catterick scheduled for February.



Protected against cold and the occasional bullet

During the First World War, Private Stephen Palmer was sent an OXO tin filled with treats from his brother. This act of brotherly love saved Stephen's life when this very tin stopped an enemy bullet.



The National Army Museum:

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Royal Hospital Road | Chelsea | SW3 4HT



Picture: Graeme Main



Wearable tech set to improve soldiers' health

THE Army is moving closer to introducing wearable technology to help soldiers track their health and wellbeing.

A pilot study earlier this year saw 40 personnel carrying Fitbit-style devices to monitor their activity levels, recovery and sleep.

The data was being analysed as this issue went to press but the plan is for the trial to be expanded to around 900 volunteers in summer 2019.

The scheme is being overseen by Lt Col Stacy McQueeney (RAMC, pictured right) from the Senior Health Adviser branch at Army HQ.

She said early results had shown the participants had found data on things like calories burned and heart rate useful in changing their behaviour.

"We could do more to empower personnel to improve their health, performance or lifestyle," the Army Rugby Union team physiotherapist explained to *Soldier*.

"We tell them when to eat, when to train and when to work. But we should provide them with the opportunity to take greater responsibility for their own

choices and behaviours.

"Many troops already use wearable technology to track their wellbeing, but the Army wants to take that one step further with bespoke kit that helps them understand what level they should be training at and when.

"For example, if they have worked at maximum intensity one day they – and their physical training instructor – should be able to reduce the tempo of the session the following day.

"It will also help identify individuals who might be struggling due to conditions such as chronic fatigue or overtraining and allow them to tailor their fitness regime and maximise their health and performance."

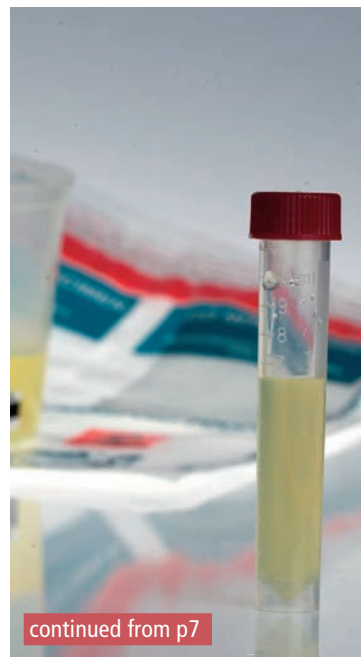
Wearable technology could mean a Fitbit-style device or sets of sensors inside kit like helmets or Bergens.

The Defence and Security Accelerator scheme, which funds military innovations, is now contacting industries to find specific products the Army could trial for this task.

Musculoskeletal injury, hearing loss and heat and cold illness are the three chief areas the Service wants to prevent with the devices.



“The Army wants to take these devices a step further”



continued from p7

further improve its already fine record in this area.

"Our zero tolerance of drugs is long-standing and hasn't changed," he added.

"Year-on-year, around 0.6 per cent of those in the Armed Forces are exposed as drug users so in that respect we are already better than the rest of society as a whole.

"But obviously we'd like that figure to be zero so we are going to focus more on prevention.

"In the future new recruits in basic training can expect to receive more education on the misuse of drugs – this is something we are working on right now.

"But we recognise that it takes time to teach individuals the values and standards the Army espouses."

The senior officer continued: "Young soldiers will go home and see their mates and be exposed to drug taking – that's a fact because that's life.

"But I hope our training mechanisms make them recognise that taking these substances is wrong, it can impair health and if they want to retain their Service careers it's not a course of action they can possibly subscribe to."

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To be in with a chance of winning, email your details with "London" in the subject line before December 28.



www.pointahotels.com



comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

WOUNDS CENTRE OPENS

■ INJURED veterans will be among 480 patients to take part in a three-year research programme at Britain's first specialist wound research centre in the world-renowned Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham.

The new facility will pioneer treatments such as the use of lasers to reduce scarring.

It will also provide mental health support to those with physical injuries.

The centre has been set up in partnership with the Casevac Club, which is made up of wounded veterans from conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

RED LETTER DAY

■ VETERANS will be encouraged to apply for jobs with the Post Office under a new agreement with the MoD.

The company has agreed to work with the Careers Transition Partnership, offer bespoke training to veterans, hire a certain number of ex-soldiers and grant paid leave and time off to deploying Reservists.

It will also set-up a staff network for those with links to the military.

Last month the Post Office became the 3,000th organisation to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

Picture: Cpl Becky Brown, RLC



TECH TESTER

■ SOLDIERS have trialled more than 70 prototype unmanned aerial and ground vehicles during Exercise Autonomous Warrior 18 on Salisbury Plain.

The Royal Tank Regiment Battlegroup provided the bulk of the testers, with more than 200 troops involved from other Services and the US Army as well.

The four-week exercise saw them evaluate kit for resupply, surveillance, long-range and precision targeting, mobility and urban warfare as well as situational awareness.

It culminated in a battlegroup experiment, where the best ideas were tested in mock warzones.

Autonomous Warrior plays a key role in the allocation of the £800 million Defence Innovation Fund, which supports groundbreaking ideas aimed at transforming thinking.

"This equipment could revolutionise our Armed Forces, keeping them safe and giving them the edge in an increasingly unstable world," said Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson.

Tests will mimic real-life military activities



Picture: Graeme Main

Revised PT regime rolls out

“It’s an important step”

NEW-LOOK fitness checks to ensure soldiers meet the Army's demanding physical employment standards (PES) will begin next year, PT bosses have confirmed.

The overhaul will see annual personal fitness assessments canned at the beginning of April 2019 and replaced with a new twice-yearly appraisal known as the soldier conditioning review.

Final details of the exercises included in the package were being signed off as this issue went to press. But they will put more focus on assessing muscular strength and endurance as well as mobility. The initiative is backed by the wider Army PT system.

The conditioning review is being rolled out across the entire Army from

its outset, although PES is initially only being introduced to those focused on ground close combat via new role fitness tests (*Soldier*, October).

The rest of the Service will see the standards arrive in three years' time – each Army job will have its own test criteria, focused on exercises that mimic military activities.

These may include things like a drag to simulate a casualty extraction as well as crawling with weapons and a redesigned loaded march.

Lt Col Mark Lewis (RAPTC), PES project officer, said: "The soldier conditioning review will tune people to train in the right way, covering all fitness components.

"These are the most important PT changes for more than 20 years."

Better care for cancer sufferers

WITH cancer continuing to be the biggest killer of Service personnel each year the Army is taking steps to improve the care it offers to soldiers with life changing and limiting conditions.

Spearheaded by Maj Mandy Islam (RAMC, pictured), the Defence People With Significant Illness project will offer access to a support network following diagnosis.

As part of the initiative the officer, who is battling a rare form of terminal cancer known as myeloma, has also written a new Army policy to guide soldiers facing this daunting path.

The document, which is due out in the coming months, will also help the chain of command to find out more about the issues

associated with such diseases.

"It looks at how we can support individuals through illness, their return to work and life beyond," said Maj Islam, who is targeting two powerboat racing records in 2019 (page 77).

She is hoping her work will help the Forces become more disability-positive.

"It's vital people fight and get back to living their lives," she added. "There are so many barriers. After going back to work I realised there's more we can do."

For details on the disability in defence network email afnetworks-candid-0mailbox@mod.gov.uk





Picture: Graeme Main



Revamp to Infantry training

THE combat infantryman's course has been overhauled to prepare troops for the modern battlefield.

The newly-titled combat infantry course is being piloted, with more advanced tactics and a greater array of weapons now on the syllabus.

It includes the Army's latest physical employment standards and will be used to train the first women heading into ground close combat.

"Our last course was still very much focused on Iraq and Afghanistan," said Maj Richard Jeffrey (Rifles), who helped draw up the new package at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick.

"We've incorporated all of our best practice, and it's being well received."

It is hoped the changes will better equip infanteers to tackle well-matched enemies while reducing injury rates and drop outs.

Larger scale manoeuvres are now

also being taught and personal equipment is being uprated to ensure troops are kitted out as they would be on operations.

In addition, digital learning materials will be available to students via the Defence Learning Environment for the first time.

Troops from two platoons under Maj Jeffrey's command in Rifles Company, 1st Infantry Training Battalion are testing the first 26-week course – which is divided into basic and advanced elements.

Different variants will be available for Infantry outfits such as the Paras and Gurkhas.

The officer added: "We'll also be using TES (simulation kit) in the training for the first time to give it a far more realistic edge."

"Overall, it will better develop troops to take their place in the Field Army."

Suicide support group will help 'process grief'

A SUPPORT group is being set up for Forces families whose loved ones have killed themselves, after a sharp rise in the number of requests for help from personnel this year.

Military charity SSAFA is launching the service in response to an increase of nearly 11.3 per cent in helpline calls from people dealing with negative or suicidal thoughts.

It has also taken into account the findings of an investigation by *The Sunday Times* that reported up to 42 soldiers and veterans could have taken their own lives since January.

The charity's initiative will give friends and family chance to meet others in the same position and to share experiences and advice.

SSAFA chief executive Andrew Gregory said: "It's our duty to help where we can with the processing of this grief."

The support group will meet for the first time in 2019. To find out more visit

www.ssafa.org.uk/help-you/currently-serving/family-support-groups

IN NUMBERS
THE NEW COMBAT
INFANTRY COURSE

26
weeks of training

SEVEN
course modules

46
troops involved
in pilot

DAY OF THE JACKAL

■ MEMBERS of the Royal Yeomanry have been getting their hands on the Jackal reconnaissance vehicle for the first time, as the replacement for the RWMK Land Rover continues to be rolled out across the Army Reserve.

The new platform allows the part-time soldiers to train on the same vehicles as their Regular counterparts, and troops from D (Shropshire Yeomanry) Squadron took delivery of the one pictured below at their Telford base as this issue went to press.



Picture: Garry Fox

ARMY CHILDREN WANTED

■ RESEARCHERS at the University of Southampton are looking for children from military families to take part in an online survey about resilience.

The study will examine how youngsters between the ages of 11 and 18 bounce back from stressful events and participants will receive a £5 Amazon voucher as a thank you.

For full details and to take part visit www.isurvey.soton.ac.uk/29131

GERMANY REMEMBERED

■ A BOOK by Headquarters British Forces Germany documenting the experiences of the thousands of British men and women who served in the country is to be published in October next year.

British Forces in Germany 1945-2019: The Lived Experience will be launched in tandem with an exhibition about the era at the National Army Museum in London.

If you pre-order your copy of the book at www.profileeditions.com/britishforces before May 15, 2019 you can take advantage of a special £10 discount on the standard retail price of £35. Email info@profileeditions.com for further information.



'NO ROOM FOR FAR-RIGHT'

■ FAR-RIGHT ideas are completely at odds with the values and standards of the Army, a senior officer has warned.

Col Graham Taylor of the Army Personnel Services Group issued the statement following the jailing of 34-year-old LCpl Mikko Vehvilainen (R Anglian, pictured below) for eight years.



The soldier, who has also been discharged from the Army, was found guilty of belonging to banned neo-Nazi terrorist group National Action.

He planned to recruit other troops and among his targets was colleague Pte Mark Barrett, who was acquitted of terror charges but has also been discharged.

When police raided Vehvilainen's accommodation in

Sennybridge in September 2017 they found a selection of Nazi memorabilia, CDs of Third Reich music and stockpiles of knives, guns and other weaponry.

The soldier was one of eight members of the terrorist group to be convicted in a series of court trials that dismantled its Midlands cell.

Col Taylor added: "While we are only talking about a very small number of cases, we take this issue very seriously.

"We have robust measures in place, including during the recruitment process, to ensure those exhibiting extremist views are neither tolerated nor permitted to serve.

"Any soldier receiving a custodial sentence will be discharged from the Army."

Far-right support: the British Army values and standards it breaches...

- ✦ Respect for others
- ✦ Discipline
- ✦ Showing moral courage
- ✦ Integrity



LOGGIES SALUTED

■ PERSONNEL from the Royal Logistic Corps have been honoured for their efforts at home and abroad at the Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transportation annual awards.

Defence Logistics, an MoD department with a strong Army presence, scooped a win in the operational excellence category following the military's disaster relief effort in the wake of Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean.

The Logistics Specialist Training Wing, an organisation boasting two RLC squadrons, claimed the people development award for its commitment to improving and developing staff and students.



Pictures: Capt Tim Miller, QOY

It's a refreshing change from the concrete cookhouse or a soggy sandwich at your desk.

But although these Reservists from The Queen's Own Yeomanry may have breakfasted like kings at the end of their Himalayan expedit, they paid for it with some seriously tough climbing.

The nine-day adventurous training package in the Annapurna region of Nepal saw them trek around 50 miles to Mardi Himal base camp (4,500m).

Exped leader Capt Tim Miller said it had been an "experience of a lifetime" for his 14-strong team.

"We were pushed out of our comfort zone – mentally and physically – but the surroundings motivated us," the officer (pictured above, front) told *Soldier*.

Trekker Tpr Andrew Loble said it had been a memorable trip.

"I know it's a cliché but if I wasn't a Reservist I'd never have got the



opportunity to do this," he added.

SSgt Les Speed commented: "I guess you could say this is what AT is all about. I was massively pushed – I don't particularly like heights – but I did it.

"Not bad for a guy in his forties."

“It's not just an officers' sport”

Army leadership: time for a rethink?

THE Service must reassess its leadership style if it is to cope with new threats, a panel of experts has told soldiers.

Around 850 personnel attended the Centre for Army Leadership (CAL) annual conference at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where discussions centred on negotiating change.

Russia, Brexit and climate change were among the concerns discussed by the presenters, who included civil service chief executive John Manzoni and former US submarine captain and bestselling author David Marquet.

The event was aimed at encouraging debate at all levels across the Army.

Speaking afterwards, the Service's

Director of Leadership Maj Gen Paul Nanson said he was pleased to see a range of ranks attend.

"This is not just an officers' sport," he added.

"We've managed to open it up to everyone and I hope we've prompted them to think a bit differently about leadership and the challenges we face.

"The CAL has been going for about 18 months, the British Army for 300 years, so the fact that we now have a forum to discuss these important issues is fantastic."

To find out more about the centre's activities and insights visit www.army.mod.uk/leadership



Going on exercise?
news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Pictures: Sgt Paul Randall, RLC

Micks kill it in Kenya

Irish Guards Battlegroup put to test on Askari Storm

THE scorching heat and tricky terrain of East Africa put soldiers through their paces on the latest Exercise Askari Storm.

Members of the Irish Guards Battlegroup spent five weeks in Kenya, where drills included defensive operations, obstacle crossings and a live-firing package.

As well as the environmental challenges presented by dry and hard terrain, Service personnel came face-to-face with some of the country's most impressive wildlife.

"I don't want to see a hyena again as I nearly got eaten by three of them the last time I was out here," LSgt Stephen Doyle (IG) commented ahead of the training package.

But the animals were kept at a safe distance as troops were forced to focus on increasingly tough tests.



"The intensity soon ratcheted up," Capt Charlie Bell (IG) added. "It tested our ability to conduct defensive, offensive and enabling operations."

Askari Storm is renowned as one of the most austere and demanding light infantry exercises the British Army runs.

It is split up into several smaller scenarios, with the live firing particularly revered, testing soldiers' ability to integrate different weapon systems including mortars and artillery.

The Irish Guards conducted various training in the UK prior to deploying. This included practical lessons at their barracks in Hounslow and a live-firing exercise in Brecon.

FACT FILE:

The battlegroup's
reccé platoon
carried

15 kg

each in **water** alone



“I don't want to see a hyena again”



FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Highlanders deliver

SLUDGY bogs, cargo net climbs and fire jumps proved no obstacle for personnel from 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland as they tackled the daunting Spartan Race in Perth.

A 60-strong team from the unit arrived at the start line in military gear and they made short work of the challenge, which also included slippery six-foot ramps and a series of crawls under barbed wire.

Money raised:
£8,000
For: Scotty's
Little Soldiers



Masked
marathon
man

POUNDING out the miles of the London Marathon is always demanding, but it takes on a punishing new dimension when you are wearing CBRN kit. Capt Iain Rodger (REME) is set to take up the challenge next April, running in a respirator and boots. He is raising

money after his friend lost a daughter to the group B streptococcus infection. Sponsor him at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ianrodger2

Target:
£5,000
For: Group B Strep Support



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

WALK BEFORE WE RUN...

