

# SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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# SOLDIER

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ARMY

# Next generation of Army equipment

ONE hundred pages is usually more than enough to keep the *Soldier* team busy every month.

But in this issue we could have doubled that number and still found more to say about the advances being made in the development of battle-winning kit.

Military equipment – from body armour (pages 26-27) to vehicles (pages 34-35), weapons and medical technology (pages 42-45) – is the subject that our readers tell us they care most about, second only to redundancies perhaps (page 7).

And for that reason we have dedicated this issue to looking at some of the fascinating strides being taken to furnish tomorrow's troops.

Such insight can sometimes prove frustrating for those who are risking their lives for Queen and country right now. Why can't we reach the future more quickly?

This could be where the MoD's Gems scheme comes in. When we asked soldiers what single piece of technology would transform their jobs (page 98) the answers were surprisingly restrained.

Service personnel may drool at the thought of operating futuristic, robot-like machines (page 29) but often it seems the smallest of details can be what makes all the difference.

So if you have an idea for improving life as a British soldier, read pages 40-41 to find out how to get it noticed.

In the meantime, enjoy our journey into the future. ■



Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

*S. Goldthorpe.*

## Ugandan undertaking

UK troops put  
Africans to the test  
(page 20)





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Picture: Graeme Main

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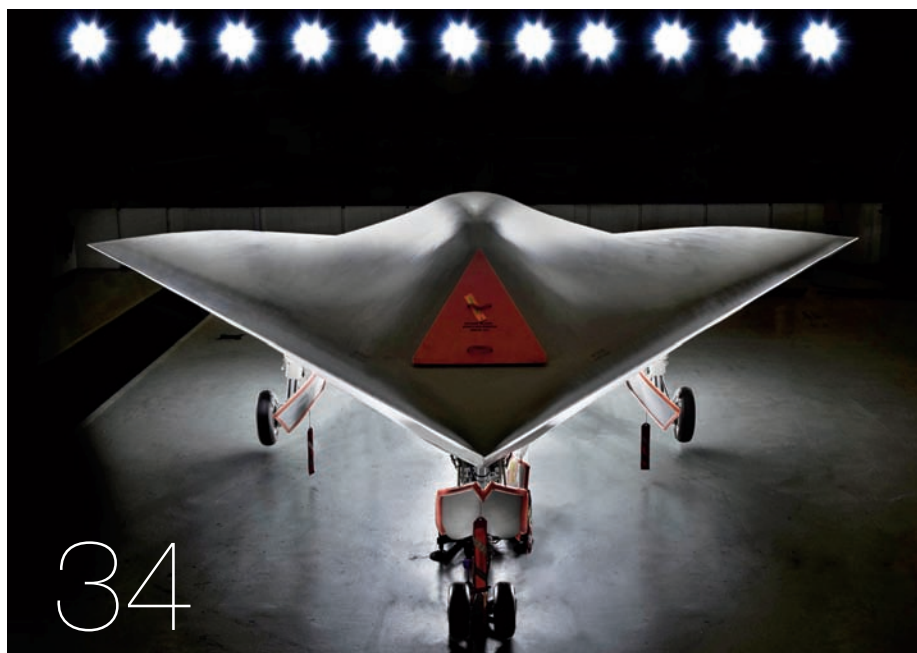
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**“I was overwhelmed when I found out I was selected”**

Service stars hungry for Sochi success p88





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BRITISH  
TROOPS'  
NEWS  
ASSET

# THE INFORMER

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Picture: Steve Dock

# 1,425

maximum number  
of soldiers who  
will lose their jobs  
in tranche four

## Fourth and final round Redundancy fields announced by Service

**A**ROUND 1,400 soldiers will lose their jobs in the fourth round of military redundancies, the defence secretary has announced.

Philip Hammond revealed the figure last month as plans to shrink the Army's size to 82,000 by next year continue at pace.

As with previous tranches, the Service will first look for volunteers from within eligible fields.

These are detailed in annex B of **2014DIN01-011**.

Notices will then be issued to those selected for compulsory redundancy on June 12.

No soldier who is serving on operations at the time of notification will have their career terminated.

Service personnel recovering from a serious injury sustained on a mission are also exempt.

"Tough decisions had to be made to balance the defence budget and this included restructuring the Armed Forces to create a more sustainable military," Mr Hammond explained.

"Everyone selected will get all the support they need to make a smooth transition to civilian life."

The MoD said there is a "robust" resettlement programme to help troops find new careers.

This includes an extension of the

Help to Buy scheme for personnel leaving in the fourth tranche who do not own a home.

Service leavers are also being encouraged to consider joining the Reserves as the department attempts to grow this element of the military to 35,000 by 2020.

Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall, said: "In order to deliver the Army's new structure, this round of redundancies is essential.

"I fully recognise the uncertainty and concern for individuals in the employment fields announced.

"Our priority will be to look after those leaving and to support their transition to civilian life."

Personnel who apply to exit the Service will depart within six months of selection. Non-applicants will go after a maximum of 12 months and, if eligible, are being encouraged to transfer into other trades, branches or specialisations with shortages. Read **2014DIN01-014** for details.

Cap badges that currently have vacancies include the Royal Engineers Royal Signals, Army Medical Services and Royal Logistics Corps.

Tranche four redundancies will also see 70 individuals from the Royal Air Force and ten from the Royal Navy lose their jobs.

**Reduction 'essential':**  
Soldier job losses are  
needed to deliver the  
new Army structure

“  
Everyone  
selected  
will get  
all the  
support  
they  
need  
”



Picture: Steve Dock

## CHIEF: BASE MOVES SHAPED BY FAMILIES

■ THE Army's base changes are being shaped as much by family and welfare priorities as military ones, the man in charge of the process has told *Soldier*.

Up to 22 units are due to alter locations this year with another 18 pencilled in for moves in 2015, which will see around 10,000 of the 14,000 personnel currently stationed in Germany move to the UK.

Maj Gen Nicholas Pope said the decision to base troops around seven so-called "cluster" sites – Salisbury Plain, Stafford, Edinburgh and Leuchars in Scotland, Catterick in North Yorkshire, Aldershot, Colchester and the East Midlands – would have a profound impact on the Service community.

"The family aspect has been core," he added. "For the first time a soldier will be able to think seriously about staying predominantly in one area for virtually his whole Army career.

"And there should be a broad enough range of roles for him to find another post in the same location if he wants to.

>> Continued on page 11



## PASHTUN PREP

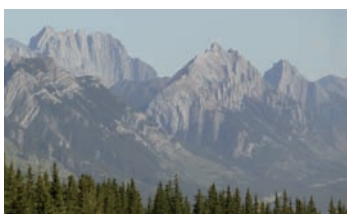
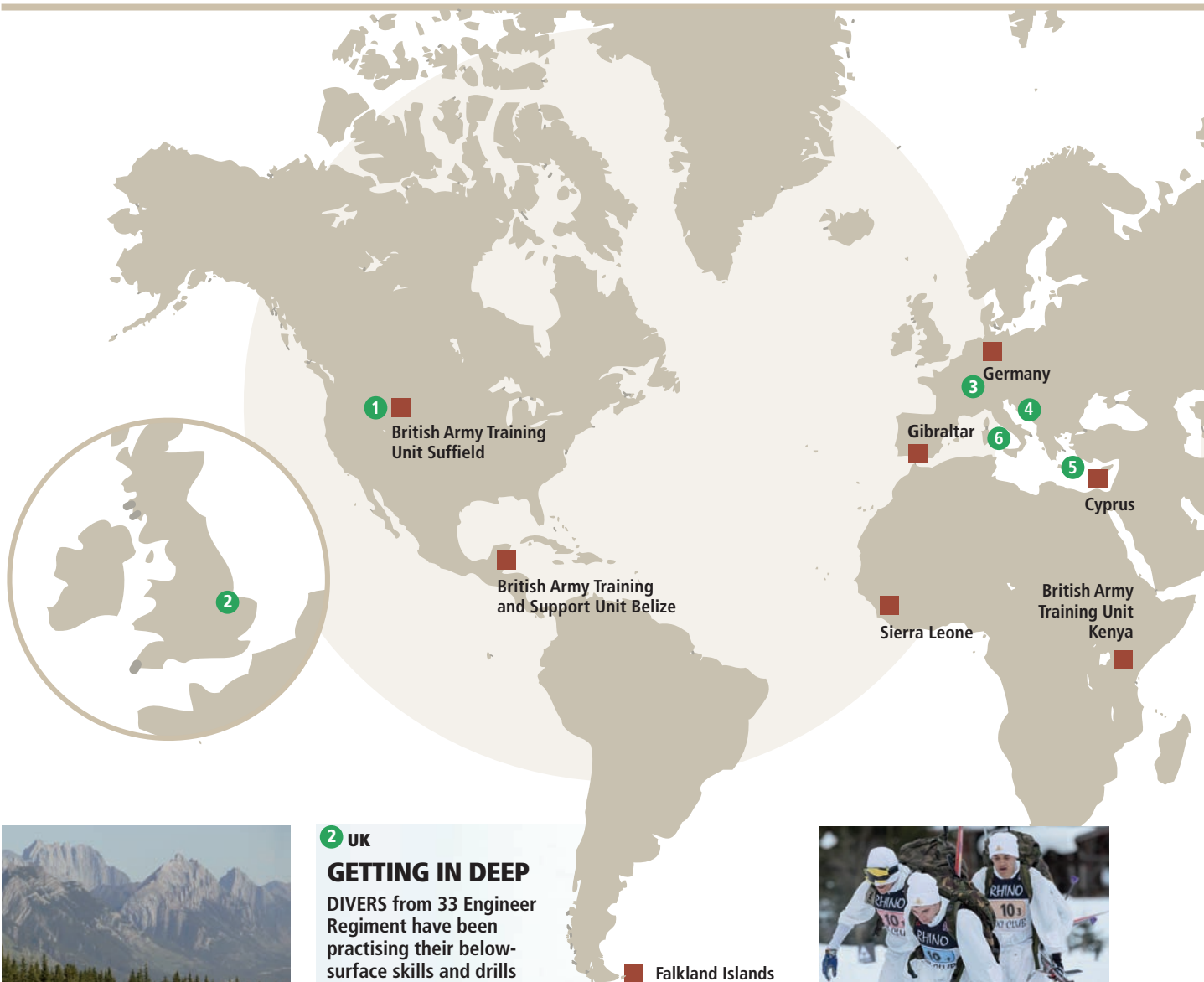
■ MORE than 140 soldiers from 5th Battalion, The Rifles have been preparing for operations in Afghanistan by taking part in Exercise Pashtun Warrior on Salisbury Plain.

Some 300 personnel, including 140 civilian contractors, supported the training – along with a number of Afghan interpreters.

The serial saw troops operate over 50 square kilometres in some of the UK's wettest conditions.



# GLOBAL SITREP



## 1 CANADA

### ALL UPHILL FROM HERE

PERSONNEL at Batus have been helping British civvy fund-raiser Jamie McDonald, 27, who is running across Canada in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital and the Pied Piper Appeal.

His quest began in Newfoundland last March and in early December he reached the remote base, resting up briefly before tackling the Rockies.

During the break he was fuelled with tea and hot meals and even given a face mask to prevent frostbite.

He received weather advice from the resident Army Air Corps crews and one officer (Maj Robin Melling, AAC) joined the runner for four hours as he was progressing into the mountains. Batus will also be backing him with a charity auction.

## 2 UK

### GETTING IN DEEP

DIVERS from 33 Engineer Regiment have been practising their below-surface skills and drills at the Gildenburgh Water Dive Centre in East Anglia.

Utilising a variety of equipment, including the advanced 17K Helmet and the open space diving system, they undertook different training scenarios at varying depths around the lake.



Falkland Islands



## 3 FRANCE

### PIPEDOWN LOGGIES

TOP honours at Exercise Pipedown, the annual military skiing contest, have once again gone to 1 Logistic Support Regiment, who have dominated the competition over previous years.

The ten-day event saw the Germany-based unit declared the overall divisional combined ski champions and the best team in the men's Alpine and Nordic disciplines.

They also won the military patrol race, which tests skills such as marksmanship, map reading and physical endurance.

The event was held near Mont Blanc with more than 70 per cent of the 320 entrants being novice skiers.

“It has been rewarding to challenge ourselves and learn new skills”





Afghanistan

Brunei

#### 4 BOSNIA

### MISSION HANDOVER

RESPONSIBILITY for the UK's commitment to the EU stabilisation mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been passed to 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

The transfer sees the end of a year-long tasking for 1st Battalion, Irish Guards as part of the multinational formation.

Known as Operation Althea, the mission centres on capacity-building and training Bosnian armed forces, as well as remaining at readiness to respond in the event of a security crisis.



#### 5 CYPRUS

### READY FOR ACTION

PERSONNEL from 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment have taken over as the Theatre Reserve Battalion based in Episkopi, Cyprus.

After recently completing their final live-firing exercises, the unit is now ready to deploy.

Commanding officer Lt Col Philip Bassingham-Searle said: "There is a plan with the drawdown and the transition to the Afghan Security Forces but like any operation if there is a requirement to deploy in order to have an effect somewhere then we will be ready to go.

"That might be something pre-planned to assist with our withdrawal or it might be something unforeseen that we need to go and deal with," he added.

"Clearly we are in an interesting part of the world – a turbulent part of the world as well – and we are acclimatised and trained as a battalion to be ready to go."

“Clearly, we  
are in a  
turbulent  
part of  
the world”



#### 6 CORSICA

### PARAS' FRENCH WINGS

B COMPANY of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment has been on exercise with 2e Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes (2e REP) on the rugged Mediterranean island of Corsica.

Exercise Blue Legionnaire saw the two units fire each other's weaponry and practise fighting together in urban areas.

The 2 Para soldiers earned French parachute wings by jumping from a French C-160 Transall aircraft, while jumps from a Royal Air Force C-130 Hercules saw their counterparts gain the British equivalent.

As the partnering unit has specialist mountain and amphibious troops, 2 Para soldiers were taught survival and climbing techniques on Corsica's snow-capped mountain ranges, as well as how to handle assault boats and attack and defend beaches.

Maj Adam Wilson, officer commanding B Company, said: "2 Para and 2e REP maintain strong links as sister battalions.

"This serial has been about us seeing them on their home turf and learning more about how they operate and live.

"It has been a huge success in developing the understanding, respect and trust between our two units, which could prove critical on future operations.

"Corsica itself has been an excellent location that has allowed us to train in the air, on the land and in the sea.

"As airborne troops, the ocean and high mountains are not familiar environments to us, but it has been rewarding to challenge ourselves and learn new skills."





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## MULTI-TERRAIN SOFT SHELL APCU LEVEL 5 JACKET

The latest generation multi-terrain camouflage Advanced Protective Combat Uniform (APCU) Soft Shell Jacket has been specifically designed to be windproof, water resistant but breathable.

Constructed from a fine mix of nylon (98%) and spandex (2%), this jacket is soft to the touch and reflects body heat despite being very lightweight. The multi-terrain camouflage fabric will compliment MTP issue uniform and equipment. Also features front rank slides, integral multi-terrain roll up hood (in the collar), full length YKK-branded front zip with velcro secured baffle, two zipped breast pockets, right and left zipped back pockets, right and left under arm ventilation zips, right and left arm pockets with velcro panels right and left breast name tape/zap number velcro panel, velcro secured elasticated cuffs and elastic hem adjustment with lock cords. Sizes (height/chest cm): M (170/104); L (180/104); XL (188/112).

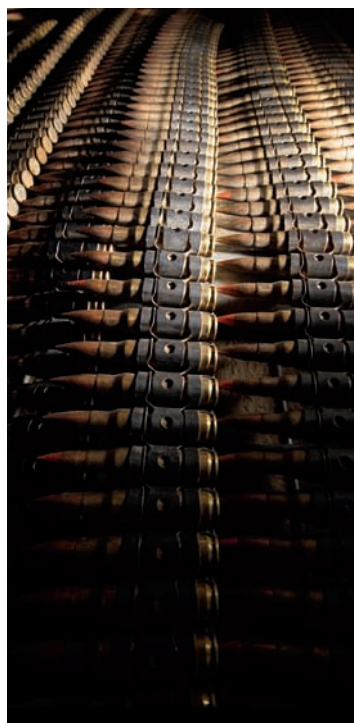


**BL-SS1-NT-14**  
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BFPO/Tax Free £62.46

**BACK IN STOCK**



# “WE WERE IN A CONTACT AND A SNIPER GOT ME ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF MY HEAD” – TROOPS CATCH UP IN CABS, PAGES 48-51



## A LIGHTER LOAD

■ IN a bid to continue its mission to reduce the weight of personal kit, the MoD has turned its attention to the design of bullets.

The department is working with BAE Systems' munitions section to make conventional small-arms cartridges lighter, which currently account for around 50 per cent of a bullet's mass.

The company has been experimenting with lightweight prototypes using novel composite materials that don't compromise lethality or Nato interchangeability.

And according to its Munitions Head of Development Programmes and Technology, Simon Jackson, a number of new models have been tested with very encouraging results.

"To date, we have manufactured small quantities of cases in 5.56mm calibre, achieving significant weight savings of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent," he said.

With 100 rounds of 5.56 ammunition weighing nearly 3lbs, this work's contribution to new, lighter combat kit for soldiers could be considerable.

“I’m surprised the garment didn’t have a hood – perhaps the test didn’t involve rain that landed on the head!”

”

**TALKBACK  
PAGES 57-63**

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## Welfare ‘heart’ of rebasing

>> Continued from page 7

“THAT’S entirely right and appropriate because it supports spousal employment, training and family education.

“For recruitment and retention it’s also hugely important because a soldier now knows he can stay close to his family in a stable situation.”

The pace of the changes is also being shaped by community concerns.

“We’re working hard to ensure that many unit moves do not disrupt the schooling academic year,” the officer (pictured right) continued.

“For example, 2 Rifles, currently based in Ballykinler in Northern Ireland, are moving to Lisburn so the quartermaster has been engaging with the local authorities there to ensure that the schools are ready.

“Also, when units move to isolated sites, it’s our aspiration to create military creches for those families so that no child is disadvantaged.

“We want to set up a community centre in every barracks, providing

evening classes and youth clubs.

“With medical facilities there’s not a one-size-fits-all solution, however.

“In some cases there will be a robust civilian medical set-up that we could use and in other instances you might find military facilities being used for civilian families. The best of the breed in this respect is the Aldershot Centre for Health.”

● Signals hub steps up – page 13



## LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

### SWAG

**£121,440**

#### WALKING WARRIORS

Three teams of wounded Servicemen and women from the UK, Commonwealth and US trekked 200km across the Antarctic plateau to reach the South Pole in just 13 days.



Walking with the Wounded

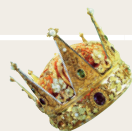
**£900**

#### ASSAULT COURSE CASH

Prisoners at HMP Stafford arranged a five-hour assault course race between former military and civilian inmates to raise money for Service charities. Soldiers from nearby 22 Signal Regiment also joined in to compete against the facility's physical education staff.

Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion

**£500**



#### QUEEN OF THE COURSE

Army chef Cpl Zara Davidson (RLC) completed the full 15-kilometre route in the annual Dhekelia Dash in Cyprus – becoming the first person to run the entire course in recent history.

SSAFA Health Zone in Dhekelia





## "THE CASH I WON BOUGHT ME A BRAND NEW KAWASAKI Z800" - EQUIPMENT IDEAS PAY, PAGES 40-41

### WIDOW PENSION PAIN

■ CAMPAIGNERS are calling on the government to end the withdrawal of pension rights from Service widows who find new love.

The Forces Pension Society (FPS) is lobbying for a change in the current system, which sees widows of troops who did not die as a result of service and who were members of the 1975 scheme, forced to surrender their income if they remarry or cohabit.

Those whose partners were members of the 2005 arrangement, or the 2015 one when it comes into force, can retain their benefits.

AM Sir Christopher Coville, the organisation's chairman, said that depriving widows of financial assistance after years of sacrifice to spouse and country was "an obscenity in modern society".

"Any government that thinks it is right to leave a Service widow with the cruel dilemma of having to give up her income or a new love should be deeply ashamed of itself," he added.

The FPS estimates that between 200 and 300 widows' pensions were withheld in 2013.

More than half of those now serving and most retired personnel are on the 1975 pension scheme, meaning such seizures will continue for 40 years.

Last year the government said there would be no rule change.

An MoD spokesman added: "It is a long-standing fundamental principle, adopted by successive governments, that pensions should not be improved retrospectively for those who are no longer contributing members, or for their dependants."

He said the policy was vital in order to keep the schemes affordable.

● Home Truths – page 14



### WARTHOG AIDS BOMB FIND

BRITISH soldiers working with Warthog armoured vehicles have enabled members of the Afghan Uniformed Police to intercept lethal bomb-making equipment in Lashkar Gah.

Reconnaissance personnel from 9th/12th Royal Lancers used their trucks to provide a security screen for local troops while they uncovered an ammunition cache and IED components.

"This was a really integrated operation," said Capt Ed Aitken (9/12 L). "We went in together, working closely, sharing information and responding to threats."

Picture: Andrew Linnett

## Theatre flights get comfier

**A** RMY personnel boarding flights to and from Afghanistan can expect to travel in style after the Royal Air Force welcomed new Voyager aircraft to its fleet.

The platforms completed their first journeys months ahead of schedule and have been earmarked for a busy workload in 2014 as operations in Helmand province draw to a close.

A converted A330 aeroplane, the Voyager has been specially adapted for a military role and offers passengers more space and greater comfort.

Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology, Philip Dunne, said: "Voyager is testament to our commitment to provide world-leading equipment for

our Armed Forces.

"Its greatest strength is its versatility. Not only will troops have a more comfortable and reliable journey to and from operations, the aircraft can also refuel our fighter jets and in future will support humanitarian aid efforts."

### Voyager: what it can carry

**300** passengers across 6,000 miles

**111** tonnes of fuel, some of which is used for air-to-air refuelling

**40** stretchers and critical care facilities

**43** tonnes of cargo



Picture: Sgt Dan Bardsley, RLC

## GOOD DRILLS

### JOINING WITH JOB SEEKERS

AN initiative in which Reservists help long-term job seekers to become more employable could be introduced across the UK. A successful four-week pilot course run by 143 (West Midlands) Brigade, Jobcentre Plus, Job Enterprise Training and Stoke College saw military personnel help to develop the skills and motivation of unemployed people.



FORCES charity Help for Heroes has teamed up with a historic Scottish brewery to launch a special-edition fundraising tipple. Throughout 2014, beer drinkers can pick up a redesigned pack of Tennant's Original Export from Asda stores across the country, with all profits going towards the support of wounded Service personnel. It is hoped the venture will raise £500,000.



### BEVVY BOOST

# “I WAS TRYING NOT TO GET WRAPPED UP IN THE OLYMPICS” – BOBSLEIGH ACE’S WINTER PLACE, PAGE 89



## SIGNALS HUB STEPS UP

■ A MULTI-MILLION pound contract has been announced to build new homes for soldiers and their families relocating from Germany to Stafford.

The £51 million project will see 346 new houses constructed at Beacon Barracks in time for the return of 16 Signal Regiment and the 1st (United Kingdom) Armoured Division Headquarters and Signal Regiment in 2015.

With 22 Signal Regiment already based on the site, the town will become a hub for the corps and one of the Army's seven major concentrations of manpower.

Plans to carry out a £100 million redevelopment of the camp's facilities were revealed in October 2013.

## E-BOOK CAREER HELP

■ A NEW guide has been published to help Army personnel manage their careers better.

The *Career Management Handbook* is available on the defence intranet and sets out all roles and responsibilities for soldiers, officers, the chain of command and staff working in the military secretary community.

The e-book contains direction previously found in a number of separate publications and will be routinely updated.

**Lighter load:** More than 15,000 pairs of binoculars have been ordered



Picture: Graeme Main

## Better battlefield view

**T**HE MoD has invested £53 million in upgrading kit to better equip troops for day and night operations.

New laser sights, enabling soldiers to spot potential threats earlier and protect themselves against the enemy during day and night manoeuvres (pages 38-39), are only part of the package.

More than 15,000 pairs of lightweight, ergonomic binoculars have also been ordered to be used alongside the upgraded equipment.

Designed to be easier to hold, the new models are 50 per cent lighter at 600g yet offer superior viewing thanks to higher quality optics – not surprising given the incumbent model was introduced in 1976.

Minister for Defence

Equipment, Support and Technology, Philip Dunne, said: “Reducing the physical burden on the soldier is something the MoD is constantly trying to achieve.”

More than 4,000 additional head-mounted night-vision systems will be provided specifically for the Army Reserve.

They allow soldiers to operate in poor light, dark tunnels and buildings, and to better identify both threats and other personnel.

Mr Dunne (shown left)

added: “The multi-million pound investment makes clear the MoD's commitment to equipping our Armed Forces with world-class battle-winning technology.

“These binoculars, laser-aimers and night-vision goggles will improve situational awareness and reduce collateral damage

“These will reduce collateral damage”



**£53M**  
Amount invested in new laser equipment and binoculars for UK troops

## MILITARY MEDAL CRIMES

POLICE have described a recent spate of military medal thefts in North Yorkshire as “beyond belief”. Officers are urging people living in the Harrogate and Wetherby areas to remain vigilant after the decorations were stolen in a series of house burglaries. Among the sentimental items taken was a Burma Star, a 1939-1945 Star, a First World War Victory Medal, a Royal Artillery cap badge and several pieces of jewellery.



AN Iraq veteran is being sued by the owners of the Empire State Building for taking pictures of a topless woman on the attraction's observation deck. Professional photographer Allen Henson, who served with the US Army's 22nd Infantry Regiment, could face damages of up to £670,000.



