

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

PARTING SHOT

*Army chief talks
lessons learnt*

+
BURN
LESS FUEL
SAVE
£££

PASS MASTER

Netball ace primed for England action

SPINELINE
COMPETITION
CRIPWELL,
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CYPRUS INFANTEERS THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX ON EXERCISE ARES STORM



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MOD CIVIL SERVICE FOR VETERANS! DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY FOR VETERANS?

To support the Government's strategy for veterans launched in 2020, the Civil Service has introduced the **Great Place for Veterans to Work** scheme to provide opportunities for service leavers and veterans to secure rewarding roles in the Civil Service across Government.

The MOD naturally considers the Veterans to Work scheme as a key enabler to attracting and recruiting the talent it needs in support of Defence outputs. There are great opportunities for service leavers to transition into the Civil Service as part of the Ministry of Defence.

All externally advertised Civil Service posts fall under the Veterans scheme. To be eligible for this scheme in the Civil Service, you must:

- Have served for at least one year in Her Majesty's Armed Forces (as a Regular or Reserve); this includes time spent training.
- Be in transition from, or have ceased to be a member of, HM Armed Forces.
- Not already be a Civil Servant, or be employed by a Civil Service Commission accredited public body

There is no maximum time limit from when you left HM Armed Forces to be eligible for this initiative.



In order to use the Great Place to Work for Veterans initiative, candidates must meet the minimum standard for the role being applied for. The minimum standard is the combination of experience, behaviours, strengths, abilities and technical/professional skills that a candidate will need to perform effectively in the role.

The minimum standards are clearly set out in the job vacancy or the candidate information packs attached to the advert. If you are unsure what the minimum standard is, you should contact the recruiting line manager for the role to discuss the post. All roles are advertised through Civil Service Jobs and are also linked to the Career Transition Partnership platform available to all ex-military personnel.

It may not be something you will have considered previously, however, the Civil Service is a modern and diverse workplace reflecting the communities we serve. For those with a public duty mindset, the MOD's Civil Service in particular provides some fascinating opportunities across numerous professions to continue supporting national Defence outputs. The Civil Service recognises the value and transferable skills that Veterans can bring to an organisation – a skill set that will help see you go beyond the job description.

For those who want to continue their contribution to national Defence, there are opportunities in the MOD's Civil Service!



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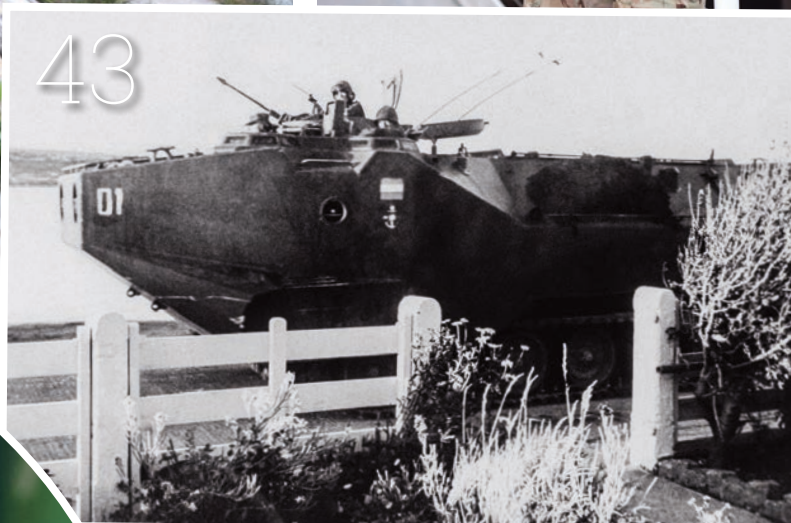
Everything we do rests on our core combat skills

”

Olive trees, sore knees and TTPs – page 30



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Trial and error



EXPERIMENTATION is all well and good, but unless troops are given permission to think creatively, make mistakes and give

brutally honest feedback along the way, it is little more than a nice idea.

Great to see on a recent trip to Cyprus, then, that British Army personnel are being given the space, time and freedom to do all three of those things.

The Enhanced Light Force Battalion (2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment) leads the way on testing and trialling new battlefield kit, and it was fantastic to speak to personnel from this set-up and hear how passionate they are about testing the latest gadgets for the rest of the Force (page 30).

These soldiers are essentially working as trial participants, and when they move under the Experimentation and Trials Group on their return to UK soil I expect we will hear even more about the fruits of their work.

Thanks to them – and the Royal Anglians deployed on Exercise Ares Storm – for sharing the highs and lows of their current taskings so candidly with *Soldier*.

And speaking of candid, do not miss our exclusive interview with Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, on page 36 to mark his departure from the top job next month.