WITH the Army once again actively recruiting foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) soldiers in larger numbers, our already-busy team is bracing itself for what's to come.

While we understand the reasons for opening up recruitment, there must be a review of the current situation and the impact of poor communication.

Improvements are needed in areas such as timely provision of immigration information and support to soldiers experiencing entry problems.

And this must happen before welcoming more personnel.

I'm encouraged by the behind-the-scenes work, including the MoD's F&C working group.

But the question is; will these discussions materialise into something useful in time?

Will the new recruits be better informed? Will they have a clued-up point of contact to assist them?

Will the minimum income threshold take into consideration their unique status and permit F&C soldiers to bring families with them?

And will the visa process actually allow them to choose an Armed Forces route when applying?

Failure to answer and deliver on these questions will have a negative effect, not just on troops but on their families.



www.aff.org.uk



Picture: Cpl Pete Brown, RLC

1,000 more Commonwealth recruits per year

“
They will
bring key
skills
”

IN NUMBERS

Troops from
**Commonwealth
countries** currently
serving in the UK
Armed Forces



MOST new Armed Forces recruits from Commonwealth countries will be joining the Army, it has been confirmed by the MoD.

This follows the department's announcement that citizens from these states will no longer need to be resident in the UK to enlist.

MoD officials said they were expecting 1,000 of a resulting 1,350-strong annual intake to join the Service.

The Royal Navy will take on 300 with the remaining 50 allocated to the Royal Air Force.

And the recruitment arrangement will remain in place for several years, the department has said.

Previously, Commonwealth citizens wanting to join the military had to be resident in the UK for five years first – although a waiver was introduced in 2016 to allow 200 recruits to apply for

a limited number of specialist jobs.

Now all roles and ranks will be available to those aged 18 and over.

Explaining the changes, Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said: “We’re stepping up the numbers of recruits from the Commonwealth, knowing they will bring key skills and dedicated service.”

“In addition, their different perspectives will help us enhance our level of cultural understanding, which will give us an operational advantage over our adversaries.”

It has been confirmed that soldier applications will be taken from early next year although the RAF and Navy are now recruiting.

Those who have already put themselves forward for Army jobs – but who have had their paperwork put on hold because of caps on numbers – will be given priority.

A HISTORY OF HORSES...



FIRST World War paintings by one of Britain's most celebrated equine artists have gone on display at the National Army Museum in Chelsea, London.

Alfred Munnings' wartime pictures – more than 40 in total – were crafted during his time with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in France during 1918.

They highlight the role of horses on the Western Front, and will be on show at the museum until March 3, 2019.



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The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

*Military Saving programme available to current and ex-Service Personnel. Including veterans and retired members of the UK Armed Forces. Customer savings of 4% to 20% off the Recommended On The Road price available across the Ford range (excluding KA+ and Focus RS) on vehicles contracted between 26th January 2018 and 31st December 2018 and registered between 26th January 2018 and 30th June 2019. Retail customers only. This promotion cannot be used in conjunction with other manufacturer promotions or incentives. At participating Ford dealers – for terms and conditions, including the eligibility criteria, eligible models and customer savings visit: www.ford.co.uk/militarysales

Facing new threats head-on

As the challenges facing the armed forces become more complex, staying on the frontline of innovation is essential. We can help.

Threats are evolving, personnel are expecting more, and budgets are constantly shrinking. The task of keeping the country safe seems tougher than ever. But technology can help you work together like never before, give your people a better experience, so you can face new threats head-on.

With the smartest tech and the best connection, it's easier to make decisions and act fast. But to do it, you need the right network, and a partner you can trust by your side. That us.

Securing your data

When it comes to defence, we know keeping data safe is essential. And our global network has defence-grade security that can protect your critical infrastructure and operations. We proactively monitor and deal with cyber-crime in real time. So we can protect you from multiple simultaneous attacks. And by bringing together multiple data sources, we can help you respond faster to risks, threats and vulnerabilities.

Our internet access is more secure, too. Your people can work more flexibly by securely logging in on any DBI connected base, or connecting to our 5 million hotspots. Plus, links to MODNET make it easier to book travel and claim expenses. And when you need to print a private document, they won't appear until you've keyed in your unique access code on the printer.

We'll even keep your kit secure when it's at the end of its life. We can securely eradicate data and hardware at all levels of MOD classification – or sanitise it, if you need to re-use it.

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You can't afford downtime. So we'll help keep your site running 24/7. Our end-to-end service

tests and maintains your comms room cabinets to UK and MOD standards. It'll find faults before they come a problem. And our security-cleared on-site engineers can be with you for a day, a week, a month, or all the time. Just tell us what you need.

Want managed site services? We've got the knowledge, resources and security-cleared people to keep things running smoothly. From overseeing workspace design to project management, sustainability and energy management. And if you upgrade or replace some kit, we'll recover and recycle your old, unneeded copper cables to make space for new infrastructure.

Keeping you connected

Talking of new kit, our IT and communications management service streamlines supply chains. So you can get what you need. We cover everything from ordering a desk phone to supplier management and order fulfilment.

Once you've got your equipment, we can get you connected, too. We'll hook up your existing locations with high speed fibre – and we can deliver at scale. And our reliable power supplies keep your systems running in any location. All while balancing cost, resilience and operating efficiency.

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But we can do a lot more than phones and cabling. Our secure CCTV connects your control rooms to more than 44,000 public spaces, carrying over half a million video images per second. So you can give your people in the field access to real-time CCTV through smartphone video apps.

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- We've been a trusted defence partner of the UK Armed Forces for over 100 years.
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“

It makes you realise how insignificant the little things are

”

Reality check for *Love Island* star...



■ *LOVE Island*'s Georgia Steel got more than she bargained for when she took to the turret for a show on Forces Radio BFBS. *On Track* saw celebs manoeuvring an FV432 armoured vehicle and Abbot self-propelled gun over some seriously muddy courses at the Tanks-Alot attraction near Banbury. The reality TV star passed all three tests set for her, triumphing over former England football captain Stuart Pearce and TV host Jenni Falconer. "I worry about small things when really there's people out there driving military vehicles for their job, and it just makes you realise how insignificant the little things in life are," the 20-year-old said.



Water obstacles caused some panic...



...but Georgia came out on top

The female thumbs-up

THE decision to officially open all front-line roles to women has been warmly welcomed by female personnel within the Army.

Existing Servicewomen can now apply to join the Infantry and with new recruits following suit from December 21 there will no longer be a barrier for females seeking career opportunities across the cap badges.

On announcing the move Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said gender is no longer a factor – a thought echoed by 2nd Lt Maddie Hudson (RE).

"If a female can do a job as well as a male there should never be an issue," she told *Soldier*.

"When you join a regiment you are looking for a home, somewhere that clicks with you. It's good that women can now find that in other cap badges."

Combat medic Cpl Vicky Helsby (RAMC, shown right) served alongside troops



from The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers on Op Herrick 18 and said there were no issues between the two sexes on the front line.

"I felt like I'd known them all my life," she explained. "We all came from similar backgrounds and that was more important than gender."

"I was getting my hands dirty and I think that's something they appreciated; I was happy to do the job and didn't shy away from anything."

"This is a natural progression. Many militaries have women on the front line as infantry."

Capt Hayley Larcombe (QARANC, shown right) is another soldier with experience in Afghanistan.

"Women have been in combat-facing roles for decades," the officer said. "We had people on Herrick serving as dog handlers, medics and in EOD. The Army is now based on opportunity rather than gender, and if you meet the physical requirements all jobs should be open to you."



“The Army is based on opportunity rather than gender”

SPINE LINE COMPETITION



WIN
a £350 Armistice watch

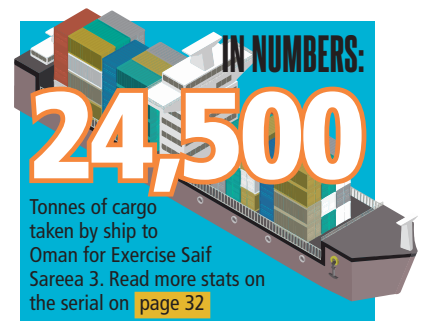
FANCY getting your hands on this super-slick commemorative timepiece this festive season?

Soldier has teamed up with watch manufacturer Col and MacArthur (www.colandmacarthur.com) to offer one lucky reader a limited edition Armistice 1918 watch worth £345.

Boasting stylish features to symbolise some poignant First World War statistics, and with only 1,918 of these models produced, they are set to become a much sought-after collectors' item.

To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue. Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by December 28.

* Ten *Soldier* readers can also enjoy £34.50 off the Armistice 18 watch while stocks last by entering discount code **HEROES** on the website.







THE BIG PICTURE

Salisbury Plain Training Area

Flame game

A CHALLENGER 2 main battle tank from The King's Royal Hussars makes a dramatic entrance at Copehill Down village during the 2018 Land Combat Power Visit. The fearsome asset worked alongside Warrior infantry fighting vehicles, armoured engineers and an Apache attack helicopter to clear enemy forces from the urban setting during a spectacular display of the British Army's capabilities. The event attracted a host of military officials from across the globe.

Picture: Graeme Main

NEED TO

NUTRITION / FITNESS / MENTAL HEALTH / 7 QUESTIONS

How to eat, drink and be merry without putting your health goals on hold

► CHRISTMAS is coming, and the geese might not be the only ones getting fat. Thanks to mess dos and office lunches we spend most of December overindulging – even before the big day itself – and come January the scales often paint a depressing picture. But there are ways to limit the damage, and it doesn't mean you have to be a party pooper...

Trimmings

Use **rapeseed** or **sunflower oil** to roast your potatoes instead of goose fat or lard. Cut them into **larger chunks**, as these absorb less fat than smaller pieces.

Get your five a day

Aim to fill half of your plate with a variety of vegetables. Avoid cooking or covering in butter or creamy sauces. **Steaming or boiling is healthier.**

Stuffing and sauces

Choose a **chestnut** or **fruit-based stuffing**. Make bread sauce with **semi-skimmed milk**. When doing the gravy **skim the fat off** the top of the meat juices and use the water from cooked vegetables.

Did you know?

- On Christmas Day many people consume more than **6,000 calories**. That's nearly three times the average daily requirement for an adult.
- Eating more and doing less over the festive period means most people gain between **one and two kilos in weight**.

5.5%

Quality not quantity

Keep an eye on the amount you are consuming. You can enjoy a full Christmas lunch without “going large” on the portions and think before you put something in your mouth. **Savour food and drink** rather than just indulging for the sake of it.

'Tis the season to be... chubby?

The main event

For your starter try **smoked salmon, melon** or **vegetable soup**. **Turkey** is a good choice as a main course as it is low in fat and high in protein but **remove the skin** before eating to reduce the calorie content. If you are a vegetarian choose a **roasted vegetable medley** with added nuts, seeds, beans or pulses for protein.

Avoid snack attacks

Instead of mindlessly reaching for the mince pies or chocolates, nibble on **unsalted nuts, chestnuts, plain popcorn** or **vegetable sticks** with **low-fat dips**. Keep tempting treats out of sight and make sure you have healthy options to hand like **satsumas** and fresh or dried **dates, cranberries** and **apricots**.

Tipplés

Go easy on alcohol – it is high in calories. Opt for **diet mixers** or **soda water** and stay away from sugary alcopops and cocktails. If you drink alcohol with your meal, **drink slowly**. Choose **light beers** and **low-alcohol wines** and add ice cubes or mineral water. Alternate your alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic ones such as **diet fizzy drinks**.

Don't skip breakfast

Start the day with a healthy breakfast, such as **cereal, porridge, bagels** or **toast**. Wholegrain varieties will keep you feeling full and less likely to snack throughout the day.

Afters

Serve Christmas pudding with **low-fat custard** or **crème fraîche** instead of brandy butter. A **spiced poached pear** or **seasonal fruit** is a healthy alternative. If you've still got room for cheese and crackers choose a smaller portion of a stronger cheese and avoid butter. Lower-fat options include **Edam, goat's cheese, Camembert** and **Danish blue**.

PORTION PROBLEMS

It's easy to help yourself to seconds at Christmas dinner or mindlessly snack throughout the day but doing that quickly increases your calorie count...



220 kcal

You would have to cycle hard on an exercise bike for **15 minutes** to burn off four cocktail-sized pigs in blankets



260 kcal

Rowing briskly for **23 minutes** on a machine would expend the same amount of energy as one minced pie



160 kcal

Three pieces of chocolate from a typical selection box is the same as a **17-minute jog**

Calories calculated for a 22-year-old individual weighing 80kg

Seasonal sessions

Counteract the calorie glut and keep your PT ticking over during Christmas leave with these tips...

Set yourself some small goals

- Train once every other day for 30 to 40 minutes, or a cumulative total of five to ten hours over the leave period
- If you are a runner or cyclist aim to cover a given distance during your time off
- Walk 10,000 steps

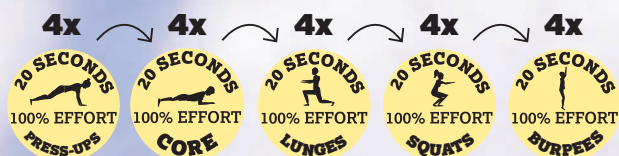


'Hiit' it hard

If you are short of time carry out two to three high intensity interval training sessions per week involving body weight exercise. You can download a free app to guide you or use the following example:

Session 1

Twenty seconds of maximum effort followed by **ten seconds rest**, starting with press-ups, then a core exercise of your choice, lunges, squats and finally burpees. Repeat each exercise four times, before a **20 second rest** in between sets.



Session 2

For this you can use a static bike, treadmill or outside running route. Take **10 seconds recovery** between each rep and **rest for one minute** between each group.



More workout wisdom:

- If running outside always **dress as if the weather was 10 to 12 degrees warmer** than it is – this will enable you to avoid overheating
- Try and **be active before that big Christmas dinner** – a short phys session in the morning will allow you to enjoy your turkey and tatties much more
- Ensure you **stay well hydrated**
- **Don't overdo it.** Leave periods let the body and mind recover from the demands of military life
- When starting back to work after leave, ensure you **build up your training gradually** using the newly introduced Army Physical Training System



Remember!

- **Warm up for five to ten minutes** by jogging or doing joint mobility exercises to get the heart rate up and raise muscle temperature
- **Cool down for ten minutes** afterwards by gently stretching the body from the top down
- Do not carry out Hiit on consecutive days. Ideally these sessions should be interspersed with **48 hours recovery**

► IT'S part and parcel of life in uniform but even in the age of FaceTime, operational tours and unaccompanied postings can have a big impact on families. Occasions like Christmas can be especially tough. However, there are things you can do, according to psychologist Carolyne Keenan...



How can being separated from loved ones affect soldiers' mental health?

In the same way being with them can enhance it. Being unable to support each other in the usual ways can lead to isolation and a sense of distance. For some, paranoia or anxiety can be felt in relation to their role being filled by someone else or not being needed anymore. Protecting each other from sadness and difficulties can feel important when there is limited time to speak. And while this is understandable, it can also lead to a sense of having to manage alone.

So what can be done about this, if anything?

There will be times where communication with loved ones is just not possible, so it's important to find a space where difficulties and feelings can be talked about and support given. This might be from professionals, or from family, friends and people in a similar situation. Acknowledge feelings rather than pretending they are not there.

Are relationships more likely to break down if you are in the Services?

Not necessarily, but extra care may be needed. There are of course other professions where people have to travel, but these jobs may not come with the same considerations as the military. For example, serving personnel cannot always be fully honest about where they are or the experiences they have had. Taking time to adjust to separation, but also reconnection, is important to give things the best chance.

Separation anxiety

Soldier grills an expert on how to limit the impact of lengthy deployments on you and your kids



What about children? What impact does separation have on them?

They can find it hard to understand and may feel rejected and confused as a result. But there is support available to help manage this. The following tips may help:

1 Measure time. You can do this by marking days off on a calendar or taking two jars and filling one with marbles for each day you expect to be away. You can then get your child to transfer them one by one to show time passing.

2 Keep to your routines. Are there songs you listen to together, books you read or foods you always eat? Ensure these things continue while you're away.

3 Remember key milestones. Write out cards or letters to your child for any events you are likely to miss. It can mean a lot for them to read messages in the absent parent's own words.

4 Leave an emotional reminder. Giving the child something that belongs to you can be comforting – maybe a favourite piece of clothing or cuddly toy.