BAD DRILLS

## BUILDING BOOB





**"I WILL HAVE A FEW JELLY BABIES BEFORE A COMPETITION"**  
**- POWERLIFTER SHOWS RESTRAINT, PAGE 97**

# HOME TRUTHS



A personal view from Catherine Spencer, chief executive of the Army Families Federation...

## Working to help widows

**O**UR organisation strives to represent the views of all Service personnel and their loved ones.

We recognise that "family", and what it means to each soldier, has many different forms and we want to make sure that whatever your relationship, the people who are important to you can contact the Army Families Federation (AFF) for information and support.

While continuing to represent those who live in Service families' accommodation, we're keen to ensure that all domestic set-ups are considered by policy makers.

We're doing far more work to highlight the needs of the divorced family, recognising that when a relationship breaks down children continue to have a serving parent and, as such, will still be affected by operational deployments.

I recently highlighted this to the covenant reference group, pointing out that some children of divorced parents are not currently entitled to the Service pupil premium and also face the challenges of separation.

Other areas that could be improved include extending the schoolchildren's admission code to include parents who are splitting up.

In addition, youngsters with a mum or dad posted overseas, but who live with their other parent, are not entitled to any funded visits and a change to that practice would benefit everyone.

But the big question is over housing and whether the new employment model will be extended to allow troops who do not have custody, but who could have regular visits from their children, to

occupy Service accommodation.

We would also like divorcing spouses to be covered by the statutory exemption for local connection when applying for council housing.

If you have further views on how AFF can help divorced or separated families please contact us.

Widow and widowers' pensions are also on our radar this month as we support the Forces Pension Society's calls for all Service widows to be treated equally after the introduction of the new pension scheme in April 2015 (page 12).

Those on pre-2005 arrangements will find they are hindered by draconian regulations.

The vast majority of Forces widows or widowers who find a new love, cohabit or remarry will lose their hard-earned pensions.

This is a pertinent issue and likely to continue to affect the military population for the next 40 years.

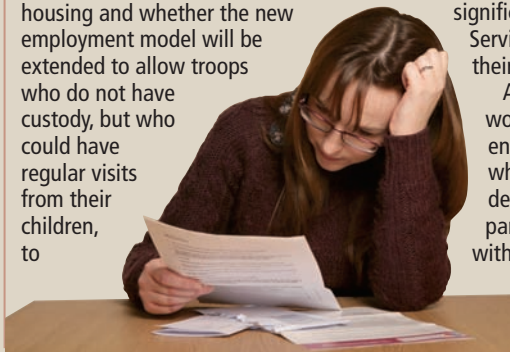
Many spouses have put supporting their soldier before their own income meaning that their pension is significantly diminished.

And if their serving partner was to die they are only able to form a new permanent relationship with someone who can financially support them as they lose the right to their widows' pension.

This dreadfully dated rule has already seen Armed Forces spouses being arrested.

Whilst this affects all of the public sector it has in the past been significantly more difficult for Service spouses to amass their own pension.

AFF will continue to work on this issue to ensure that someone who has already had to deal with the loss of their partner is not then faced with having to abandon hope of a new life.



[www.aff.org.uk](http://www.aff.org.uk)

## 'INCLUSIVE' ARMY

**■** GAY rights group Stonewall has named the Army in its top 100 inclusive employers for the first time.

The Service was placed 79th in the table, which covers areas such as employment policy, staff training, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community engagement.

According to Stonewall, the proactive work of the Service's LGBT forum had contributed to improving the Army's score – last year it was placed 167th.

LGBT champion Lt Gen James Everard said the fact the Army had been recognised was evidence of clear momentum in turning "fine words into measurable deeds".

## CALCULATOR UPGRADE

**■** THE Armed Forces pension calculator has been upgraded to allow most of the Military Provost Guard Service to forecast their payout.

Personnel will be able to combine their accrued rights under current schemes with future benefits that could be earned under AFPS 15.

A small number of MPGS soldiers and other groups are still unable to use the tool but the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency can provide a manual forecast.

Read ABN 131/13 for details.



Picture: Sgt Barry Pope, RLC

## SPECIALIST SHORTFALL

**■** THE MoD has insisted that shortages in some specialist Army trades will only be a temporary issue.

The statement follows a warning by the House of Commons defence select committee, which identified a deficit in Armed Forces personnel in certain areas.

Other reports have predicted there could be 10,000 unfilled Army positions by the middle of next year.

However, the MoD has insisted there will only be a small number of gaps as the Service structure continues to alter.

Among the pinch-point trades currently suffering shortfalls are emergency nurses, anaesthetists, radiologists and Royal Artillery fire support commanders.

"There are safeguards in place to ensure front-line operational capability is not affected," a MoD spokesman said.

Financial rewards, specialist pay and transfer opportunities are already being used as incentives to address the problem.



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**COLLEGE**



## “I THINK I SIGNED MORE AUTOGRAPHS IN BASTION THAN I HAVE IN MY WHOLE LIFE” - BARLOW REFLECTS ON ARMY AIRTIME, PAGE 55



Picture: Steve Dock



### LORD OF THE GUNS

■ A PIECE of historic weaponry has gone on display at the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester.

The First World War Webley Mk V revolver belonging to JRR Tolkien, the author of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, will be available to view permanently.

The firearm has a link to the author's work because Tolkien, who served as a signals officer in The Lancashire Fusiliers, started writing early versions of his mythological Middle Earth masterpieces while recovering from trench fever, which he contracted at the Battle of The Somme in 1916.

The writer, who died in 1973, is reported to have said that some of the scenes and characters he created were shaped by his experiences during the First World War, the centenary of which will be marked this year.

For details visit [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)



## New car discount deal

MILITARY personnel and their families are being offered thousands of pounds off the cost of a brand new car as part of the latest initiative by the Defence Discount Service.

Leading manufacturers such as Citroen, Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Mazda are among 11 companies to back the scheme, which offers average savings of £3,250 on each purchase.

Included in the range of exclusive deals for soldiers are discounts of up to £7,170 on a Seat Alhambra, £6,100 on a Peugeot 5008 and £4,300 on a Renault Scenic.

The Defence Discount Service was launched in October 2012 and so far more than 2,500 businesses have pledged generous offers to show their support for the Armed Forces.

Chrysler, Jeep, KIA and Skoda have also added their name to the car programme and personnel, veterans and their loved ones can view the unique bargains online or by visiting their local dealer.

Defence minister Anna Soubry said: "The Defence Discount Service is a great example of ways to help our Forces families by offering money off everyday purchases or more significant items like a new car.

"I hope to see even more companies around the country signing up to show their support for the military community."

Visit [www.ddscars.co.uk](http://www.ddscars.co.uk) for details of the car offers.

More information on the wider scheme is available by logging on to [www.defencediscountservice.co.uk](http://www.defencediscountservice.co.uk)

**Efficient engines:**  
The latest Defence Discount Service initiative could save troops thousands on their new wheels

### CALLING ALL AUTHORS

■ EVER wondered how to get published? An online competition could help to give Service personnel a foot in the door.

Percy Publishing, an organisation that specialises in fast-paced adult fiction, is on the hunt for talented new military authors.

To enter, troops must submit short stories of no more than 2,000 words on any topic, as long as the plot is full of action and suspense.

Army entrants should first consult the chain of command if their tale relates to military service and winners will see their work published online with the potential for further manuscripts to be considered.

Visit [www.percy-publishing.com](http://www.percy-publishing.com) for details on the competition.

**WIN**

## ...a bespoke piece of kit designed by you

LAST month's spine lines competition puzzled several of our readers. Garthwaite, Cumberland, Campbell and Long are all the names of individuals featured in *Wounded: The Legacy of War* (although we prefer one reader's suggestion that they are all types of sausage).

This month, courtesy of [www.jayjaysbrecon.co.uk](http://www.jayjaysbrecon.co.uk), we have a very special prize up for grabs: the chance to design and produce your own bespoke piece of kit\*.

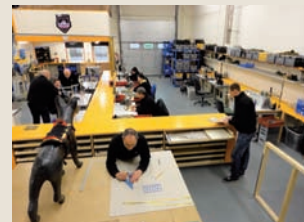
The winner will be invited to the Jay Jays factory in Brecon to discuss their idea before seeing it being made.

Choices include a full Bergen modification, individual armour carrier or a bespoke set of webbing or pouches.

To be in with a chance of winning this prize, worth more than £400, tell us what links the words on the spine of this issue.

Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address or via [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) by February 28.

\* Open to member of the Armed Forces only. Visitors must fund their own transport to the site.



Experts at work: Staff at Jay Jays





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The injured who suffer,  
The families who struggle,  
The veterans who remember,  
The aircrew who fly,  
The children who wait,  
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## IN MEMORIAM



CAPT RICHARD HOLLOWAY (29)  
ROYAL ENGINEERS  
KIA DECEMBER 23  
— AFGHANISTAN

THE Royal Engineers are mourning the loss of a natural leader and inspirational colleague who was killed on operations in Afghanistan.

Capt Richard Holloway died after coming under enemy fire during a mission east of Kabul.

The 29-year-old was a committed member of the Armed Forces. His tactical ability attracted wide respect, while his enthusiasm proved infectious.

"He had a humble self-confidence that instinctively drew people to him," said Capt Holloway's commanding officer.

"His own brand of selflessness and professionalism marked him out as a soldier, but it was the warmth of his personality that set him out as a popular and effective leader."

Capt Ed Martin (RE) added: "He lived life to the full and was an inspiration to others to do the same. I have never met a more trustworthy, loyal or dedicated friend."

"He had humility in spades and I would have followed him anywhere."

The officer leaves behind his parents Jaquie and Neil, brother Luke and girlfriend Sandy.

In a statement the family said: "The sense of adventure he experienced in the Royal Engineers was echoed in his love of travel to faraway places and physical activity including surfing, kayaking, canoeing, mountain-biking and climbing."

"Wherever the action was, he wanted to be part of it."

### MEAT-FREE MILITARY

■ NORWEGIAN defence chiefs have announced plans to cut down the amount of meat eaten by their personnel in a bid to combat climate change.

"Meat-free Monday" will see troops fed a vegetarian diet once every seven days to reduce consumption by 150 tonnes in 2014.

Commander Pal Stenberg of the Norwegian Defence Logistics Organisation said the move would make the force more ecologically friendly.

"The environmental element of meat-free day will be significant but we also hope the dietary aspect will have a positive impact on people's health," he added.

"In addition, we believe that our chefs will provide more varied menus, which our soldiers will benefit from."

The initiative follows a project set by the country's military in 2010 to incorporate more organic food into its catering.

An MoD spokesman said British Forces had no plans to introduce a similar scheme.



● Should the British Army also adopt a meat-free Monday? Email *Talkback* via [mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk)

Crime scene: The site where Fus Rigby died was covered with tributes in the wake of the attack



## Battalion 'rocked' by court case CO pays tribute to Woolwich's local community

THE commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers has spoken of the deep-felt anguish caused by revelations brought to light during the Lee Rigby murder trial.

Lt Col Jim Taylor (pictured right) said the thoughts of every soldier and officer from the unit were with the family and friends of the 25-year-old after a jury at the Old Bailey found Michael Adebolajo, 29, and Michael Adebowale, 22, guilty of his murder.

While hoping the conclusion of court proceedings will bring even the smallest sense of closure, the senior officer described the impact the

horrific crime has had on the late Serviceman's colleagues.

"Many in the battalion, particularly those in the drums platoon, have been rocked by the details that have emerged," he said in a statement.

"We have all taken tremendous comfort from the support that so many people have offered us."

"This includes, in particular, the very diverse community of Woolwich, which has continued to build on its already deep ties with the Army."

The officer added:

"Fus Rigby was a highly dedicated and professional soldier. He was one of the true characters within the Second Fusiliers and he is missed greatly."



“ We have all taken comfort from the support so many have offered ”

**NEWS IN NUMBERS**

# 20,000

Bed spaces provided so far by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation's programme to revamp single living accommodation. The milestone was reached at Defence Medical Services Whittington in Staffordshire



# RESERVES ROUND-UP



## Ugandan undertaking

**R**ESERVISTS have been helping to prepare Ugandan soldiers for a forthcoming peacekeeping mission in Somalia.

Members of 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment led a contingent of 30 British troops to East Africa to put a 1,900-strong battlegroup from the Ugandan People's Defence Force through its paces on a counter-insurgency exercise.

"I'm loving this experience," Cpl Mark Cowley (4 Yorks) said during the 11-day deployment.

"The Ugandan soldiers are really keen and the instructors we are working with are soaking up the information we're giving them."

Based at the Peace Support Training School in Singo, the local troops were tested in an environment designed to mimic

the conditions they will face in the troubled country.

Local villagers were paid to play civilians and members of 4 Yorks, along with their Regular colleagues, assessed the personnel.

The tri-Service Military Stabilisation Support Group also worked closely with 4 Yorks during the trip.



**African alliance:**  
UK troops tested the local soldiers on their counter-insurgency skills

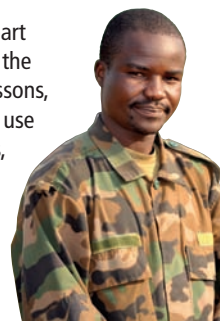
**“I am loving this... the soldiers are really keen”**

## THEIR SAY:

UGANDAN TROOPS ON  
WORKING WITH THE BRITS...

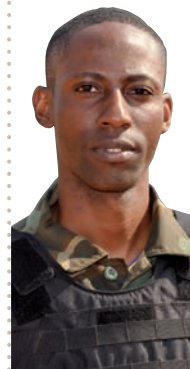
"The best part for me was the practical lessons, such as the use of weapons, patrols and so on"

LCpl  
Andrew  
Maraka



"The experience has been fantastic and really entertaining! The British soldiers are very human and love to teach"

Pte Drake  
Niwamanya



"We've been tested and I am sure the things we have learnt will be useful in the future"

Lt Benson  
Arineitwe



## Defence minister: changes will improve recruitment

SERVICE chiefs are to introduce a range of measures to boost Reserves recruitment after acknowledging the number of new applicants was lower than expected in 2013.

An MoD progress report identified difficulties with the joining process as part of the problem and set out some short-term improvements to be put in place until a new computer system comes into effect.

These include simpler application forms, faster assessments and more streamlined medicals to make it easier for potential recruits to reach enlistment, as well as greater mentoring from Reserve units.

The news followed high-profile criticism of a new recruitment IT system being developed by the Army and Capita, which is thought to be almost two years behind schedule.

Speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live, Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said the measures would improve the experience of applicants in the interim.

"The most important thing we have done is gone back to using the front-line Reserve units as the principal instrument to manage recruitment," he explained.

"When people apply to join the Army Reserve, they will be assigned to a local unit

who will take them under their wing and manage them through the process so they have a human point of contact, not just a website or telephone helpline."

A recruitment drive has been launched to attract people into the Armed Forces after research revealed that one in four Britons is dissatisfied with their current job.

The "more than meets the eye" adverts will run on TV, radio, digital media and cinema screens until March.

In addition, more than 100 recruitment clinics will be held at Jobcentre Plus sites across the country.



European Parliament and local elections



# 22 May elections

Register by 6 May

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chance to vote**



Fill in a form today  
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[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces)

The  
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Commission



# THE BIG PICTURE







## > TOWER OF LONDON, UK **WARDER LIFE**

Of all the jobs open to British soldiers when they leave service, yeoman warder must be one of the most distinguished. The Tower of London's ceremonial guards, commonly known as Beefeaters, are former military personnel who served with an honourable record for at least 22 years. The current contingent boasts operational experience from Northern Ireland, the Falklands War, Bosnia, the first and second Gulf conflicts and Afghanistan.

Pictures: Steve Dock





# CHECKPOINT!

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# BATTLE-WINNING BRILLIANCE

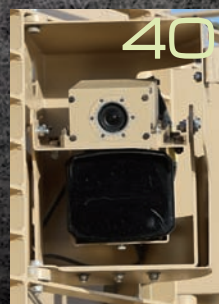
The amazing advances helping to deliver the next generation of military equipment

26-29 **Soldier protection**

A long-term look at potential body armour developments



27



40

30 **Sums of survival**

When technology take its toll

32-35 **Future fighter**

Experts develop new gadgets for conflicts to come



38

36-37 **Eyes in the sky**

Unmanned air systems take on growing number of tasks

38-39 **In sight**

Laser moves Force forward

40-41 **Battlefield brainwaves**

Troops' equipment ideas brought to life



32

42-45 **Bionic man**

Pioneering prosthetic helps injured Serviceman rebuild his life



45



36



# ARMOUR EVOLUTION

A MIND-BLOWING TRIP  
INTO THE FUTURE OF  
THE ARMY'S PERSONAL  
PROTECTION KIT

Report: Becky Clark

**B**RITISH troops serving in the world's trouble spots can do their jobs knowing that their body armour is the best on the market. In the main, this is thanks to experts at Defence Equipment and Support, the Infantry Trials and Development Unit and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL).

Together, they work with industry to translate the lessons learnt on operations into new ideas and technologies which can then be used to develop new kit or introduce modifications to existing gear.

This process ensures that the people who use it actually have a say in its design – for example, the current Osprey Mk 4A body armour has been modified 13 times since 2006.

But as well as keeping pace with the ever-evolving enemy threat, boffins also face the difficult task of predicting what Servicemen and women will need to fight the wars of the future.

*Soldier* went behind the scenes to get a tantalising glimpse into what tomorrow holds in the fast-moving world of troops' protection...

## NEXT GENERATION

The soldier protection under development

» THE current Osprey Mk 4A body armour and Mk 7 helmet worn by British troops are among the best in the world but within years these could be replaced by even more effective and wearable kit.



### Reducing the load

» WORK is underway to drive down the load carried by the soldier by more than a third.

Sialon ceramics, so named because they contain silicon, aluminium, oxygen and nitrogen, are just as strong as the ceramics currently in service but 31 per cent lighter and might one day be used as side plates in body armour.

Another idea could see titanium casing used to hold ammunition instead of the current pouches. These would be heavier but by affording more protection they would cut down on the amount of armour elsewhere on the body, thus reducing the overall weight carried by personnel.



Left to right, Preservation is the priority: Soldier protection is constantly evolving as demonstrated clearly by enhanced combat body armour, Kestrel system and Osprey assault kit



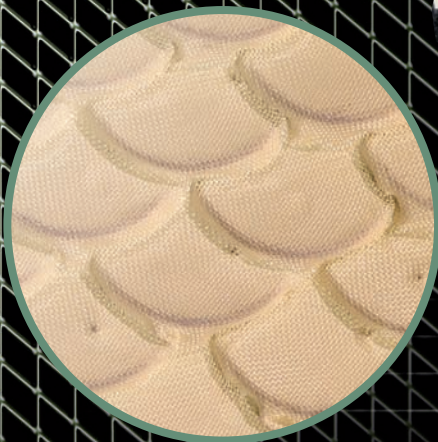
## Flexible fighting

» WHILE Osprey's large ceramic plates and composite backing currently afford top protection for vital organs, they can be restrictive and cannot be repaired once cracked. By using a system of smaller plates, scientists hope to dramatically increase troops' range of movement.



» THE flexible plate (pictured above) and so-called "dragon skin" armour (pictured below) are among the several options under development in the industry.

Protection constructed out of component parts in this way will also allow better tailoring to individual body shapes and be easier to fix than whole plates.



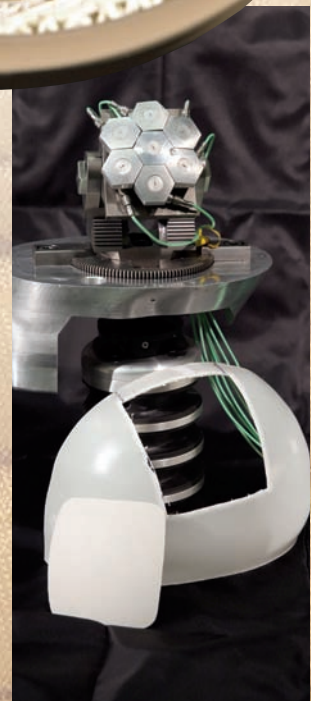
» THE non-ballistic protection provided by today's Mk 7 helmet is second-to-none but anyone who has worn the headgear during the Afghan summer will know that it can uncomfortable in the heat.

Better airflow will make for a more alert soldier so in the future troops could find themselves wearing helmets with a 3D printed mesh liner like this prototype developed by BAE Systems.



» TOMORROW'S headgear is likely to integrate features like visual displays (see pages 32-33) or built-in respirators and face shields, such as this development idea which DSTL call Viper. Current counter measures for chemical and biological attacks are effective but cumbersome and unpleasant to wear. By incorporating this equipment into the uniform and increasing comfort, troops would be more effective over longer periods.

THE UPPER LIMIT IN KILOGRAMS THAT DSTL ESTIMATES AN AVERAGE SOLDIER CAN CARRY WHILE STILL EFFECTIVE AT FIRE AND MANOEUVRE



» ALL potential new materials are subjected to state-of-the-art testing. This blunt impact head injury model measures blows to the head in terms of their potential to cause fracture to understand how equipment will perform.

35%

THE AMOUNT SCIENTISTS HOPE TO REDUCE THE WEIGHT OF PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT BY IN THE NEAR FUTURE





**Snugpak**

**35 YEARS IN THE FIELD.**



The latest evolution of the **Softie® Jacket**  
**SJ-6** • Comfort at -5°C • Made in Yorkshire



Report: Becky Clark

**I**n the not-too-distant future scientists believe that troops' clothing will not just offer coverage and protection, but deliver its own capabilities.

This vision could, within decades, turn the soldier into a fully integrated system of sensors and data, able to interact with other assets on the battlefield and higher command.

Imagine *Robocop* and you won't be too far off the mark.

Incredibly, armour would by then be so sophisticated that even the next generation of flexible plating would become a historical relic.

Instead, protection could be provided at a molecular level by materials which instantly harden when subjected to an electric charge – known as electrorheological materials.

These could be incorporated over key areas of the body and activated as required (see Grenadier concept bottom left).

Meanwhile, the rest of the suit would provide a rigid covering composed of shape-memory materials – a robust muscular system that could morph its form on demand.

Underneath this outer-armour would be a base layer able to simultaneously transmit signals to and from the body (top left).

A biosensor would control the exterior by reading the soldier's movements, while feedback from touch, based on the kind of technology found in smartphone screens, would still let him or her "feel" the outside environment.

And the mind-boggling science doesn't stop there. In something seemingly straight out of *Avatar*, troops could one day operate robot-like armoured machines.

Currently known as Hussar, this biped would be controlled by the movements of a soldier located in its torso, effectively delivering the capability of a light tank but offering the operator much more situational awareness and manoeuvrability than before.

This would be ideal for the congested, urban environments in which future wars are likely to be fought

One thing is certain: tomorrow's troops will be much more than foot soldiers and while those serving today won't see this technology become standard Army issue particularly soon, the future is not as far off as it may seem. ■

# LONG-TERM LIFESAVING

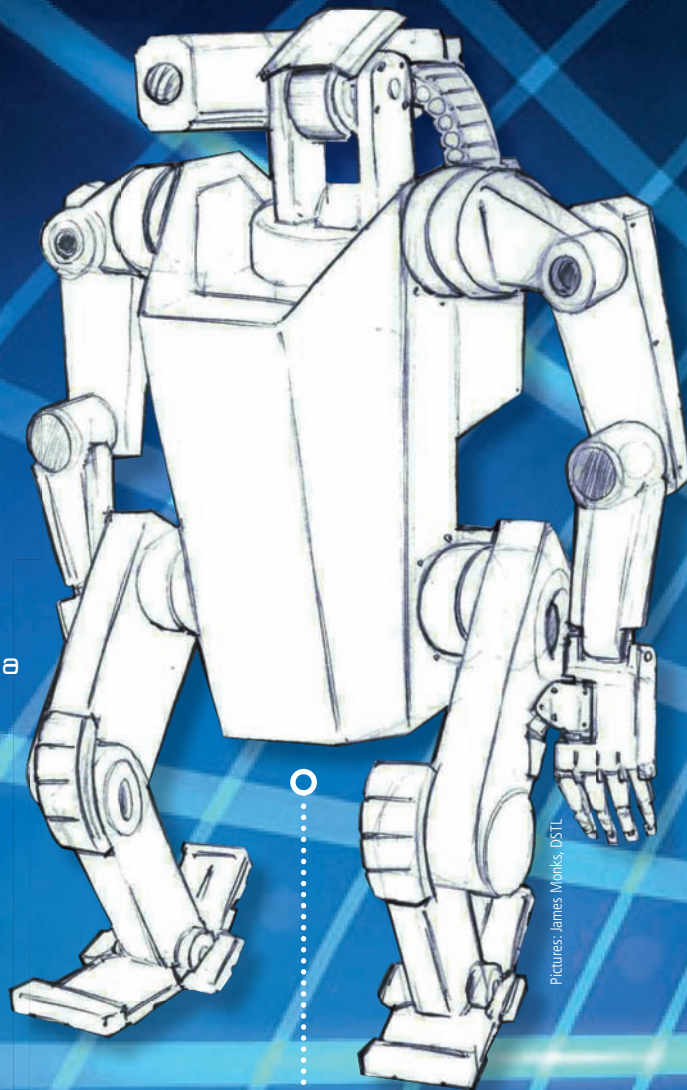
## Changes to protection that could be just decades away



In the future a base layer could enable signals to be transmitted to and from a soldier's body



The Grenadier suit would comprise a tough muscular exterior which could morph its form on demand



The Hussar vision would see a soldier sitting inside a robot's torso and delivering the same capability as a light tank

Pictures: James Monks, DSTL



# SURVIVAL SUMS

Protection involves a lot more than just body armour

Report: Becky Clark

**U**NDERPINNING the development of all new equipment is the concept of "survivability" and protection is only one piece of a much larger jigsaw puzzle.

As well as armour, elements such as the load a soldier has to carry, his situational awareness and his ability to move, fight or conceal himself are just as crucial in safeguarding him and the mission.