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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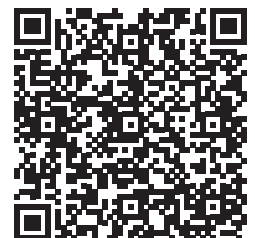
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At the sharp end in Cyprus

Infanteers relishing their role as battlefield testers

EXPERIMENTS with ground-breaking kit in Cyprus are firing up soldiers' imaginations and passion for the job, they have told this magazine.

Troops from the Army's Enhanced Light Force Battalion – 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment – said their role testing the latest battlefield gadgets was creating a new generation of analytical and creative fighters.

And with the Force undergoing rapid transformation under Future Soldier, such skills are likely to be in high demand over the coming years.

"There's nothing worse than seeing the organisation you love getting seen off with kit that's not the best," Cpl Niki Grantham (Yorks) explained.

"Especially as a screw, where your number one priority is the blokes and how they work.

"So everyone approaches this with an element of passion, and that's important because passion is what's going to develop all this kit."

Part of Coronna Company, the Serviceman has been pleasantly surprised by the responsibility given to the troops as they put Arills sights, robotic platoon vehicles, mini-drones and dismounted situational awareness kit (DSA) through their paces.

And it is the latter that is causing the biggest stir.

"It is honestly the best piece of kit I have seen brought into service," the NCO continued.

"The DSA is going to affect almost every role of soldiering across the Army, and take the speed that some information gets filtered up the chain of command from days to seconds."

The task is one that personnel are not taking lightly, he added.

"I had two hours yesterday with a manufacturer telling them about various issues with some kit," Cpl Grantham continued.

"We are in a creative space when we test, and you don't get that a lot in the Army. It's refreshing.

"We look at things from a soldier's point of view – what works well, what could be better and what's missing."

Colleague Cpl Ansias Londt (Yorks) said the work was being embraced by junior troops in particular.

"Technology is so natural to them," he added. "So my personal view is that the younger lads are the ones that are going to get you the better ideas and keep changing things."

CO Lt Col James Ashworth said the battalion was privileged to have the role, and the attention of the defence industry right down to the rank of private. ■



“It's the best kit I've seen brought into service”

Exercise Ares Storm – page 30

SOLDIER

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

SOLDIER is published by the Ministry of Defence
and printed by Walstead (Roche) Ltd.
Print contract managed by CDS.
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GLOBAL SITREP



1. MONTSERRAT PREP IN PARADISE



SAPPERS are stood by to assist if called upon to deliver humanitarian aid in the Caribbean following an exercise in the region.

Members of 528 Specialist Team Royal Engineers (Power) spent nearly five weeks on the British overseas territory of Montserrat preparing for hurricane season, which runs roughly from June to November.

From next month they will

be on 48 hours' notice to move, alongside colleagues from across 66 Works Group.

Exercise Power Plus gave them the chance to practise disaster relief drills and examine the island's infrastructure, as well as learn about its drive towards net-zero carbon power generation.

They also completed joint tasks with the Royal Montserrat Defence Force.

 1. MONTSERRAT

2. FALKLAND ISLANDS STUDY LEAVE

SCHOOL pupils on the South Atlantic territory had a first-hand taste of a military career when they joined troops to find out about their roles and day-to-day life.

The students teamed up with personnel from the Roulement Infantry Company – currently drawn from The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment – as well as outfits including the Joint Service Police and Security Unit during a week of work experience.

They visited Mount Pleasant Complex to speak to soldiers about the diverse range of jobs available.



Picture: British Forces South Atlantic Islands

2. FALKLAND ISLANDS

4. CYPRUS SAPPERS SUPPORT UN

RIPON-based 21 Engineer Regiment has taken over from 1st Battalion, The Rifles on Operation Tosca.

The sappers will be wearing the iconic United Nations blue beret for the next six months, carrying out peacekeeping duties in the buffer zone between the Greek and Turkish sectors of Cyprus.

Commanding Officer Lt Col Perry Bishop stressed: "Peacekeeping poses some unique challenges that I have not experienced elsewhere in my career but the soldiers understand the importance of this mission."

The personnel, including 18 Reservists from the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia), prepared for their deployment with training in active listening and conflict resolution.

Infanteers
break new
ground on
exercise in Cyprus
– page 30

3. UK PARAS STRIKE HARD

PERSONNEL from 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment have been experimenting with drones for target spotting and correcting mortar fire during Exercise Black Strike.

The package allowed the formation's Support Company to practise their fire and manoeuvre tactics on the rugged Castlemartin and Sennybridge ranges in South Wales, as well as refining its tactics for fighting in built-up areas.

With buildings restricting the sight lines for fire controllers, troops used drones as eyes in the sky to direct their 81mm mortars onto targets.

They also adapted their firing positions to suit urban areas, making sandbagged bunkers and camouflaging positions to look like construction sites or car accidents.