5 Let them talk. The absence of a parent can bring up lots of confusing feelings so it's important they are able to express things like anger or worry so they can be reassured.

6 Talk to them. Make sure your child understands why you are going away. This might alleviate potential worries about it being their fault.

Are shorter postings preferable to longer ones? Which is worse for children?

Both will come into play, and it is very difficult to say. The routine a child has, the number of people around them and their own resilience have an impact, as well as their care giver's ability to support them.

Any other advice?

Families can put huge pressure on their relationships when they feel they should be able to "get on with it" or "accept that's just how it is". But while separation is unavoidable, struggling alone is not. Reach out to the people and services around you and know that, while there isn't a magic solution, small things can make it feel more manageable.



Zoe and the Time Rabbit is a new children's book that deals with the subject of parental absence. Get your hands on a copy here: www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk/kid-years-campaign/

FACT FILE: WO1 GAV PATON

Age: 39

Cap badge: Late Rifles

Years of service:
1997-present

Operational experience:
Includes Sierra Leone,
Iraq, Afghanistan,
Northern Ireland, Kosovo

Last job: Field Army
Serjeant Major

Pictures: Graeme Main, FreePik



“Good ideas don’t come with rank”

Talking shop with the new Army Sergeant Major

► THE archetypal soldier’s soldier, WO1 Gav Paton has served all over the world in a career spanning more than two decades. We asked him about his aspirations as the second incumbent in the role as well as his wider life in uniform as a rifleman.

1. What do you hope to achieve in the job?

In general terms I want troops to be comfortable talking to me – so making sure I’m approachable is important. I represent soldiers at all echelons of the Army – I want them to tell me about what is working as well as anything we could do better.

2. How will you keep your finger on the pulse?

Nothing beats face-to-face contact for me, so I intend to get out and about, meeting people where I can. I’ve been set up on Twitter – @ArmySgtMajor – although I am a social media novice it will be a useful way of ensuring people can contact me. And I’m on Defence Connect as @Gavin_Paton

3. Tell us about your leadership style

It’s inclusive – that is the way we have always done business in The Rifles. Everyone is a rifleman, first and foremost – I’ve carried that with me throughout my Army career. More widely we are all soldiers, regardless of our gender, background and where we are from. And, importantly, good ideas don’t come with rank.

4. What are the key challenges facing the Service?

Manning is something we need to address and – related to this – stability is also key. It’s very important to me that people are proud to be soldiers, that they understand how good they are, and that the public are also proud of these ordinary people who do extraordinary things in military life.

5. Do you have a pet hate in terms of discipline?

Honestly I don’t have any particular fads or pet hates. But I don’t like exclusive behaviours that push people out. I like things to be done properly and really detest dishonesty. You should be able to trust everybody.

6. As an infanteer, how testing do you find the new physical employment standards?

The bottom line is that they replicate what you do in ground close combat. Repeated lifting and running are obviously a familiar experience; unfortunately extracting casualties has been for me too. The tests are demanding but we have a duty to set up soldiers physically and mentally for what they need to do. The enemy will not discriminate when the lead starts to fly.

7. What have been the best and worst places you’ve served?

The best and the worst are actually one and the same. Having joined the Infantry, both fortunately and unfortunately I found myself in Sangin, Afghanistan, during Op Herrick 11. It was the Army’s most brutal tour since the Korean War – it was horrific but also an extraordinary experience. You feel the responsibility when you’re a soldier on the ground in that situation, and Helmand was both a good and bad time in my life.

Seasons greetings...

“To the warriors of the British Army, the families that provide support and to those who have served and moved on – thank you and merry Christmas, wherever you are.” – WO1 Gav Patton





THE LION IN WINTER

Brits face
big freeze
as Nato
flexes its
muscles



Report: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Cpl Ben Beale, RLC

THE sudden arrival of the Arctic's most brutal weather is a shock for concealed British soldiers as they maintain a watch on enemy armour attempting to push forward.

A long way from the settlement where Headquarters 4th Infantry Brigade has established its foothold, the Norwegian countryside is rolling and stark, signs of civilisation steadily becoming sparser.

It is a hostile, frigid environment as lethal to the unprotected as any would-be opposition.

Many of the soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment Battlegroup started their long journey to Exercise Trident Juncture in the warmth of the UK's autumn sunshine.

Now the Husky, Wolfhound and other protected patrol vehicles that were moved to Norway in convoys across central Europe are hammered by snow.

But the winter clothing with which the troops have been issued is up to the mark – and Jackal crews who now have eyes on the enemy are already familiar with Europe's deep freeze from Op Cabrit in Poland.





“Trident Juncture is the largest Nato exercise for years and it has taken over Norway,” says Maj Josh Badger (Scots), who helped plan the British contribution to these manoeuvres with 1 (UK) Division. “There are troops and vehicles from different nations wherever you go.

“Since we have been out here we have seen the first real snowfalls of winter – but our soldiers have remained enthusiastic about their work in some really tough conditions.”

The training package in which the 2,000 British personnel are involved is based on a fictional assault on one of the alliance countries.

In a real situation, such aggression would be deemed an assault on all member states – and a multinational retaliation would follow.

In simulating this scenario in the exercise, there are some 40,000 troops from 31 countries – with the serials flexing the muscles of Nato’s land, air and sea capabilities.

The aim has been succinctly summed up by Alliance Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who said the test sent a very clear message to any would-be adversaries: “We do not seek confrontation, but stand ready to defend all allies against any threat.”

Brits from the 1 R Irish Battlegroup – which includes soldiers from B Squadron, The Light Dragoons and Anzio Company from 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment – are involved in a demanding series of tasks in the face of strong opposition during the final phase of the manoeuvres.

Working from a base in Akrestrommen, a world away from the bustle of the capital Oslo, the personnel have had to use their initiative to maintain the edge against a mock enemy force which is more than a match for them – calling on sympathetic local civilians to help their cause where possible.

“You don’t have to go far from the settlement to really find yourself in the middle of nowhere,” Maj Badger continues. “There is rolling terrain and it can be hard to gain a vantage point – this is a demanding place.”

But watching the opposition’s attempted push forward, the Light Dragoons have used their powers of negotiation to swing the balance in the alliance’s favour.

Having withdrawn after their Jackals came under contact, destroying a bridge across a river in a bid to slow their attackers down, they have been welcomed at a local farm. And with their vehicles now concealed in a barn they are continuing to report any hostile movements.

It has not taken the foe long to establish a new crossing point, which is proving an effective means of despatching main battle tanks under the cover of air support.

“This place is ideal to have eyes on our adversaries – we can see loads of enemy movement,” says Lt Paddy Bernard (LD) as the observation continues. “We couldn’t have asked more from the



IN NUMBERS: NATO ASSETS

65

Vessels at sea

250

Aircraft at readiness

10,000

Vehicles involved

Personnel on exercise

40,000





local population, who have been helpful to us.

“The farmer has been really kind – we’ve been looked after and even given cookies.”

Working with people who live in this area has been a new experience for some troops who said it added another dimension to serials in an unfamiliar place and different culture.

“This does give the training a more realistic feel, especially when you have an enemy that is trying to find you,” admits Tpr Aaron Leonard (LD). “We’ve also never been here and don’t know the land.

“It has been challenging – coping with the cold weather has been alright but you need to keep on top of your admin and check on each other.

“It was -23 degrees Celsius on our first night and we had a lot of snow, which was a shock to the system.”

Without doubt, Trident Juncture has been a tough undertaking from beginning to end for the British forces taking part. Completing a marathon convoy move (*Soldier*, November) before embarking on a demanding exercise programme has required stamina, strength and resilience.

But troops are continuing to prove their mettle as they train to meet evolving threats. Underpinned with the experience of past ops, they are reasserting themselves with the disciplines for conventional warfighting as well as learning new skills for the changing battlespace. ■



ROLL OFF, ROCK ON

Logistics success paves way for regular training in Oman



3

Apache
helicopters
deployed

WITH a firepower demonstration that included Apache strikes, tanks powering across the desert, an amphibious assault and troops fast-roping from Chinooks, plenty of dramatic images have emerged from Exercise Saif Sareea in Oman.

However, the far less glamorous behind-the-scenes operation to move men, women and machines from the UK out to the Middle East was every bit as impressive and, arguably, played an even more important role for UK defence.

During the peak of the manoeuvres it was announced that a new joint training establishment would be set up in Oman, showing the increasingly close military relationship between the two nations.

And that meant the transportation of equipment and personnel, which is so crucial to any training activity, came under some sharp scrutiny. ➔

7

How many roll on-roll off ships were used to transport UK equipment and weaponry

450

Iso containers shipped from the UK to Oman





1,100

Vehicles deployed by the Army, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Air Force



35

Area in hectares the support base at Duqm covers, including the vehicle park, a headquarters and workshops



SAIF SAREEA 3 IN NUMBERS



200

Personnel making up the Theatre Enabling Group in Oman. They were drawn from **9 Regiment, 29 Regiment** and **17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC, 5 Force Support Battalion REME** as well as **medics, Royal Military Police** and **signallers**.



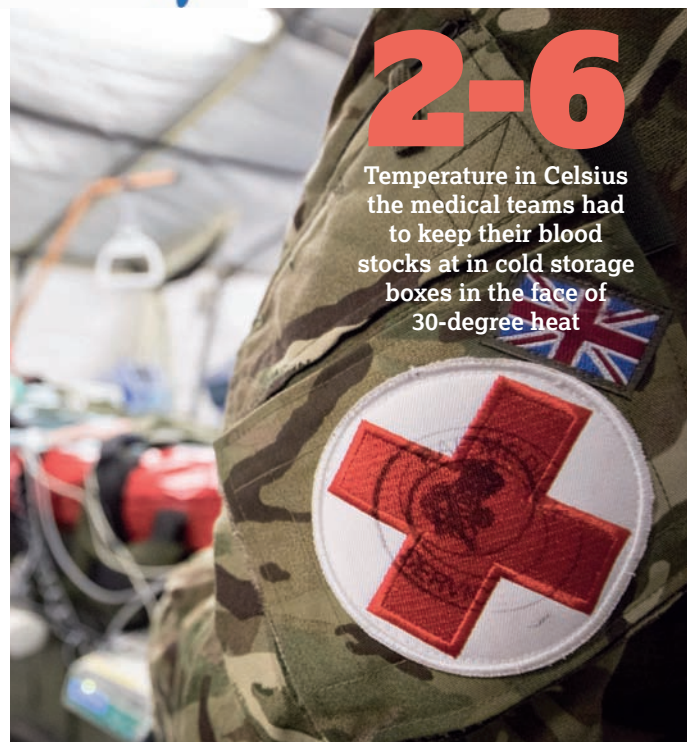
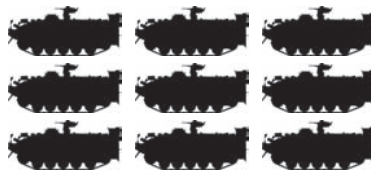
Tonnes of cargo transported to Oman by the ships

24,500



200

Army armoured vehicles employed in the exercise



2-6

Temperature in Celsius the medical teams had to keep their blood stocks at in cold storage boxes in the face of 30-degree heat



32

Years since the first Exercise Saif Sareea (it was previously staged in 1986 and 2001)

Picture: Graeme Main



430

Distance in kilometres from Duqm to the training area in Shafa

ENABLING



Voyager aircraft used to transport British personnel to Oman



350

Soldiers the British Army's kitchens catered for during each sitting



Time in months the Theatre Enabling Group will be deployed for (leaving January 2019)



“Part of our brief was to facilitate Saif Sareea 3 but the main aim was to prove Duqm (one of the country's main ports) as a location the UK could operate from in future,” explained Lt Col Andy Geary (RLC), commander of the Theatre Enabling Group.

This formation, part of 104 Logistic Support Brigade, had to set up a facility capable of managing 1,100 vehicles being shipped in from Marchwood and around half the 5,500 British personnel involved in the package, who were flying in through the nearby airport.

For UK Armed Forces, this was the largest exercise in the region for nearly two decades, involving the first deployment of Challenger 2 main battle tanks and Warrior infantry fighting vehicles to a Gulf country since the withdrawal from Basra nearly ten years ago.

“It's been a long time since the last Saif Sareea and Afghanistan has happened in between but this exercise has been a great demonstration of UK strategic deployment at range,” said Lt Col Geary.

“We had to adapt the port facilities for military use and set up our base from scratch.

“It wasn't austere in that some buildings were already constructed, but unlike Afghanistan we weren't taking over from another team and inheriting their facilities and systems; we had to decide what to do and where.

“We also had to develop health and safety criteria as well as standard operating procedures – we were presented with a genuine blank canvas.”

The logistics base will be used again as soon as March 2019, when the new training establishment in Oman will host the first Exercise Khanjar Edge, an Army-only package with the Royal Tank Regiment and supporting elements.

“Our base will be around for a long time and is now at the heart of the UK's footprint in the country,” added Lt Col Geary.

“It's a place we now know we can stage operations from, and the joint new training area is only around 60km away from Duqm so everything will mount through here.” ■



65,000

Omani troops took part this year, along with 5,500 British personnel

RIFT Military Engagement

The RIFT military engagement programme reached new heights this month with the first of a series of planned events designed to provide a platform for members of the military community to share insights into their activities.



The RIFT military engagement programme reached new heights this month with the first of a series of planned events designed to provide a platform for members of the military community to share insights into their activities.

This proved a popular event, with RIFT employees welcoming the opportunity to meet representatives from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, 103 Battalion REME, The Army Engagement Group, and The South East Reserve Force & Cadet Association.

It was amazing to get such direct and personal insight into the day-to-day challenges of military life, to help RIFT staff appreciate the positive impact our services have on your finances, families and lives.

Highlights of the day included:

- ✓ A presentation from our partners at ABF the Soldiers' Charity.
- ✓ Martyn Gibbons MBE's moving account of the support his family received from the charity after his injury in Afghanistan.
- ✓ Our own Dan Nightingale and Tyler Elliott's feedback on participation at RAF Halton's Leadership Event.

- ✓ A talk on RIFT's support for employees interested in becoming involved with the military community.
- ✓ Round table discussions, in which members of the military community shared insights into different roles and activities; the potential personal and professional benefits to be gained from involvement; and a typical day in the life of a member of the Armed Forces.

The event was such a resounding success, we are already planning our next activity, and we look forward to meeting, and learning from, more of you soon.

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Details of the legislation RIFT claim under can be found on www.HMRC.gov.uk under section 336-339 of ITEPA 2003. We operate under this legislation to ensure that no one is exposed or receives a refund they are not entitled to.

DOG



DAYS

What happened
when Nato
soldiers and
their four-legged
friends took
each other on?



Event:

International Military Canine Biathlon 2018

Held annually across Nato, but the first time it has been hosted on UK soil

Location:

St George's Barracks, North Luffenham

AS WELL as testing vital military skills, the biathlon brought troops together and helped build strong relationships with Nato partners, CO of 1 Military Working Dog Regiment, Lt Col Neil Lakin explained. "Climbing, lifting, jumping, shooting and endurance are essential skills that the military working dog handlers and their animals need," he said. "This event is about putting those disciplines to the test in a fun environment. It has also given us the opportunity to work alongside our international partners and develop our relationships."



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VIEW FROM THE GROUND:

Latvian soldier SSgt Ivars Veisis, who won the title of best individual male, said:

“The obstacles weren’t easy. The water was very, very cold. But it’s been a good experience and I’ve enjoyed it.”

Personnel:

40 teams

Belgium, Latvia and USA were among the overseas competitors. And joining the international contingent on the start line were teams from the Military Provost Guard Service, MoD Police and the Defence Animal Training Regiment.

Course:

10km of arduous cross-country

Along the way 24 obstacles tested the fitness, skill and endurance of both dog and handler.

They included tunnels, walls to climb, a waist-high water obstacle and a section where soldiers had to carry their animals.



Best overall team:
Belgian Armed Forces

Runners-up:
101 Military Working Dog Squadron, 1 MWD Regt
A Reserve squadron whose performance the organisers called “outstanding”





Interview: Steve Muncey Pictures: Shutterstock, Peter Davies

The new unit protecting relics to help win wars

CULTURE CLUB

THE British Army is in the process of creating its very own *Monuments Men* – a squad of curators, art specialists and archaeologists who are willing to risk life and limb to defend some of mankind’s greatest cultural treasures.

The George Clooney-directed Hollywood movie of that name was based on the work of an actual formation – the Monuments,

Fine Arts and Archive section – during the Second World War, which rescued art treasures looted by the Nazis.