The challenge for scientists is balancing so many competing factors to deliver maximum capability.

John Hunt, Strategy Chief for Integrated Survivability and Platform Systems at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), likened the process to the world of elite sport.

"A good way of thinking about it in simple terms is the method used by the Team GB cycling team," he said.

"Their performance director looks very broadly at all the factors affecting performance and allocates resources accordingly.

"So it isn't just about making sure that Bradley Wiggins is eating the right diet or has the right state of mind, it is also very simple things like wiping down the bikes after every session to make sure that there aren't any germs clinging to them that could make the whole team ill.

"We take a similarly holistic approach in what we do."

Despite the highly complex nature of their subject matter, boffins at DSTL use a simple framework for their research.

The so-called "survivability onion" is a layered approach to countering any threat system that could be used against the soldier, whether that is an insurgent with a gun, an IED or an enemy tank.

Mr Hunt explained: "The outer skin of the onion is 'don't be there'. Can you avoid using a particular route and therefore avoid being ambushed?

"The next level is 'if you're there, don't be seen' and that relates to camouflage and concealment.

"Underneath that is 'if you're seen, don't be hit'. Movement and obscurity methods such as smoke grenades reduce the likelihood of a strike.

"Near the middle of the onion is 'if you're hit, don't be killed' and at the very centre are damage limitation measures such as the medical techniques and procedures for treating casualties."

The importance of viewing each component as part of a whole – known in industry as a systems engineering-based approach – was underlined several years ago when the weight carried by troops reached a critical point.

Successive upgrades under the urgent operational requirement programme had improved personal equipment but not balanced this against all requirements, which meant that by the time vital supplies such as rations and water were taken into account, some troops were hauling around 70 kilograms of gear.

awareness is affected and you could miss a threat, such as a buried IED," he said.

"So reducing the physical and cognitive burden on the individual is key.

"For example, the Viper concept helmet (page 27) currently being developed is made of ultra-high molecular-weight polyethylene, which gives a 30 per cent saving on mass.

"You could use this weight reduction in different ways – for example, to add more equipment to the headgear, such as sensors that would allow troops to see targets better.

"That could have survivability benefits by allowing them to see the enemy before the enemy spots them.

"Other work is being done with academics to look at bio-inspired camouflage using the same concept as a chameleon blending into its environment.

"It won't quite be like the *Predator* films but certain technologies will allow you to reduce your contrast so you're less visible to thermal imaging."

While such tangible advances have the potential to increase survivability some ten or 20 years into the future, an equally vital part of the equation happens before soldiers have even set foot on the battlefield.

High-tech equipment can only do so much if the troops are not properly schooled in its use.

"Training is one of the key elements and we're very conscious of that," said Ross Jones, DSTL's programme manager for Dismounted Soldier Systems.

"Unlike a vehicle, which has a design spec that you know delivers certain capabilities, every single Serviceman or woman is physically and mentally different.

"There is a human at the core of all of this and survivability is as much a part of getting into their mindset as it is about pulling technological strands together."

As warfare increasingly becomes the stuff of science

fiction, it is perhaps a comforting thought that real-life skills and drills will still have a place in combat.

One day battles might be fought at the touch of the button but for the time being at least, science cannot completely replace a living, thinking soldier. ■



The advantages gained through top-notch kit almost came at the expense of soldiers' mobility and even ability to think clearly.

According to Mr Hunt, this "trade off" is at the very heart of the survivability conundrum.

"At some point when you're carrying x-amount of weight your situational



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# VISION OF THE FUTURE

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED  
FOR FIGHTER PILOTS COULD  
GIVE TROOPS A VITAL EDGE  
ON THE BATTLEFIELD IN  
YEARS TO COME





**Report: Steven Muncney**  
**Pictures: BAE Systems**

**Y**OU'VE probably seen clips on television showing a pilot's-eye view as he relentlessly tracks his prey over a dusty foreign landscape.

Projected onto the glass at the front of the cockpit is an array of lines, symbols and numbers marking targets and navigational points that dance around the screen as the aircraft manoeuvres through the skies.

This type of high-tech wizardry seems entirely appropriate in a multi-million pound fighter jet operating at top speeds and thousands of feet in the air but, amazingly, similar devices could soon be transforming the capability of infantry troops on the ground.

Q-Warrior is a cutting-edge British project, now at an advanced stage of development, that uses apparatus originally developed for Royal Air Force and Royal Navy aircrews.

"The technology is proven and stems from equipment we have honed over a long period of time, starting around 50 years ago with head-up displays for Buccaneer aircrew," said Paul Wright, the Soldier Systems business development lead at BAE Systems.

Q-Warrior could eventually do for troops what similar kit has long been doing for those fast jet aviators – producing a view of the world augmented by streams of data and graphics that enhance navigation and

communication and enable enemies to be targeted more effectively.

Anyone who has driven a car equipped with a so-called head-up display will appreciate how it works.

Information is projected onto a glass screen with its focus at infinity, which means the user doesn't need to shift his attention between what is on display and the view of the world beyond – it can all be absorbed at the same time.

With Q-Warrior, a special headset allows a pre-selected collection of information and graphics to be laid over the soldier's field of view.

That data can fulfil a number of different functions including guidance over unfamiliar terrain, identifying friendly and enemy forces and determining the location of assets on the ground and in the air, with distances and altitudes included in the feed (see graphic below).

This information can be supplied from a variety of sources including reconnaissance units, scout vehicles, unmanned surveillance sensors and even airborne warning and control system aircraft.

Despite its technical complexity the developers have worked hard to make the Q-Warrior as easy to use as possible.

"At the last Defence, Security and Equipment International exhibition in London we had a Q-Warrior running with a simulated display that included threats in the air and on the ground as if receiving live information," commented Mr Wright. >>>

**Already in sight:** The existing clip-on Q-Sight provides enhanced situational awareness in land vehicles. Q-Warrior builds on this existing technology for the dismounted soldier

## SUPPLYING INFORMATION TO Q-WARRIOR

Information is supplied from scouts, reconnaissance units and unmanned surveillance sensors



Section commander controls data that is sent to the dismounted soldier wearing Q-Warrior



Output to Q-Warrior headset



» "I would say about 80 per cent of people who tried it were familiar with its operation within seconds of putting it on and those who weren't would get a two-minute brief and would then be able to use it quite happily."

He continued: "Despite the fact that the ability to integrate this sort of data is a very recent development, there are semi-integrated soldier systems out there already, used by people like forward air controllers who are moving information from laser range finder binoculars direct to radios and sending and receiving target information."

"Many developed armies are looking at transferring this technology down to the dismounted infantryman, the most production-ready at the moment being the French Felin programme."

"The French army has an order in for about 20,000 units with a local manufacturer. It doesn't contain a line-of-sight display but their next-generation version probably will."

With various Western nations developing their own technologies in this field, the obvious question is, will these different systems be compatible?

That could prove to be an essential requirement with Nato forces now entering an era of closer cooperation and more combined missions.

BAE Systems' electronics division in Kent has been working closely with the MoD's Defence Equipment and Support with this in mind, Mr Wright told *Soldier*.

"The systems we are constructing for Q-Warrior should become a Nato standard eventually so French and British soldiers fighting together, for example, will receive the same information at the same time," he added.

But how feasible would it be to furnish thousands of UK troops with equipment of this complexity?

"The technology to feed this information into the headsets is already there but it's a question of having the network capable of delivering it," the expert continued.

"The next generation of field radios should be able to handle the necessary volumes of information and they will become a battlefield internet effectively, with the soldier's helmet part of it."

"However, Army chiefs will have to decide what they want on the soldiers' head-up displays and what they want on the head-down displays, on a PDA or a mobile phone, for example."

"Not all data needs to be in the line of sight and not all of it is useful in that format so the Army has to carefully consider the operational aspects of using this technology."

"What it can give section commanders, even if they are the only ones to have the full system, is 360-degree control information and that could be invaluable in the complex battle spaces predicted of the future." □

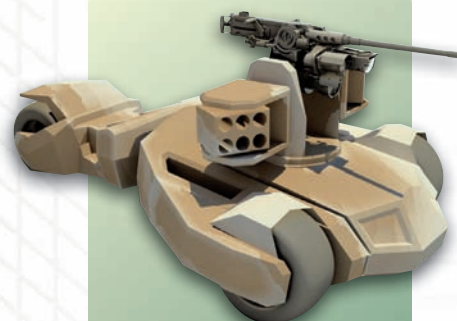
## AN INTRIGUING GLIMPSE OF SOME OTHER CONCEPTS CURRENTLY IN DEVELOPMENT BY BAE SYSTEMS

# TEST-BED TEASERS



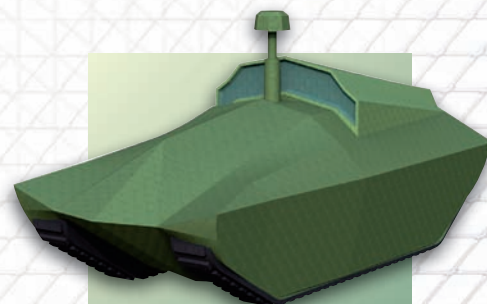
### POINTER

an agile robot which can take over dirty, dull or dangerous jobs such as forward observation



### RAIDER

a remotely or autonomously controlled unmanned recce and skirmishing platform



### WRAITH

a low signature scout vehicle

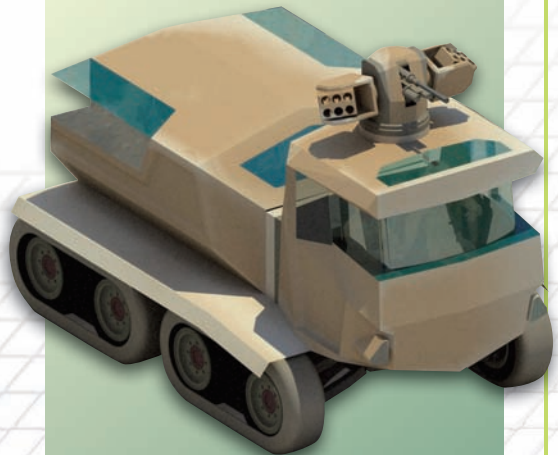


a cross between a bulldozer and a tank, this is a reconfigurable attack vehicle that can knock down walls and launch missiles



CHARGER

a modular platform that can carry a range of mission payloads such as protected mobility, air defence and ambulance



BEARER

TARANIS



a stealthy unmanned air vehicle capable of striking targets (with a human operator in the loop) with precision at long range. The first test flights took place last year

**SAFEGUARD:**  
an ultra-utility infantry carrier or command and control centre

**ATLAS:**  
an automated convoy system (retrofitable if necessary) which uses drive-by-wire, intelligent driver aids or tele-operation to keep soldiers completely out of the firing line

And more ambitious ideas being explored...

**A "sweating" vehicle** could use water from a diesel or fuel cell propulsion system to reduce a vehicle's thermal signature by emitting it through pores in the machine's skin. That same water could also be reclaimed to enable soldiers to stay in the field for longer.

**E-camouflage** would allow a vehicle to blend into its surroundings by using hexagonal "pixels" on its skin. The system, which can work over infra-red and other frequencies, uses on-board cameras to pick up the background scenery and display images on the platform, allowing even a moving tank to match its surroundings.

**Active protection** could see a vehicle extend its armour to provide an increased stand-off distance. A version of this is envisaged as employing electro-magnets to "float" above a vehicle to provide protection from aerial threats.



AFTER PROVING THEIR WORTH ON  
OPERATIONS, THESE UNMANNED  
MACHINES ARE SET TO PLAY A  
KEY ROLE IN FUTURE BATTLES

# FLYING STAR

Report: Joe Clapson

**B**RITISH unmanned air systems (UAS) can be found soaring through the skies of southern Afghanistan on any given day.

But from the start of operations in Helmand these eyes in the sky have courted controversy.

The idea of an aircraft functioning without a pilot on-board understandably leaves some members of the public panicked about autonomous robots waging war.

In response to such concerns, those overseeing the British military's plethora of UAS and remotely-piloted air systems (RPAS) at RAF Waddington have been trying to dispel myths of remote-controlled killing.

Instead, commanders are keen to celebrate the wide-ranging achievements of these go-getting gadgets, which they say are helping to protect the very people who fear their role in modern warfare.

"There has been uncertainty about the level of human control with these assets and this has led to legal concerns being raised," explained AVM Phil Osborn, Joint Force Command Capability Director. The Royal Air Force officer is the MoD's spokesman on UAS and RPAS capabilities.

"But the reality is that the level of human control is equivalent to that of a piloted platform.

"The operator is simply physically removed from it."

To date, the UK's varied collection of UAS and RPAS have flown more than 160,000 hours on intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (Istar) operations.

And from the perspective of those on the front line, this has led to British troops being far better protected.

"The rules of engagement are exactly the same with these systems as they are for manned aircraft," said AVM Osborn.

"Every effort is made to avoid the risk of civilian casualties in accordance with the law."

The most contentious contraption currently being used is Reaper, a remotely-piloted device that provides surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance. It can also carry Hellfire missiles and laser-guided bombs.

Since last April, this platform's missions in Afghanistan have been directed from ground

control stations in rural Lincolnshire in addition to Nevada in the US.

But the fact that this RPAS's pilots are located 3,500 miles away from where it is flying is not a problem, according to the RAF boss, who believes the technology on-board frequently makes it a better option than conventional aircraft.

"Where these systems have the edge is that their ability to loiter brings time – time for deep analysis, time to assess target validity and surroundings and time to better manage the risk of unwanted casualties or damage," he said.

Britain's stock of unmanned aircraft currently includes six different models (shown opposite).

Each asset offers varying levels of Istar capability and the kind of technology that would not be out of place on the set of a James Bond film.

Sgt Scott Weaver (QRL) recently used the toylike 16g Black Hornet while deployed on Herrick 17 as part of the brigade reaction force.

The nano system is fitted with three cameras and can "hover and stare", allowing troops to see around corners or over walls.

"Instead of having to request an aircraft I just put this thing in my daysack," explained the UAS controller.

"I'd send it up to look at the area and tell me if anything was creeping up or if there were insurgents in the vicinity.

"You can drop it down to 20 metres and it still won't be seen or heard and if you've just been in an engagement you can fly the area to see if there are any booby traps."

The Serviceman continued: "Having these systems gave us the warm fuzzy feeling that someone was looking after us and without them on our side I am sure our casualty rate would have increased."

For this soldier and many others, these gadgets have already earned their place in the Army's future toolkit.

"To be honest, I cannot see a time when we wouldn't use them," Sgt Weaver added.

"If they're available I'll put them in my bag, just like I would my gun and helmet."

The emergence of new battlefield technology has always attracted scrutiny from the public.

But from a soldier's perspective it seems clear: these eyes in the sky are protecting lives while operating within the law. ■

「WHERE THESE  
SYSTEMS  
HAVE THE  
EDGE OVER  
MANNED  
AIRCRAFT IS  
THEIR ABILITY  
TO LOITER」





# SKY HIGH:

The unmanned systems currently supporting British missions

## ARMY-OPERATED

### HERMES 450

- Tactical unmanned air system
- Unarmed
- Provides video surveillance to UK ground forces day and night
- Remotely piloted by the Royal Artillery
- 85,000 hours flown in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2007

### DESERT HAWK

- Mini unmanned air system
- Unarmed
- Provides key surveillance and intelligence
- Operated by the Royal Artillery
- Carried on the ground and launched by hand
- 30,000 hours flown in Afghanistan and Iraq

### BLACK HORNET

- A nano unmanned air system
- Unarmed
- Provides surveillance and intelligence
- Operated by the Infantry
- Used in Afghanistan since 2012

### TARANTULA-HAWK

- Unmanned aerial system
- Unarmed
- Examines possible IEDs to allow safe passage and clearance
- Operated by the Royal Engineers Counter-IED Task Force
- Designed for short-endurance missions

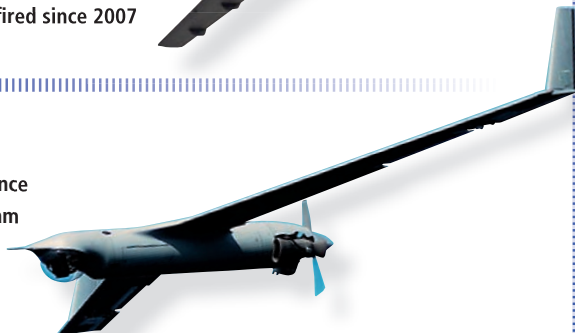
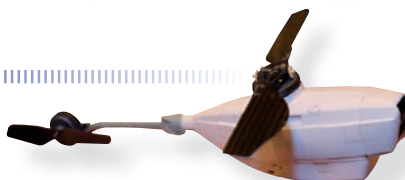
## OTHERS

### REAPER MQ-9

- Remotely-piloted aircraft system
- Operated by RAF pilots
- Designed for medium-altitude and long-endurance surveillance missions
- Carries precision guided air-to-ground missiles
- Five aircraft in service will expand to a fleet of ten
- 54,000 hours flown and 459 weapons fired since 2007

### SCAN EAGLE

- Maritime unmanned air system
- Unarmed
- Provides key surveillance and intelligence
- Operated by a specialist contractor team on-board Royal Navy vessels
- The first maritime-specific unmanned reconnaissance asset to operate from UK warships and auxiliaries day or night



## ONE TO WATCH

The newest addition to the Army's eyes in the sky

### WATCHKEEPER

- Unmanned air system
- Unarmed, providing surveillance and intelligence
- Will be an enduring tactical UAS capability
- Remotely piloted by the Royal Artillery
- Features state-of-the-art sensors and laser designators
- More than 500 hours flown in UK to trial the system

CONSTRUCTED from Kevlar-carbon fibre composite material, Watchkeeper is at the cutting edge of aviation technology.

The unmanned air system is due into service in the coming months and with an ability to climb to 10,000ft, the 450kg device will be a welcome addition to the Service's UAS fold.

A total of 54 machines have been procured for the Army and will be operated by trained members of the Royal Artillery.

The Thales-produced equipment has the ability to launch and descend using a GPS or radar landing system and each crew comprises two pilots, a mission commander and an image analyst.

"This system will be able to assist with convoy overwatch, route clearance and will have a long loiter time in the sky," explained Sgt Alex Buchanan (RA).

"We can recce an area before the lads go into it, which means they are not going anywhere without knowing exactly what is going on."

- See future editions of *Soldier* for further updates as this state-of-the-art piece of equipment enters service



# NEW LASER SIGHTING SYSTEM SET TO TRANSFORM ARMY'S NOCTURNAL FIGHTING CAPABILITIES

Report: Steven Muncey  
Pictures: Graeme Main

**B**RITISH infantry soldiers will be able to fight more aggressively, stealthily, safely and quickly than ever before at night, thanks to a new laser sight.

The Laser Light Module (LLM) Mk 3 has double the range of the previous standard-issue version during daylight hours and treble its range at night – and that will save troops' lives as well as make after-dark combat manoeuvres more effective.

"In my opinion this will revolutionise the way we fight," said Lt Callum Cameron (1 Yorks), a member of the Infantry Trials and Development Unit (ITDU) in Warminster who was one of the first soldiers to use the equipment over a six-week period on the Salisbury Plain and Sennybridge training areas.

"In Afghanistan, one of the hardest things to do is identify an enemy or their firing point.

"Not only is it hard to spot the target yourself as a commander but to then try and talk the guys onto that same position can be time-consuming and incredibly complicated," said the officer, who served on Herrick 16.

"In a scenario where every second counts, this piece of equipment has

put us in a situation where a ground commander can identify an enemy combatant through his thermal sight, put a laser on to him and let soldiers immediately see the position."

The new kit, which is fitted to the SA80 rifle and weighs just 244 grams, will be distributed to troops over the coming weeks and months.

It has visible and infrared modes for day and night operations and the increase in the power of the laser

allows a spot to be put on a target from a much longer range than before.

This means the enemy can be engaged from a safer distance or the laser can silently provide an indicator for a sniper.

Lt Col Rob O' Connor (1 Yorks), commanding officer of the ITDU, explained: "If I've got a rifle and I spot an enemy at 600 metres I'm not going to be able to hit them with an SA80 but I can use the LLM to spot them and a sharpshooter with a longer range sight can then fire at the target."

The new LLM combines effectively with the existing head-mounted night vision system (HMNVIS) that is already used by Regular troops and is about to be distributed to the Reserves.

"We've had the goggles for a while so we're used to operating at night but until the Mk 3 laser came in,

“Until the  
Mk 3 laser  
came in,  
fighting at  
night was  
extremely  
difficult”



Night vision: Views through the Laser Light Module

# OWNING THE NIGHT



fighting after dark was extremely difficult," added Lt Col O'Connor.

"Now we are marrying the two technologies together to make it much easier."

In infrared mode the laser spot should only be visible to the British troops wearing the HMNVIS and this will provide a crucial advantage for night attacks.

"If I'm sending people round on a flanking manoeuvre they can now get incredibly close to the enemy before they themselves open fire," added Lt Cameron.

"Also, there's much less risk of them coming across the line of fire and having friendly fire incidents because they can all clearly see where our rounds are landing."

Being equipped with the HMNVIS and the new LLM will also mean that Britain's Infantry can fight more quickly and aggressively than before.

"In places like Afghanistan we can experience what's called a meeting engagement, where you almost bump into the enemy at night," continued Lt Cameron.

"With these pieces of kit in place you don't have to bring the weapon up to look through a night sight before firing, which can take a couple of crucial seconds.

"You can shoot from the hip and that's how we've been trained to fire it on the ranges.

"Your finger is already next to the button, you press it and immediately acquire the target with the laser and fire.

"Fighting in such conditions used to be slow, careful and methodical but now we can go into a situation and be fast and aggressive. We can really own the night." ■



Close up: Laser sight clipped on to a weapon



# HOW BRITISH SOLDIERS ARE INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CUTTING- EDGE MILITARY EQUIPMENT



Report: Sarah Goldthorpe  
Pictures: Graeme Main

**E**VER come up with an idea for a piece of kit that would make life easier for you and your comrades? Perhaps.

Ever watched that equipment get rolled out across the Service? Perhaps not.

Two soldiers who can answer yes to both those questions, however, are former warrant officer Darren Hugill and SSgt Mark Smith (REME).

In recent years the Servicemen have played their part in developing Army technology by suggesting improvements via the Ministry of Defence's Gems scheme.

The initiative not only rewards troops financially if their inventions or ideas are taken up by the department – up to £10,000 in some cases – but it also allows battle-winning kit to be perfected by those at the sharp end.

And with a team at Army Headquarters dedicated to going through every soldier's suggestion, grass roots innovation has arguably never been taken more seriously.

"The Gems scheme is one of the few instances where it doesn't matter who you are or what rank you are, someone is going to look at what you have said and consider it objectively," said Stuart Laws, manager of the departmental-wide initiative.

Anyone in the Armed Forces or civil service can submit an idea.

And although the brainwave can cover any aspect of defence work, it is hardly surprising that most of the suggestions put forward by Army personnel each year relate to front-line equipment.

Darren Hugill, who left the Service in 2013, submitted his idea for a new system to avoid costly repairs to cameras on-board the Mastiff – a heavily armoured

patrol vehicle that has proved crucial on operations in Afghanistan.

Known as the "Mastiff man" to his former colleagues in the Defence School of Transport's (DST) advanced training wing, the ex-soldier was inspired while teaching crews to operate the fearsome platform.

"I came up with the idea because the cameras kept breaking off – even during training at DST," he explained.

"It was costing the MoD a lot of time and money to get new ones fitted and I heard they were having the same problem in theatre. I thought there must be a better solution."

Hugill decided that a new piece of equipment was needed to allow the Mastiff's cameras to instantly fold away on contact with an obstacle.

He set to work designing a prototype along with the machine's manufacturer NP Aerospace and after successful trials and full endorsement by the Army, the kit was incorporated into version two of the vehicle, plus all Ridgeback and Wolfhound platforms.

As well as earning the former Serviceman the top Gems prize of £10,000, the idea is expected to have saved the department £883,705 already.

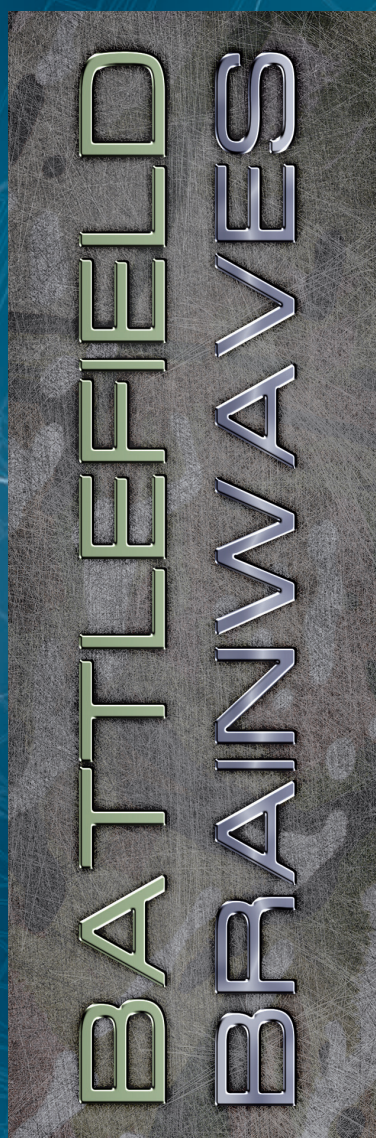
"The improvement not only saved the MoD money but it made a battle-winning piece of kit even better," he said.

"The cash I won helped too – it bought me a brand new Kawasaki Z800."

SSgt Smith, who was one of a small team of people to create a new training aid for vehicle mechanics, agreed the scheme was a positive way for soldiers to influence their world-class machinery.