Picture: Cpl Danny Houghton, RLC

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

Brief the team now:



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3. UK

5. LITHUANIA

4. CYPRUS

7. IRAQ

6. NEPAL

7. IRAQ

MARCHING FOR VIMY

BRITISH and Canadian troops serving in Baghdad have taken part in a memorial march to mark the 105th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Joined by more than 120 other coalition members, the event started exactly at the moment the first troops crossed the line of departure on April 9, 1917 at 0538.

Each participant carried 22kg for the nine-mile route around the main headquarters base of the Combined Joint Task Force and Nato Mission Iraq. And even a sandstorm which suddenly blew up didn't stop them.

The Battle for Vimy Ridge was part of the wider Battle of Arras where more than 170,000 Canadian and British Service personnel fought.

5. LITHUANIA

TANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

BRITISH soldiers showed their anti-tank prowess as they joined Nato allies in rehearsing the skills and drills needed to provide a knockout punch to enemy equipment.

Around 40 soldiers from Black Horse Troop of The Royal Dragoon Guards had hands-on time with the Javelin and NLAW systems – both designed to hit armour hard.

The pre-planned Exercise Hunter also saw the personnel – currently forming part of the US-led Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup in Poland – field their Jackal and Coyote vehicles alongside their Lithuanian counterparts during the training.

The UK has a long-standing relationship with the host nation as part of the Joint Expeditionary Force – an outfit drawing on high-readiness troops from several countries.

Established in 2014 and with Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Holland, Norway and Sweden also in the line-up, it provides a key component of European security.



6. NEPAL

VETS GO 'ALWAYS A LITTLE FURTHER'

A GROUP of injured veterans have set off on an expedition of a lifetime, trekking in the Himalayas.

Organised by the Pilgrim Bandits charity, the group have embarked upon a 12-day trek while four of the party are also being given the opportunity to do a tandem skydive over Mount Everest.

One of them is double amputee Hari Budha Magar (pictured), a former Gurkha rifleman who was injured in Afghanistan, losing both his legs. "I think I will be the first double above-the-knee amputee with Genium X3s to trek to base camp, then skydive over Everest – I am super excited," he said.

The exped will not only show the veterans what they can achieve with a strong support network surrounding them, but also raise funds and boost the profile of the organisation behind the venture.

Matt Hellyer, head of Pilgrim Bandits, who will be leading the trek, commented: "The pandemic made it difficult for us to arrange trips that really challenge and motivate those that we support who have been injured on the front line.

"We hope to continue raising awareness for the important work that the charity does, so that we can help more veterans in the months and years ahead." To donate log on to totalgiving.co.uk/mypage/mteveresttrekjump





COVENANT FUNDS NOW AVAILABLE

■ THE Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust is launching a trio of initiatives that will provide targeted support for veterans and military families, as well as for serving personnel.

The Force for Change programme is now open to applications from the Armed Forces community – with grants of up to £10,000 available.

Meanwhile, Reaching and Supporting Armed Forces Communities is a scheme that addresses gaps in support and provision with cash sums of between £100,000 and £150,000.

Elsewhere, the Transformational Grants programme – scheduled for launch later this year – will make significant contributions to a small number of initiatives that meet unmet needs.

All three projects could be used for new and additional support, or build on work that organisations have already done. But the trust will be looking for ideas to target specific needs while delivering lasting changes or improvements.

For more information on applying and deadlines visit covenantfund.org.uk

Signalling their intent:
Information from the field will be fed into a new unit dedicated to analysing and exploiting data



Picture: Cpl Alex Morris, RLC

Making data more deadly

Hybrid formation created to exploit information advantage

THE 1st (UK) Division has established a new formation that will help speed up and improve commanders' decision making.

The Divisional Integrated Effects Group (DIEG) consists of two units each from the Intelligence Corps and Royal Corps of Signals.

The intelligence function will be provided by Catterick-based 1st Military Intelligence Battalion and Reservists from its sister formation, 5th Battalion, drawing personnel from the East Midlands, the North of England and Scotland.

The signals element will be generated by Regulars from 2 Signal Regiment in York as well as Reservists from 37 Signal Regiment, which is located throughout the Midlands and North of England.

"DIEG is about generating information advantage," Lt Col Chris Dobson, commanding officer of 1 MI Bn, told *Soldier*.

"It will give us a critical edge with

both our choice of narratives and our decision-making speed."

The officer explained that the drive to gain information superiority has become the foundation of all the division's activities.

"It is a weapon, and the side that most effectively collects, analyses, exploits and wields information will achieve a critical advantage in complex environments," he added.

Multi-domain integration will also be a key feature of the DIEG's activities, with the growing diversity of sensors and digitised battlefield assets increasing the options for collecting and disseminating vital data.

"Although we are a land formation we will be using air, cyber and space," continued Lt Col Dobson.