And the Service’s new Cultural Property Protection Unit has been created in much the same vein, but with a far wider brief.

Its job will be to return works of art stolen by invasion forces or terrorists.

But it will also assist with investigations into looting, help to bring smuggling gangs to justice, support the protection of ancient buildings and inform British and allied forces about the location of important cultural sites in the areas they operate in.

“Our staff could find themselves doing operational planning or sitting at a border, checking vehicles for stolen artefacts,” says commanding officer Lt Col Tim Purbrick (RL), a Gulf War tank veteran-turned-Reservist, pictured right.

“Part of our job will also be helping educate personnel by giving briefings during pre-deployment training or RSOI.”

The creation of the unit, which sits within 77th Brigade, was partly in response to Daesh’s recent destruction of ancient sites such as Palmyra in Syria, Nimrud in Iraq and the grave of Prophet Jonah in Mosul.



Main picture, left: Ruins of the ancient city of Palmyra, Syria, before the destructive invasion of Daesh and, above, the destroyed grave of Prophet Jonah, Mosul, Iraq.

“The looting and selling of antiquities has been proven as a fundraising method for terrorist groups”



But the work isn't just about preserving heritage for its own sake.

Lt Col Purbrick believes there are very pragmatic reasons why British Armed Forces should protect these assets when they move into a war zone.

“The looting and selling of antiquities has been proven as a fundraising method for terrorist groups,” he explains.

“Part of our job is about preventing ‘threat finance’, where you have an adversary extracting cultural property from the region you are operating in and then, in effect, sending it back at

you in the form of bombs and bullets.”

The second factor is that protecting heritage and culture can help win the hearts and minds of the local population.

“If you damage, destroy or loot someone's cultural property are you more or less likely to increase your influence in the region?” adds the officer.

“We could end up making our force protection job a lot more difficult.

“Plus, if we do protect these assets it's been shown in post-conflict studies to aid stabilisation and recovery because tourists return more quickly and in



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“Part of our job is to find out what is out there and provide up-to-date information to commanders”

Protected, left: A blue shield painted on the roof of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad. This is the internationally recognised symbol, defined in Article 8 of the 1954 Hague Convention that identifies cultural property during armed conflict

greater numbers than they otherwise would.”

The most important consideration for his team, though, will be international law.

In 2017 the UK ratified the Hague Convention on protecting cultural property during military conflict.

This has many implications for Servicemen and women on the ground, who now have a duty to prohibit, prevent and stop damage, destruction and looting of artefacts by others, including organised crime groups.

They must also ensure there are mechanisms in place to report the presence of cultural property when it is identified on an operation.

“That’s quite a tricky one,” concedes Lt Col Purbrick.

“Part of our job is to find out what is out there and provide up-to-date information to commanders before deploying, and that’s obviously challenging.”

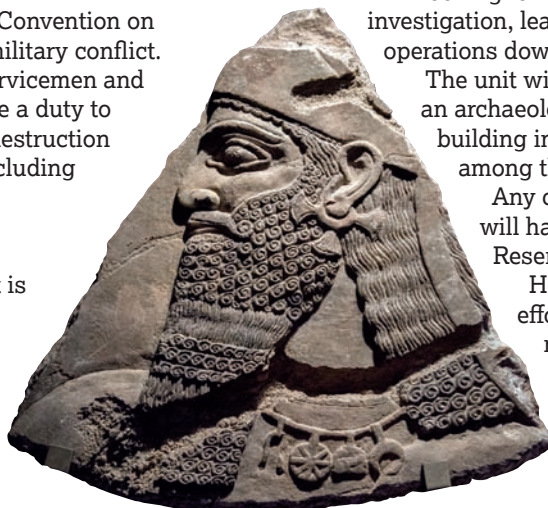
To make some progress on this front, consultations have been taking place with several allies, including the Americans who have already developed an extensive database.

The officer has also visited the specialist cultural heritage protection unit of the Carabinieri, Italy’s paramilitary police force, which is a world leader in recovering art and artefacts.

In recent years they have been working in Iraq to train the local police to investigate cultural property crimes.

There is no doubt their British counterparts will be working hard over the next few months as Lt Col Purbrick selects his supporting cast.

A professional art dealer by trade, he worked with the Art



Loss Register that tracks down stolen antiquities and is hoping to build a team primarily from Reservists in all three Services.

“I’m looking for experts in art, archaeology and art crime investigation, leaders in their field who are able to deploy on operations down to the tactical level,” he says.

The unit will eventually consist of 15 people, and so far an archaeologist from the Army Reserve and a historic building inspector from the Royal Navy Reserve are among those identified as potential candidates.

Any civilians who want to be part of the team will have to go through the process of becoming a Reserve officer first.

However, Lt Col Purbrick is convinced that the effort is worthwhile and his eclectic group will make a vital contribution to future missions.

“Not only is it the law now but it could provide an edge in conflict zones,” he says.

“It’s also right that we exercise our moral obligation to those communities where we are conducting military operations.” ■

Interested in the Cultural Property Protection Unit?

It is looking to recruit Reservists. All ranks are being encouraged to apply and a high level of knowledge in cultural property is required.

Contact 77th Brigade via its page on the Army website or email: **77X-Recruiting-GpMailbox@mod.gov.uk**

1.

ICE MAIDENS MAKE HISTORY

(January)

The year started on a high for the Army when the Ice Maidens became the first all-female team to cross Antarctica on foot.



4.

SPORTING HOT SHOT

(April)

Sgt Sam Gowin (RA) winning bronze in pistol shooting at the Commonwealth Games in Australia had us all grinning. And the medal came just a year after his competitive debut in the sport.



2.

PARALYMPIC PEAK

(March)

Capt Jen Kehoe (RE) scooping four medals at the Winter Paralympics – and becoming Britain's most decorated Paralympian in the process – had us all applauding in what was a tough month following the Salisbury nerve agent attack.



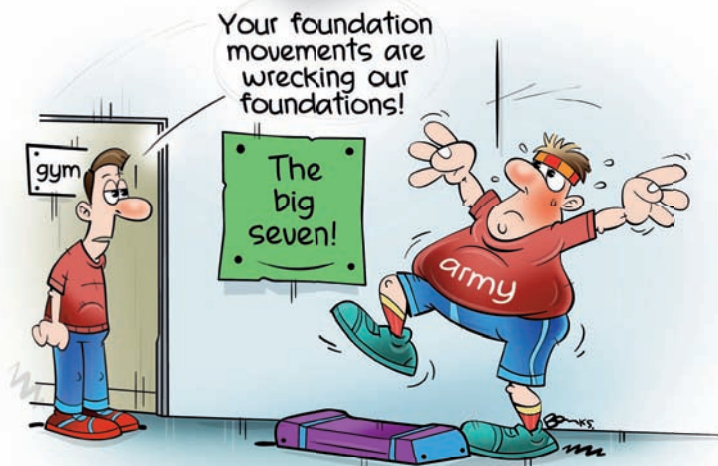
3.

WILDCAT DEBUT

(April)

The hi-tech recce helicopter got to cut its teeth on its first operational deployment, taking to Estonia in support of the country's defence forces on Operation Cabrit.





5. FITNESS TO THE FORE

(May)

News of a PT overhaul was welcomed by many this year. "In the Army being physically fit is as important as being able to shoot a weapon," senior master at arms Lt Col Tom Scarr (RAPTC) told *Soldier* when the change was announced. Seven exercises known as "foundation movements" are now the focus of unit fitness sessions.

12 DAYS

Soldier looks back with festive cheer at some of the Army's best moments from 2018... and others we would rather forget

Words: Sarah Goldthorpe Illustrations: David Banks

6. ROYAL WEDDING

(May)



Trust British troops to keep a lid on the global hysteria. While members of the Household Cavalry rehearsed hard for Harry and Meghan's union, a former Army Air Corps colleague was reported telling the media the prince was "punching above his weight". He said it...

7. ARMY-NAVY SHOWDOWN

(May)

It never fails to disappoint for players and spectators alike. And this year's lively reunion...sorry...match was no exception. A small amount of beer-fuelled naughtiness led to 2019's fixtures being altered to curb the all-dayers, but we're sure it won't impact on the merriment...or the Army's win.



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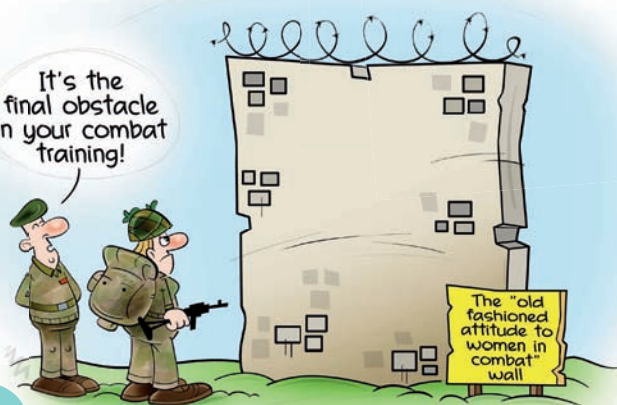
TOTTING UP ON TORAL

(July)

Theresa May's announcement that 440 extra troops would be drafted on to Operation Toral made the UK the third largest contributor to the mission in Afghanistan. And the experience has been boosting troops' skills ever since. As Welsh Guards CO Lt Col Dai Bevan told this magazine, "junior soldiers and commanders have a phenomenal amount of responsibility in Kabul".



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9.

EQUALITY AT LAST

(October)

After years of speculation and heated debate among troops, not to mention some health research from Army docs, the Infantry finally opened its doors to women. A historic moment.



10.

ARMISTICE 100

(November)

Four years of events commemorating the centenary of the First World War were brought to an end with some deeply moving ceremonies across the globe last month. As well as bringing home some shocking facts, our November issue reminded the *Soldier* team just how proud we are to serve the British Army (okay okay we'll stop).



And what we won't be raising a glass to...



11.

BOXING GRIEF

(March)

One of the longest winning runs in Forces sport came crashing to an end when the Army boxing team lost their Inter-Services title to a delighted Royal Navy team – their first prize since 1983.



12.

PERCEPTION QUESTIONS

(July)

TOP brass are addressing concerns about morale after the 2018 continuous attitude survey. But while the poll raised fears of a low ebb in some outfits, many soldiers remain upbeat about the perks on offer. Senior officers believe more training opportunities, among other things, will leave personnel with a spring in their step in time for next year's quiz.

IN his heyday, Steve Collins fought and defeated some of the biggest names in boxing on his way to becoming a two-weight world champion.

Now, more than two decades later, the “Celtic Warrior” is again embracing a lifestyle of discipline and commitment as he embarks on a new career as a Reservist in 4 Regiment, Royal Military Police.

The 54-year-old arrived at the unit’s London-based 253 Provost Company in 2017 and in the process fulfilled a life-long quest to serve in uniform.

“Joining the Army has been an ambition of mine since I was a kid,” LCpl Collins told *Soldier*.

“A lot of family members have served so the military always appealed but ultimately I followed a career in boxing.

“I lost three great uncles in the First World War and my grandfather had lots of medals from his time in the Service. My uncle and cousin have also served.

“So it is a great family history, but it is also a sad history.”

The former super-middleweight, who boasts a ring record of 36 wins from 39 bouts, had hoped to join the Irish Guards but after discovering the regiment does not have a Reserve element, he opted for the RMP.

And having lived in the capital for more than 20 years – during which the city suffered high-profile terrorist attacks as well as the Grenfell Tower tragedy – he felt the time was right to make a contribution in his adopted community.

“I live in the UK and my children were born and raised here as well so I wanted to give something back,” LCpl Collins, who counts Chris Eubank and ex-soldier Nigel Benn among the rivals he defeated, explained.

“So I looked into joining the Reserves. The more I looked, the more it appealed to me due to the courses and training opportunities so I had a lot of motivation.

“This role suits my persona. I’m dealing with young people and my background in boxing helps – I think they respect my experience and what I’ve achieved in life.

“It has been far more involved than I thought and there are a lot of legalities to consider such as the power of arrest and what constitutes breaking the law.

“There is also a lot of man management. I believe the best way to resolve a situation is through talking.

“It is rewarding and the work pushes me out of my comfort zone.

“The most appealing aspect for me is the discipline.

On one of my courses we were up every morning doing physical exercise before a day in the classroom.

“It took me outside of the norm and in many ways it was like a break. I was the fittest I’d been for a long time and felt ten years younger.”

Part of a hybrid regiment of Regulars and Reserves, 253 Provost Company provides military police support at high-profile events throughout London and has standing commitments at the annual Army-Navy rugby union match and the Lord Mayor’s Show – which LCpl Collins attended last month.

His services were also implemented at the Chelsea Pensioners freedom parade, when the

On the

veterans marched along Kings Road in Chelsea.

Despite being in the early stages of his Army career the soldier has already made an impression among his colleagues.

“LCpl Collins is a prime example of what Reservists bring to the Army,” explained Maj Dan Staples (AGC (RMP)), officer commanding 253 Provost Company.

“They are individuals who are highly skilled in their civilian employment and that can only benefit the Service.

“He has been amazingly supportive and proactive. He obviously comes with a high profile but we have not really pushed that, which has allowed him to get on with his career as a Reservist.”

Having never officially retired as a boxer it comes as no surprise that LCpl Collins is still heavily involved in the sport.

While talk of a third fight with Benn surfaced last year – a challenge the Dublin-born star would happily accept if the money was right – his immediate focus is on coaching.

He earned his level one qualification through the Army and played a pivotal role in the inaugural 4 RMP boxing competition in October after being invited on-board by organiser Lt Luke Bullous (AGC (RMP)).

Having trained at gyms across the world he was clearly impressed by what the Service can offer aspiring fighters.

“I did my qualification at the Army boxing gym and it is an amazing set-up – it is better than the facilities I had as a professional,” he said.

“The lads there work really hard and you see the same faces 24/7 – they put so much effort in.

“We took our guys down there to train and they were blown away by the standard on show.”

Achieving such success requires significant discipline, something that is second nature to LCpl Collins as well as his fellow boxers and soldiers.

And he believes if the concept was stretched further it could benefit society as a whole.

“The military is respected around the world,” he added.

“The discipline instilled in people joining different regiments is great and I think the youth of today should experience time in the Army.

“It teaches them the discipline and self respect that will serve them so well in life.” ■



beat

The Celtic Warrior chats to *Soldier's* Richard Long about life in the Royal Military Police



“

It is rewarding and the work pushes me out of my comfort zone

”

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Picture: Sgt Ian Forsyth, RLC

Brexit baffler for partners

I AM married to an EU citizen who I met while serving overseas.

I'm concerned that the periods of service I spent stationed abroad as married-accompanied will disadvantage my wife when it comes to applying for settled or pre-settled status to remain in the UK after Brexit.

The current guidance on the government website states that EU citizens must have five years of continuous residency in the UK to be able to apply for settled status, but many dependants will struggle with this criteria due to postings.

In relation to upholding the Armed Forces Covenant and ensuring that personnel are not being disadvantaged by their service, what is being done by the MoD to keep families together?

I have particular concern for groups who are vulnerable due to lack of awareness, such as junior soldiers or personnel who have been stationed overseas for many years.

Are there plans in place to internally communicate with them regarding this situation and will the MoD provide assistance with the £65 fee that these families will be forced to pay per application? – **Name and address supplied**

Lt Col Iain Wallace, Personnel Capability, Army Headquarters, replies: The MoD are currently in discussion with the Home Office on

this issue.

Under the current immigration rules, time spent outside the UK accompanying serving personnel counts towards the time accrued for settlement purposes.

The European migration policy team have stated: "The Home Secretary said in the statement of intent, published in June this year, that careful consideration is being given regarding whether EU citizen partners of UK [Service personnel] posted overseas will lose their continuity of residence.

"The Home Office seeks to ensure that EU citizen family members of Armed Forces personnel, and EU citizen crown servants and their family members and the EU citizen family members of British citizen crown servants, are not unfairly disadvantaged under the settlement scheme, by absences from the UK as a result of overseas postings."

Further details will be published on official channels when more details of the EU settlement scheme become available.

Army Headquarters and the MoD are pushing hard to see drafts of the settlement scheme to ensure it properly captures all of our personnel serving abroad and to make sure that time spent overseas as part of a posting counts for settlement purposes.