"I think it is important for the Army to get feedback from the ground," the member of 11 Training Battalion told *Soldier*.

"Troops have got nothing to lose by submitting their ideas and they may get recognition which can boost their careers."





Along with two colleagues at the School of Electronic and Aeronautical Engineering, the Serviceman was rewarded for creating a piece of kit that gives vehicle mechanics hands-on practice at repairing the increasingly complex electrical systems inside protected mobility vehicles.

This was done by converting surplus FV 432 Armoured Personnel Carriers into bespoke training aids at a cost of £24,800. Industry versions would have cost around £500,000 each.

Along with his former colleague SSgt Andrew Laurie (REME), the soldier designed a replacement

electrical system for the old vehicles that would replicate those of modern platforms.

The realism of this kit has helped to make trainee technicians more confident in tackling electrical faults in theatre, with those on Op Herrick reporting faster diagnosis as a result.

"To be honest we were just doing our job and didn't expect to get any recognition," SSgt Smith added.

"But we are grateful to everyone involved. It was a real team effort."

With Defence Equipment and Support and the Gems team

working closely to ensure decent ideas are put into practice, soldiers can be assured that inspired technologies of the future will be as practical as they are impressive.

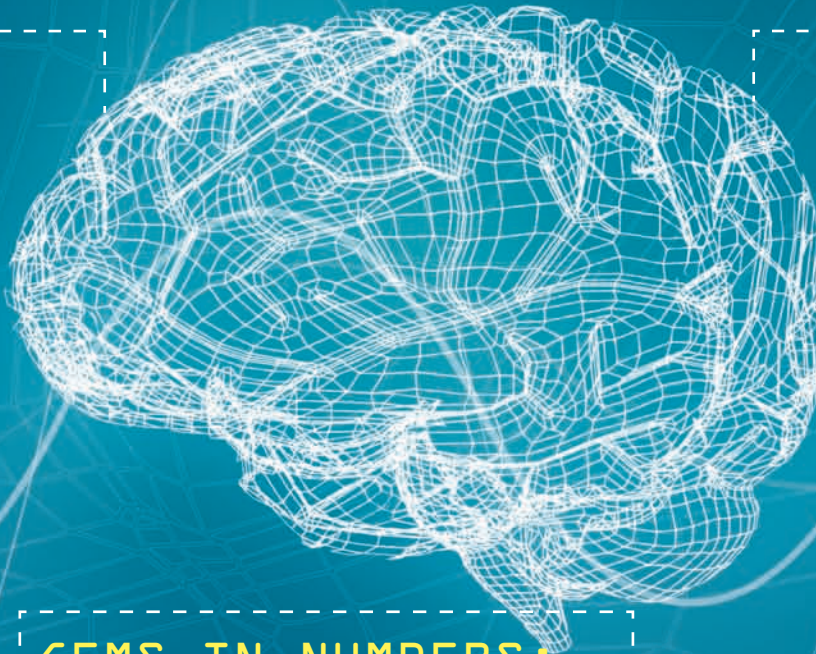
"This scheme lets us tap into people who are closest to issues that others in the department might not necessarily be aware of," Mr Laws continued.

"Having input from guys on the ground who are using our equipment opens up a whole generation of new ideas." ■

● What single piece of kit would transform your work?  
Final Word – page 98



**Innovation station:** This piece of kit thought up by Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers personnel led to vehicle problems being tackled more quickly in Afghanistan



## GEMS IN NUMBERS:

12 - ideas for new or enhanced equipment from soldiers which have become a reality in the last 14 months thanks to the MoD-wide suggestion scheme



**War fighting wisdom:** Former soldier Darren Hugill came up with a folding camera system for the Mastiff after teaching crews how to operate the vehicle



## LIGHT BULB MOMENT?

The Gems scheme rewards military and civilian personnel for any ideas they have to improve the way the Ministry of Defence works – and not just those based on equipment. From changing processes at a regimental level to ways of cutting out paperwork, if you have a suggestion visit People Services on the defence intranet or the Gems page on the MOSS portal.



INJURED BRITISH TROOPS  
HAVE BEEN PLAYING A VITAL  
ROLE IN HELPING TO DEVELOP  
THE LATEST GENERATION OF  
ARTIFICIAL LIMBS

‘PEOPLE CALL  
ME THE  
BIONIC SOLDIER’





**Report: Joe Clapson**  
**Pictures: Graeme Main**

**W**HEN Andy Garthwaite's right arm was completely blown off by a Taliban rocket-propelled grenade in September 2010 he thought his life was over.

"I was lying there with my limb detached next to me and my hand on fire," recalled the former corporal in the Queen's Royal Lancers.

"I remember seeing my family's faces going round and round my body and thinking 'is this what dying feels like' – I honestly thought I was going to be gone."

However, following his astonishing recovery and a strong determination to use a traditional prosthetic limb, surgeons decided Andy was the perfect candidate to test their revolutionary mind-controlled arm.

He was understandably sceptical when first briefed by a team from Ottobock, the German company that makes the equipment, on the plan to fit him with a limb that would function just like a natural one.

"When Professor Oskar Aszmann talked me through what he was going to do I just thought it sounded like science fiction and something that was never actually going to happen," said the 26-year-old veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Once it had sunk in that he would be having electronic sensors fitted inside his body and connected to his brain, Andy took on the challenge with gusto.

In January 2012 he was flown to the Medical University of Vienna in Austria for an eight-hour operation known as targeted muscle reinnervation, a new development in the field of prosthetics.

"It's exactly like a rewiring process – they cut me open and laid my nerves out on the table," he said.

"Then they operated on my chest and split my muscles into different groups and worked out which nerves supplied which movements."

The procedure of attaching the prosthetic arm to the injured soldier involved using the nerve endings in his shoulder that were previously linked to his hand and connecting them to his chest.

Following the initial operation Andy had to spend nine months without a prosthetic arm to allow his nerves to settle down and regrow.

He also had to spend hours each day undergoing "visualisation" drills without a limb.

This involved sitting in a chair with his eyes closed and training his brain to work with his muscles again.

Once the new arm was fitted he learnt to move the bionic hand simply by thinking of moving his fingers.

**IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS – THIS IS THE PEAK OF TECHNOLOGY**

Steve Lambert, Lead Prosthetic Technician at Headley Court, explained: "We have five electrodes in his pectoral muscle and Andy's thoughts then fire the electrodes, which in turn are linked to the arm and hand."

He is able to move the new limb instinctively but the former soldier is unable to sense hot or cold with it.

However, it is fitted with a sensor that recognises weight and grips objects to prevent slippage.

As a result, Andy can undertake everyday tasks in the house and garden that previously would have been beyond him.

Even watching this patient make a cup of coffee brings a proud smile to Mr Lambert's face.

"I have worked in complex trauma at Headley Court for six years and it doesn't get any better than this – this is the peak of technology," he said.

"In the UK we are a long way ahead of the field because this is the finished product."

Andy may have played an important role in this piece of scientific history but he knows it is the many talented individuals operating behind the scenes who have made it all possible.

"People call me the bionic soldier and I'll take that," said the man who was medically discharged from the Army in December.

"But every time I go to see the surgeons I think about how they are able to literally rewire people's nervous systems."

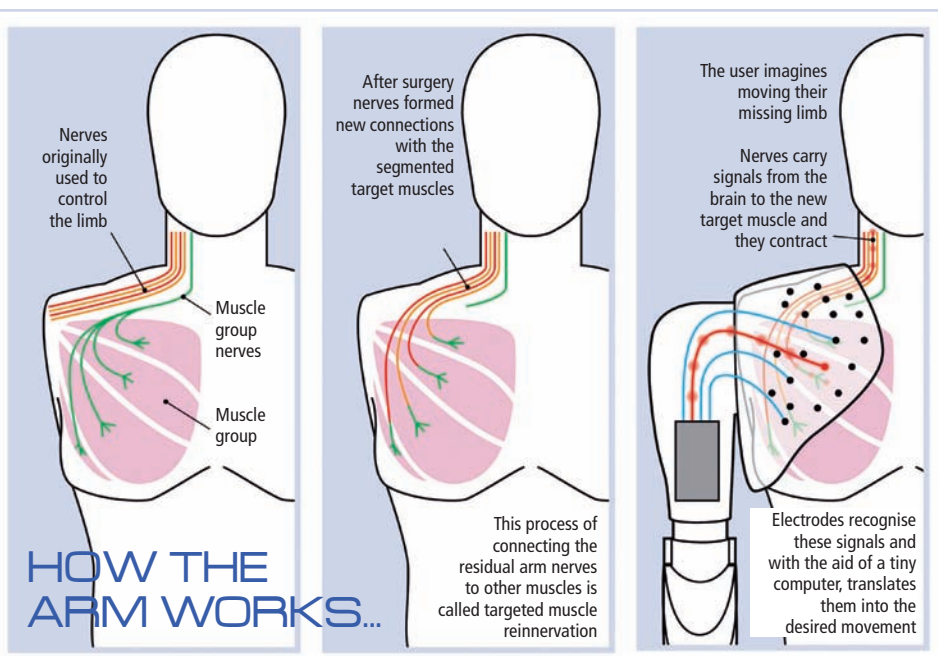
"To do stuff like that is amazing and they've really given me a second chance in life."

The humble motorbike enthusiast, who is already back racing his beloved Suzuki GSR 600, added:

"I owe my life to the soldiers who helped me when I was hit."

"My time in the military has been fantastic and it's because of the Forces that I'm the first person to have this operation – they lead the way with this sort of technology." »

**Life-changing limb, Clockwise from top right: Andy Garthwaite working with an occupational therapist; the former soldier on patrol in Afghanistan in 2010; Prosthetic Technician Steve Lambert at Headley Court**





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# LEGS TAKE A LEAP

The latest prosthetic leg is so good it can even be programmed for different sports

Report: Joe Clapson

**I**N the wake of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan hundreds of soldiers have been fitted with so-called C-Legs as replacement limbs.

These microprocessor-controlled hydraulic units have become the most popular prosthetic leg in history thanks to their proven functionality and stability, with more than 40,000 of them fitted to date.

But while this remains an impressive piece of kit, its successor, the new Genium leg, provides an even wider range of movement, including the ability to walk over obstacles, move up and down stairs and step backwards.

Research teams initially worked alongside the US military to create the remarkable limb using gyroscope mechanics similar to those employed in aircraft controls.

The significant upgrade in technology and the benefits it brings are something double amputee Gdsm Stuart Gallacher (SG) is particularly appreciative of.

"Everyone who is on prosthetic legs wants to be equipped with Geniums," he told *Soldier*.

"With stubbies [C-Legs] you cruise along by just moving from side to side but on the Geniums you have to concentrate on walking straight ahead and that involves a lot of thinking.

"It's for the best, though, and the technology is amazing."

The Serviceman, who was admitted to Headley Court last May, added:

"Once I get my own Genium I'll look forward to walking in public again and then if I want to run I will look at getting some blades."

The whole idea behind the pioneering piece of equipment is to provide a quality of life as close to a non-amputee's as possible by offering – for the first time – the opportunity to walk with a gait that mimics a natural one.

Achieving such an important

objective hasn't been easy and the Genium leg contains a carbon fibre frame, an aircraft-grade aluminium alloy shin tube, titanium bolt connectors and a lithium-ion re-chargeable battery, all controlled by powerful microprocessors.

"There is a lot of sophisticated technology going on inside these legs," explained Ken Hurst from prosthetics maker Ottobock UK, who was a member of the technical support team at the London Paralympic Games.

"There is a gyroscope which controls the directional movement, there are knee sensors that work on the angulation at the base of the shin and we also have the axial load sensor that caters for the pressure on the limb.

"These feed information to the knee's microprocessor and that is transferred to the cylinder inside the knee which holds and releases it."

The legs can be programmed for different activities including cycling or table tennis.

A remote control, which can be operated using Bluetooth technology, can adjust the settings of the legs to these bespoke modes.

"It shuts off certain sensors and allows others to work to facilitate movements like lunging at speed, which might be required for playing a certain sport," Mr Hurst added.

"This is the top end but obviously technology never stands still and we will always be looking at ways to improve – bringing in a full running mode is on the wish list, for example.

"Our challenge is to keep up with what people require.

"Someone might want to run over the world's roughest terrain so we must cater for that."

With technology moving forward at this kind of pace there seems little doubt that many injured soldiers will eventually be able to enjoy a quality of life they could have only dreamed of a few short years ago. ■

Socket

Gyroscope/  
two-axis  
accelerometer  
and angle sensor

Hydraulics

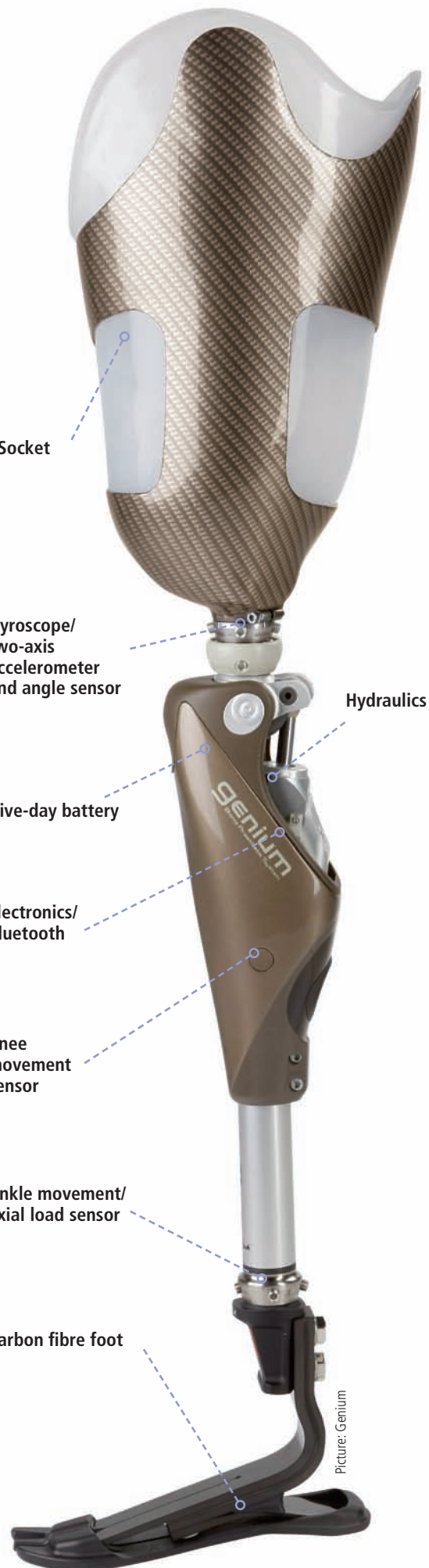
Five-day battery

Electronics/  
Bluetooth

Knee  
movement  
sensor

Ankle movement/  
axial load sensor

Carbon fibre foot



Picture: Genium





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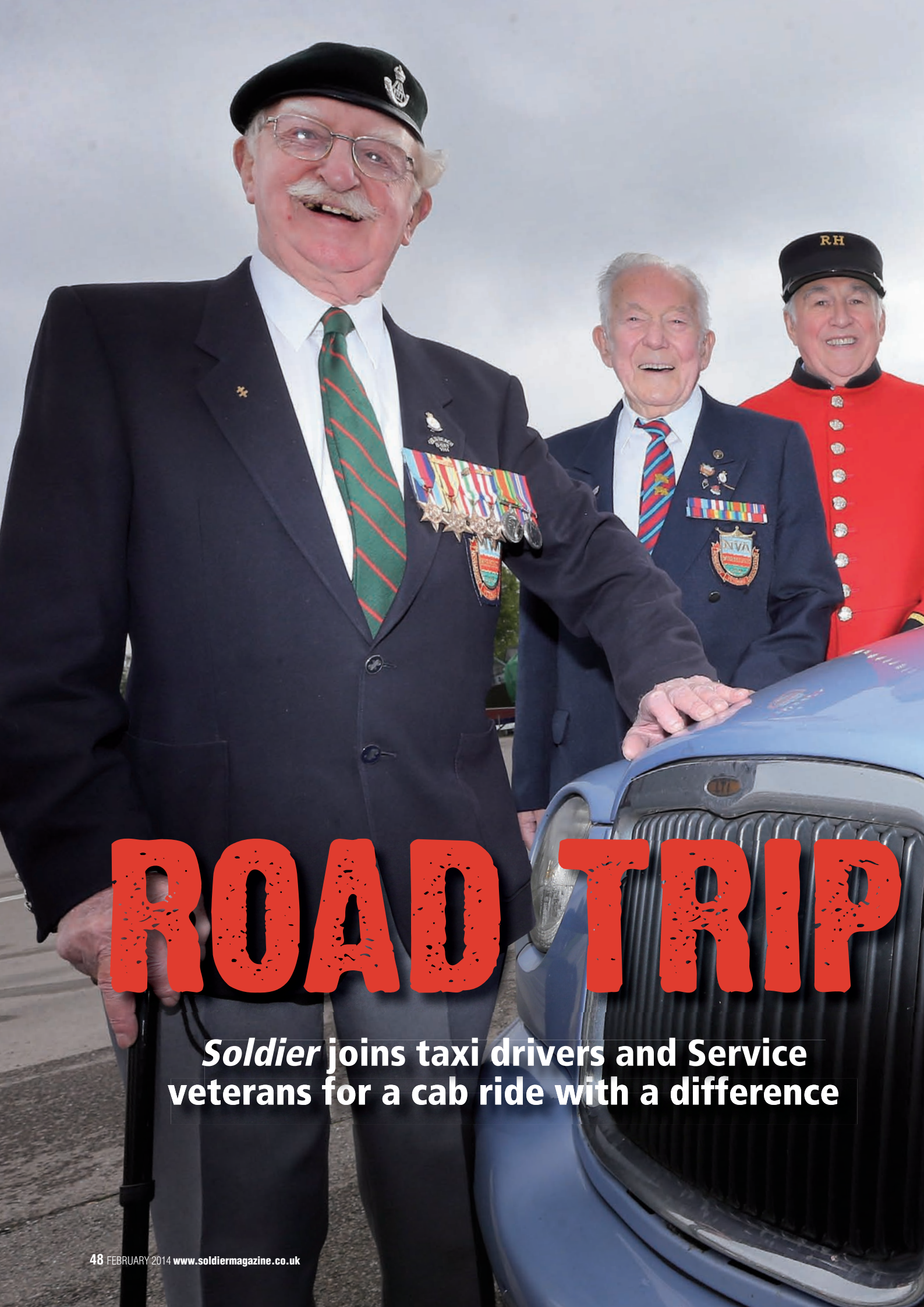
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# ROAD TRIP

***Soldier* joins taxi drivers and Service veterans for a cab ride with a difference**





**‘IT’S NOT  
JUST ABOUT  
A DAY OUT -  
FRIENDSHIPS  
ARE FORMED’**

**Report: Becky Clark  
Pictures: Graeme Main**

**L**ONDON'S black cabs are as much a part of the city's fabric as bearskin-wearing guardsmen and Big Ben. Famously talkative, and possessing an encyclopaedic knowledge of the capital's streets, taxi drivers spend their days getting residents and tourists to where they need to be.

But several times a year, one group of cabbies make time for a different kind of passenger altogether.

Since 1947 the London Taxis Benevolent Association for War Disabled has arranged free outings for Armed Forces veterans of all ages.

Drivers from across the city collect former Service personnel from their front doors and take them to places of interest around London and beyond, completely free of charge.

Dick Goodwin, the organisation's vice president and appeals officer, explained the philanthropic concept behind the long-running charity.

"Our title says 'war disabled' but today we work with all veterans so if you were in the Services you are entitled to come on a trip," he said.

"We do one big outing to Worthing every year and as many smaller ones as we can manage.

"In 2012 we took 160 people in 86 taxis to Arnhem and this May we are planning to take a similar number back to Holland for VE Day.

"There are about 140 drivers on our books and the veterans live all over the place so it's a real mission to get everything together."

Despite the logistical challenges, the rewards of the trips are obvious to those who are involved.

"It's not just about a day out – lasting friendships are formed," continued Mr Goodwin.

"We didn't realise it but we ended up putting two guys together who hadn't seen each other since one of them pulled the other out of the water on D-Day."

Cabbie Dave Hempstead said it was stories like this that motivate him and his fellow drivers to give up their time

and often petrol money to help out.

A former Territorial Army soldier, the 52-year-old first volunteered for the organisation five years ago.

"It's a pleasure being with the old boys – they've got some wonderful tales," he commented.

"You get a bunch of these chaps together and after about ten minutes they'll be having a singsong.

"It's lovely to see people coming over to talk to them and ask them all about their medals.

"Many of the gentlemen are in their nineties and a lot of them live on their own; they might have lost their wives years ago.

"They try and remain independent but quite a few go to the Royal Hospital Chelsea and we have a close relationship with the home.

"Unfortunately, we see veterans pass on all too regularly now but it's an honour to be part of their lives towards the end."

Among the Chelsea Pensioners to benefit from the charity's work is ex-Royal Engineers corporal, Ray Pearson.

The 77-year-old National Serviceman explained what it meant to him and his fellow redcoats to go on outings.

"Everyone at the hospital really appreciates what the taxi drivers do for us," he remarked.

"I've been on five trips so far and they're fantastic.

"Before I went to Chelsea I was a widower for ten years and I'd be sitting at home in the morning eating breakfast on my own, no one to say good morning to, no one to pass the time of day with unless I went outside.

"The taxis pick us up, look after us all day long and deliver us back again in one piece.

"I'd encourage anyone to come along because the banter that goes on is fantastic." ■

**Soldiers on a journey:** Pictured left to right, James Corrigan, Ted Roberts and Ray Pearson look forward to a day out with cab driver Dave Hempstead from the London Taxis Benevolent Association for War Disabled



# SOLDIERS SWAP STORIES

**T**HOSE who have spent time in uniform share a common bond, even if they saw service in very different eras.

As well as catering for older veterans, the London Taxis Benevolent Association for War Disabled is open to those who have served in more modern conflicts.

Having started to develop links to Headley Court, the charity is keen to spread the word amongst recent Service leavers living in or near London.

The goal: for young and old to come together and share their experiences.

Here, three veterans of the Second World War and Afghanistan recall what happened to them on the battlefield...



● Dan Edwards, a 22-year-old ex-paratrooper, was wounded in 2010 while serving on Operation Herrick 13 in Nad-e Ali.

After undergoing rehab he was discharged from the Army in October 2013 and now lives in West London, where he is planning a new career in property management.



Dan Edwards



“ I WAS hit three weeks into the tour, the first member of 3 Para to get injured.

We were in a contact and a sniper got me on the right-hand side of my head and in the arm.

I fell down and I think I actually died for a few seconds but when they took my body armour off I started to breathe again.

All this I found out when my mates got back – I don't remember any of it myself but it's what I've been told happened.

I was in hospital in Birmingham for 14 weeks, four of which I spent in a coma.

When I woke up I realised half my head was missing.

My recovery has been good. I spent nine months in Headley Court before I was moved to a brain trauma unit.

I still get my up days and down days but at the moment I'm feeling good.

At first I wanted to stay in the Army but now I'm squared away and I know what I'd like to do with my life.

Talking to the older Service veterans is intriguing.

Their stories interest me because I've been through something similar myself and I can relate to it. ”



● D-Day veteran Ted Roberts not only joins the charity for outings but has also raised more than £100,000 in collections for its work over the last ten years.

The 88-year-old first joined the Army after the Battle of Dunkirk when he was just 15. Kicked out not once but three times for being underage, he finally enlisted in the Glasgow Highlanders when he was 18.

“ I LANDED in Normandy on D-Day plus one, two days short of my 19th birthday and I lasted until the battle for Hill 112, where I think we lost 5,000 men.

According to the orders that came down, the hill had to be taken 'at all costs' because the Germans could see everything that was going on and were knocking our tanks out one by one.

Our job was to go round the back and dig in so if there was a counter attack we could fight them off.

So we'd taken the position and were at a crossroads when a lad was told to go and get the Bren Gun Carriers.

He went down – I think he was shot – and because I was the next nearest I was told to go.

I started running but came under fire.

When someone shoots at you and misses you hear a noise like the crack of a whip.

I got on the ground and lay there for about ten seconds, before getting up and starting to run in zigzags but a bullet caught my arm, smashed the bones and the nerves, spun me round and put me flat on my back.

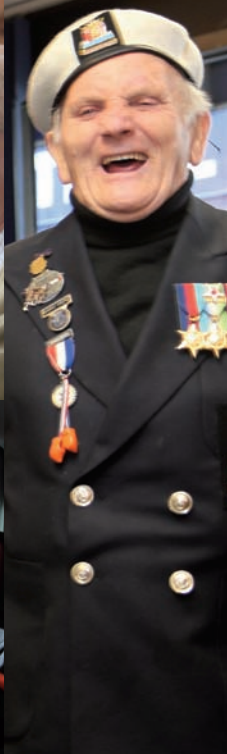
## TAKE A TAXI

THINK you or someone you know could benefit from the work of the London Taxis Benevolent Association for War Disabled?

The organisation is open to all those who have served in the Armed Forces and is also looking for more cab drivers to volunteer.

Visit [www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org) for more information.





My tin hat went one way, my rifle went somewhere else.

I daren't move a muscle because I was stuck in the open so all I could do was play dead – I couldn't even stop the bleeding.

For what seemed like hours but was probably only 20 minutes I lay there waiting.

All of a sudden I heard the rumble of tanks.

I didn't know whether they were British or German – and they would have run me over – so by now I was in a desperate situation.

I'm not ashamed to admit that I've never been so frightened before or since.