"Our role will include assessing how we use and bring together satellites, air-based sensors and other technologies that will generate a powerful information advantage for the British Army." ■

“It will give us a critical edge”

INSPIRATIONAL SAPPER BOBBY McCAIGUE PASSES AWAY AFTER FIGHTING HIS ILLNESS 'LIKE A SOLDIER'

■ A SAPPER who inspired *Soldier* readers with his words of wisdom about facing up to terminal cancer has died, aged 32.

Bobby McCaigue passed away in a nursing home surrounded by his family. He had recently been promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Personnel recovery officer Capt Kev Robison (Para) said the geo specialist's fight had left a remarkable impression on all who knew him, including his wife and two children. He added: "Bobby fought his cancer battle like a soldier fighting

the enemy and leading by example, never giving up and always thinking how he could protect his family and help others in need.

"His energy, drive, resilience and love for others was an inspiration and will be a proud legacy for his children to draw on."

In March, Sgt McCaigue (pictured right with wife Najette) told this magazine he had been well supported by the military community and that he was "so proud" to be part of an organisation that cares for its personnel.



Picture: Cpl Nanda Atherton, RLC



More Boxers arriving with new order

BRITISH troops are poised to benefit from additional mobility, firepower and protection after it was confirmed that an extra 100 Boxer armoured vehicles are joining the fleet.

Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Lt Gen Sir Christopher Tickell, confirmed that an order had been placed for another tranche of the platforms, which are set to see service as infantry carriers as well as mobile command and control centres and ambulances.

They will be pressed into service with the Army's new armoured brigade combat teams, created under the reorganisation of defence structures announced at the end

of 2021. Assembled in the UK and Germany, deliveries are expected in two years' time.

The move is an extension to an existing £2.8 billion deal between the MoD and Artec, a consortium between two firms – Krauss-Maffei Wegmann and Rheinmetall.

Under the agreement, 523 Boxers are being built by subcontractors WFEL and Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land in the UK, with the first deliveries expected next year.

Defence Procurement Minister Jeremy Quinn said the latest order would accelerate delivery of the new vehicle to the Army as well as increasing its numbers. ■

Above: The vehicle will see service with armoured brigade combat teams

GREAT WAR HEROES SALUTED IN FRANCE



■ SERVICES to remember five previously unidentified First World War soldiers have been held in France after their resting places were confirmed by defence experts.

Rev Andrew Grant, chaplain to 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, led the graveside rededication events attended by relatives and dignitaries.

The graves of Cpl Alexander Thayne of 2nd Dragoons (The Royal Scots Greys); 2Lt David Bell of 13th (Scottish Horse) Battalion, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders); CQMS Charles Niven of 6th Gordon Highlanders; CSM William Bax of 2nd Battalion, Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry; and Cpl William Court of the 19th Royal Hussars (Queen Alexandra's Own) were formally identified by the MoD Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre. Commonwealth War Graves Commission spokesman David Royle thanked the team for its work "in helping identify these five brave men".



Picture: Sgt Ben Beale, RLC

HELMETS FOR UKRAINE

■ TROOPS from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment have been hard at work packing 84,000 surplus helmets for the Ukrainian military.

The Cottesmore-based soldiers worked out of a huge warehouse at MoD Donnington in Shropshire, where the supplies were shipped to from military stores across the UK.

Their tasks included physically stripping the helmets of any British Army webbing or identifying badges.

The personnel processed up to 12,000 helmets a day, packing them into giant cardboard boxes ready for transport to Poland.

Sgt Oliver Church, who coordinated the project, said: "The lads were more than happy to help the cause – hopefully it will boost our military counterparts in Ukraine, providing them with the vital protection they really need at the moment."

Due to a lack of adequate kit for members of the Ukrainian armed forces during fighting in Crimea in 2014, hundreds of Mk7 helmets were purchased from the UK and used by Ukrainian personnel, together with earlier Mk6 and Mk6A variants.

TANKFEST TICKETS

■ TICKETS are on sale for Tankfest – an annual festival billed as the world's best display of historic moving armour.

The event in Bovington, Dorset is set to include a British Army display as well as guest vehicles including the Sherman 51, AMX and Panhard AML.

It will be staged by the Tank Museum from June 24 to 26 with arena displays, a living history battle, guest speakers and more.

Thousands are expected to attend. For tickets visit tankmuseum.org



“
The lads were
more than
happy to help
”



Q&A

Soldier asked Col Leigh Drummond from the Personnel Directorate about gaming policy change...

Why are you doing this?

For the good of the organisation and the individuals within it. When people get themselves into financial difficulty it affects their ability to deploy, as well as look after their dependents, so we should take this small but important step to safeguard troops – along with the through-career education they receive on the issue.

But isn't gambling a personal choice?

We are not banning the practice outright – personnel can continue to use the National Lottery, gamble online or run bespoke social events such as bingo or casino nights.

What's the point if people can still gamble online?