Talkback

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

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“
 Many
 dependants
 will struggle
 ”

PAPER TRAIL TRAVESTY

● I HAVE served in the Army for 19 years and have seen how the military has changed hand in glove with the surging force of technology.

We have gone from work tickets to James, “P” files to JPA and now instead of scores of soldiers running around with memos we have email.

We have wholeheartedly embraced the electronic world to make our lives easier and I imagine this has saved the military money too.

So why do we still receive paper pay statements every month?

My main issue with this is that I very rarely get them on time.

Like most soldiers, I check what I’m going to receive well in advance of pay day either by referring to JPA – from where I can print my statements off – or using the Forces Gateway.

When I do get the paper versions I invariably have more than one page and as a taxpayer I would be interested to know how many of these are sent out every month and what it costs.

This is something most civilian organisations no longer use and I believe the military is wasting money on.

– Name and address supplied

Lt Col Andrew Lowe, Defence Business Services, responds: We are currently working on a project to cease distributing hard copy pay statements and I agree with your views about utilising more modern ways of working.

Please be assured that our aim is to see that we use taxpayer’s money as effectively as possible.

Once all options have been reviewed by the Service principal personnel officers, an update will be provided early in the New Year.



‘We’re losing face on Army’s page’

I FIND it astounding that there appears to be no active moderation policy for comments posted on the British Army’s social media pages.

Look at the Service’s Facebook page, for example. Any post detailing some aspect of overseas deployments will almost invariably be accompanied by a slew of remarks demanding to know why these operations are necessary.

That there is no attempt to engage with these comments is perplexing – in any operation where encountering the press is likely, a media line will be issued as part of orders.

Given that these are social media accounts, it seems bizarre that there is no effort to answer these questions or correct misunderstandings.

More disturbing is the fact that the Army Facebook page allows feedback that is blatantly unsupportive of operations or is a thinly-veiled attempt to present a racist or political message.

Obvious misinformation is also permitted. More than two years after the EU referendum, there are still comments made on this page expressing hysterical conspiracy theories that training and operations with coalition partners are “proof of an EU army”.

It should go without saying that it is public knowledge these operations are undertaken as part of Nato, not the EU, and yet there is no attempt to put the record straight.

If any of these views were to be expressed in barracks, they would almost certainly constitute a gross violation of our values and standards and action would be taken.

And what might their impact be on soldiers or potential recruits from ethnic

and religious minorities?

Both our allies and our adversaries monitor our social media accounts – such opinions alienate the former and deliver propaganda coups to the latter.

Given recent revelations regarding the cyber activities of hostile intelligence agencies, it may well be that they are responsible for some of these comments, and yet there appear to be no proper controls in place. – Name and address supplied

Cassandra St Louis, Head of Digital, Army Media and Communications, replies: All posts on the main British Army channels are monitored for the first 24 hours.

We apply light touch moderation to allow people to have the freedom of speech.

There are a high number of comments that are hidden and won’t be visible to the public and negative remarks and opinions are also countered by our community.

Actively responding to questions requires a lot of resources – it is definitely something that we aspire to and we hope, in the near future, to have the manpower to make this a reality.

We take breaching the Army’s values and standards very seriously and a number of personnel have been subject to disciplinary action for their behaviour online.

This was reinforced by the launch of the Service’s new social media policy in September (www.army.mod.uk/socialmediapolicy).

Please report any such behaviour to your chain of command.

“There is no attempt to engage”





Picture: Peter Davies

Terms of service are being ignored

AS A serving member of the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), it's my understanding that we have a 30-day commitment to serve outside our chosen unit within a 30-mile radius.

Some units are suffering from manpower problems so this stipulation is understandable.

However, the rules and regulations seem to be getting twisted as we've been told we must work at one site less than 30 miles away which has fewer manpower problems than us – and we've also been informed that we are to operate there on a permanent basis.

That is leaving many of us confused as it seems to be contravening our terms of service.

The opening line on the MPGS website says that, unlike the rest of the Army, you can select a location of your choice and serve at that unit for the duration of your career. It then explains the 30/30 rule on postings.

Would it be possible for the military local service engagement we are employed under to be explained?

– **Name and address supplied**

Lt Col Tracy Wright, Directorate of Manning, Army Headquarters, responds: Your understanding that you have a 30-day commitment to serve outside your chosen unit within a 30-mile radius is not correct I'm afraid.

The rule actually relates to service outside the 30-mile radius from your base location.

Unless doing so as a volunteer, you may only serve as an MPGS soldier outside your stated area of service for a maximum of 30 days in any calendar year, or part of a year, in which you are serving.

A day away from your base location would commence if you have been required to assist other MPGS units (detached duty), attend a career course or temporary assignment (which hasn't been used to date) beyond 30 miles as the crow flies from your chosen unit as stated in your area of service certificate.

Your second question relates to being permanently assigned to a base within your 30-mile radius.

AGAI 43, paragraph 43.918b, states: "The individual is to notify their recruiting officer in writing on an AFB 271 Area of Service Certificate of their desired base location, and are to be employed within 30 miles of that location."

You would always be offered an assignment that you have the option to accept or decline.

The requirement for the Army Personnel Centre to issue offers of assignment is linked to promotion, new MPGS locations or site closures.

The 30-mile radius rule is explained correctly in the deployment paragraph for your cap badge as well as your section of the relevant Army web page and is in line with military local service engagement.

“Some units are suffering”

‘I’VE MORE TO GIVE’

● I WOULD like to know why I cannot have versatile engagement (VEng)?

I was recently refused because I am not in the motorised transport or joint terminal attack controller trades.

I was never offered VEng when I was at the rank of bombardier as I was between postings.

I have served for 19 years and feel I could easily do another five; I still complete the personal fitness assessment run in 9min 30sec and am fully deployable – I'm going on a six-month tour later this year.

I feel I have more to give the Army so why have I been turned down when there are soldiers with ongoing health and fitness issues who have been accepted? – **SSgt Daniel Mackinnon, RA**

Lt Col Tracy Wright, Directorate of Manning (Army), responds: Thank you for your letter, it is always encouraging to hear from soldiers who are still enthused about their profession after such a long career.

As a gunner the conversion from an open engagement to a versatile engagement is based on the manning requirements within the Royal Artillery (RA).

The details of this can be found within [2017DIN01-109 Versatile Engagement \(VEng\) conversion for Army other ranks](#).

Before making an offer of conversion from open to versatile the manpower planners within Army Personnel Centre carefully consider each one based on specific career paths and the structural requirements of the corps (i.e how many people they have got of each trade and rank).

They also have to make sure they don't convert too many individuals and subsequently have a damaging effect on promotion rates.

The RA manning department within Army Headquarters are looking into your claim that you weren't offered VEng as a bombardier because you were between postings.

Please ask your regimental career management officer to contact the team by email ([Army Manning-CS-RA-Plans-SO2](#)) and they will give you a specific answer.

I wish you the best of luck for your upcoming operational tour.



CAREERS

After a successful inaugural year the **Forces Media Academy** has opened its doors for another free, full-time HNC course in creative media production. For details and to apply for the September 2019 intake visit www.forcesacademy.com



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Maj Benjamin Ford, East Yorkshire

The Last Witness DVD: Jayne Hawkes, Herefordshire; Wendy Ann Sparrow, Hampshire; David Woolmer, Cumbria; Iain McCallum, Bristol; John Car, Stafford

Strange Brigade game: Jayne Hawkes, Herefordshire; Sam Mortimer, Newcastle upon Tyne



DIARY

March 16: Whacky Specs Ball in aid of Help for Heroes at Farnham Castle. The event will include fizz and canapes, three-course meal, 1980s disco, auction and raffle. Tickets £75 per person with seating arranged in tables of ten. To book call 01252 720402.



DIRECTORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Army Libraries:
01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall:
www.bigwhitewall.com

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

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

Care After Combat:
www.careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service:
01980 618244;
dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk

Combat Stress:
01372 841600;
www.combatstress.org.uk

Defence Humanists:
www.defencehumanists.org.uk

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

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

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

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

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988

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

Heroes Welcome:
www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01252 787574

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

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

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

Remount: 01451 850 341;
www.remount.net

Royal British Legion:
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www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre:
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www.rbli.co.uk

Scottish Veterans' Residences:
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www.svronline.org

Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services:
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www.spaces.org.uk

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

Stoll:
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info@stoll.org.uk;
www.stoll.org.uk

The Not Forgotten Association:
020 7730 2400;
www.nfassociation.org

The Poppy Factory:
020 8940 3305;
www.poppyfactory.org

The Royal Star and Garter Homes:
020 8481 7676;
www.starandgarter.org

The Veterans Charity:
01753 653772;
info@veteranscharity.org.uk

Troop Aid:
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uk4u Thanks!:
01798 812081;
www.uk4u.org

Veterans Welfare Service:
0808 1914 218 (from the UK);
0044 1253 866043 (from overseas);
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 101/18: Defence engineering remuneration review engineering professional recognition award

ABN 100/18: Regular Army rejoin bounty – amendment 1

ABN 99/18: Reserve Land Force regulations – AMDT 2

ABN 98/18: Army trainer capability accreditation

ABN 97/18: Women in ground close combat – Infantry transfer

ABN 96/18: 2018 pay award – non-consolidated bonus payment

ABN 95/18: Army newsletter

DIN 2018DIN01-124: The Defence Humanist Network presents Remembrance, a secular reflection

DIN 2018DIN01-123: British Armed Forces Rastafarian network gathering – Amport House, December 10

DIN 2018DIN01-122: Introduction of a Joint Personnel Administration system competence framework to reflect knowledge and experience of military planning at the joint operational level

DIN 2018DIN01-121: 2018/19 fees for officiating chaplains to the military

DIN 2018DIN01-119: Branch transfer to medical technician (operating department practitioner) student entry criteria

DIN 2018DIN01-118: Branch transfer to medical technician (biomedical scientist) student entry criteria

DIN 2018DIN01-116: Continuity of education allowance eligibility certificate – discrepancy between automated version and the regulations detailed in JSP 752

DIN 2018DIN01-115: Special terms of service for University Officer Training Corps chaplain cadets' pilot scheme

DIN 2018DIN01-114: Army Reserve senior soldier entry commissioning – devolved selection trial terms of reference 2018/19

DIN 2018DIN01-113: Revised mess and single accommodation charges for MoD civilians temporarily residing in Service messes in the UK

DIN 2018DIN01-112: Regular flexible duties – trial (transitional)

DIN 2018DIN03-027: Implementation of the Cabinet Office's consolidated guidance

DIN 2018DIN03-026: Launch of new FMed portal

DIN 2018DIN03-025: Requirement for all units to re-apply for the use of blue light vehicles

DIN 2018DIN03-024: Publication of JSP 800 Vol 2 – *Passenger Travel Instructions V7.0 (Phase 1 – Refresh)*

DIN 2018DIN03-023: Defence diving policy

DIN 2018DIN03-022: The provision of temporary landing zone safety officer training

DIN 2018DIN03-021: Defence policy for modelling and simulation

DIN 2018DIN03-020: Publication of JSP 800 Vol 5 – *Road Transport Policy V6.0 (Phase 1 – Refresh)*

DIN 2018DIN04-195: Declaration of obsolete – Dewdrop five-metre mast system

DIN 2018DIN04-194: Obsolete – ADAC 53534-01 – conventional munitions disposal pack No1 L1A1 NSN 8140-99-226-1457

DIN 2018DIN04-193: Obsolete – ADAC 42502-03 – rocket hand-fired para white Mk8 NSN 1370-99-563-6225

DIN 2018DIN04-191: Obsolete – ADAC

42015-02 – signal set diver supervisor Mk2 NSN 1370-99-148-1506

DIN 2018DIN04-189: Obsolete – ADAC 43602-01 – cartridge aircraft fire extinguisher three-pin NSN 1377-14-328-6098

DIN 2018DIN04-188: Obsolete – ADAC 13040-02 – signal set lifeboat category two and three NSN 1370-99-667-2134

DIN 2018DIN04-187: Obsolete – ADAC 43601-01 – cartridge aircraft fire extinguisher six-pin NSN 1377-14-328-6099

DIN 2018DIN04-186: Obsolete – ADAC 14201-02 – portfire friction Mk2 NSN 1370-99-960-4459

DIN 2018DIN04-185: Obsolete – ADAC 15300-01 – device infra red marker L1A1 NSN 1370-99-269-2905

DIN 2018DIN04-184: Obsolete – ADAC 42507-01 – signal set submarine L1A1 NSN 1370-99-727-5343

DIN 2018DIN04-183: Obsolete – ADAC 42202-01 – signal set bridge distress NSN 1370-99-551-6086

DIN 2018DIN04-182: Obsolete – ADAC 51403-01 – archived match waterproof safety No4 Mk2 NSN 9920-99-966-9432

DIN 2018DIN04-181: Obsolete – ADAC 42501-04 – rocket hand-fired para red distress Mk8 NSN 1370-99-134-8670

DIN 2018DIN04-180: Obsolete – ADAC 44901-01 – metron protractor NSN 1377-99-257-5679

DIN 2018DIN04-179: James modern, build release 4.0

DIN 2018DIN04-178: Change of order process for bulk supply of oils and lubricants

DIN 2018DIN04-177: Information Systems and Services change of contract arrangements for support of Minimax equipment

DIN 2018DIN04-176: Declaration of obsolete: A0 Plotter NSN:7025-99-741-3098

Continued on page 56



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Intelligence continued

DIN 2018DIN04-175: Notification of use of combat footwear spacers for fit options

DIN 2018DIN04-174: BATCIS declaration of obsolete: A1 Printer NSN 7025-99-617-7813

DIN 2018DIN04-173: BATCIS management of Land Rover-based training aid

DIN 2018DIN04-172: BATCIS management of VHF and HF manpacks on James and MJDI

DIN 2018DIN04-171: Lascar EL-USB-1 data logger and EL-data reader

DIN 2018DIN04-170: Amendments to operational medical modules

DIN 2018DIN04-169: Cryotherapy to Role 1 medical treatment facilities

DIN 2018DIN04-168: BATCIS declaration of obsolete: Various NSNs from BATCIS DMCS

DIN 2018DIN04-166: Accounting for deployable management of joint deployed inventory hardware

DIN 2018DIN04-164: The Defence Equipment Sales Authority hazardous waste contract ends March 31, 2019

DIN 2018DIN04-163: BPR Swiss smart port portable dental unit

DIN 2018DIN04-162: Reallocation of the MAI/MMA codes within DGM PT

DIN 2018DIN04-161: Declaration of obsolescent, supersession code 70 – laptop and accessories only – joint point mensuration

DIN 2018DIN04-160: Passenger and cargo services at RAF Brize Norton

DIN 2018DIN04-159: BATCIS management of TacSAT – MMR on James and MJDI

DIN 2018DIN04-158: BATCIS joint common remote viewing terminal – full operating capability 1

DIN 2018DIN04-157: NL Mk.1 change of hydrostatic release unit

DIN 2018DIN04-155: 2019 aircraft display season aircrew coveralls

DIN 2018DIN04-154: ACOG NSN 1005-01-584-7705 declared obsolete

DIN 2018DIN04-153: Covert body armour, out of service notification

DIN 2018DIN04-152: Physical training equipment service repair and maintenance provision

DIN 2018DIN04-055: Deletion of

obsolete NSNs 7RU within the Land Equipment operational support vehicles programme vehicle support team

DIN 2018DIN06-034: DSA generic duty holder course

DIN 2018DIN06-033: Move of DGAC codes for Class one dangerous goods from DOME to JSMCR

DIN 2018DIN06-032: Joint Service exercise rehabilitation instructor – return to clinical practice

DIN 2018DIN06-031: Asbestos in Main Building beneath the portals in B2

DIN 2018DIN07-123: Adventurous training expeditions Morocco 2019

DIN 2018DIN07-122: JOLP 3 and MA courses: 2019/2020

DIN 2018DIN07-119: User requirements for the migration of Defence Academy acquisition elearning to the Defence Learning Environment

DIN 2018DIN07-118: Adventurous training – planning post-monsoon expeditions to Nepal (2019)



REUNIONS

13 (Martinique) Battery reunion on April 13, 2019 at the Copthorne

Hotel, The Waterfront, Brierly Hill, Dudley, DY5 1UR. For more details contact Kevin Brooks-Usher on 07834 287426.



SEARCHLINE

Deepcut – Royal Logistic Corps Headquarters and Central Sergeants' Mess closure. Anyone wishing to reclaim presentation items should contact **brian.hinton373@mod.gov.uk** before March 1, 2019.