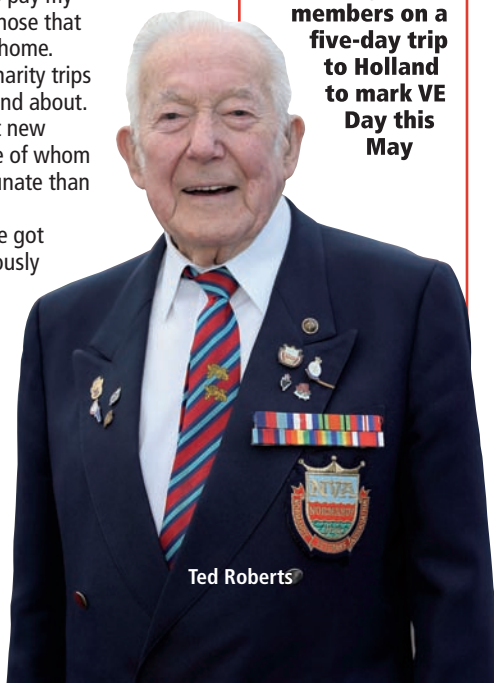
A tank came along and out popped a head and said, 'where's all these bloody Germans you're shouting about then?'

Soon after that the medics came to get me and I was taken to the beaches and put on a boat and that was the end of my Normandy story.

I'm one of the lucky ones and that's why I travel over to France every year to pay my respects to those that didn't come home.

The taxi charity trips get me out and about. I get to meet new people, some of whom are less fortunate than I am.

I'm 88, I've got nothing seriously wrong with me and I'm fit so I like to do what I can for others. It keeps me young. ”



Ted Roberts

## IN NUMBERS

**London Taxis Benevolent Association for War Disabled**

# 67

number of years the charity has been running for – one veteran has attended every single year since 1947

# £130,000

anticipated cost of taking 160 members on a five-day trip to Holland to mark VE Day this May

● **Former major James Corrigan is a 90-year-old widower and father of three, with eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. In 1941 he got "a bit merry" with friends and went to enlist, lying about his age in order to do so. During training he was selected to become an officer, commissioning in 1942. He deployed to North Africa with the Durham Light Infantry, before taking part in the Allied landings at Sicily, where he lost a finger to a sniper. Later he fought on D-Day and in Operation Market Garden in Holland.**

“ ON D-Day I came ashore at Gold Beach.

The landing craft went into a sand bank and started to swing round and we got swamped. I fell in.

They gave you waterproof trousers and the water would get in over the top and fill them up like a balloon but after Italy I had learnt a lesson.

I pulled my trousers out of my gaiters and threw away my tin helmet too.

I made myself as light as possible so I could swim because a lot of men were weighed down, with bicycles and all sorts, and couldn't stay afloat.

When you got to the beach the thing was to just keep on running.

It was about a mile from the sand and

along the road but we made it because, luckily, there wasn't the full commitment of German troops there.

In those days as an officer you were fortunate to last eight hours.

The war in Afghanistan is very different. It's a career for soldiers today and they have better protection but they don't see their enemy really.

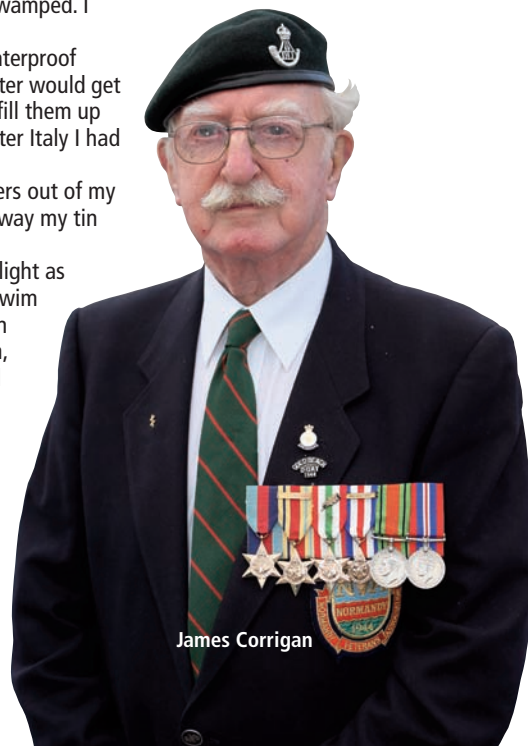
We saw ours and once he put his hands up you might share a cigarette and become the best of friends.

We would tend to their wounded and they to ours. It was strange.

Through my involvement in this charity – collecting for them or coming on outings – I get to experience comradeship.

It's a camaraderie that started in the Army.

The men I served with are all dead now, sadly. They were some great blokes. ”



James Corrigan



## Interview: Joe Clapson

**M**ANY soldiers encounter life-threatening situations during their careers on the front line.

But one rifleman faced almost certain death three times before he had reached the age of five.

Within days of Paul Apowida's birth in the rural town of Sirigu in Ghana, members of the community branded him a "kinkuru" – someone possessed by evil forces – and it was decided he must be killed.

It was only due to sheer luck, the remarkable efforts of a Catholic nun and his own dogged determination that Rfn Apowida survived attempts to poison him and escaped to the UK to join 1st Battalion, The Rifles.

Now, the supremely talented artist and veteran of Afghanistan has told his staggering story in an autobiography called *Spirit Boy*.

"They believed that I was born with an evil spirit inside me so they gave me a poison and left me in the sun to die," said the 28-year-old.

"I wanted to write the book to tell the public what I went through."

The decision to feed a concoction of lethal herbs to the infant was made after his parents and six other relatives died soon after his birth.

In some African communities, so-called "spirit children" are identified as being the cause of any misfortunes that occur.

As a result, Rfn Apowida was left to perish in the 35-degree Celsius heat of northern Ghana.

"Thankfully someone reported what had happened and a nun rescued me," said the Serviceman.

"She arranged for me to be looked after elsewhere, but then someone else tried to give me another dose of poison."

Sister Jane Naaglosegme proved to be the soldier's saviour and after realising that he was still not safe, she took him to an orphanage hundreds of miles away.

Then, with the help of the UK charity AfriKids, he was put through boarding school and art college in the country's capital, Accra.

But despite showing considerable creative talent the youngster decided to put down his paintbrush and join the British Army at the age of 22.

"I wanted to join the military as a way to thank everybody in the UK and all those that helped me," explained the Serviceman.

But enlisting with the Armed Forces did not turn out to be a one-sided affair.

"Because of my experiences as a child I joined up as a scared person, but the Army took the fear out of me and made me strong enough to face the people who had tried to kill me," he added.

"The discipline and courage needed has really helped me and has changed my life."

Armed with the experience of operating calmly in the face of IED blasts in Helmand, Rfn Apowida returned to Sirigu to confront the "concoction men" who poured deadly poison down his neck.



**Courageous:** Rfn Paul Apowida is determined to save other people from the terrifying plight he faced



**Spirit Boy** by Paul Apowida is out now, priced £20

"They explained why they did it; obviously I was really upset but they apologised and I was able to forgive them," he said.

Hailing from an area synonymous with infanticide, the Ghanaian soldier is one of the few "spirit children" who has lived to tell the tale.

And now in his role as an ambassador for AfriKids, the Serviceman is championing the campaign to ensure youngsters earmarked as evil are not forgotten or ignored.

"The practice is still going on today," he told *Soldier*.

"I just hope that they stop this kind of behaviour and kids are allowed to grow up.

"When I went back home everyone was surprised because they didn't realise what I had become – people there think that being in the British Armed Forces is like being the King of England."

After a successful career in uniform the rifleman is set to leave the military later this year and turn his attentions back to painting and writing, while continuing his mission to save people from the terrifying plight he faced.

So far sales of his paintings have raised £40,000 for AfriKids and it seems, after overcoming such a horrendous start in life, nothing is going to stop him from achieving.

"To me, whatever happens, giving up is not part of my routine," he said.

"I've learnt that there's no such thing as impossible – if you want to do it, you can." ■

# SPIRIT BOY

The remarkable survival story of a Ghanaian rifleman branded evil







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Robert Dicketts, father of Oliver Dicketts

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# “TALK ABOUT HECKLING!”

**Music star tells *Soldier* of his new-found respect for British troops (even if they did give him a hard time on stage)**

**Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe**

**W**HEN Gary Barlow visited Camp Bastion last year to film the ITV documentary *Journey to Afghanistan* it went largely unnoticed by those at the forefront of operations. But according to the musical megastar, his cobbled-together performance on the back of a vehicle actually proved to be the gig of a lifetime. Here he explains why...

● **When did you decide you wanted to visit troops in Afghanistan?**

The trip took a couple of years to happen. Initially it was difficult to get the idea past the MoD, although they were helpful in the end.

● **What was your biggest fear when you left home turf?**

I wasn't really that worried about where we were going; I felt like I was always going to be safe. The only bit that concerned me was the landing at Camp Bastion.

● **What were your first impressions when you arrived?**

What I suspected I was going to find was completely different to what I ended up seeing and hearing. I thought the atmosphere would be quite down but what I discovered was people who have trained for years to be there and who wanted to be doing that job. It was inspiring to see, and it was so good wandering around camp and meeting people. We went through our whole life stories together!

● **How did you find the squaddie humour?**

It was fantastic, it really was. But talk about heckling! I'm not a comedian but the crowd was full of them when we played. The troops were shouting things and had banners. It was a great atmosphere, just brilliant.

● **Any difficult moments?**

Visiting the base's memorial. As soon as you stand there you feel as though time has stopped.

● **Did the visit put anything about your own life into proportion?**

Yes, massively. There's not a lot of perspective in my industry. When I was back home having Christmas dinner the guys I met were still out there, serving their country.

● **Was it important to involve the troops in your performance?**

Absolutely. When we realised that the Royal Artillery Band was going to be there at the same time as us, I knew we'd have a great show. The excitement towards the performance was brilliant.

● **So will your career be taking a more serious turn in future then?**

This is the type of thing I love to do, so yes – as long as what I do is centred on music.

● **Will you keep in touch with the band you put together out there?**

I would love to!

● **And finally, how would you react if one of your children said they wanted to serve in the British Army?**

I think personally I want my kids to do something they love. Every single person I met in that camp, no matter what their role, was at the top of their game. People were saying "this is what I was born to do". You can't argue with anyone who feels like that. ■







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Back to school:  
When do you  
have to justify  
taking a course?

## Moving moan

I HAVE entered my last two years of service and have completed 23 years in uniform.

I asked for my final tour of duty in Newcastle and have started my resettlement plans so I have a few queries regarding housing policy.

I'd like to know why is it that when personnel leave the Army there is no funding to help them with their house move even though their first transfer into military quarters was undertaken with no financial help whatsoever.

Also, why is it you can only use the long service advance of pay (LSAP) to buy a property but not for renting a dwelling when you might still need to buy items such as a cooker and carpets.

Is there any way I can obtain a lump sum to enable my family to move to a house that I have been recently offered by the local council?

We have asked various organisations including The Royal British Legion and my regimental association only to be told there is no financial help available as I'm still serving. – Name and address supplied.

**Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds:** It is tri-Service policy that personnel have to fund their first and last moves and this remains the case.

However, an exception is made for those Servicemen and women who have completed a commission or engagement that entitles them to an immediate pension or early departure payment.

Those meeting the criteria are able to take advantage of the final tour of duty (FTOD) provision that allows them to claim disturbance allowance and movement of personal effects at public expense to settle themselves and/or their immediate family in a selected place of residence during their final tour of duty.

Eligibility for FTOD is in JSP 752 and personnel intending to claim this allowance must ensure they have submitted an F024 (preference for FTOD location) on the JPA system during their penultimate tour and updated their preferences accordingly.

I understand that you have applied for this allowance and intend to use it for a final move to Newcastle.

The LSAP is specifically for those undertaking house purchases.

The aim is to assist eligible personnel to enter the UK property market by advancing an interest-free sum of money from their pay (up to £8,500) to be used for buying a house.

For more information log on to [www.moneyforce.org.uk](http://www.moneyforce.org.uk)

## Course catastrophe

I AM a mechanic in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers with 13 years' experience and I've been trying to obtain enhanced learning credits to take a course.

After applying through my Army education centre I was asked to justify why I wanted these skills and how it would benefit the Service.

I was also asked to provide a covering letter endorsing my application from my commanding officer.

However, a colleague who has completed a project management class was not asked for any of these.

Regardless of the course's type and content, why should justification be sought if it is fully approved?

Any such tuition should be funded because it will increase the soldier's morale, knowledge, experience and self-confidence and that must be of benefit to the Army.

For example, a qualified plumber among us would have been a godsend at my last

command post on Op Herrick.

The Service is willing to pay £2,000 to individuals to improve themselves and gain civilian trade skills.

That's why, to be eligible for the credit, a relatively advanced level 3 national vocational qualification is required at the completion of the course.

Yet although it is widely known the Army wants and needs more civilian-qualified Reserve soldiers, it seems to be less happy to give Regular soldiers the time and funding to gain more civilian qualifications, which in my eyes appears to be short-sighted and puts them at a disadvantage with their careers. – Name and address supplied.

**Col Andrew King, AD Educational Operations, replies:** The Army does encourage its serving personnel to gain civilian qualifications.

This process is supported through the accreditation of military training and through the learning credits scheme of which the enhanced learning credit is an important part.

At the higher rate (eight years of service after registration) soldiers can claim up to £6,000 from the Army towards their academic or vocational studies in a broad range of topics.

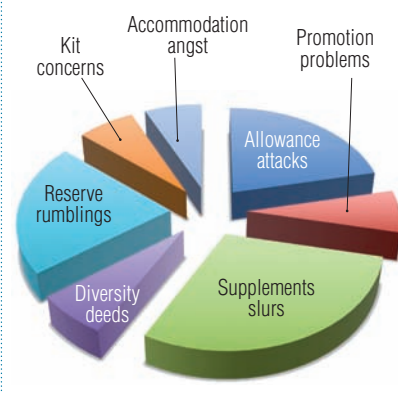
Current policy (JSP 898, part 4, chapter 3) requires that the course of study must be a minimum of level 3 (A level) and benefit both the soldier and the military.

The course must not duplicate Army training; if personnel require a skill to do their job then the Service will provide it.

A letter from a soldier's chain of command is necessary so that you can be released from duties to attend courses or periods of residential study.

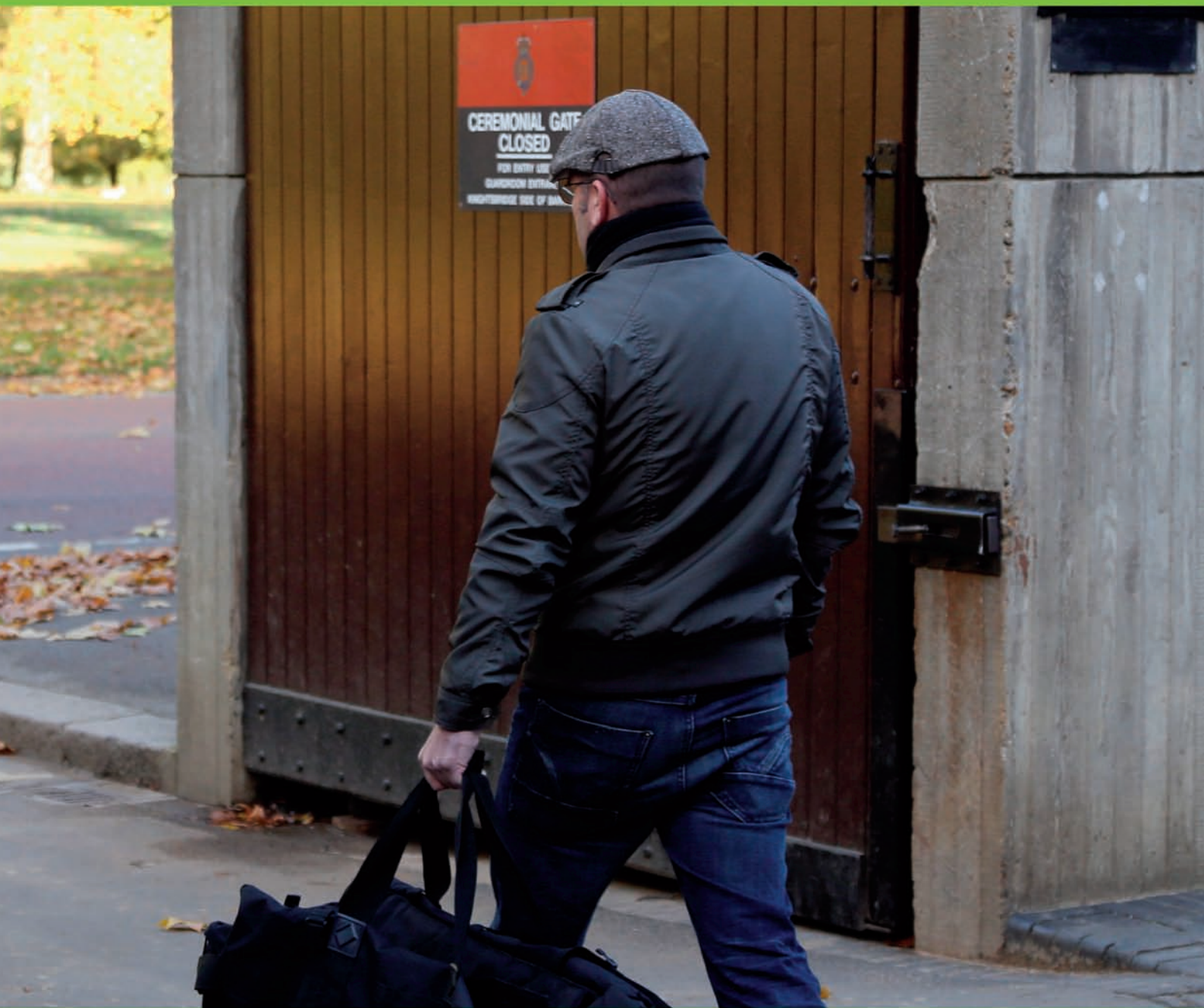
### Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...





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# 'New pension is not what I signed up for'

**H**AVING read much over the last few months on proposed pension changes to be implemented in 2015, I have some significant concerns that have yet to be addressed.

On enlisting I agreed to a set of terms and conditions which included constraints such as a minimum period of service (three years when I joined, but has increased since) and a substantial notice period of 12 months.

A military career is unique in that no other organisation demands such rigid conditions nor exposes their employees to such high levels of physical risk.

I accepted this on the basis that I would have the opportunity to enjoy a long-term career and receive a full pension at the end of my service.

As an officer commissioned from the ranks, I have served as long as I have on the basis that I will be eligible to leave after 16 years reckonable service (age 37 in my case as I remained part of Armed Forces pension scheme 75) with an immediate pension and gratuity.

Although I acknowledge that plans have yet to be finalised, it now appears that the value and age at which I can receive my pension and gratuity are in jeopardy of changing for the worse.

Surely this would be a breach of my employment contract with the MoD?

Am I now being held hostage for longer service just so that I can receive the pension I have worked so hard to earn?

If I do not agree to the proposed changes the only recourse I have is to resign, sacrificing all the benefits I have accrued over the years.

I find this reprehensible.

Army personnel should be permitted to serve out on their current terms and conditions of service or, at the very least, be given the option to leave with a representative portion of their accrued pension at the point where pension changes are introduced. – [Name and address supplied](#).

**Brig John Donnelly, DSP(A), replies:** The Hutton report recommended fundamental change in order to ensure that our pension schemes remain affordable, sustainable and fair to both recipients and the UK taxpayer alike.

In common with all other public sector initiatives, the Armed Forces are changing their pension arrangements.

While transitional protection has been funded by the government for those closest to retirement, most soldiers will be automatically transferred to the new system in 2015.

While this is a change in your terms and conditions of service, it is legal and, if one considers that there will be some personnel serving for up to 40 years after the introduction of the new scheme, it is



also reasonable.

To introduce the revised allowance for new joiners only would not deliver the affordability that is critical to the long-term sustainability of the Forces pension.

The new scheme will recognise the unique requirements of military service; we have retained the early departure payment and have secured a highly competitive accrual rate.

Most importantly, personnel will retain their accrued rights to pension benefits earned under their current scheme and will see no change in when they are entitled to draw them.

This was announced in February last year in [2012DIN01-063](#) and covered during the consultation roadshow that ran from March to May.

The Army has produced a video

covering accrued rights and the central messages have been reiterated in several other documents.

To recap, accrual in your current scheme (AFPS 75) will stop when you move to the new pension arrangement in 2015, but the service required to trigger the option of leaving with immediate benefits is unaffected.

For example, if you are a major with 15 years' reckonable service in 2015, you will still be eligible for an immediate pension (IP) when you have completed your 16th year.

If you choose to leave at that point you will receive 15/16ths of a major's IP under AFPS 75, with a year of deferred benefits under the new pension.

Significantly, if you continue to serve and promote further, your accrued rights will be in your final rank, not the rank you held in 2015.

Details on accrued rights and on the new pension itself are widely available on the internet and intranet and through your unit's administrative staff.

We have secured a good deal on the new pension – in September 2012 *Pathfinder Magazine* stated that it was "100 per cent sure the scheme on offer was as good as the Armed Forces could have hoped for".

Ultimately, it is a personal choice to remain with the Army or leave but I urge you to do proper research before arriving at your decision as the new arrangement will be better than almost any other pension scheme outside the Service.

## Service medal mix-up

I AM confused about the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal 2 criteria, which I believe is 720 days (or four tours).

I have been informed by personnel staff that rest and recuperation does not count towards this.

I know there will be a lot of Servicemen and women on their fourth tour of duty who, like myself, thought that four deployments would have been enough (in my case one in Iraq and three in Afghanistan).

This means that now I will have to start a fifth tour to qualify.

Is this correct? – [Name and address supplied](#).

**Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, responds:** The Accumulated Campaign Service Medal requires 720 days of operational service to qualify. Rest and recuperation leave does not count so, dependent on tour lengths, four operational deployments that included these periods may indeed leave you short of the qualifying period.





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# Reserves 'robbed' of allowance

**R**EGARDING Reservists and longer separation allowance (LSA), I have a complaint about the conditions set out in JSP 752 and sections of the Reserve Forces Act.

Having been a Reservist for more than 15 years and mobilised twice, I have accrued a number of LSA days.

When I passed through the Reinforcements Training and Mobilisation Centre I was informed that I should have accrued more for all my previous qualifying periods with the Reserves.

When JPA was introduced these were not accounted for properly so what do I do now?

In addition, I am now on an exercise with Regular soldiers for six weeks and, according to the DIN that relates to the serial, LSA is permitted but JSP 752 and section 27 of the Act states I am not entitled to LSA as a Reservist.

Does this mean it is ruled out for all Reservists unless mobilised?

If this is correct it is incredibly unfair. Regular soldiers I'm with are entitled to LSA while, as a Reservist, I'm not.

Why am I not permitted to claim this allowance for this exercise? And can I have some clarification as to if and when non-mobilised Reservists would qualify.

As the Army Reserve develops and becomes more integrated with the Regulars, we will be expected to commit more than the odd weekend and two-week annual training camp.

We are already fully committed to day jobs and we have to devote ourselves to a role within the Service at a daily rate of pay which simply would not be accepted in civilian employment.

Regular soldiers are already receiving a higher daily rate of pay due to the X factor

that recognises the special conditions of service.

I believe Reservists deserve their own X factor payment as they have to deal with civilian and military employment.

The bounty scheme is a financial reward and incentive for a Reservist's dedication, but Regular soldiers also receive their own commitment bonus.

Surely it is time that the pay and allowances of Reservists were fairly matched to that of their Regular counterparts in order to create the feeling that we are all equal in this developing Army. – Sgt James Bell, 3 Royal Welsh.

**Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), replies:** LSA exists primarily to compensate for periods of involuntary separation.

Training conducted under this Act is classed as voluntary training other duties (VTOD) and as such you are not entitled to this allowance.

However, mobilisation renders Reservists involuntarily separated and so you are entitled to LSA for the periods of your mobilisation.

If you feel you have not been correctly paid for these periods then you can claim up to six years after the dates concerned (see JSP 752, 01.0119).



Integrated Army: Reserves commit to more than the odd weekend

I can also confirm that the Army Reserve does receive an X factor which is set at five per cent of pay.

The Armed Forces pay review body recommends the level of X factor and this is set at a lower level than for Regulars because Reserves do not have to endure many of their disadvantages, such as routine separation from families.

You are absolutely right that with the increased use of Reserves alongside Regulars in a future integrated Force we need to ensure fairness.

New work is underway to develop Reserve terms and conditions of service.

It is our firm intention to ensure you receive entitlements that are fair and match any increased commitment.

## Why Irish eyes are not smiling

I AM from Northern Ireland and in my first posting in York.

When I joined up I was told I would be given travel warrants to get home.

Subsequently, I was informed that these were in danger of being cut so I was prepared for when this did happen.

However, I am confused by the fact that soldiers based in Northern Ireland receive 12 warrants per year to travel back to mainland UK.

My chain of command has told me that, "it's one of those things".

How can the Army justify not giving Northern Irish soldiers warrants for exactly the same journey? – Name and address supplied.

**Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A) responds:** Until 2011 the get you home (early years) allowance enabled junior members of

the Service (within three years of joining on a full-time Regular engagement and assigned in the UK) up to four return journeys per year.

Following the Strategic Defence and Security Review, eligibility was restricted to those below the age of 18 for assignments in the UK or, if over that age, those taking phase one training.

Service in Northern Ireland, be it accompanied or unaccompanied, subjects personnel to a unique range of security threats affecting off-duty lifestyle. This is not the case on the UK mainland and so Northern Ireland is treated as a separate theatre for allowance purposes.

There are a number of provisions to compensate for and alleviate those constraints. One of these, Northern Ireland journeys (NIJ), is to give a



Worth paying for? Who wouldn't want to get back to scenery like this?

degree of respite by providing travel to the UK mainland.

Single and unaccompanied personnel get up to 12 return journeys per year and accompanied personnel are entitled to three family return trips in the same period. The point is that NIJ is not to do with helping with the cost of travel home but is in recognition of the unique pressures of serving in that region.