We acknowledge that problem gambling is largely not done through gambling and gaming machines – it's usually people sitting in their rooms with their iPads and credit card next to them. But it is within our gift, where possible, to reduce the risk of it becoming a problem.

But doesn't the Army get a share of the profits from these machines being installed?

That's no defence. Our argument is that it's exploiting a small number of individuals to fund a larger number of people's welfare and that isn't right.



“Taking them away will help”



Pictures: Shutterstock and Dragana Gordic

Slot machines are history

Troops welcome the move, but sound alarm over online gambling

NEWs that the Army is to remove gambling and gaming machines from most locations has been welcomed by troops pushing for better awareness of addiction.

A recent announcement from the Personnel Directorate stated that all devices would be withdrawn by June 30, unless delayed by contractual or other reasons.

The Army briefing note on the policy acknowledged that gambling addiction has a “serious impact on the physical, emotional and financial health of individuals, as well as their families” and could also affect soldiers’ deployability.

Maj Anselm Allen (Yorks), who helps personnel navigate financial matters as part of his role as a life skills adviser at 4th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters North East, said the statistics behind the issue were sobering.

“Analysis conducted by the MoD-approved Serve and Protect Credit Union showed that the average spend among regular gamblers in the military is £220 per month,” he said.

“Removing gaming machines is a positive step in the right direction, however the next battle will be with online gambling.

“Along with relationship matters, financial concerns are the root cause of many mental health problems, so it's vital to try and change behaviours and make people aware of the dangers.”

Recovering gambler SSgt Stew Duffus (RE), who in 2015 spoke candidly to *Soldier* about his addiction, echoed Maj Allen's comments.

“Any positive action to mitigate against someone becoming a compulsive gambler is good news in my eyes,” he said of the policy.

“My issues have always been with slots – whether mechanical ones in bars or online. I hate them with a passion because I know the devastation they can cause.

“To a degree I think taking them away will help, but it won't have a massive impact for those who gamble online. Hopefully, though, the Army recognising this and taking this measure will lead to bigger things.

“Gambling is one of the worst compulsions because there are no physical signs, unlike with drugs and alcohol. But it has a huge impact on an individual.”

SSgt Duffus added that he would like to see better awareness within the military community and support systems put in place to mirror the help available to those suffering with alcoholism or poor mental health.

FIRST VETERAN CARE VILLAGE COMPLETED

■ A £12.5 MILLION scheme to create the UK's first veteran care village has been completed. Broughton House in Salford has looked after more than 8,000 people since it opened its doors to the ex-Service community in 1916. Following the demolition of the original home in 2020, it has been transformed into a modern complex featuring a 64-bed care home and six retirement apartments. Facilities include a gym, hair salon, restaurant and bar. A support hub is also on site to provide welfare services and counselling.





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Additionally, from April this year, everyone serving on AFPS 75 and 05 has been transferred to AFPS 15, involving further calculation complexity.

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PARADES ARE BACK!

Troops on the march once more...

WITH the easing of pandemic restrictions across the UK, parades are back on the agenda at last.

And units across the country have wasted little time reconnecting with their local communities through this time-honoured tradition.

These include soldiers of the British Army's newest combat regiment – The Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry, a Reserve unit paired with The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards – who marched to exercise their newly-granted freedom of Edinburgh (pictured above and top right).

"The relationship in our society between the civic community and the Army is one of deepening importance," said Commanding Officer Lt Col Mark Gannon. "We have seen, especially through the past two years, the interdependence of both upon each other.

"Our unity has, in no small part, enabled our society to rise from a global pandemic more robust and ready to act than before."

Members of 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment – a Reserve unit based across the UK with significant representation in Leeds and South Tyneside – also made up for lost time with a parade exercising their freedom of Leeds (bottom right).

Around 60 Service personnel marched through the city with some soldiers carrying weapons systems including the 81mm mortar and general purpose machine gun to demonstrate the unit's capability.

Meanwhile, 3 Regiment, Army Air Corps celebrated their links to Suffolk with an event in historic Bury St Edmunds to mark their freedom of St Edmundsbury (pictured below).

The day included a flypast by three Apache helicopters and was a delayed celebration of the unit's 50th anniversary, a milestone which could not be marked at the time due to coronavirus restrictions.

Commanding Officer Lt Col Simon Wilsey said: "Today is a great honour for the regiment and celebrates our place in the Suffolk community." ■



Picture: Cpl Nacanieli Tanuku, RLC



Picture: Richard Watt



Nesmith cracks brass ceiling

...but British Army's first female 2iC says there is more to do

THE appointment of the first female deputy chief of the general staff "speaks volumes" about the opportunities now open to Servicewomen, but the Army still wants to do more – according to the officer selected for the role.

Maj Gen Sharon Nesmith (pictured) will take over as the Army's second-in-command in the summer, when she will also become the first woman in British military history to reach the rank of lieutenant general.