Former Reservist Scott Irvine – who joined 243 Provost Company, Royal Military Police in July 1989 after completing basic training at Browndown, Gosport – has lost his passing out photo and is trying to track down a new copy. Anyone who can help is asked to call him on 07593 576463.

The Centre for Air and Space Power Studies is seeking any descendants of Brig Gen Gordon Shephard, who gave his name to the Gordon Shephard Memorial Prize, to inform them of its success throughout the last century and invite them to the 2019 prize ceremony. Contact the centre via **enquiries.dds@da.mod.uk**

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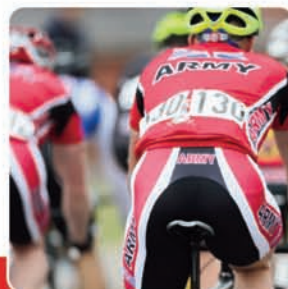
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11 August 2018

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Hill. Consolation Prizes (£100): Capt S Silvester, Sp Sqn, 4 Med Regt, Aldershot; LCpl B Limbu, 28 Sqn, 10 QOGLR, Aldershot; LCpl E Newsum, 110 Pro Coy, 1 RMP, Catterick Garrison; LCpl C Webster, LAD REME, C Sqn, 4 Med Regt, Aldershot; LCpl G Batten, 821 Sqn, 33 Engr Regt, Saffron Walden; Cpl O Fury, 174 Pro Coy, 3 RMP, Telford; Tpr J Dawson, B Sqn, QRH, BFPO 16; OCdt J Allitt, RMAS, Camberley; Sgt A Cook, RG, BFPO 52; Col J Tuck, DMED POL and OP Cap, London.

18 August 2018

1st Prize (£10,000): Pte S Edgar, A Coy, 1 Scots, BFPO 806. 2nd Prize (£5,000): Capt M Tankaria, HQ Coy, 7 AA Bn REME, Ipswich. 3rd Prize (£4,000): Cpl S Cohoon, Sp Coy, 2 Lancs, Preston. 4th Prize (£3,000): WO2 J Timperley, RMAS, Camberley. 5th Prize (£2,000): LCpl J White, RAFF MPGS, Carterton. 6th Prize (£1,000): Sgt R King, RL, Catterick. Consolation Prizes (£500): SSgt S Byrne, RSA, Salisbury; Maj M Holgate, 21 Engr Regt, Ripon. Consolation Prizes (£200): WO1 A Brewer, HQ 11 Inf Bde and HQ SE, Aldershot; Cpl L Parker, MCTC SCF, Edinbrugh; Sgt A Owens, 1 IG, Hounslow; Name withheld, HQ Hereford Garrison, Hereford; Maj A Parkinson, King's Tp RHA, London; Gdsm B Taylor, C Coy, 1 WG, Pirbright; Cpl R Botes, 661

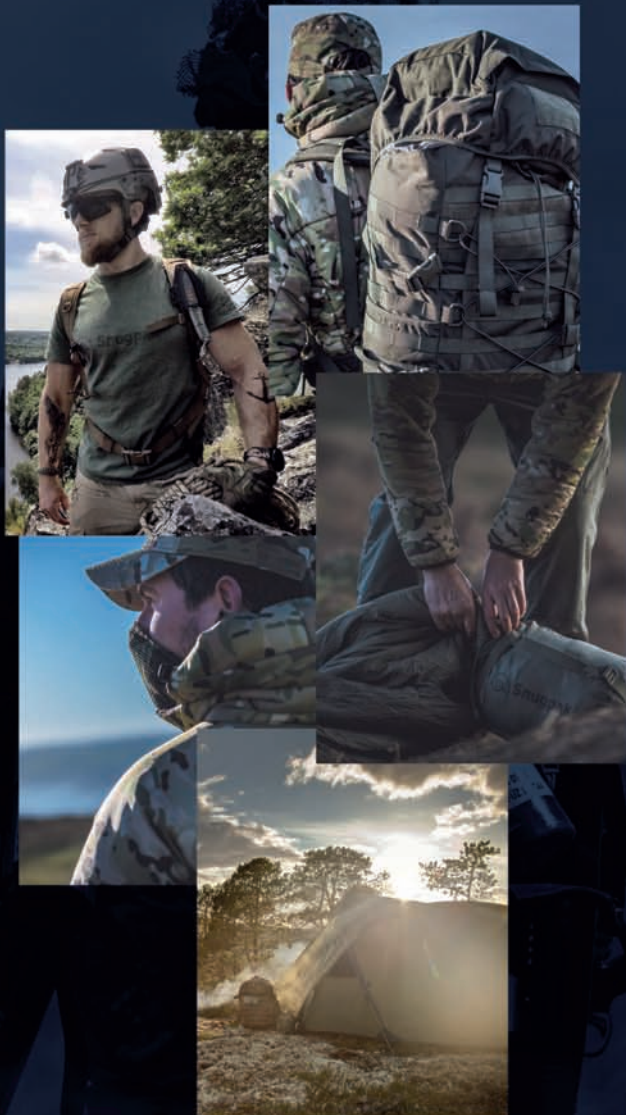
Sqn, 1AAC, Yeovilton; Cfn J Hume, 2 Coy, 5 Bn REME, BFPO 39; Cpl B Garland, 156 Pro Coy, RMP, Colchester; LCpl C Phillips, 50 Sqn, 29 Regt RLC, South Cerney; 2nd Lt A Basham, REWW, 3 RSME, Camberley; Spr B Johnson-Evans, 14 Sqn, 42 Engr Regt, RAF Wyton; Col A Jackson, LWC, Warminster; WO2 L John, DNRC, Stanford Hall, Loughborough; Cpl H Murray, HQ Sqn, 3 AAC, Ipswich. Consolation Prizes (£100): Capt D Mortimer, 20 Bty, 16 Regt RA, Thorney Island; WO2 M Perry, 35 Engr Regt, BFPO 22; WO1 P Willison, RHQ, 253 Med Regt, BFPO 801; SSgt J Maddock, JFIG DGC, Feltham; WO2 D Scott, 12 Sqn, 23 Engr Regt, Ipswich; SSgt L Mittins, DEMS Trg, Kineton, Southam; Cpl S Draper, 3 RMP, Salisbury; Cpl A Livingstone-Muller, Batus, BFPO 14; Lt J Pollard-Jones, KRH, Tidworth; Sig P Hadfield, 258 Sqn, 30 Signal Regt, Nuneaton.

25 August 2018

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Hosp, Aldershot; SSgt I Mayhew, DPHC North, Med Cen, Catterick Garrison. Consolation Prizes (£200): Maj D Janvier, JSSU (D), Lincoln; WO2 M Harrison, 1 Lancs, BFPO 53; WO2 R Armstrong, DES Comland Arty, Bristol; Sgt S Colley, REME Det, Inf AA Bn, Colchester; Cpl D Booth, 29 Sqn, LAD REME, 2 Med Regt, Oakham; Sgt R Jones, 215 MI Sect, 2 MI Bn, Shefford; Bdr J Patterson, 132 Bty, 26 Regt RA, Ouston; Cfn S Gerber, LAD REME, 9 Regt RLC, Stanton St Quintin; Gnr M Wookey, 16 Bty, 26 Regt RA, BFPO 113; Gnr J Bennison, 29 Cdo Regt RA, Plymouth Hoe; ATpr A Gask, 7 Flight, AAC, Brunei, BFPO 11; Tpr B Finnimore, D Aqn, QRH, BFPO 16; Spr A Bentham, 5 Sqn, 22 Engr Regt, Tidworth; Cfn J Moir, 8 Bn REME, DSEME, Chippenham; Lt Col J Bradbury, Log Div HQ Land, Andover. Consolation Prizes (£100): Cpl J Squires, DSEA DMR, Corsham; Capt J Whitehouse, 8 Bn REME, DSEME, Chippenham; Capt S Reynolds, 3 Sqn, 22 Engr Regt, Tidworth; WO2 P Lane, 17 Port and Maritime Regt RLC, Marchwood; Sgt R Piesse-Mills, 84 Sqn, 9 Regt RLC, Stanton St Quintin; SSgt M Gurung, DLS CW, Deepcut; Pte B Purja, 1 Sqn, 10 QOGLR, Aldershot; LCpl C Lamb, 659 Sqn, 1 AAC, Yeovilton; LCpl C Marshall, 174 Pro Coy (RMP), BFPO 801; Pte S Manning, RG, BFPO 52.

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REVIEWS

MOVIES

PILGRIM

Independent debut focuses
on a veteran's PTSD battle

HOW a soldier deals with the mental scars of warfare has been a well-trodden theme of the war movie world for decades – but the latest offering to venture into this territory is unusual in its conception.

Far from Hollywood blockbusters such as *First Blood* and *The Deer Hunter* – in which US veterans fight the demons of Vietnam – the independent film *Pilgrim* is a self-funded project led by director **Julian Jakobsmeier**. And it has a very British take on the topic.



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GAMES

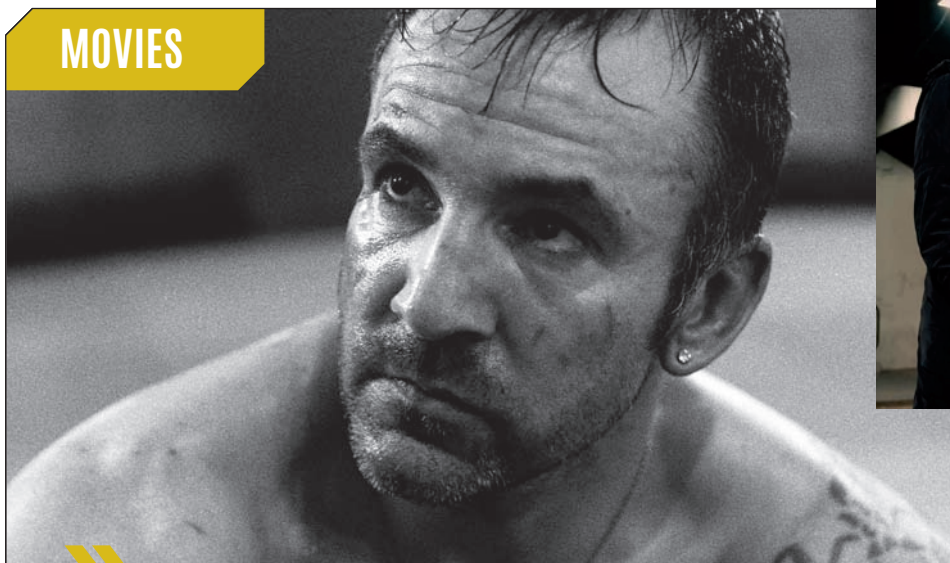
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MOVIES



Set in the familiar garrison town of Paderborn, the story follows the fortunes of an ex-soldier still coming to terms with his experiences in Afghanistan when he discovers an organised crime group whose members are terrorising immigrant families.

Scripted by former British rifleman **Pilgrim Patton**, the project's unusual journey to the screen is also a backstory in its own right. Having moved to Germany, married and himself settled in Paderborn, the veteran had become friends with local filmmaker Jakobsmeier – already highly respected for his work on documentaries.

"I asked him whether he'd ever considered making a movie," Patton, who served the large part of his 21-year career with 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, told *Soldier*.

"We then started talking about my experiences with the Army and being diagnosed with PTSD. He asked me to sketch out an idea and some scenes.

"I did this – Julian pondered over them before he said that we could do it and I should write the story."

Having never put pen to paper before, Patton admitted the challenge was significant. But he had soon devised the bones of a plot that mirrored aspects of his own experiences.

"While I felt the story needed to be fictional – it's not about my life – fact was required to add authenticity and realism," he continued. "In the film, the main character – also called Pilgrim – is living alone in Paderborn and trying to deal with the PTSD affecting his life.

"He's working for a German street security company when he gains the trust



of a little girl from an immigrant family – they're being forced to steal for a gang run by a businessman.

"The character then has to decide whether he intervenes, or carries on with his old life."

Facing such a decision certainly has an impact on the fictional lead, who is persistently attempting to alleviate the symptoms of his mental health crisis by self-medicating with alcohol.

Throughout the film he is plagued by flashbacks of being held captive by Taliban fighters – which you are never sure are real or an amalgam of other traumas the ex-soldier has suffered – while his booze-induced moods lead him into fights with local civvies.

The real Pilgrim – who joined 1st Battalion, The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment in 1995 and served in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan – admitted that confronting his own past had been tough.

"It did force me to relive memories and places I did not want to remember," the 44-year-old said.

"But for me it was important – I wanted to get the message about PTSD

VERDICT:

A decent story, well filmed

★★★★★

out there, not only to the British military and population, but to the German public as well."

Patton also admitted that learning some filmmaking fundamentals had been tough.

"The business can be quite intense," he said. "Shooting two minutes of a movie can take hours – we started the whole process way back last year and only recently finished.

"In the end I wrote the whole script and had to figure out how to be a make-up artist along the way. Fortunately I had the backing of my wife – she has been the hero in all of this."

Patton is pleased with the way the film has been received so far at test screenings in Germany – as well as at a showcase for a British military audience at the Kaleidoscope cinema in Barker Barracks. He is now looking at bringing it back to the UK.

"We want to see what the final feedback from Germany is like," he added. "It would need an age rating but if it is shown I'd like to premiere it in my home town of Plymouth."

Clearly a labour of love, *Pilgrim* stands up well for a debut offering. It is beautifully shot, with the backdrop of Paderborn providing a picturesque setting to the action.

While the film could be shorter and the quality of acting is patchy in places, these do not detract from the viewing experience. And the professional cast members – largely playing the villains – put in credible performances.

All in all, *Pilgrim* is an interesting piece of work as much for its provenance as its delivery. It holds together well and successfully – if brutally – makes Patton's points about post-conflict trauma. ■

REVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, *SOLDIER*

DIGITAL/DVD RELEASES



A Star is Born

Out this month

THIS is the fourth rehash of a classic story that charts an unlikely relationship between an established rock star (**Bradley Cooper**, making his directorial debut) and an aspiring singer (**Lady Gaga**). Following the different trajectories their careers and lives take as a result of crossing paths, the plot moves forward in predictable fashion. But the soundtrack is exceptionally good. Any misgivings about casting Lady Gaga in the lead are quickly forgotten as she more than proves that she is up to the mark and is the true star of the show.

Maddie Marchment, *Soldier*



Papillon

Out now

A RETELLING of the story that previously saw **Steve McQueen** as wrongly convicted Henri

"Papillon" Charrière attempting to escape a medieval penal colony, we now have **Charlie Hunnam** (*Sons of Anarchy*) and **Rami Malek** (*Bohemian Rhapsody*) in the lead roles. The cinematography is great and the sets are no doubt accurate. But this lacks the suspense and claustrophobia of the 1973 film and left me drifting off. Remakes of a classic movie need to be better than the original – this doesn't match up.

Sgt Donna White, RAMC



The Snarling

Out now

THE left-field plot of this bizarre flick follows the fortunes of a film crew making a zombie movie while coming under attack from a real-life werewolf. But don't let that put you off – it's a must watch for anyone who enjoys British horror comedies. Think *Shaun of the Dead* crossed with *Carry On* and you're not far off the mark. All the clichés are here – a pub called the Dirty Hog, village idiot extras and a bumbling cop. It is low budget and the CGI isn't the best but the humour is top notch.

Rodge Tappley, ex-RE



PICK OF THE MONTH:

SHADOW OF THE TOMB RAIDER

For PS4, Xbox One and PC

THE third instalment of the revitalised *Tomb Raider* franchise provides some great story elements, fast-paced action and survival-based tests.

Shadow of the Tomb Raider sees Lara Croft and her friend Jonah endeavouring to stop the enigmatic Trinity organisation.

Seeking a mysterious dagger, our heroine inadvertently triggers the beginnings of an apocalyptic event and subsequently races to prevent the worst from happening.

Lara's character has developed over the two previous releases, taking her from an athletic but unprepared individual to a more capable adventurer.

Here, there's a definite Indiana Jones feel but there are still areas where the game could benefit from something else.

There are puzzles to solve – and in greater numbers compared to the adventurer's earlier outings – and they're significantly more inventive.

The action is pretty much non-stop as well. Despite her obsession for retrieving ancient artefacts, Lara is now more adept at being a stone-cold killer when

VERDICT:

A definite addition to the Christmas list

★★★★★

required, which adds weight to her previous and traumatic exploits and shows that her character has evolved.