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# 'Why is our new waterproof a damp squib?'

I'M SURE the new multi-terrain pattern waterproof has been subjected to extensive and rigorous testing to ensure it is suitable for operational use by troops.

I do wonder, though, if the designers ever anticipated the need to stow or remove items from trouser pockets or the benefit of having a waterproof jacket with map and side pockets?

I was also surprised to see that the garment was lacking a hood – perhaps the test conditions didn't involve rain that landed on the wearer's head!

I do appreciate that within my air-conditioned ivory tower at Permanent Joint Headquarters I may simply have become too accustomed to the easy life and that "real" soldiers are far more robust than I am but will they really be happy to have water dripping down the back of their necks?

Has the cheapest product from the lowest bidder been purchased in order to meet a short-term requirement?

I'm quite certain that specialist kit suppliers will continue to bridge the gap by offering gear that's fit for purpose, thereby (yet again) passing the burden of getting appropriate equipment onto the individual rather than the system.

I shall retain my issued waterproofs for those rare occasions when a light summer shower necessitates a quick covering and my beret can provide sufficient protection for my head from the precipitation. – WO2 Tobias Woolfitt, Int Corps.

**Maj (Retd) Allan Law, SO2 Mat Sp, responds:** The original statement of user requirement was for a lightweight waterproof suit that could be carried in a pocket or pouch when on operations or field training and worn comfortably with a

helmet. Therefore, the inclusion of a hood was not specified.

The design and specifications were not changed as a cost-saving measure, nor were the items manufactured to a price but to enable the wearing of a helmet and body armour and reduce the weight burden for the user.

The lightweight waterproofs were initially designed for occasional use and so that patrollers could wear the jacket under body armour.

This was later changed to an over-armour jacket after extensive tests by the Infantry Trials and Development Unit.

Pockets were not specified as this increased bulk and weight and combat smock pockets could be accessed by

undoing the main jacket zip.

Similarly, the trousers now have the additional feature of full-length two-way zips which give access to combat trouser pockets and can be quickly removed without muddying the insides of the trouser legs.

All clothing has a product development process and observations on quality, size, defects or other suggestions for improvements are actively encouraged.

These can be made by submitting the MoD form 1197 direct to the defence clothing team.

Although this form is primarily used to report kit defects it can also be used for user suggestions in respect of item design and quality.



**Up to the job?** There are times when you just know you're going to need a hood...

## Let down by the 'poor' display of promotion results

I SERVE with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and our promotion results, when displayed online, used to provide a tab showing name, number, trade group and unit.

Recently the trade group tab has been removed and this has created a massive list of names who, for all we know, could come from just one category.

That's a retrograde step in my opinion because it's really useful to know how many people in each sector have been promoted.

For example, if 30 soldiers in my trade were successful last year and this time around that figure dropped to, say, five it gives me a strong indication of my prospects for promotion and I can plan my future accordingly.

Also, we were told there would be an online page confirming the names of those being considered by the promotion board but I can't find one.

I was hoping to be promoted after four

years' hard work in my current role but without knowing more about my promotion prospects I feel I could be in dead man's shoes and I know that others feel the same way. – Name and address supplied.

**Maj Rob Taylor, SO2 REME Soldiers, Army Personnel Centre, responds:** We do not currently include a soldier's main trade for pay in the promotion results that are posted. As such, your situation is not unique.

This is currently being reviewed and main trade for pay details may be included in future results.

The corps is allocated a promotion quota into a respective rank annually by the Directorate of Manning based on current staffing figures and anticipated inflow and outflow (promotions out of that rank, notice to terminate, transfers, etc).

Almost invariably, every eligible REME trade group will feature on a respective

rank's promotion results.

Only the numbers selected will fluctuate depending on the current staff levels and the number of candidates in a trade group graded above the promotion quality line.

The list of potential candidates is usually disseminated six weeks ahead of the promotion board.

Their details should be published online with the intention of updating them a week before the board sits.

Due to an ongoing transition to a new online system this is proving impractical but it will resume once the new web pages are fully functional.

With respect to your personal prospects, I recommend that you complete a soldier career review and request an interview during the REME Soldiers roadshow.

You could also obtain a back brief from your respective chain of command to get an idea of your performance at the promotion board.



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**The Petrofac Forces transition programme** is a partnership between industry, the MoD and training providers to teach qualified and experienced ex-Forces personnel to become offshore technicians and project engineers. For further information contact [nathaniel.mumford@petrofac.com](mailto:nathaniel.mumford@petrofac.com)

**The Logistics Guild** works with the British Army and, in particular, the Royal Logistic Corps helping ex-military personnel find work within the civilian logistics industry. For more information contact Carly O'Donoghue via [carly.odonoghue@logisticsguild.com](mailto:carly.odonoghue@logisticsguild.com)

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## COMPETITIONS

**Spine line winners:** Cpl Simon Haggerty, BFPO 16; James Fisher, Colwyn Bay; C Duckworth, Chicksands.

**Alpha Papa DVD:** LCpl Steven Wood, BFPO 31; Matthew Parmenter, Aldershot; Robert Crane, Onchan; Capt Stephen Gibbons, Ashby de la Launde; WO2 Garry Cron, BFPO 39.

## DIARY

**February 14: The Royal Artillery Gold Cup.** The day will start at 1030 with a parade by members of The King's Troop and 1st Regiment RHA along Esher High Street to Sandown Park Racecourse. To celebrate Valentine's Day, racegoers are being given the opportunity to propose on the winner's podium. Visit [www.sandown.co.uk](http://www.sandown.co.uk) for details.

**February 14: Brighton Half Marathon.** The only way to gain entry to this event now is by taking a guaranteed charity place. Blind Veterans UK has a limited number of positions which require a non-refundable registration fee of £30 and a minimum sponsorship pledge of £250. To apply for a place visit [www.blindveterans.org.uk](http://www.blindveterans.org.uk)

**March 13: Boarding Schools' Fair 2014.** The chance to see and talk to more than 70 independent schools from across the country at the Joint Services Command and Staff

College, Shrivenham from 1800-2030. For details contact [tdrake.serco@defenceacademy.mod.uk](mailto:tdrake.serco@defenceacademy.mod.uk) or [sduffy.serco@defenceacademy.mod.uk](mailto:sduffy.serco@defenceacademy.mod.uk)

**Until July 2014:** IWM London is temporarily closed and will reopen in summer 2014 with new First World War galleries to mark the 100-year anniversary of the start of the conflict. The IWM London's research room will remain open during the temporary closure. For more information visit [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

**Until further notice:** Chelsea Pensioners' wartime stories are being captured in a new online collaboration between the National Army Museum and the Royal Hospital Chelsea. **The Old and the Bold** is an audiovisual history project and videos are available to view by visiting [www.nam.ac.uk](http://www.nam.ac.uk)



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

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**Armed Forces Muslim Association:** Chaplain 0207 414 3252; [www.afma.org.uk](http://www.afma.org.uk)

**Armed Forces Humanist Association:** [www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk](http://www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk)

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

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

**Army Libraries:** 01252 340094

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

**Army Welfare Service:** 01980 615975; [www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/welfare-support.aspx](http://www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/welfare-support.aspx)

**Blind Veterans UK:** (formerly St Dunstan's) [www.blindveterans.org.uk](http://www.blindveterans.org.uk); 0207 7235021

**British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association:** 0208 590 1124; [www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)

**Career Transition Partnership:** 0207 766 8020

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Service Personnel and Veterans Agency:** 0800 169 2277 (from the UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

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

**Stoll:** (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation) 0207 385 2110; [info@stoll.org.uk](mailto:info@stoll.org.uk); [www.stoll.org.uk](http://www.stoll.org.uk)

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

**The Poppy Factory:** 020 8940 3305 [www.poppyfactory.org](http://www.poppyfactory.org)

**uk4u Thanks!:** 01798 812081; [www.uk4u.org](http://www.uk4u.org)

## INTELLIGENCE

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

**ABN 134/13** New ATAB process

**ABN 133/13** Guidance for NRPS and FTRS

**ABN 132/13** Borona name change – Army basing team

**ABN 131/13** Armed Forces pension calculator upgrade

**DIN 2013DIN01-251:** The Professional Engineering Institution Churchill Medal Award 2013/14

Continued on page 67



# Independent Education

Boarding School Girls & Boys, 5 to 19 years

Ranked by the Daily Telegraph for A level and equivalent qualifications 2013:

Queen Ethelburga's College

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The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's

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For the third year running we have pegged your contribution per child, per term, at £795. Childcare Vouchers also accepted. This now means we rank as one of the most competitively priced schools for Forces in the UK. Over £65m invested in new facilities in the last eight years. Our boarding facilities are the best in Europe. Every bedroom has its own private shower and toilet plus telephone, voice mail, large plasma TV/DVD player with gaming port (on timer), a Sony PS3, fridge, microwave, trouser press, safe and hot drinks facilities. House staff are friendly and caring.



We understand the needs of service families with staff who are married to serving members of the Forces. With years of experience in ensuring our 200+ Forces children settle well, are confident and highly successful. Easy to get to by road, rail and air. We work hard, we play hard. Top of the line academic facilities and resources with an amazing range of out of hours activities. Dedicated, professional, friendly and helpful staff go the "extra mile" to ensure your child is happy and doing well. We have Forces families from all over the UK, not just the north. One new pupil described our Estate as "imagine Hogwarts meets American Campus". Successful CCF contingent. Huge range of sports + £16m new Sports Centre, new 100 station £1m gymnasium health club, + music and drama. Wide range of abilities accepted. A full range of A level and BTEC courses.



Over 98% of our Year 13 students went on to university with majority to the first class Russell Group universities.

Want to see how we are into Sport? [www.SportsVillageQE.org](http://www.SportsVillageQE.org)

"Our son read your prospectus. Wonders will never cease. He soon found the piece about all the things you put in a boarding bedroom including TV and PS3, plus your amazing sports, now he is all smiles!"

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Thorpe Underwood, Yorkshire. Web: [www.QE.org](http://www.QE.org)

Tel: 01423 333 330 Email: [info@QE.org](mailto:info@QE.org)

Ranking of all Independent Schools offering day and boarding from the 2013 Daily Telegraph chart, for % A\*/A A level and equivalent qualifications. (NR = Not ranked, • Means last year's results as this year's not available.)

1	94%	Cardiff 6th Form Coll	75	45%	Truro School
2	86%	Wycombe Abbey	76	45%	Kent College
3	81%	St Swithun's School	77	45%	St Leonards
4	80%	QE College	78	45%	Harrogate Ladies'
5	79%	Concord College	NR	45%	Fyling Hall School
6	74%	Brighton College	79	44%	ACS Cobham School
7	72%	St Mary's Ascot	80	44%	Christ College
8	71%	Badminton School	81	44%	Mill Hill School
9	71%	Benenden School	82	43%	St Bees School
10	71%	St Catherine's	83	43%	Ampleforth College
11	71%	Wellington College	84	43%	Windermere School
12	68%	Faculty of QE	85	43%	The Leys School
13	68%	St Mary's Calne	86	42%	St Mary's Shftbury
14	68%	Canford School	87	42%	Stonyhurst College
15	67%	Hurtwood House	88	41%	King William's Coll
16	67%	Oundle School	89	41%	New Hall School
17	66%	Dulwich College	90	41%	Wellington School
18	65%	St Clare's	91	41%	Burgess Hill Girls
19	64%	Headington School	92	41%	King's School
20	64%	Malvern St James	93	41%	Royal Dungannon
21	63%	Godolphin School	94	41%	Wells Cathedral S
22	62%	Caterham School	95	40%	Queen's College
23	62%	Moreton Hall	96	40%	Glenalmond College
24	61%	Bromsgrove School	97	40%	St Margaret's Bushey
25	61%	Royal High Sch Bath	98	39%	St Edmund's College
26	60%	Ruthin School	99	38%	Purcell School of Music
27	60%	St Michael's School	100	38%	Bruton School for Girls
28	59%	King's School	101	38%	Stamford School
29	58%	Marlborough College	102	38%	Wrekin College
30	58%	d'Overbroeck's Coll	103	38%	Victoria College
31	57%	St Leonards-Mayfield	104	38%	Leighton Park School
32	57%	City of Ldn Freemans	105	37%	Welbeck College
33	56%	Talbot Heath School	106	37%	Tring Park School
34	56%	Haileybury	107	37%	St James Senior Boys'
35	56%	Queenswood	108	35%	Ratcliffe College
36	56%	St Peter's School	109	35%	Rossall School
37	55%	Warwick School	110	35%	Kirkham Grammar
38	55%	Woldingham School	111	35%	Lord Wandsworth Coll
39	55%	Queen Margaret's	112	35%	Ashville College
40	54%	Rugby School	113	34%	Plymouth College
41	54%	Roedean School	114	34%	St Edmund's Cantbury
42	54%	Bedford School	115	34%	St Joseph's College
43	54%	Uppingham School	116	34%	Pocklington School
44	54%	Bishop's Stortford	117	34%	Stamford High School
45	53%	Lancing College	118	33%	The King's School Ely
46	53%	Haberdasher Girls	119	33%	Bede's Senior School
47	53%	Oakham School	120	33%	Sutton Valence School
48	53%	Gresham's School	121	33%	Langley School
49	53%	St Francis' College	122	32%	Battle Abbey School
50	52%	St Teresa's, Eff	123	31%	Felsted School
51	52%	Brentwood School	124	31%	Kelly College
52	52%	Surbiton High School	125	31%	Ackworth School
53	51%	St Mary's Cambridge	126	30%	Millfield School
54	51%	Loughborough Gram	127	30%	The Oratory School
55	51%	Merchiston Castle	128	30%	Sedbergh School
56	50%	Bootham School	129	29%	Farringtons School
57	50%	Dauntsey's School	130	28%	Shebbear College
58	50%	Reed's School	131	28%	Clayesmore School
59	50%	Marymount School	132	28%	Box Hill School
60	50%	Kingswood School	NR	28%	Giggleswick
61	49%	Ipswich School	NR	28%	Polam
62	49%	Merchant Taylors B	133	26%	Tettenhall College
63	49%	Prior Park College	134	25%	St John's College
64	48%	Tudor Hall School	135	25%	Woodhouse Grove
65	48%	Downside School	136	24%	Sibford School
66	48%	St John's School	137	24%	Culford School
67	47%	Mount School (York)	138	24%	Friends' School
68	46%	Chigwell School	139	24%	Lincoln Minster School
69	46%	Chetham's Music	140	24%	Hampshire Collegiate
70	46%	Sidcot School	141	23%	LVS Ascot
71	46%	Kimbolton School	142	22%	Seaford College
72	46%	Bradfield College	NR•	21%	Barnard Castle
73	46%	Cheltenham College	143	20%	Trinity School
74	46%	Bury Grammar Girls	144	18%	The Royal Ballet School
			145	18%	Fulneck School
			NR•	16%	Read School Drax



**DIN 2013DIN01-250:** Direct appointee scheme

**DIN 2013DIN01-249:** Upgraded online pension calculator now available to Military Provost Guard Service

**DIN 2013DIN01-248:** Fuel subsidy scheme charges for UK SFA – entitlement and reconciliation

**DIN 2013DIN01-247:** Chain of command guide regarding full-time Reserve service personnel affected by restructuring

**DIN 2013DIN03-026:** DFTS secure managed interface gateway policy

**DIN 2013DIN04-214:** Declaration of obsolete – cartridge distraction Mk .245 Mod 0

**DIN 2013DIN04-212:** Publication of *Sea Survival Equipment Log* foreword, issue 11 (December 2013)

**DIN 2013DIN04-211:** Equipment tables, scales and schedules

**DIN 2013DIN04-210:** Declaration of confirmed out-of-service date for the Pistol Pyrotechnic, 1 Inch, No 1, Mk 5; DMC PYRO, NSN 1095-99-961-8490

**DIN 2013DIN05-048:** Army basing team

**DIN 2013DIN05-047:** The detachment of the airborne equipment team from Hercules and TriStar project team and merger with the C17 and command support project team

**DIN 2013DIN06-037:** Defence Annual Road Safety Awards 2013/14

**DIN 2013DIN07-181:** Space operations foundation course

**DIN 2013DIN07-179:** Mandated course trained personnel within an Army unit

**DIN 2013DIN07-177:** DAEMS specialist training

**DIN 2013DIN07-176:** Key logistics messages

**DIN 2013DIN07-175:** Training by manufacturer or civilian – submissions for financial year 2015/16

**DIN 2013DIN07-174:** Update of defence training support manuals

**DIN 2013DIN07-172:** Joint operations planning course – financial year 2014/15

**DIB66/13:** Future Reserves 2020: progress report

**DIB65/13:** Publication of the Armed Forces Covenant annual report

**DIB64/13:** Principle civil service pension scheme member contribution increases from April 2014

**DIB63/13:** Chancellor's Autumn Statement – implications for MoD

**DIB62/13:** DE&S materiel strategy – next steps

**DIB61/13:** Lord Levene's second annual review of defence reform

**DIB60/13:** PUS writes to staff about the MoD Your Say 2013 results



#### 42 Sqn AMF(L) 1st Gulf War and Norway

**Accident reunion.** To coincide with the annual reunion this event will take place on July 5, 2014 at The Kings Arms, Amesbury, Wiltshire. Visit the 42 Sqn AMF(L) Facebook page for further details.

**P (Parachute) Troop, 7 Para RHA reunion** at the Elephant and Castle, North Camp, Farnborough on Airborne Forces Weekend, Saturday, July 5, 2014, to mark 30 years since the formation of P Troop. All ex-members and friends welcome. For further information contact Mark Flannigan via [mark.flannigan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mark.flannigan@yahoo.co.uk)

**7th Intake AAC ACC 40th Anniversary reunion dinner.** To celebrate the 40th anniversary of members of the 7th Intake joining the AAC ACC, a dinner will be held on August 2 in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire. Any permanent staff serving at the AAC at the time are also invited to attend. For further details contact Stephen Carroll via [stephencarroll441@btinternet.com](mailto:stephencarroll441@btinternet.com)



**23 Pioneer Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps** is to disband in late 2014 as part of the defence review. Anyone who has donated property to the regiment or any Royal Pioneer Corps unit and wishes to have the item returned please contact OC 144 Sqn, 23 Pnr Regt RLC, St David's Barracks, Graven Hill, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6HF or email [23pnr-144-oc@mod.uk](mailto:23pnr-144-oc@mod.uk)

**Traveleyes**, an organisation that allows blind people to travel the world independent of their families, is looking for serving personnel to act as the "eyes" during a First World War remembrance tour in Belgium during April. Volunteers will enjoy a reduced rate of travel. For more details call 0844 8040221 or email [info@traveleyes-international.com](mailto:info@traveleyes-international.com)

Phillippe Clerbout has found identity discs marked **R Lawson, S.R. 41724** and **LCpl Arthur of the 2/7 Sherwood Foresters, partial number 268**, and would like to return them to their families. Anyone who can assist is asked to contact [morillonsouchet@aol.com](mailto:morillonsouchet@aol.com)

Tony Dixey is trying to trace members of the intake **86/18 RAC at Cambria Barracks, Catterick** with a view to holding a reunion. Anyone interested should contact him via [stores@robertpearson.co.uk](mailto:stores@robertpearson.co.uk)

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Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by February 28, 2014.

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

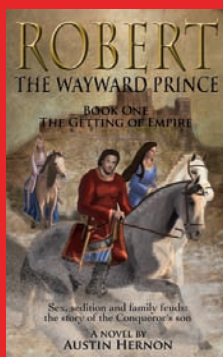
First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win £100; the second and third will receive £25 gift vouchers. The

results will be announced in the April issue. Usual rules apply.

**December's winner:** First correct entry drawn at random was Sue Manning, Army Reserve Centre, Hebburn. **Runners up:** Sam Balfre, Shrivenham, Wiltshire and Pte J Lee, Southwick Park, Hampshire.







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# REVIEWS

A man with dark hair and a goatee is sitting and playing a semi-hollow body electric guitar. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt under a dark vest and blue jeans. He has a watch on his left wrist and a ring on his right hand. The background is dark and textured.

## HIGH FLIERS

### FEBRUARY'S FINEST

P76 MOVIES **MANDELA MASTERPIECE**

P78 MUSIC **BOSS HITS TOP FORM**

P80 BOOKS **A STUDY OF EVIL**

P82 TOP GEAR **WINTER WARMERS**

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# MOVIES



PICK OF THE MONTH: MANDELA: LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

## CURTAIN CALL

NELSON MANDELA BIOPIC CEMENTS  
SOUTH AFRICAN'S HERO STATUS



Review: Sarah Goldthorpe

**I**F THERE is one figure to be feared by film directors when immortalising 21st century icons on screen, it is surely that of Nelson Mandela.

The first black president of South Africa, who spent 27 years incarcerated for trying to overthrow a pro-apartheid government, endured more battles during his 95 years than any movie could capture.

This was confirmed at the end of 2013 when the former leader died and, for once, the world's 24-hour news channels had more than enough subject matter to fill their programmes with.

The burden of portraying such a God-like figure does not appear to have hampered director Justin Chadwick, however.

His two-and-a-half hour epic, skilfully written by William Nicholson and based on Mandela's 600-page memoir, is both credible and moving.

In the lead role, English actor Idris Elba proves to be truly unforgettable.

His physical presence lends weight – literally – to the growing political tensions at the start of the movie and is surpassed only by Naomie Harris's portrayal of Winnie Mandela.

"I just thought Winnie was Nelson's wife. I had no idea," the actress recently revealed about her role.

And the former Bond girl's tireless efforts to understand this complex character clearly paid off.

Her sensitive portrayal allows the audience to see how years of intimidation transformed Winnie from a ballys young woman into an angry and potentially dangerous leader.

But despite its quality cast, the quick-paced *Mandela: Long Walk To Freedom* turns out to be something of an oxymoron.

The film races through key events at speed and this can be frustrating at times.

The depiction of Mandela's first marriage is rapid to say the least – over and done with before the audience has had chance to blink.

Similarly, the scenes showing a young Mandela's upbringing within his Xosa tribe are afforded little time or sentimentality as his rise towards a revolutionary movement beckons.

But if nothing else, the pace of all this brings home exactly how much this remarkable person crammed into his lifetime – despite being incarcerated for more than a quarter of his years.

One of the most interesting aspects of the film is its preoccupation with the former South African leader's family and all that they sacrificed in order to help change the world – a hardship that is certainly understood by military personnel.

He goes to prison leaving behind a baby girl who he doesn't see again until she turns 16 and is allowed to visit him.

Thankfully though, Chadwick ensures the adaptation pays due respect to those who have always surrounded Mandela – in jail, on the streets of South Africa and across the world.

The use of real-life footage from the Nelson Mandela concert and other key events during the 1980s could so easily have confused the film but they simply cement its success as a fantastic tribute to what this man achieved.

No fight can be won by a single person. It relies on the support of those around them. Few are likely to understand that better than serving soldiers. ■

**VERDICT:** A remarkable film about a remarkable man. You won't forget this in a hurry ★★★★★



**GRAVITY** out now in cinemas

THE story of a routine space station maintenance mission gone horrifically wrong. **Sandra Bullock** and **George Clooney** are cut adrift, floating in space with just the stars for company. The plot is simple: can they get home? There's a token gesture to some kind of backstory but it's a small side dish to a huge platter of visual treats and heart-stopping action. This isn't a movie, it's a cinema event. Treat yourself.

**Dean Nash, civvy**

**VERDICT:** A cinematic masterpiece that is well worth a watch ★★★★★



**TRAVELLER** out now

THE 1970s pin-up **David Essex** joins forces with his son **Billy Cook** in this portrayal of traveller life. Cook plays a so-called "half-breed" gypsy whose dad was a traveller but his mother was not and as a result he struggles with his identity. There is bare-knuckled boxing, cock-fighting and clashes with the police and as such the film is not groundbreaking. However, Essex is on form and his boy shows star quality.

**Becky Clark, Soldier**

**VERDICT:** An interesting but non-revelatory gypsy tale ★★★★★



**BOUNTY KILLER** out now

THANKFULLY this low-budget feature doesn't take itself too seriously as scantily clad Mary Death (**Christian Pitre**) sprays bullets as the heroine. Borrowing heavily from *Mad Max*, the post-apocalyptic frolic sees bounty hunters dispatched by the government to wipe out the corporate bosses who have taken control of the world. It is pure, unadulterated cheese on screen and as such is a guilty pleasure.

**Tom Jackson, civvy**

**VERDICT:** Fans of buxom babes slaying bad guys will be happy ★★★★★



**12 YEARS A SLAVE** out now in cinemas

SUMMING up a film of this quality in a few sentences is no easy task – a bit like watching the movie itself. Completely unflinching in its telling of the true story of Solomon Northup, a freeman sold into slavery, it's gut-wrenchingly painful viewing. A stellar cast, beautiful soundtrack and high degree of realism make it one of the most haunting and unforgettable films. The hype is entirely justified. Go and see it.

**Jo Hall, civvy**

**VERDICT:** Will be on many shortlists as one of the best films ★★★★★



**PRISONERS** out now

THIS disturbing crime thriller is nearly three hours long and it keeps you in suspense throughout. **Hugh Jackman** and **Jake Gyllenhaal** star in what is a tale of two girls who are abducted in broad daylight and the agonising hunt to find them. Jackman plays a traumatised father and Gyllenhaal is in charge of the search as detective Loki and both are excellent. It's a tough film to watch but worth the effort.