In an interview with this magazine shortly after her appointment was announced, she described her excitement at driving forward change, both in terms of gender equality and Service restructuring.

"It is important to have a serving female three-star – there were many in my generation that had remarked they thought they would never see the day," she said.

"I think that speaks volumes, both by showing those inside the Army that we value our people and provide them with opportunity, as well as for the outside world that we are credibly seen as an inclusive employer.

"I'm looking forward to drawing on my breadth of experience from a number of roles and playing my part in the transition to Future Soldier."

Currently general officer commanding of Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command, Maj Gen Nesmith previously headed up 1 (United Kingdom) Signal Brigade and served as director of personnel.

But despite having broken through the so-called "brass ceiling", she believes more should be done for those following in her path.

"Change is never going to be fast enough – we will always want to do more, more quickly, more demonstrably so fewer people have bad experiences



Picture: Graeme Main

and the vast majority have good ones," she continued.

"Six or seven years ago I had convinced myself the lived experience for the majority of Servicewomen was good and that people were valued for how they contribute, but I think I was kidding myself – and I had my eyes opened to the fact that is not the case for all.

"Since then, the Army has asked itself the difficult questions and removed a lot of the hard barriers for equal opportunities, but we still have work to do on the soft barriers."

Maj Gen Nesmith will take over from Lt Gen Sir Christopher Tickell in August, working alongside incoming Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Patrick Sanders, who is succeeding Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith (page 36).

Announcing Maj Gen Nesmith's appointment, Gen Carleton-Smith said: "She is the right person at the right time to drive the Army's transformation and she brings a wealth of experience, energy and fresh ideas." ■

“Change is never going to be fast enough”

WOMEN IN NUMBERS

Number of female general officers serving in the British Army



Total number of generals in the British Army



9.9
Percentage of Army personnel who are female

MILITARY CHARITIES GET MORE SUPPORT

■ MILITARY charities are to receive £5m in government funding to support those who served in Afghanistan.

The sum will finance more than 50 projects and is being distributed by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

It will include £150,000 for RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity and half a million pounds for the Samaritans to launch a new veterans support helpline.

Other projects being backed by The Afghanistan Veterans' Fund will provide ex-soldiers with mindfulness and recovery through nature, sports and access to assistance dogs.



YOMPING FOR GOOD

■ THE Army sergeant major has been training to tackle a punishing cross-country course in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

WO1 Paul Carney (pictured) is taking on the Cateran Yomp – a 54-mile journey across the Cairngorm Mountains in 24 hours. The 42-year-old former Royal Engineer said he was looking forward to the challenge – which takes place from June 4-5 – but was expecting a tough time.

Search "Cateran Yomp" at soldierscharity.org to find out more and sponsor him.

TEN TORS RETURNS

■ THE ARMY-run Ten Tors youth trek returns to Dartmoor this month for the first time since the pandemic.

Taking place from May 6 to 8 in and around Okehampton camp, the fixture is one of the biggest adventure challenges for young people in the country and sees them walking distances of up to 55 miles.

Nearly 3,000 teenagers are set to take part this year, supported by around 1,000 Service and civilian personnel as part of Exercise Wyvern Tor – a multi-agency effort that doubles up as a test of military engagement with the local authorities.



CITY VIEWS

ROYAL ENGINEERS have been thinking up new ways to help commanders visualise the urban environments that soldiers operate in. A workshop hosted by 8 Engineer Brigade brought together experts from across the sappers and industry to experiment with different ways of presenting geospatial information. Troops were split into 11 pods, each looking at separate approaches including traditional paper maps, digital displays, 3D printing, apps, drones and human factors. Troops from the Infantry were also on hand to give the ground view. Staged at the Ilford Reserve Centre in North London, the event focused primarily on how features above and below ground could be accurately captured in a disaster relief scenario. Fresh ideas will be fed back to the wider Army.

WIN

£200-worth of sports kit



LAST month's spine line clues may have been recognised by Falklands War aficionados.

Inspired by our feature on the conflict, (Jeremy) Moore, (Brian) Pennicott, (Julian) Thompson, and (Tony) Wilson all served as British Armed Forces commanders during hostilities with Argentina.

This month, we have teamed up with Anita Active sportswear to offer a package of superb clothing.

The Anita Active air control DeltaPad sports bra and coordinating massage sports tights have both won design awards for superior fit, support and design.

The sports bra has been designed for optimum ventilation, resulting in a much cooler experience for the wearer.

Pair one with the matching massage sports tights, which are made from a special fabric featuring three-dimensional nubs that massage and tone as you wear them.

A soft wide waistband ensures comfort throughout your workout. The tights are ideal for your exercise regime or other activity such as flying when you want to increase circulation to the legs.

To be in with a chance of winning this superb prize tell us what links the words on the spine of this issue.

Answers, including phone number, to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by May 31. Good luck!