The downside of this is that it also steps very firmly away from the Croft of old, who was more of a free-spirited, gun-toting toff.

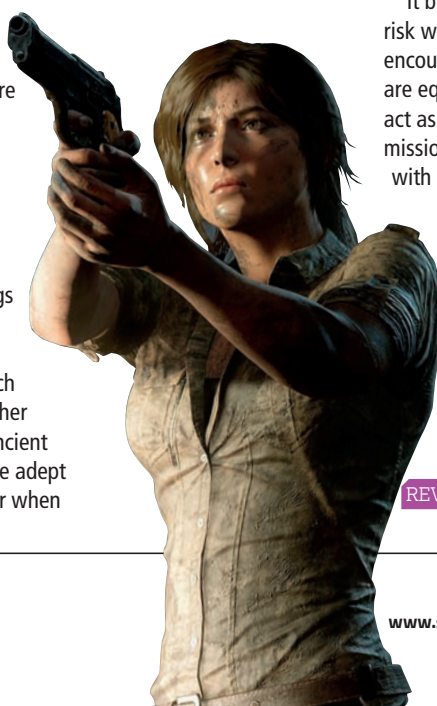
But that's all down to personal taste. This iteration is more emotionally bound than her previous interpretations and I'm definitely on board with that.

Visually, the game looks superb. This series has never failed to impress and has successfully made high clifftops, imposing spires and towering radio masts look unnervingly perilous.

It brilliantly captures the element of risk with every outing, especially when encountering wildlife. The environments are equally impressive and don't just act as window-dressing for the main missions and tasks – they're all alive with purpose.

Shadow of the Tomb Raider is a superb final instalment to this rebooted trilogy and develops the young archaeologist to a point where she's almost on a par with her former, fearless self but maintains the risk, adventure and excitement of this new interpretation. ■

REVIEW: DAVID MCDUGALL, CIVVY



GAMES RELEASES CONTINUED



Assassin's Creed Odyssey

PS4, Xbox One and PC

TAKING place during the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, the newest addition to the *Assassin's Creed* series places you in the shoes of a mercenary and descendant of King Leonidas. It also allows you to play as a man or a woman, without breaking the storyline. Make no mistake, the environment is vast and, in keeping with Ubisoft titles, beautiful. It's a vibrant and colourful blend that never ceases to amaze. The gameplay is fairly easy to master and the early stages allow you to level up without too much trouble – but there are still plenty of challenges to keep you engaged. Sailing is also back and provides another dimension to an already impressive offering. There are, however, times when the character dialogue could use some polish.

David McDougall, civvy



Fishing Sim World

PS4, Xbox One and PC

SIMULATORS can be notorious for their lack of devotion to being an actual simulator, usually because a faithful adaptation would be unplayable. But when it comes to fishing this is undoubtedly the most ruthlessly authentic recreation I have ever seen. If you're a keen angler then you'll be right at home here. Visually, more could be done. That's not to say the graphics are poor, they're certainly exacting in presentation, but that's about it. The fish are procedurally generated so you'll never catch the same two during a session and there are varying weather conditions to make it a bit more interesting. Unfortunately, the game is too realistic for its own good. Though there are some highlights it involves way too many periods of inactivity that only serve to hamper any enjoyment.

David McDougall, civvy

BOOKS

FESTIVE SPECIAL

TOP FIVE

► The *Soldier* review team select their best reads from 2018



Fight to the Finish

by Allan Mallinson

CEMENTING his standing as a historian with this excellent book, Allan Mallinson takes the huge subject of the First World War and condenses it into just under 400 pages. He has carried off a seemingly impossible task and rather than dismissing this as yet another title on the conflict it should be considered the primer for anyone new to the era. Thoroughly enjoyable, hugely informative and very easy to read, this comes highly recommended.

Andy Kay, ex-RS

Vietnam

by Max Hastings

FIRST-HAND accounts from those unfortunate enough to be caught up in conflict always resonate more with me than studies of military strategy, so Max Hastings' unrelentingly bleak portrayal of the Vietnam War tops my list this year. The personal tragedies played out on both sides – military and civilian – lingered on long after I put the book down. An obvious choice for the hard-to-buy-for historian in your life this Christmas.

Becky Clark, *Soldier*



Battle Scars

by Jason Fox

THIS year has been all about mental health, which is what Jason Fox really focuses on in this brutally honest book, rather than his exploits prior to starring in Channel 4's *SAS: Who Dares Wins*. Given the reported rise in veteran suicides I think it will resound a lot with military readers.

Capt Daniel Burke, Int Corps



Arnhem

by Antony Beevor

ALTHOUGH Arnhem will go down in history as the battle between 10,000 British and Polish airborne troops and a fanatical German enemy, this book shows it was much more than that. Miscalculating that the Germans were in their death throes, Montgomery planned to end the war by Christmas but his bold action swiftly fell apart. Antony Beevor's in-depth analysis of the entire campaign from the top, with nation against nation, to the bottom, with soldier against soldier, will no doubt go down in the annals of great military literature.

Cpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



Big Week

by James Holland

WITH an ever-dwindling number of living witnesses to the aerial confrontations of the Second World War, accessible works such as this are becoming important documents in our understanding of this brutal period. Initially charting the fierce fighting between the German Luftwaffe and US Eighth Air Force, the book follows the allied bombing campaign leading up to D-Day using both analysis as well as fascinating personal accounts from both sides. The result is a stark tale of a campaign that helped turn the tide of the war, but which claimed the lives of thousands of combatants and civilians in the process.

Cliff Caswell, *Soldier*

» WIN



● IT'S the season of goodwill so *Soldier* has teamed up with the Folio Society (www.foliosociety.com) to offer a set of three special edition classics, worth more than £150.

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Good luck!



● *My Christmas Dream is You* is available to download now

MUSIC

beautiful message."

Paoli's cousin and uncle have both served in the Army and this proud family background helped motivate her participation in such wide-ranging military projects.

And once she got involved she found the experience immensely humbling.

"When I spent time with the Invictus choir I saw the strength the members found from being in a situation where everyone understood what each person was going through," she added.

"It enlightened me to a world I was quite naïve about.

"They are unsung heroes; we don't always hear about what goes on but these people are risking their lives for us every day.

"I'm normally a solo act but that project made me feel like part of a team.

"We then had the bonus of going to number one; it's not often a soprano knocks a rapper off top spot."

Paoli's debut album reached number two in the classical charts in 2017 and she recently released follow-up offering *Live at Cadogan Hall*.

With her fame continuing to rise she has already agreed to return to the stage at the 2019 Soldiering On Awards and further military appearances could follow.

"It would be wonderful if I could perform to the Armed Forces at some bases or barracks," she said. "I spend my life travelling and it would be great if I could sing for our personnel." ■

INTERVIEW: RICHARD LONG, *SOLDIER*

PICK OF THE MONTH:

MY CHRISTMAS DREAM IS YOU

Soprano offers festive support to Forces family

► BILLED as the rising star of the commercial classical world, **Carly Paoli** has been no stranger when it comes to using her growing fame to benefit the military community.

Following her performance at the Soldiering On Awards earlier this year the singer joined forces with the Invictus Games Choir on the single *Liberty* – a track that knocked rap superstar **Drake** off the top spot in the iTunes video chart.

The 29-year-old also entertained the Chelsea Pensioners and football fans at last month's Games of Remembrance in Nottingham (pages 72-73) and she has capped a hectic 2018 with the release of *My Christmas Dream is You*.

Written as a celebration of the personnel who dedicate the festive season to serving the nation, the song

will raise money for the Soldiering On Awards – a charity for which Paoli now serves as an ambassador of arts.

"It talks about being away from the ones we love at Christmas," the artist told *Soldier*.

"This year we have marked the 100th anniversary since the end of the First World War and so much has changed since then.

"But Servicemen and women are still sacrificing the time they could have with their families at Christmas.

"I love the lyrics and the video marries some beautiful images of the way soldiers spend time together when not at home.

"It really does complement my style and I think it is a song you can love no matter who sings it as it has such a



Paoli with the *Invictus Choir*

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SOLDIER SPORT



TOP OF THE WORLD >>

POWERLIFTER Cpl Catherine Quinn (RLC) celebrated a record-breaking campaign at the World Full Power Championships. The soldier lifted 137.5kg in the squat on her way to becoming world champion. Read about her success on page 76...

POWERS OF PRECISION

RIDERS REVEL IN TESTING CONDITIONS AS SERVICE'S FLEDGLING DRESSAGE TEAM FINDS ITS FEET

PRIOR to the 2012 Games in London, Britain had never won an Olympic dressage medal.

The sport, which offers a stern examination of the relationship between horse and rider, had traditionally played second fiddle to other equestrian disciplines but the success of athletes such as Carl Hester and Charlotte Dujardin has seen its popularity soar.

The trend has been mirrored in military circles, with the Army launching its own dressage team this season.

Featuring five officers and three junior ranks, the squad has been tested in a series of civilian competitions and saw two members triumph at the UK Armed Forces Championships.

Maj Rose Lambert (RLC) and Maj Sophie Gregory (RADC, pictured right) won the

preliminary and elementary classes and the haul could have been greater had it not been for injuries and work commitments.

"This is our fledgling year and we did not know what the interest would be like," said manager LCpl Sarah Karim (AGC (RMP), pictured below).

"The bulk of our members come from a show jumping background but they have an interest in the flat work that comes with dressage.

"The team has a really good mix and our training weekends have proved it is a success.

"People are there for the sport – rank is not an issue. We respect each other and work well together."

When it comes to honing skills the Service outfit has profited from the impressive facilities found at the Defence Animal Training Regiment in

"PEOPLE ARE THERE FOR THE SPORT – RANK IS NOT AN ISSUE"

Melton Mowbray.

The riders also have an international-level instructor to call upon for expert guidance and advice.

One of those to benefit is team member Maj Becky Darke (RLC), who also serves as competition secretary for the Army Equitation Association.

"We are always grateful for the support we get from the regiment – they work tirelessly to help us develop the sport," the officer said.

"The centre has two arenas – one for warm-ups and another for training.

"That means a rider can go to the training arena for a full 45-minute session having already done a warm-up; it makes a huge difference and allows them to maximise their time with the instructor.

"Dressage is the foundation for most horse riding disciplines. A show jumper needs the flat work to position a horse for a jump.

"It also requires extra-level precision and I think that appeals to soldiers."

For a rider to be successful they must show a judge they can get their horse to do what they want, when they want.

Competitors are issued with a test that features a range of instructions, with each movement marked out of ten.

Freestyle contests are set to music and the winners are the duo who post the highest score.

"Once a rider knows the test they will have a month or two to prepare," Karim explained.

"This is when they will train on a regular basis and work through the elements of each criteria so they can hopefully inch towards a score of ten.





"The complexity of the tests gets harder as you move up the levels and at the very top you will come up against professional athletes."

Army riders have been competing in a range of categories and Darke finished seventh in the preliminary bronze section at this year's Summer Music Festival – a national-level competition.

She said: "We already have people placing at regional level and a few are in contention to qualify for the nationals."

"We are seeing success in our members, they have been very proactive and are applying themselves under the guidance of the Army manager."

"The idea of having a team means we have consistency in management and training – we can now organise ourselves much better."

With a successful campaign nearing completion the soldiers are preparing for further challenges in 2019 while also directing newcomers to the grass roots league, which features both dressage and show jumping and has a final scheduled for next season's Army Championships.

Another UKAF competition is already on the diary and the squad will be looking to compete in further three-day events across the country.

"People didn't realise we had a team and we've already had messages from those interested in future training weekends and selections," Karim added.

"The make up of this season's squad stemmed from a pretty decent standard of dressage."

"We were looking for people with a 67 per cent average from their tests."

"But next year it will be more strict so we can start pushing towards the 70 per cent barrier, which means we can compete at national-level events."

"We are not looking for a big team of average scorers, but a small team of dedicated people who are willing to put the time and hard work in." ■



SOLDIERS STUNNED BY BUNDESWEHR GOAL BLITZ

THREE goals in the space of ten first-half minutes fired the German Bundeswehr to an emphatic win over the Army at the City Ground.

MSgt Alexander Hess, SSgt Eric Schaaf and LCpl Yannick Wolf inflicted the damage in a ruthless spell that left the hosts firmly on the back foot.

There was little sign of the carnage to come as the soldiers made the better start, with Sgt Calum Wilkinson (RLC, pictured above) seeing an early shot deflect wide following some good link-up play with strike partner LCpl Adam Wakely (Rifles).

Sgt Erico Karg then wasted a glorious opportunity for the visitors as he latched onto a ball from Cpl Martin Pett only to stab a tame shot across goal.

From there the Germans seized control and they came close to breaking the deadlock as Cpl Artur Zielke rattled the crossbar from a short corner routine.

However, they quickly put the disappointment behind them to take the lead in the 24th minute.

A corner from Schaaf caused havoc in the Army area and as the soldiers failed to clear Hess was on hand to loop a half-volley into the roof of the net.

The Bundeswehr doubled their lead on the half-hour mark as a trademark spell of possession saw them move down field, where Schaff lashed a curling effort into the top corner from distance.

Wolf was the next to threaten as he scooped a shot over after racing clear of the Reds' defence but he showed his clinical edge moments later when he buried a near-post header following a deep cross from the right.

The Army claimed a lifeline on the stroke of half-time as Spr Sam Atkinson (RE) delivered a superb free kick that was emphatically headed home by skipper LCpl Rob Farkins (R Signals) but they had to wait until the 61st minute

GAMES OF REMEMBRANCE

ARMY

1

B'WEHR

3



for their next effort of note as keeper Lt Sven Steingraeber parried a snapshot from Spr Dan Stoneman (RE).

While their opponents continued to control proceedings they lacked their earlier intensity but they sprang to life with a late salvo that drew the best out of keeper LCpl Luke Cairney (RE).

Pett was the first to go close as his stinging low drive was tipped wide and the stopper then diverted a header from Cpl Andreas Dick on to the crossbar at full stretch.

He completed a hat-trick of fine saves by thwarting substitute SenChPO Patrick Piesker in a one-on-one duel.

The late excitement continued as Reds' substitute LCpl Jack May (R Signals) tested Steingraeber at his near post before fellow replacement Cpl Graham Williams (RLC) failed to convert after Farkins hooked the ball across goal. ■



GAME BRIEF

DATE: November 8, 2018
COMPETITION: Games of Remembrance
VENUE: Meadow Lane (women) and City Ground (men), Nottingham

STAGED to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, the Games of Remembrance attracted healthy crowds as the Nottingham community joined current and former military personnel in remembering the fallen.

While the Army fell short in both matches the sense of occasion was not lost on the soldiers, who reveled in the high-profile fixtures.

"To play in a stadium like this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said women's coach WO1 Mags McAteer (AAC). "The most important thing about this is that we have helped a new generation learn what it means to go to war and about the poignancy of remembrance."

Men's coach Capt Sean Birchnall (RLC) added: "For the players it was an absolute privilege to be selected."



BEGUNK AT THE DOUBLE TO DENY REDS

GAMES OF
REMEMBRANCE
ARMY

1

B'WEHR

2



A STUNNING goal from Bundeswehr striker Civ Sarah Begunk laid the foundations for a comfortable victory over the Army women.

The forward fired an unstoppable effort into the top corner midway through the first half before doubling her tally after the break as the visitors recorded a 2-1 win.

An enthusiastic crowd at Meadow Lane did their best to inspire the soldiers but it was the Germans who bossed proceedings and they would have enjoyed a greater winning margin had it not been for the form of LBdr Jessica Horsley (RA) in the Service goal.

She thwarted SSgt Jasmin Hommel and Sgt Alexandra De Lucia in a frantic opening spell, with Reds' striker Cpl Libby Dixon (AGC (SPS)) forcing a save from rival keeper 2nd Lt Janine Loris.

However, there was little Horsley could do to prevent the Bundeswehr's opener in the 24th minute.

Having regained possession in midfield the ball was played to Begunk, who sprinted

forward and drilled a vicious shot into the top corner from the edge of the area.

MSgt Kirstin Stegmann dragged a close-range effort wide moments later and the Army spurned a glorious opportunity to equalise in the 37th minute as Sgt Zoe Stewart (AGC (SPS)) bundled wide from a corner.

Stegmann fired a shot across goal as the pressure continued before Cpl Sabrina Braunschweig broke clear on the stroke of half-time only to be thwarted by Horsley.