**Joe Clapson, Soldier**

**VERDICT:** Gripping and full of moral questions ★★★★★



**WIN... BLOOD GLACIER**

CRAZED cross-bred beasts fill the screen in this hybrid of horror and poorly-executed science. Directed by **Marvin Kren** the movie is set in the German Alps where wildlife feed on a glacier which is oozing blood, transforming them into monstrous mutations. *Soldier* has teamed up with Studio Canal to offer a copy of the DVD to five lucky readers. To be in with a chance of winning, tell us the name of Kren's 2010 debut film. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Closing date: February 28**



# MUSIC



PICK OF THE MONTH: HIGH HOPES

## **THE MAGIC OF MORELLO**

COLLABORATOR INSPIRES  
BACK CATALOGUE MASTERPIECE



Review: Richard Long

**A**ERICAN rockers Rage Against The Machine achieved notoriety as the band that halted the *X Factor* juggernaut in its quest for yet another Christmas number one in 2009.

Their surprise success stemmed from an internet campaign against the might of Simon Cowell but to dismiss the band as simply being the poster boys for a plastic pop rebellion is doing a disservice to their music.

Tom Morello has been one of the driving forces behind the group's anthology of politically charged anthems and his efforts have certainly been held in high regard, none more so than by Bruce Springsteen.

The Boss invited the guitarist to join him on the Australian leg of last year's world tour and the new arrival found himself playing a pivotal role in Springsteen's 18th studio album – *High Hopes*.

The record is a collection of unreleased tracks, along with re-recordings and cover versions, and Morello's trademark sound is prevalent throughout.

"I was working on a selection of our best material from the past decade when Tom suggested we add the track *High Hopes* to our live set," the singer recalled.

"We worked it up in our Aussie rehearsals and he proceeded to burn the house down with it. We re-cut it mid-tour along with *Just Like Fire Would*, a song from one of my favourite Australian punk bands, The Saints.

"Tom and his guitar became my muse, pushing the rest of the project to another level, so I have to thank him for the inspiration he provided.

"Some of these songs, *American Skin (41 Shots)* and *Ghost of Tom Joad*, will be familiar from our live versions. I felt they were among the best of my writing and deserved a proper studio recording.

"This is music I always felt needed to be released, I believed they all deserved a home and a hearing."

While Springsteen's motive for the album is admirable it almost comes across as a cut-and-paste effort as there is a lack of flow from one track to the next.

But that is perhaps unavoidable given the fact these songs stem from a ten-year timeframe with different inspirations and themes coming to the fore.

Morello's influence is evident from the outset as hints of the customary Rage riffs underpin the superb title track.

*American Skin (41 Shots)* and sombre offering *The Wall*, a track inspired by Springsteen's visit to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, also stand out but it is the reworking of *Ghost of Tom Joad* that steals the show.

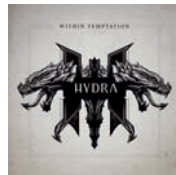
A mainstay of the star's live shows, the song is revitalised by Morello's stunning guitar work and delivers an undeniable high as this somewhat disjointed but impressive album draws to a close. ■

**VERDICT:** A superb repertoire of hidden gems from the past decade ★★★★★

## Hydra by Within Temptation

THE new album from **Within Temptation**

– named after the mythical sea-monster with many heads – certainly lives up to the title; it's a monster featuring operatic vocals, metal guitar, strings and hip-hop. That may sound interesting but, despite the array of musical styles featured, the tracks sound remarkably alike. Listening to this conjured up visions of an epic battle between **Rammstein** and **Katherine Jenkins** in which there's no clear winner. That said, the musicianship and production values are high.



Maj Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)

**VERDICT:** A musical equivalent of a well-polished polyhedral dice ★★★★★

## Post Tropical by James Vincent McMorrow

IRISH singer-songwriter **James Vincent McMorrow**

returns with his second album *Post Tropical*. In a bid to leave the indie-folk flavour of debut offering *Early in the Morning* behind, the 30-year-old has fused acoustic guitars and synthesisers with his impressive vocal range to forge a new direction in his music. The result creates a distinctly laid-back sound and tracks like *Gold* and *Looking Out* serve to underline this. But be warned, his choirboy style is an acquired taste.



Graeme Main, *Soldier*

**VERDICT:** The perfect Sunday morning hangover album ★★★★★

## Don't Wait Down by The Graveltones

IF you want an album full to the brim of wailing guitars and thudding drums then this is for you. Opener *Bang Bang* offers an impressive start but the record suffers from an inferior middle section where the songs unfortunately seem to blend into one another. Then before you know it, you're at the end. *I Am A Liar* is a dull affair but tracks such as *You're No Good* steer things in the right direction before arriving at final number *Six Billion*, which has a touch of **George Harrison** about it.



LCpl Scott Roberts, *Rifles*

**VERDICT:** Think **White Stripes** meets **Audioslave** ★★★★★

## Song Book by Simply Red

ASHAMED as I am to admit it, some of **Simply Red's** earlier offerings are a bit of a guilty pleasure. This compilation gets off to a good start with numbers such as *Money's too Tight (to Mention)* and *Holding Back the Years*. However, the problem with arranging your greatest hits chronologically is that your peaks and troughs are all too obvious. I soon found myself hitting the skip button with increasing frequency and by the 61st song I'd lost interest completely. Less is sometimes more.



Becky Clark, *Soldier*

**VERDICT:** All the old favourites, plus quite a few duds ★★★★★

## BZ20 by Boyzone

THIS album marks the 20th anniversary of **Boyzone**.

Another reason for its release was to pay tribute to the late **Stephen Gately**

so I was expecting a few of their greatest hits to be present. However, this offering quickly becomes the **Ronan Keating** show – in fact I cannot recall hearing the other members sing. After reaching the third track I soon lost interest and it just became background noise. This will no doubt appeal to the band's dedicated fans but newcomers won't be impressed.



Julie Jessup, *civvy*

**VERDICT:** Background music at best but not worth a repeat listen ★★★★★

## Wanderlust by Sophie Ellis-Bextor

SINGER-turned-dancer **Sophie Ellis-Bextor** has cashed in on her *Strictly* fame to release new album *Wanderlust*, an unlikely collaboration with the Mercury-nominated **Ed Harcourt**. The end product offers mixed results as her soft melodies do not always sit comfortably with the musical arrangements. *Love is a Camera* and *Interlude* are light, fluffy and pleasant enough but they are typical of the record as a whole in that it lacks any real energy and backbone. This won't live long in the memory.



Richard Long, *Soldier*

**VERDICT:** A bland offering from *Strictly's* nearly girl ★★★★★

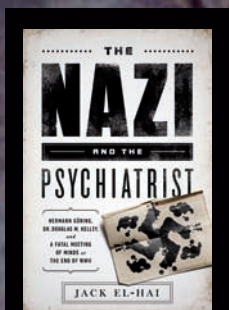


# BOOKS

PICK OF THE MONTH:  
THE NAZI AND THE  
PSYCHIATRIST

## EVIL INFLUENCE

INSIDE THE MINDS OF  
HITLER'S HENCHMEN



Available to buy now,  
priced £18.99



Interview: Becky Clark

**W**HAT makes a person evil? In the aftermath of the Second World War, as the true scale of Nazi atrocities became clear, one man came closer than most to answering that question.

Tasked with establishing whether senior members of Hitler's regime were sane enough to stand trial at Nuremberg, military psychiatrist Dr Douglas M Kelley seized the opportunity to dig deeper and find out whether a psychological disorder could explain the horrors of the Third Reich.

Now his story has been retold in *The Nazi and the Psychiatrist*, a new book by American journalist Jack El-Hai.

According to the author, the "brilliant but difficult" Kelley was every bit as complex as the prisoners he was interviewing.

"He was very ambitious," said Mr El-Hai. "And it was this that led him, when he got to Nuremberg, to take on the challenge of finding out whether there was, in fact, such a thing as the 'Nazi personality'."

The main focus of Kelley's studies was the corpulent Luftwaffe chief, Hermann Goering.

Welcoming the respite from the boredom of solitary confinement, the former Reichsmarschall proved to be a strange combination of ruthless narcissist and amiable family man.

"Kelley was very conflicted in his response to Goering," explained Mr El-Hai.

"He was under no illusions about his unpleasant qualities but at the same time he could be very charming."

"I think Kelley saw a lot of himself in him. They had a similar drive and ambition and both were attention seekers."

"He left thinking they had something in common, which would trouble him later."

The psychiatrist departed Nuremberg with the disconcerting conclusion that, rather than being certifiably mad, the Nazis were no different to most people – a theory that post-war America found hard to accept.

Over time Kelley became dissatisfied with science's failure to provide an answer for inexplicable acts, turning instead to criminology to continue his research.

Meanwhile, Goering had evaded the hangman's noose by swallowing a cyanide capsule, an event which would later take on a gruesome significance.

In 1958 Kelley also poisoned himself with cyanide in front of his horrified family after years spent battling depression.

Had he ultimately paid the price for getting too close to evil? Mr El-Hai thinks that's too simple an explanation.

"Kelley had a darkness in him even before he got to Nuremberg," he commented.

"His work made it worse but I think the stresses and burdens upon him had just become too great."

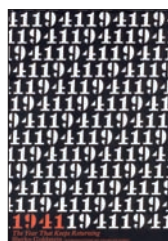
"Unfortunately he refused to seek help because he thought speaking to another psychiatrist would be shameful."

However, reflecting on the cautionary nature of Kelley's tale, he added: "It has made me wonder if journalism isn't similar – he was asking questions and trying to tell a story and that can be dangerous." ■

## 1941

by Slavko Goldstein

RELEASED to great acclaim in Croatia in 2007, this book has now been translated to convey to the wider world the full extent of the Nazi extermination regime in the country. Slavko Goldstein relates how the Germany-backed Ustasha movement killed almost 80 per cent of its Jewish population and systematically targeted anyone else considered "anti-fascist", including, tragically, his father, a leftist bookseller. A vivid account of a less well-known Nazi-inflicted horror.



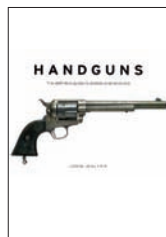
**Maj Euan Mathieson, Yorks**

**VERDICT:** Chilling, insightful and compulsive reading ★★★★★

## Handguns

by John Walter

THIS is an encyclopaedia of the 350 most significant handguns in history, from the iconic Walther pistol from the James Bond franchise to the famous Colt 1911 and Lugers at the turn of the 20th century. Even Dirty Harry's Magnum makes an appearance. Most interesting, though, are the rare weapons – especially those issued to special operatives during the Second World War, which you're unlikely to ever see, even in a museum.



**LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles**

**VERDICT:** All the ultimate handgun geek could want in a book ★★★★★

## Taking Fire

by K O'Rourke and Joe Peters

THIS book takes a humbling look at the work of the US Air Force's para rescue jumpers. It centres on the 1972 mission to extract Capt Lynn Aikman after his bomber was shot down over Vietnam but also expands to tell the story of "PJ" Chuck McGrath and other personnel involved in the recovery. What these crews did, and still do today, to ensure that comrades are not left stranded in enemy territory is nothing short of heroic. Well worth checking out.



**Andy Kay, ex-RS**

**VERDICT:** An excellent account of search and rescue in Vietnam ★★★★★

## Cold

by Ranulph Fiennes

EXPLORING the effect of extreme cold on the human body, Ranulph Fiennes has compiled a gripping collection of historical polar endeavours, fascinating scientific facts and his own experiences to paint a graphic picture of exploration in the frigid temperatures of the ice caps. Drawing on diary entries and accounts by expedition team members, the book presents a self-effacing look at the author's impressive feats of endurance and brings home the true meaning of the word "cold".



**Vicky Clark, civvy**

**VERDICT:** A must-read for adventurous spirits ★★★★★

## Herbert Columbine VC

by C McEntee-Taylor

THE obvious entry point for gaining an understanding of a conflict as complex as the First World War is some sort of family reference or profile of an individual soldier. This is a great example of just such a biographical account. The research is sound and well presented and the narrative easy to follow and linked with facts, maps and photographs. Proceeds from the book are being donated to a fund for a statue of Herbert Columbine in his home town.



**Maj Mike Peters, AAC**

**VERDICT:** A fitting tribute to an extraordinary soldier ★★★★★

## Win... Battle Classics

by Garth Ennis

PUBLISHED between 1975 and 1988, *Battle* remains one of the most important British comics of all time. In this collection, fan and comic writer Garth Ennis presents his favourite stories from the series, including *HMS Nightshade* and *The General Dies at Dawn*. *Soldier* has teamed up with Titan Books to give away three copies. To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us which famous comic featured Dennis the Menace. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk)



**Closing date: February 28**



# TOP GEAR



PICK OF THE MONTH:

## WINTER WARMERS

BEAT MOTHER NATURE AT HER OWN  
GAME WITH THESE TOASTY TOGS



Review: Sgt Mike Owens, RE

**W**ITH the good old British winter proving as unsettled as ever this year, one thing is certain: it pays to be prepared for whatever the weather gods decide to throw at you.

Layering is the way to go when temperatures and conditions fluctuate, so in my bid to stay one step ahead of the game I trialled three items from outdoor clothing supplier Tog24's 2013/14 collection.

I put a combination of base and outer garments through their paces in wet and windswept Britain and in the snowy French Alps and was not disappointed.

The *Heat* thermals (£69.99) provided a toasty base layer in the mountains.

Made of the finest merino wool, the top and bottoms are warm yet very breathable, ideal for when you exert yourself or temperatures rise unexpectedly.

If you do end up getting a bit hot and bothered, the antibacterial properties of the material keep any body odour to a minimum.

Although fairly pricey, a decent set of thermals is worth investing in if they're going to keep you warm and sweat-free.

The next weapon in your arsenal for staving off the cold is the padded *Vidar Tech* jacket (£59.99, pictured left).

Boasting 600 down – the highest grade of real feather down – its special coating allows it to be breathable and showerproof while being extremely light and it is ideal for folding down small into your daysack if the weather changes or you're not sure whether to take an extra layer.

My only criticism of this – and I'm sure most soldiers would agree – was the open pockets but otherwise it's an excellent choice for cold, dry days.

When the rain just won't stop – so most days then – the *Guide 2* jacket (£69.99, pictured far left) is the way forward.

Charcoal grey with red detailing, the kit looks the part and delivers on utility.

Tog's Milatex material is highly waterproof and breathable with heat-sealed seams to ensure no water creeps in.

Again, the lightness of the jacket allows it to be easily stowed away in your Bergen.

I would have preferred a removable or foldaway hood but that's a personal choice.

By far the best thing about the range, however, is its price. For just short of £200 you can own the lot, which sounds steep but is considerably cheaper than some of the other options on the outdoor clothing market.

I've worn my fair share of the better-known brands but the Tog24 range is a welcome addition to my winter wardrobe.

Wear the three layers in combination on the worst days or individually as required.

Well, perhaps don't wear the thermals on their own – at least not in public!

For details visit [www.tog24.com](http://www.tog24.com). *Soldier* readers can get a ten per cent discount by quoting code APEX24 until March 30. ■

**VERDICT:** Top-grade gear that offers great value for money too – a good choice for most cold-weather activities



## STAY SNUG FROM HEAD TO TOE

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### RAB ENDURANCE DOWN MITT

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### TOG24 RUSSIA MILATEX GLOVES

Keep your fingers frost free with these Russia Milatex Storm gloves. The waterproof, windproof and breathable Milatex insert offers great protection from the elements, while the thermal lining provides superb warmth. Other features include an adjustable wrist strap, one-handed cuff adjuster and reinforced palms. Available from [www.tog24.com](http://www.tog24.com), priced £29.99.



### MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT MEN'S IBEX PANT

These lightweight trousers will cope with tough terrain and winter temperatures, perfect for hill walkers or mountaineers. Effective against wind, rain and snow, their MTN lite series stretch fabric also allows for freedom of movement. Pre-shaped knees, an integrated belt and micro-fleece waistband also up the comfort factor. At £80 they aren't cheap but are a good option for dedicated outdoor types. For more details visit [www.cotswoldoutdoor.com](http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com)

### BRIDGEDALE ALL MOUNTAIN SKI SOCK

Even if the rest of you is cosy, having cold feet will ruin your day. These socks are aimed at skiers but will do the job for most winter activities. Thirty-five per cent merino wool gives maximum warmth, while extra padding delivers all-day comfort. Their £18 price tag means they're not the cheapest option on the market but it's money well spent if your toes stay warm. Buy at [www.cotswoldoutdoor.com](http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com)





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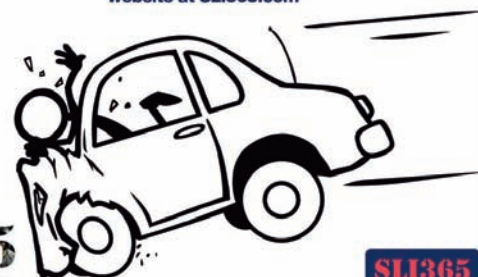
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# SOLDIER SPORT

EDITED BY RICHARD LONG PICTURES BY GRAEME MAIN

Art lovers: From left, LCpl Ben Halpin (AGC (RMP)), Capt Paul Reynolds (REME) and LCpl Calley Tanton are gearing up for a busy year of action in 2014. Read more about the Army's flourishing martial arts scene on page 92...





# PEAK PERFORMER



Pictures: Graeme Main and Richard Heathcote/Getty Images



# Army try machine shines on elevation to rugby's top table

**H**AVING terrorised his Forces rivals with devastating try-scoring bursts, Army rugby union star LCpl Samesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) is making a name for himself with Premiership giants Bath.

The flying winger has become a regular fixture at the Recreation Ground and his sparkling form has helped fire the club to third place in the league as the business end of the season looms.

His promotion to the professional ranks followed a string of superb performances in Service colours that included back-to-back hat-tricks against the Royal Navy as the Army ran riot at Twickenham in 2012 and 2013.

The 26-year-old has already scored six tries for Bath this season but in an exclusive interview with *SoldierSport* he insisted more hard work would be needed to ensure the progress continues.

"It is a case of so far, so good and I'm getting better all the time," he said.

"The skill level of these guys is really up there, particularly in terms of kicking and passing. To get to the same standard I have had to work extra hard in training but there is still room for improvement.

"We go through each match over and over again and the coaches always talk about areas we can enhance.

"As a team we are doing well. We have to keep to the game plan, focus on the attention to detail and make sure we play in the right areas of the pitch.

"Hopefully we can be up there at the end of the season."

Rokoduguni caught the eye with a superb showing against the Royal Air Force in 2012 before taking centre stage at Twickenham a month later.

"I was a bit surprised to score a hat-trick in front of that crowd and the boys were going mad," he recalled.

"I had guys like Pte Jack Prasad (Scots) and Apo Satala (ex-Scots) around me, along with lots of other senior players.

"They told me if I continued what I was doing on the pitch I'd be in the Premiership in no time."

Rokoduguni's big break came on the sevens circuit when he

scored a hat-trick for the Reds against future employers Bath during a tournament in Bournemouth.

"The coaches came to speak to our manager after the game and wanted me to come for a trial," the Service star explained. "I then went away with the Army team to Portugal where we played against Newcastle.

"Both clubs offered me a contract but I chose to come to Bath as it was an opportunity to play in the Premiership.

"It's really not that different. You have pressure from the crowd and they expect more from you. If you limit the number of errors you make it keeps everyone happy.

"But I'm still really proud to represent the Army – it is where I started. I would do anything to be in the team for Twickenham; I hope to get the opportunity this year."

By flying high at Bath Rokoduguni has continued a proud tradition of soldiers excelling in the upper echelons of the sport and he believes there is a definite overlap between life in the military and the action out on the pitch.

"It shows we are flexible; you can put us anywhere and we will survive," he said. "We can adjust to what is required on the field but from there we can go to Iraq or Afghanistan and perform as soldiers.

"In rugby it is 15 players out on the turf and in the Army you are in a group of guys on patrol with a commander taking charge.

"As troops we do as we are told and that happens on the pitch as well."

**"I WOULD DO ANYTHING TO BE IN THE TEAM FOR TWICKENHAM; I HOPE TO GET THE OPPORTUNITY"**

Rokoduguni maintains close links with the Service and his unit, who are currently away on operations.

"It feels strange and if it was not for playing with Bath I would be there with them," he said.

"I deployed to Afghanistan in 2011. For me it was important to get out there on tour. It was what I wanted to experience as a soldier.

"We were doing four patrols a day, day in day out. It was hard work but very rewarding. My unit is in Kabul now, where they are involved in sentry duties. Being with the guys is something I miss." ■



## ROKO'S PATH TO THE TOP

LCPL Samesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) joined the Service in 2007 and excelled while playing for the British Army Germany sevens side.

Promotion to the senior set-up soon followed and the winger scored tries against Worcester Warriors and Northampton Saints before earning his first Army cap against the Royal Air Force in 2012.

He celebrated by crossing for four tries in a resounding 59-0 victory and then scored a hat-trick as the Royal Navy were crushed 48-9 at Twickenham.

Rokoduguni helped the Army lift the inaugural International Defence Sevens title later that summer before firing the Reds to another Inter-Services victory a year on.

The 26-year-old is in his second season with Bath and has scored 12 tries in 23 games. His exploits were rewarded with a call-up to the England Saxons squad last month.

"He's excited about playing and his form and the feedback from Bath has been excellent," said England coach Stuart Lancaster.





# Soldiers set for Sochi

WITH the Winter Olympics getting under way this month Army athletes will be hoping to shine. *SoldierSport* profiles those in contention and learns more about their aspirations for the Games...

**S**ELECTION for the Team GB biathlon squad caps a remarkable rise for Cpl Amanda Lightfoot (AGC), who only started skiing seven years ago.

The 26-year-old was introduced to the sport through the Army and is only the second British woman to achieve the qualifying standard needed to compete at the Games.

"I didn't join the military to be a biathlete, it just sort of happened," she said.

"I was out in Iraq and when I came back they were looking for people to go skiing and it seemed like a good idea, but I'd never been on snow or even seen the sport before.

"I quickly took to it and I was the top novice at my first British Championships. I suppose it's my personality but the more I did it, the more I wanted it.

"I was watching the Winter Olympics in Vancouver and that's when I decided I really wanted to go to Sochi and I'd do everything I could to make the team."

Lightfoot will compete in the 7.5-kilometre sprint race and the 15-kilometre individual event, with a place in the pursuit competition also up for grabs depending on results.

However, the prospect of testing herself at the Russian venue has provoked a mixed reaction.

"Sochi's not got the happiest memories after last year's test event," the soldier explained.

"I came off the track and suffered a knee injury that needed surgery in April. I was coming down a bend when I hit some ice and went crashing into a tree – I thought any Olympic ambitions were over.

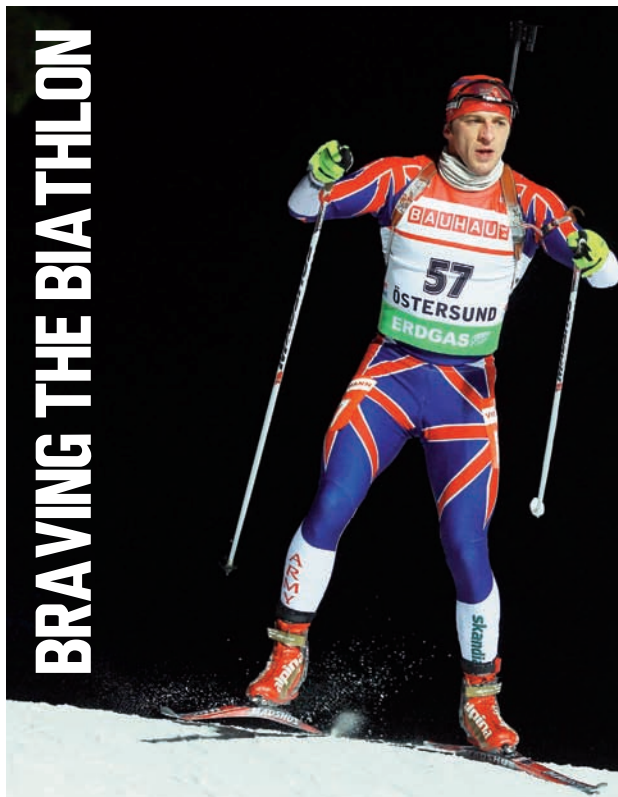
"I was overwhelmed when I found out about my selection, tears and laughter combined.

"It has been a worthwhile journey to get to this point. I will enjoy every minute of the experience but I've also got my performance targets to achieve."



Picture: Martin Rose/Getty Images

## BRAVING THE BIATHLON



A SECOND Olympic campaign beckons for LBdr Lee Jackson (16 Regt RA) and the soldier is targeting a top-30 finish in biathlon's individual 20-kilometre race.

The 33-year-old, who has been competing in the sport for 15 years, made his Games debut in Vancouver in 2010 where he finished 55th in the sprint, 56th in the pursuit and 66th in the individual events.

"The aftermath of the Olympics was scary as I hadn't planned anything past that point and the feeling of achievement came and went very fast," Jackson said.

"But I knew I wanted that buzz again and to be part of Team GB in 2014."

With that in mind the soldier committed himself to another four-year cycle that paid off when he was named in the squad for Sochi.

"I am delighted to have been selected," Jackson added. "Having missed out on the Turin Winter Olympics, Vancouver taught me how to deal with the pressure in the build-up to the Games and I feel better prepared now heading to Russia.

"Being a part of that one team – Team GB – is unbelievable and remembering the disciplined four-year commitment full of hard work and sacrifice helps me to focus on the task at hand."

Picture: Alexander Hassenstein/Getty Images





BOBSLEIGH pilot LSgt Lamin Deen (Gren Gds) produced the drive of his career to book his ticket to Sochi.

With qualification in the balance the soldier gave an inspired display at the World Cup in Austria to finish 11th and move into the required top 20 in the world rankings.

His bid was boosted by a tactical switch by Team GB bosses, who allowed Deen to compete alongside athletes from the squad's leading four-man crew.

And the move reaped dividends as the GBR2 sled clocked a combined time of 1 min 42.75secs, which put them 0.53secs behind the winners.

"I'm really emotional, I'm overwhelmed," Deen told the BBC after reaching the finish line. "It means so much."