SPINE LINE COMPETITION

One of Graham Bound's pictures showing Argentine conscript soldiers in Port Stanley during the occupation of the town in 1982

“We gain a glimpse of their despair”



BACK IN THE SADDLE

Riders return to action at the UK Armed Forces Equestrian Championships – page 66



Falklands exhibit goes live

A UNIQUE collection of photos documenting the invasion of the Falklands taken by a former *Soldier* journalist have gone on display in the UK for the first time.

Graham Bound, who grew up in the territory's capital Port Stanley, captured the Argentine attack on April 2, 1982 and the 74-day occupation that followed on film.

Now his pictures are being displayed at the Historic Dockyard, Chatham in a showcase that commemorates the 40th anniversary of the conflict in the South Atlantic.

The exhibition – called *Everything Changed* – pulls together 40 images documenting life under the rule of the South American military junta as well as the islands' liberation.

A Royal Navy-led task force retook the territory in June following fierce fighting that cost the lives of three islanders as well as 255 British and 649 Argentine personnel.

Bound – who was 24 at the time and had founded the islands' only newspaper – openly took photos during the early stages of the occupation. But as the weeks

progressed, and repression mounted, he wielded his camera covertly.

The pictures selected for display have been restored and digitised by photographic expert Alex Schneiderman from a series of previously unprinted negatives.

An assistant editor on *Soldier* in the late 1990s and the author of several military books, Bound hoped the showcase would give visitors a unique perspective on the conflict.

He added: “Some 40 years after I took them, Alex has performed digital magic and brought my images to life – once written-off photographs are now the most dramatic.”

“In some of the pictures the light falls on the faces and eyes of the men and we gain a glimpse of their emotions – despair, pride, exhaustion, determination and fear.”

“I hope they remind people of the dramatic days of 1982 – when everything changed.”

The exhibition is running until June 14 and admission is included in an entry ticket to Chatham. Details of the event and other Falklands exhibits are available at thedockyard.co.uk ■

GOING GREAT GUNS

■ THE first steel has been cut for the Challenger 3's turret – a major part of the upgrade programme. The modernised platforms – 148 in all – will be delivered from 2027. The new turret will improve targeting, surveillance and survivability and includes a smooth bore 120mm gun able to use the latest generation of digitally programmed ammunition.





LEVEL PEAKS

SITKA ARROWHEAD EQUIPMENT

Focused on developing and manufacturing purpose-built technical products, Arrowhead Equipment is a natural extension of SITKA Gear.

Founded upon SITKA Gear's DNA and considered approach to design, the program leverages the materials science expertise of Gore® to provide purpose-built solutions for the specialist military end-user.

www.levelpeaks.com



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

GOLD AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING

Raise your hat

A FORMER Army photographer who has been living with a brain tumour is raising money for research into the disease.



Steve Blake – who served with the Royal Logistic Corps during his 23-year military career – encouraged colleagues at his

Fareham-based employer Giganet to take part in Wear a Hat Day, where participants part with cash to sport novelty headgear.

The 40-year-old has meningioma – the most common type of adult primary brain tumour – and underwent punishing surgery and radiotherapy after diagnosis five years ago.

Money raised:
£1,000+
For Brain Tumour Research

Pounding the miles

ENERGETIC individuals are being invited to sign up for a 26-mile challenge to raise money to help youngsters from bereaved military families. Those enlisting in the May Marathon can complete the demanding distance any way they

choose – or even in fancy dress – but must finish by the end of the month. Participants last year raised £7,000 for Scotty's Little Soldiers – which helps children from Armed Forces

households who have lost a parent – and those behind the good cause are hoping that the impressive total can be topped in the 2022 event. See scottychallenges.co.uk for info.



Target fund:
£7,000+
For Scotty's Little Soldiers

“
We are
exploring
future
support
”

The Starstreak missile will form part of the hardware supply



Picture: Steve Dock

DEFENCE'S EASTERN PROMISE

Training as well as kit will be in a package of support for Ukraine

SENIOR British defence personnel and ministers have hosted a top-level delegation from Ukraine to discuss future military aid in the face of Russian aggression.

High-ranking officers from the Eastern European state saw equipment – including missiles as well as armoured vehicles – shown on the Salisbury Plain Training Area.

The kit rolled out included the high-tech Starstreak air defence system – which the UK has recently supplied to Ukraine along with training on how to use the package.

A consignment of Javelin anti-armour missiles – a weapon which proved lethal against Taliban fortifications on Op Herrick in Afghanistan – has also been sent eastwards.

Ukrainian deputy defence minister Volodymyr Havrylov fronted the delegation of military representatives on behalf of the country's president Volodymyr Zelensky.

Topics on the agenda during talks included the challenges that troops

are facing in the fight against Vladimir Putin's forces to ensure future aid fits their requirements.

The UK has a long-standing relationship with Ukraine and has trained around 22,000 personnel over the past seven years covering medical skills, logistics, countering improvised explosive devices, leadership, planning, and infantry tactics.