Substitute Civ Franziska Becker drew another save from the Army number one after the break. Her inspired form continued as a full-stretch stop denied Becker before the marauding Braunschweig was foiled again moments later.

She was finally beaten in the 72nd minute as Begunk tapped in after Becker's initial shot was parried.

But Dixon ensured the Army's day ended on a high as she rifled a stinging effort into the top corner to reduce the arrears in injury time. ■



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Pictures: Cpl Nick Johns, RLC



SCOTS BATTLE FOR RING HONOURS

AMATEUR fighters from across The Royal Regiment of Scotland took to the ring in a fierce battle for bragging rights at the formation's biennial boxing night in Edinburgh.

Athletes from the five Regular battalions went head to head in a ten-bout contest that attracted more than 1,000 spectators at the Oriam Sports Performance Centre.

The 4 Scots team celebrated a successful evening after they won four of five fights entered and coach LCpl Alastair Townsend told *SoldierSport* the competition formed the ideal preparation for the challenges to come in this season's Major Units Trophy.

"Last year we narrowly lost to the Paras, who went on to win the overall title," the junior NCO explained. "Hopefully we can go one better this time."

"The sport is very popular within our battalion and we are fortunate to have a lot of good boxers and coaches to choose from."

"We had a six-week training camp in the build-up to this event and used an inter-company contest as selection for the team."

"It could not have gone any

better. The one bout we lost was a really close call and he fought his heart out."

"I'm really pleased with our performance; the lads gave 100 per cent and the venue was amazing."

The squad claimed further honours when Hldr Kai Anderson was named best boxer on the night after he won his lightweight clash with Fus Jason Brown (2 Scots) on a unanimous verdict.

The 18-year-old prospect only started boxing when he joined the battalion and has now won two bouts in his fledgling career.

"I was pretty surprised to take the best boxer award," he said.

"The atmosphere was electric and everyone was chanting my name – it was something else."

"But I stayed calm and composed and got the win."

"I now want to stay on the team for as long as I can and then hopefully push for a place on the Army squad."

The other 4 Scots winners on the evening were Hldr Alexander Wishart at welterweight, Hldr John Barclay in the light welterweight division and cruiserweight LCpl John McIntyre. ■



**"I MADE
SURE I
STAYED
CALM
AND
GOT THE
WIN"**



GAME BRIEF

DATE: November 8, 2018

COMPETITION: The Royal Regiment of Scotland Boxing Night

VENUE: Oriam Sports Performance Centre, Edinburgh

THE competition also proved to be a success for the 3 Scots team, with Pte David Dawson, Pte Jonathan Torbet and LCpl Kevin Mackie all securing victories.

Elsewhere, Fus Michael McGraw and Fus Chris Stevenson were triumphant for 2 Scots, while heavyweight LCpl Herblin Biscette was the sole champion from 1 Scots.

Organiser Maj Philip Morgan (4 Scots) told *SoldierSport* the event has gone from strength to strength since it was first staged in 2014 and believes some boxers are destined for bigger things.

"We had an exceptional venue and great support from our battalions across the Regulars and Reserves," he added.

"The commanding officers want to know how they can do things better and take their teams forward; we have an opportunity here we want to exploit."

"We have some promising fighters and hopefully they can now challenge for a place on the Army development squad."





SPORT SHORTS

Picture: SAC Tom Cann, RAF



Forces draw a blank

THE UK Armed Forces football team stretched their unbeaten overseas run to five matches following a 0-0 draw with their French counterparts.

A red card for Army player LCpl Rob Farkins (R Signals) was the major talking point in a game of few chances, with the referee opting to dismiss the defender following a robust challenge.

"I went to nick the ball," he said. "It could have been seen as a yellow but it was red.

"It is what it is; the lads stuck together and saw the game out."



Fighters on world stage

ARMY ace Spr Ebonie Jones (RE) missed out on a place in the Women's World Boxing Championships quarter-finals following a narrow defeat to home favourite Pinki Rani in Delhi.

The flyweight, part of a seven-strong GB squad at the tournament, won three bouts in the preliminary rounds before falling short as the latter stages loomed.

Fellow soldier Cpl Megan Reid (RLC) also missed out in the preliminary draw, losing to India's Simranjit Kaur while representing Scotland in the welterweight ranks.

Elsewhere, the Army recorded a 6-1 win over England and Tyne Tees and Wear at the ITC Catterick boxing night.

QUINN ACES GLASGOW TEST

POWERLIFTER Cpl Catherine Quinn (RLC) is celebrating a new high in her sporting career after setting world and European records in her latest elite-level competition.

The 26-year-old lifted 137.5kg in the squat at the World Full Power Championships in Glasgow, an effort that saw her shatter the previous best for the 55.5kg class.

Quinn opened her account with a lift of 122.5kg and set the new world record as she successfully negotiated 135kg during her third attempt.

The athlete then reached 137.5kg in her final lift of the day.

"I was completely overwhelmed by it," she told *SoldierSport*. "I finished the British Championships on 120kg and came into this event wanting to reach 135kg.

"It has taken two months of complete graft in the gym but if you are passionate and dedicated the results will come."

A second record followed as Quinn clocked a combined total of 360kg from the squat, deadlift and bench press as she was crowned world full power champion.

The soldier only started competing in powerlifting three years ago, when her athletics career was curtailed by injury, and she is targeting more record-breaking performances in 2019.

"Three years sounds like a short space of time but when you are training in the gym every day, as well as working, it is hard," she added. "This is a sport where you have to be all in."

Quinn was part of an eight-strong Army Powerlifting Union team to compete at the Scottish event.

Cpl Becky Jones (REME) set new squat and total lifted world records in the 63kg class, while WO2 Lainey Hunt (AGC (SPS)) and WO1 Sean Smithson (RE) both retained their world masters titles.



● **ENTRIES** are being encouraged for the 2019 Army Indoor Tennis Championships.

Staged at the Aldershot Tennis Centre from February 6 to 8, the three-day competition will feature men's and women's singles events.

The 2018 contest attracted a healthy turnout – despite the absence of several top players – with Lt Alex Haddock (Int Corps) claiming the men's title and Maj Fiona Welborn (RADC) the women's.

Email greig.taylor193@mod.gov.uk for more details on how to get involved.



MONTH IN SPORT

December's key fixtures...



WHAT: Exercise Raging Ice I

WHEN: December 3 to 7

WHERE: Igls, Austria

NEED TO KNOW: Novice athletes take to

the ice to perfect their skills in luge, skeleton and bobsleigh. The top performers will have the chance to gain further experience in the new year



WHAT: Inter-Corps Swimming and Water Polo Championships

WHEN: December 5 to 6

WHERE: Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre

NEED TO KNOW: Records tumbled in the pool last year as the Infantry and Army Medical Services retained the men's and women's titles respectively. Can their dominance be broken in 2018?



WHAT: Army Blades v Royal Navy ice hockey

WHEN: December 12

WHERE: Cardiff

NEED TO KNOW: The soldiers return to action following a successful Inter-

Services campaign – when they won the coveted title for a sixth consecutive year. They will be looking for further bragging rights as they head to Wales

WIGHT IN NUMBERS

THE TOP
SPEED, IN
MPH, OF THE
MICROLINK
VESSEL TO
BE USED IN
THE RECORD
ATTEMPT

120

DISTANCE, IN
MILES, OF A
LAP AROUND
THE ISLE OF
WIGHT

60

YEARS SINCE
MAJ MANDY
ISLAM WAS
DIAGNOSED
WITH
MYELOMA – A
RARE FORM
OF CANCER
THAT
DEVELOPS
FROM CELLS
IN THE BONE
MARROW

3

RECOGNISED
LONG-
DISTANCE
ENDURANCE
COURSES IN
THE SPORT
– WHICH
INCLUDES
THE ROUND
THE ISLE
OF WIGHT
CHALLENGE

16



THE POWER OF POSITIVITY

STANDING beside the powerboat she hopes will propel her into the record books, Maj Mandy Islam (RAMC) tells *SoldierSport*: "I'm trying to find myself again after a lot of treatment."

The officer is battling a rare form of cancer and after relapsing in the summer is currently undergoing another course of chemotherapy – with back-to-back stem cell transplants to come.

Following her diagnosis in 2015, the veteran of tours to Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan was told that a third of patients with such conditions die within a year – but she was determined to live life to the full.

This attitude explains her migration to the adrenaline-fuelled world of powerboat racing – in which she is targeting records for the fastest woman and fastest disabled person to complete laps of the Isle of Wight.

The 38-year-old had been due to complete the attempt

in September but her relapse meant the bid was put on hold as an immediate return to treatment was required.

"We are now looking at next year," she explained.

"But I need to finish my chemotherapy first."

"Adversity is all about working round your problems and not folding."

"I love the water and I love speed so powerboating is the perfect combination. I would love to set that record."

World champion Vee Ganjavian will act as her co-pilot and he suggested the idea of a record attempt after seeing her compete in the P750 ThunderCat series.

"Her dedication, attitude and professionalism was something that had to be invested in," he said.

"So I suggested we race round the Isle of Wight and see how fast we go."

"The key is getting her to the stage where she can drive at the boat's limit. It will take time but it is achievable." ■

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UP FOR THE CUP: THE ARMY UNDER-23 SIDE WAS IN INTER-SERVICES ACTION AS THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS

RUGBY UNION



FORCES FALL SHORT

THE UK Armed Forces women's team produced a stirring display in a 31-12 defeat to South Africa in their remembrance fixture at Rosslyn Park.

Having been the better side in the opening 15 minutes the military outfit deservedly took the lead as Royal Air Force forward Sgt Ruth Harper crossed for a converted score on her debut.

But the tourists then started to show their international pedigree through some strong running and slick passing and tries from Alana-Lee Horne, Aseza Hele and Aphiwe Ngwewu saw them open a 17-7 lead at the break.

After absorbing a prolonged spell of pressure in the early stages of the second half the Servicewomen established a foothold in the game and some much-needed possession created the platform for Cpl Sarah Batley (AGC (RMP)) to reduce the arrears.

However, fly half Cpl Lou Dodd (QARANC, pictured above) missed the resulting conversion, meaning the Forces' scoring for the night was complete.

South Africa then added two further tries to their tally to cap a successful showing against a determined UKAF squad.



Pictures: Aligin Photography

BEARS BITE BACK IN BRISTOL BATTLE

REMEMBRANCE
RUGBY UNION

BRISTOL

30

UKAF

22



INJURIES and availability issues resulted in just three Army players taking to the field for the UK Armed Forces' annual remembrance fixture.

Forwards Cpl Gaz Smith (R Welsh) and LCpl Kristian Smith (WG) were included in the pack, while Sig John Davetinavalu (R Signals, pictured above) lined up at centre, but they were powerless to prevent a youthful Bristol Bears outfit from running out 30-22 winners.

Having tasted victory against the same opposition last season the Servicemen took to the field in confident mood and opened the scoring in the third minute as Royal Air Force lock Cpl Josh McNally crashed over.

However, the hosts found a quick response as a flowing cross-field move created a numerical advantage out wide, allowing Sam Graham to touch down in the corner.

In a break from tradition, Bristol opted to use their penalties to accumulate points rather than a basis for attacking play and two successful kicks from Tiff Eden pushed the score to 11-5 on the half-hour mark.

Wing Reiss Cullen stretched

the advantage as the interval loomed – collecting the ball on the left before sprinting clear to run in under the posts.

But the Forces players stood firm and skipper Flt Lt Rob Bell reduced the arrears following a strong surge from the forwards.

A penalty from Mne Nathan Huntley edged them closer to their rivals and with Army stars LCpl Chris Budgen, Cpl Morgan Evans (both R Welsh) and LSgt Matty Dwyer (WG) joining the action from the bench, the momentum was growing.

Unfortunately, Bristol swung the match back in their favour with two scores from Brandon Petite, meaning Cpl Toby Mann's scintillating interception try proved nothing more than a consolation at the death.

"We are really pleased with our performance but a little disappointed with the result," head coach WO2 Gareth Evans (RE) told *SoldierSport*.

"We made them work hard for their tries but perhaps didn't take our opportunities; it is a game we could have won.

"The lads only had two days of training but they really bought into what we wanted to do." ■

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Picture: British Paralympic Association



SERVICE TOASTS SPORTING SUCCESS

PARALYMPIC champion Capt Jen Kehoe (RE) added another accolade to her growing haul after she was named as the Service's sportswoman of the year. The officer received the honour at the annual Army Sports Awards, which celebrated a stellar year of athletic achievement in the prestigious setting of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Kehoe acted as the guide for Menna Fitzpatrick in the visually impaired skiing and the duo (pictured above) won gold in the slalom, silver in both the super combined and giant slalom as well as bronze in the super-G – making them Team GB's most decorated Winter Paralympians. Success at the Pyeongchang Games saw the Servicewoman awarded the MBE last month and her military prize capped a sensational 2018. "Our achievements are taking time to sink in," she said. "We've gone from one incredible experience to another." Superheavyweight boxer LCpl Chez Nihell (RLC) claimed the sportsman of the year prize

after he finally tasted success at the English Amateur Boxing Association Championships. A former finalist who had also suffered losses at the quarter- and semi-final stages, Nihell achieved what he described as the "holy grail" of his sport by defeating Courtney Bennett. "It's a real benchmark of my career," he said. "I was just tripping up on that last hurdle and then I started to believe this is my year." The result completed an impressive 12-bout winning streak for the fighter, who has since turned professional. The rising star crown was handed to skiing star Spr Euan Kick (RE) following his efforts at this year's Inter-Services snow sports event – where he was named individual champion. Inter-Services success also paved the way for the Army men's triathlon squad to be named team of the year, while basketball referee WO2 Ian Lester (RAPTC) took the sports official prize. Maj (retd) Colin Dickson won the lifetime achievement award for his services to Army orienteering. ■



**"I WAS
TRIPPING
UP ON
THAT
LAST
HURDLE"**



BOARD'S BIRTHDAY

IN a year of major military milestones the Army Sport Control Board has also found cause to celebrate after reaching its 100th anniversary.

Formed just nine days after the end of the First World War, the organisation was built around the realisation that athletic endeavour could be a vital tool in revitalising front-line personnel.

This sentiment still rings true in 2018 and the present-day structure presides over 45 disciplines, ranging from archery to water skiing.

"Sport had always been played in the Service but creating an overseeing body ensured there would be proper infrastructure and funding," explained Maj Gen (retd) Shaun Burley, Director Army Sport Control Board.

The first grant of public funds for the construction of sports facilities was made in 1926 and from this point onwards pitches and gymnasiums became mainstays of barracks. Such provision remains a priority now.

Boasting 40 permanent staff in Aldershot, the board will see further expansion next year with cycling, martial arts and triathlon set to recruit full-time secretaries.





The Army has shown it's taking a more positive outlook towards developing and retaining people by providing different opportunities. For example, I'm looking at commissioning and was able to work at the CAL for a few weeks. It gave me an insight into the wider Service – the behind-the-scenes stuff a normal soldier wouldn't usually see.

Spr Connor McLelland, RE



I'm very proud to be the first sergeant to become part of the CAL. Until now it's only been warrant officers and above and I think that has been a positive step forward for the Army. It puts me in a great position to potentially influence junior leaders.

Sgt Filipe Franco, R Welsh



The fact that women now have access to combat roles is a great step forward for equality – I believe it will just take a while for it to filter through. Once a couple of people lead the way and show what can be achieved, others will follow.

LCpl Andee Birkett, CAMUS



I've been struck by the way the Service has reinvented itself in its recruitment of young people. The Royal Air Force and Royal Navy adverts were enticing but now the Army has brought itself up to date with the "this is belonging" campaign, which is much more relevant and makes the Army a more attractive offer.

Lt Col Justin Baker, RA



The Army has made real progress in the way it uses technology to connect with audiences. Tools like social media, Defence Connect and live video streaming – which we use regularly at the CAL – are a great way to engage with personnel who don't always have access to Modnet.

W01 Mick Latter, R Anglian

We're heading in the right direction by taking a more diverse perspective on leadership. The recent Army Leadership Conference encompassed views from across academia and industry, which was great for creating discussion and wider thought about how we lead all ranks.

Maj Paul McFarland, R Irish



2018's best bits

Centre for Army Leadership (CAL) staff reflect on their highlights of the past year

I think it's great there are no barriers for women within the Army anymore. I'm not sure there will be a massive influx of women for combat roles but some will go for it and do really well.

W01 Sarah Cox, RLC



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