"I was the VIP for 24 hours. All the physios, mechanics and crewmen just pulled together and focused on me, which really helped the team."



### Soldier's Games guide

#### Biathlon

Men's sprint - February 8

Women's sprint - February 9

Men's pursuit - February 10

Women's pursuit - February 11

Men's 20km individual - February 13

Women's 15km individual - February 14

#### Bobsleigh

Two-man heats 1 and 2 - February 16

Two-man heats 3 and 4 - February 17

Women's heats 1 and 2 - February 18

Women's heats 3 and 4 - February 19

Four-man heats 1 and 2 - February 22

Four-man heats 3 and 4 - February 23

## WALKER TAKES POLE POSITION

A STRONG end to the World Cup campaign saw Army bobsleigh ace Cpl Paula Walker (21 Sig Regt) cement her place at this month's Winter Olympics.

The soldier underwent a knee operation last summer but returned to action in time to resume her position as Great Britain's number one driver in the team's two-man crew.

A challenging series of races in North America saw the Servicewoman achieve regular top-ten finishes before the competition shifted to Europe in the new year, where she finished 13th in Winterberg and eighth in St Moritz.

Walker refused to get distracted by the prospect of competing at the Olympics while the World Cup was in progress but she remained quietly confident of reaching the standard required for Sochi.

"The summer training went well," she told *SoldierSport* on the eve of the St Moritz leg.

"The rehabilitation at Bisham Abbey pushed me along nicely and I was in the best shape ever coming into the season.

"The World Cup has not been too bad, although we would have liked to have been higher in the rankings.

"But it is hard going into a season

knowing everyone will raise their performance for the Olympics.

"We are in good shape and we've got some fantastic kit.

"We've had top ten finishes but we dropped to 13th at Lake Placid, which was disappointing.

"There were some slight issues with our equipment and other people are better on certain tracks, that's the way it is in bobsleigh.

"I was trying not to get wrapped up in the Olympics but now I've got the good news I can switch my attention."

With Walker meeting the qualifying criteria for Sochi she is fully aware of what lies in wait having already tested herself at the venue.

"The facilities out there are amazing," she explained.

"The structure is a little bit different but they have really looked at how they can make it a better track.

"There is a suspended athletics circuit for us to warm-up on and there is easy access to the course, which means we do not have to clamber up and down. These are only little things but they make the difference.

"It is fast but quite technical as well so it will be interesting."







Star turn: Sig Susannah Wells (R Signals) opened the scoring in the Army's 4-0 win over Aldershot

# Reds hit goal trail

Women's football friendly  
Army 4 - Aldershot Town 0

**A**BRACE from striker Pte Rachel Rigby (RLC) helped the Army women to a comfortable 4-0 win over Aldershot Town in their latest friendly fixture.

With challenging ties in the Southern Counties Cup looming this month the match proved to be a welcome run out for the Reds, who dominated throughout and could have easily added to their tally.

Rigby showed her intent in the early exchanges when she headed just wide from a cross by returning skipper SSgt Krissy Wright (AGC (RMP)), before Sig Susannah Wells (R Signals) tested the opposition keeper with an effort from the edge of the area.

Wright (pictured) forced another save with a sharp strike as the Army pressure mounted and the soldiers saw their efforts rewarded midway through the first period.

Rigby received the ball on the edge of the area and after leaving the visiting defenders flat-footed played a perfectly weighted pass to Wells who fired into the bottom corner.

The hosts doubled their advantage on the stroke of half-time

when a miss-hit cross from Pte Jen Keane (RLC) crashed against the bar and was bundled home by Rigby.

With conditions deteriorating after the break the Army failed to maintain their stranglehold but substitute Cpl Holly Darling (AGC (RMP)) reasserted the team's dominance with a neat finish following good work on the right.

A superb passing move involving Keane, Rigby and Wright created a chance for Pte Shannon Morgan (RLC), but the midfielder's effort sailed wide.

Rigby completed the rout late on when she raced clear before calmly slotting the ball past the onrushing keeper.

"We played Aldershot at the start of the season and drew 0-0 so this is a great result," coach Sgt Mags McAteer (AAC) told *SoldierSport* after the final whistle.

"It is good to have Krissy in the side again and she was brilliant, she led by example.

"Around 80 per cent of the squad is made up of new players but they have settled in really well. The girls coming back from theatre will now have to fight to get back in the side."

**Army:** Brown, Jennings, Kidd, Wells, Clarke, O'Neill, Wright, Gwilliam, Rigby, Morgan, Keane.  
**Subs:** Darling, Stacey, Jaffe, Anderson. ■



Woolwich Cup semi-final  
Royal Signals 2 - Royal Engineers 1

THE Royal Signals booked their place in the Woolwich Cup final with a 2-1 win over defending champions the Royal Engineers in Aldershot.

Army forward Sig Luke Noble was the hero as he settled the contest after a dramatic late equaliser from striker Spr Matthew Price sent the game into extra time.

Having set the pace in the early stages the sappers fell behind to a stunning strike from Cpl Jay Bates, who fired home from the edge of the area midway through the first half.

With chances at a premium in the second period the contest looked to be slipping away from the Engineers but a misplaced pass from Bates gifted Price a clear run on goal and the striker calmly converted to send the tie into extra time.

But the setback spurred the challengers on and when Sig John Mackie drilled the ball across the six-yard box Noble had a simple tap-in to win the match.

"As we headed into extra time we thought we should be ahead," said Signals' skipper Cpl Kev Cameron (pictured below). "But we knew that if we kept going we would win."

The Royal Artillery play the Adjutant General's Corps in the second semi-final on February 7.







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# MASTERS OF THEIR ART

**THE Army Martial Arts Association is enjoying a boom period as more and more personnel take to the mat. Here, we look at the various action-packed disciplines and chart their progress to date...**

ITF TAE kwon do enjoyed its most successful year in 2013 as the team celebrated Inter-Services success and a host of medal-winning performances at national level.

The squad boasts almost 50 soldiers who have flourished under the guidance of coach SSgt Colin Sayer (REME) and his newly appointed assistant SSgt Angus Hodge (AGC).

"We are probably one of the strongest disciplines within Army martial arts," Sayer told *SoldierSport*.

"Having Angus on-board means we can start pushing things forward, instead of me running it by myself.

"We are now getting a lot of new people coming through. One of those, LCpl Steven Hodgson-Lamb (REME), took part in his first national competition last season and won double gold.

"We are going to the European Championships in March, which will be the first time the Army has travelled abroad to compete at international level.

"We are also looking ahead to the World Championships in 2015 and there is no reason why we cannot take part."

LCpl Ben Halpin (AGC (RMP)), a former junior world champion, is one of the Service's leading lights but a broken foot has halted his progress.

"It has been frustrating not being able to train fully but hopefully I'll be back soon," he said. "I'll be going to the Europeans and if I could place there it would be great.

"In the Army squad I train with people from different backgrounds and that has really benefitted me."

Teammate LCpl Calley Tanton started competing as an 11-year-old before



**Dynamic duo:** LCpl Calley Tanton and LCpl Ben Halpin (AGC (RMP)) perfect their tae kwon do skills

moving away from tae kwon do. However, after joining the Service she soon found herself returning to action.

"I missed the sport," she said. "I got involved again after seeing the Army Martial Arts Association website.

"It is like one big family and we all support each other. Work has also been

very supportive by giving me time off to take part in different events."

The ITF set-up holds winter and summer training camps and there are plenty of opportunities for newcomers to get involved.

For more information on the sport email [colin.sayer@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:colin.sayer@hotmail.co.uk)



## LET THE GAMES BEGIN

THE 2014 Army Martial Arts Championships will be held at the Combat Sports Centre in Aldershot on Saturday, March 15.

Open to all serving personnel, the event will feature competitions in karate, ITF tae kwon do, WTF tae kwon do, kata/poomsae/tuls/open forms, kendo, weapons forms and Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Email [ronald.harley520@mod.uk](mailto:ronald.harley520@mod.uk) for more details.

A CLUTCH of medals in 2013 saw the Army's WTF tae kwon do team go from strength to strength, while a second successive Inter-Services title underlined their growing potential.

More than 50 soldiers are involved in the set-up and they test themselves in competitions throughout the year while also training on a regular basis.

"WTF is an Olympic event and we hope to get someone on Team GB within the next four years," said head of discipline Aftab Hussain (pictured), an MoD civil servant based

with the Household Cavalry Regiment.

"We want to develop the sport and open it up for everyone. We hold training sessions with guest instructors who are experts in the field but it is not just about competitions and sparring, those who do not fight can focus on patterns."

WTF differs from ITF in that it is a

full-contact event and the Army set-up hosts a week-long basic skills course each year, the latest of which will be held in Windsor from April 14.

To find out more email [hcr-hq-cis@mod.uk](mailto:hcr-hq-cis@mod.uk)





## NEW BLOOD TAKES KARATE FORWARD

HAVING seen star performer Sgt Hayley Just (RE) crowned Army sportswoman of the year in 2013 the Service's ever-expanding karate squad is revelling in its elevation to the mainstream.

The soldier won a bronze medal while representing England and secured second place at the JKA tournament in the USA.

Army coach and teammate SSgt Brian Hall (REME) also celebrated international honours with England.

"We have got a lot of promising youngsters coming through at black belt and below," said Maj Ronnie Harley (RAMC, pictured).

"They represent the Service at a high standard and also take part in a number of civilian competitions.

"We wiped the floor with our Forces rivals at the Inter-Services last season and we have a great chance in each category this year.

"Karate is popular as it has a strong military application in terms of the self discipline, fitness and controlled aggression it promotes."

Junior and novice training sessions have already been planned for this season and newcomers are welcome to attend. For more information on these and how to get involved in the sport email [ronald.harley520@mod.uk](mailto:ronald.harley520@mod.uk)



THE Army has been staging kendo courses since 2004 and with a steady flow of soldiers joining the discipline's ranks its popularity is gradually growing.

Primarily designed as an introduction for novices, the week-long programme is led by a civilian instructor and includes squad training for regular participants.

"We get a lot of guys from other martial arts," said Capt Paul Reynolds (REME, pictured), the team's captain. "They see kendo at open championships and want to have a go.

"They are used to punching and kicking so this is something different.

"The highlight for us is the Inter-Services. We were victorious last year but the Royal Navy won in 2011 and 2012, so there is a big rivalry there now."

Kendo is practised using a bamboo sword and protective armour, with points being scored via cuts to well-defined targets (the top of the head, right wrist and breastplate).

The next course will be held at the Combat Sports Centre in Aldershot from March 10. For more details email [paul.reynolds709@mod.uk](mailto:paul.reynolds709@mod.uk)



## JIU-JITSU PLOTS BRIGHT FUTURE

BRAZILIAN jiu-jitsu has seen a rapid expansion in numbers since the discipline first emerged on the Army's sporting landscape.

Although it is still in its infancy there are high hopes for an Inter-Services competition in the next two to three years and a training camp in Cyprus is also in the pipeline.

"We have gone from three people on the mat to seeing 136 take part," said Sgt Mark Badham (AGC, pictured in blue), one of the Service's top athletes.

"It has become quite big due to the popularity of the Ultimate Fighting

Championship, where jiu-jitsu is one of many styles covered, and people want to give it a go.

"We have competed at two Army championships and the Royal Marines have just recognised this as an official sport so we are hoping to face them in the near future."

Brazilian jiu-jitsu is based on grappling and wrestling and promotes the belief that smaller athletes can compete with bigger opponents by using leverage and proper technique.

Email [mark.badham646@mod.uk](mailto:mark.badham646@mod.uk) for more details on how to get involved.







Picture: DPPI

**Sole survivor:** The Race2Recovery support truck makes its way to the rally's finish line in Chile

## Racer's Dakar delight

**T**HE Race2Recovery initiative has celebrated a record-breaking start to 2014 by crossing the finish line of the gruelling **Dakar Rally** for a second successive year.

By reaching the final podium in Valpariso, Chile, the team became the first disabled outfit to complete the world's toughest race on two occasions – but their latest quest was far from easy.

Having seen both Wildcat cars retire after the second stage their hopes rested on the T4 Renault Kerax truck, which had been on hand to support the other vehicles before their withdrawal.

The crew included below-knee amputee Cpl Daniel Whittingham (11 Regt EOD) who, along with driver Mark Cullum and co-driver Chris Ratter, battled across a demanding 9,000-kilometre route that included the Atacama Desert and Andes mountain range.

A total of 204 vehicles completed the rally, meaning just over 50 per cent of entrants were forced to retire.

"I'm so proud of the team," a delighted Whittingham said. "To complete one Dakar was amazing, to finish a second is just unbelievable.

"It was tough keeping the truck in the race. We were often finishing the stage with very little turnaround time before starting the next one, so sleep wasn't really on the agenda for us.

"There are so many obstacles as well; the terrain, the climate and the time pressures – all while keeping a cool head.

"I also had to look after my prosthetic leg and ensure I was in the best possible shape, which is vital in such surroundings with the dust and high temperatures."

A suspected broken head gasket claimed the Wildcat driven by Ben Gott and amputee Cpl Phillip Gillespie (1 R Irish), who completed the 2013 race.

A further setback followed when the pairing of Tony Harris, a former captain in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, and Quin Evans rolled end-to-end as they were progressing down a large sand dune. ■



Picture: Gigi Soldano

## SPORT SHORTS

■ A FORMER private in the Royal Anglian Regiment joined a team of ten motorists in their bid to drive through all 42 English shire counties in 24 hours.

Steve Gill completed the challenge to raise awareness for his charity Baron Motorsports, an initiative aimed at giving disabled men and women a taste of life in the fast lane.

The 43-year-old, who was injured by an IRA bomb in 1989, started his journey in Plymouth before finishing at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.



■ SAILORS from the Royal Armoured Corps return to the high seas this month as they compete in their third successive Caribbean 600 race.

The 12-man crew features a blend of experienced yachtsmen and novices who will begin their challenge on February 24.

More than 50 vessels are expected on the start line for the race, which begins and ends in Antigua and follows a route round 11 Caribbean islands.

"This year we are determined to get on the podium and have chartered a race-proven yacht to help us do so," said skipper Lt Col Paul Macro (RTR).

"While we have still taken some novices we have added more depth to the crew and a greater percentage have raced offshore before."

■ AN ex-soldier who now serves in the Royal Marines is hoping to set a new world record when he rows across the Atlantic Ocean this month.

Sgt Gav Emmerson will join a team of seven fellow athletes in an attempt to cover 2,598 nautical miles in less than 30 days.

Their challenge starts in Gran Canaria on February 14 and, if successful, they will break the current world record for the fastest crossing.

"We will be facing the severity of the elements by tackling waves of up to 40 feet, tropical storms, sleep deprivation, sweltering heat and the psychological stresses of working in such a dangerous and unpredictable environment," Emmerson said.

For more information on the attempt visit [www.oceanusrowing.co.uk/atlantic](http://www.oceanusrowing.co.uk/atlantic)



A silhouette of a soldier in full combat gear, including a helmet with a night vision device and a large backpack, holding a rifle. The soldier is standing against a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise background. The text "Supplying the world's finest combat equipment." is overlaid in white.

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Picture: Ben Duffy

**Ready to row:** From left, Capt James Kayll, Cpl Cayle Royce, Capt Mark Jenkins and Cpl Scott Blaney

## Mission accomplished

**T**HE Row2Recovery team celebrated a superb third-place finish in one of the world's toughest races – the **Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge**.

After spending a punishing 48 days, 9 hours and 13 minutes at sea the four-man crew arrived in Antigua last month to a hero's welcome.

Injured soldiers LCpl Cayle Royce (LD) and Cpl Scott Blaney (Gren Gds) were joined by able-bodied colleagues Capt Mark Jenkins (RAMC) and Capt James Kayll (LD) in the boat, which left the Canary Islands at the start of its 3,000-mile voyage in early December.

But their quest proved to be far from plain sailing as they battled heavy storms in the first two weeks before huge waves

battered their vessel, throwing the crew and much of their kit overboard.

"It's been hugely challenging for Scott and Cayle, not just the rowing itself, but things like getting from one end of the boat to the other," said Jenkins.

"They have shared their hardship and developed a great camaraderie."

By pushing themselves to the limit the Servicemen have raised more than £18,000 for Help for Heroes.

Blaney said: "This row has been a huge challenge and a great personal achievement but for me the greatest achievement is doing something to help the wounded community".

Donations to the cause can be made at [www.bmycharity.com/R2RAtlantic2013](http://www.bmycharity.com/R2RAtlantic2013)



■ THE Army rugby league team travel to Cumbria this month as they return to action in the first round of the Tetley's Challenge Cup.

Askam ARLFC will form the opposition on Saturday, February 1.



■ **ENDURANCE** athlete Capt John Warburton (2 Rifles) has set his sights on conquering one of the most gruelling running races in the world – the Marathon des Sables.

The officer broke his ankle on returning from Op Herrick 15 and accepted the challenge as he embarked on his recovery.

Set in the southern Moroccan Sahara, the event sees competitors cover 280 kilometres in just seven days while carrying their food, clothes, sleeping, eating and personal equipment – without any resupplies.

Warburton is supporting The Rifles' regimental charity Care for Casualties and hopes to raise more than £1,000.

The marathon starts on April 4 and donations can be made by visiting [www.justgiving.com/John-Warburton4](http://www.justgiving.com/John-Warburton4)

## Brennan books Sochi slot

**FORMER** soldier Mick Brennan has been included in the Team GB skiing squad for the Winter Paralympics in Sochi.

The double amputee, who served as a sergeant in the Royal Signals, will compete in the sit-ski events at the Games, which get under way on March 7.

"Knowing the public and my sponsors are supporting me gives me the biggest boost," he said after his selection was confirmed last month.

"When I was first injured I thought I would be limited to desk jobs so to be out on the slopes and now competing for Paralympics GB is just incredible."

Brennan gained a place on the national development squad in 2009 and was one of eight athletes who travelled to the Vancouver Games as part of the inaugural Paralympic Inspiration Programme. In 2012 Help for Heroes funded a new sit-ski to help him reach the upper echelons of his sport.





# Bell breaks on to world stage

**P**OWERLIFTING sensation Bdr Sarah Bell (RA, pictured) has set her sights on global glory after celebrating a record-breaking start to her sporting career.

The 27-year-old has made remarkable progress in the muscle-flexing discipline since she began training in 2011 and has already booked her place at this year's World Championships after some impressive showings at national level.

Her introduction to the event came on the back of an injury that prevented her from doing cardiovascular fitness work, so she started lifting weights as an alternative.

"That is when I found out how strong I was," said Bell, who serves with Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in Innsworth, Gloucester. "So I started training to be a powerlifter."

"When I win a contest I feel fantastic. It shows that all the effort has paid off and I have achieved something I have strived so hard to be good at."

Bell competes in the 63kg weight category and lifts as much as 90kg in the bench press, 120kg in the squats and 175kg in the dead lift.

Her hard work and dedication has seen her break a host of Army and Combined Services records and she set a new benchmark at the recent push and pull competition in Middle Wallop.

Such success has been achieved while maintaining her commitments in uniform but she still finds time to hit the gym six to seven times a week.

"I like to be strong all over, so I train regularly like a bodybuilder," Bell explained.

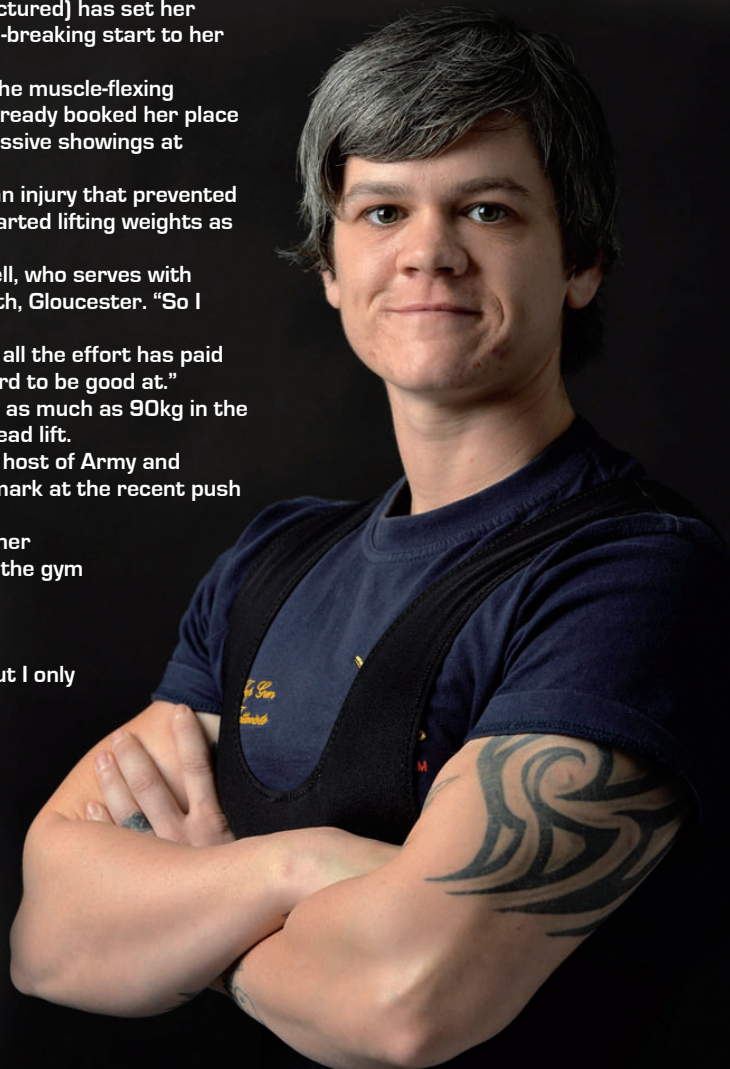
"I will have a few jelly babies before a competition but I only have natural sugars from fruits. I keep my diet as clean as possible."

"I love fitness. I certainly love bodybuilding, powerlifting or anything to do with strength and conditioning work."

The Middle Wallop event also saw Service star Sgt Aaron Hull (15 Sig Regt) hit top form.

The soldier showcased his immense power in the heavyweight category where he produced a massive 195kg bench press to set a personal best and new Army and Combined Services record.

For more details on all upcoming powerlifting events and how to get involved email WO2 Dave Heath via [david.heath652@mod.uk](mailto:david.heath652@mod.uk) ■



## AMERICAN FOOTBALL

AMERICAN football outfit the Swindon Storm are looking for Service athletes to join their ranks ahead of another busy summer schedule.

The team will be holding open trials on Monday, February 10 and with a number of personnel already on-board they are hoping to welcome further military firepower to the fold.

Cpl Steve Bennett, of the Royal Air Force, is the driving force behind the club and has overseen a rapid expansion since it was formed in 2008, the culmination of which was a ten-game campaign in the national league last year.

"It's been an incredible amount of work building the team from scratch, even UK clubs often boast well over 50 members,

dozens of staff and an annual turnover in the tens of thousands of pounds," he said.

Bennett represented the Great Britain Lions senior squad in the build-up to the 2008 European Championships and

has played for local clubs throughout his Forces career.

"A friend dragged me down to a junior-aged squad that was starting up in Plymouth and I was hooked from that first session," he added.

The trials will take place at Isambard School, in Swindon, from 1845.

No previous American football experience is necessary and equipment will be provided.

For further information on the session email [steve.bennett@swindonstorm.org.uk](mailto:steve.bennett@swindonstorm.org.uk)



Pictures: Richard Wintle



# Final word

With strides being taken in the standard of equipment supplied to British personnel, we asked troops what single piece of technology would transform their work as a soldier



## **Cpl Andrew Wood (2 Yorks)**

I'm a signaller so I'd want some sort of radio system that incorporates every band that we use, HF and VHF, but has the same weight as a mobile phone. We carry a lot of stuff – in Afghanistan the guys move around with radio kit weighing around 60 kilos – so anything that makes our load lighter would be welcome.



## **LCpl Herblin Biscette (2 Scots)**

I'd like to get hold of a bit of kit that has literally just come out called the Black Hornet (pages 36-37). The little helicopter with a camera on is brilliant for situational awareness. As a section commander I could fly it myself and quickly see what's going on behind a building or a hill. I've tried it and they're really easy to operate.

## **Lt Col Rob O'Connor (1 Yorks)**

Anything that delivers better situational awareness to the dismounted soldier without overloading him with too much information would be good. Whether that would come from better optical equipment or quicker mechanisms for communications I'm not sure. My other dream is simply for every piece of kit to be made much lighter.



## **Cpl Shaun Maddison-Clow (2 Rifles)**

The iPad, with its scanning function for radio checks, would make life a lot easier. I'd also like to see an integrated communications unit that runs off a battery pack in your daysack. We could just plug in and go – that would be amazing.



## **Lt Callum Cameron (1 Yorks)**

I'd like to reduce the signature of our weapons, cutting their noise and muzzle flash. I know there's a new one being developed for the SA80 and I'm looking forward to that. It would be deadly when combined with our new Laser Light Module (pages 38-39) and the night vision system. We'd then have capabilities that were traditionally the remit of elite units.



## **Rfn Andrew Saunders (2 Rifles)**

I'd like to see lighter batteries introduced. With ops lasting longer than 24 hours there is a lot of weight to carry. If there was a way to reduce that without taking a massive hit on battery life it would make our job easier.



## **Cpl Ryan Hearn (1 Yorks)**

I would like to get the Personal Interfaced Hearing Protection System that was given to personnel in Afghanistan under an urgent operational requirement. It hasn't been rolled out to the rest of the Army yet. It looks after your hearing yet also allows for clear radio communications through the earpiece.

## **Rfn Ryan Walker (2 Rifles)**

I would like to see the pouches for webbing improved. The ones we buy privately have Velcro clips and are generally better to use. But everything is down to the individual and how they manage things, as long as you maintain your kit it will look after you.





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