Defence Procurement Minister Jeremy Quin said: “We are exploring options for future military support, including working with the UK defence industry and our Ukrainian counterparts into the longer term to ensure the equipment supplied continues to be both effective and sustainable.”

Armed Forces Minister James Heappey shared the sentiment, praising the country's forces for putting up a tenacious fight against an “illegal and unprovoked invasion”.

But he told reporters: “The job is far from done and the prime minister has directed we provide even more support in the next phase of this conflict.”

SETTING SAIL

THE Joint Service Adventurous Sail Training Centre is under British Army command after being run by the Royal Navy for the last 50 years. The Gosport-based centre is now part of the Army Adventurous Training Group, which vowed to continue the site's success as a centre of excellence.





Ground view

Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Paul Carney, offers his take on Service life...

BRITISH troops have worked with allies throughout history – from two world wars to more recent deployments in Afghanistan – and the ability to operate seamlessly with others has never been more important than in the world we now face.

As I put pen to paper for this column, there has been fighting in Ukraine for more than two months. It is the first time in decades that Europe has seen an aggressor attack another country and we have all witnessed the human tragedy unfolding via the media.

We should, however, be encouraged by the response of the international community to the crisis – which has united in its condemnation of Vladimir Putin's action while imposing far-reaching sanctions.

And far from fragmenting, as some had predicted, Nato has shown its resolve.

Members have rallied to an alliance that has stood the test of time; its militaries having worked together for more than 70 years.

Our soldiers have always been a vital component of this force – most recently we have seen The Royal Welsh take the lead of an expanded

Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup in Estonia, with personnel numbers on Op Cabrit doubled.

Danish as well as French troops are now working with us in the Baltic state too.

Partnerships are our strength – so it is important that we take every opportunity to develop our ability to work with allies and build the strongest possible relationships.

This means understanding each other at every level of the chain of command – and developing ties with opposite numbers in other countries.

This is one of my aims at this month's regimental sergeant majors' convention, to which senior warrant officers from Nato states have been invited. There will be discussions on several topics at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst event.

It will be an opportunity for the Army's leaders to benefit from an international perspective, learning how others do business and thinking about how we can better work together.

More widely, I want to see greater opportunities for exchanges and placements, because these are important ways we can build stronger future relationships.

“
Nato has shown its resolve
”

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Q What is your idea of perfect leave?

A Alternating between relaxing and adventurous holidays. Anything other than DIY!



Picture: Freepik/Racool Studio



Reservist sappers hone their skills at Longmoor

Our valued volunteers

COMMANDERS have often highlighted that the battlespace has become a complex place – as well as using traditional conventional forces, we have seen our potential adversaries deploy cyber attacks while using fake news as a potent weapon.

With niche areas of expertise required to counter these threats, our Reservists – and the skills they bring from civvy street – are critical to future success.

I recently had the privilege of meeting

volunteers from 3rd Military Intelligence Battalion in London. And while this column is not the place to discuss their work, these analysts have backgrounds ranging from student to scientist and the experience they bring is impressive.

We need to ensure we keep developing the Reserve – not just as a means of bolstering our force strength but for the knowledge its troops can bring from elsewhere.

Our volunteers punch well above their weight.

If the cap fits...



■ WITH private soldiers now able to apply to become pilots in the Army Air Corps, I have been struck by the huge number of career opportunities across the Service. There are many roles available in all kinds of specialist areas.

Last month I visited troops at 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery, Royal Artillery.

Its personnel are trained as special observers – but the role is open to all cap badges and anyone who can make the grade and complete the demanding selection course.

It is important to keep an open mind about your career – and make sure you check in with the education centre to see how staff there can help keep you qualified. Don't lose sight of opportunity.

THE BIG PICTURE

Alexander Stadium, Birmingham

Dropping in

THE Red Devils Army Parachute Display Team touch down at one of the key venues for this year's Commonwealth Games.

Their appearance formed part of a military-led test event at Alexander Stadium, which has undergone a £72 million revamp ahead of the sporting showcase and will host the athletics competitions, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies.

In addition to the aerial arrival, the Service provided a thorough examination of the track and field facilities as it staged the UK Midlands Army Athletics Championships.

Around 350 personnel from Regular and Reserve units across Wales, and the West and East Midlands, were in action in a host of disciplines as they looked to qualify for the Army Athletics Association finals to be held in Aldershot later in the summer.

Picture: Birmingham City Council

Got an impressive shot of your own?

Email it to news@soldiermagazine.co.uk





NEED TO

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'The naysayers

One man, **111** days at sea,
one world record



spurred me on'

▶ AFTER a punishing three-and-a-half months alone on the Atlantic Ocean, Cpl Jack Jarvis (RE) became the first person in history to singlehandedly row from mainland Europe to the east coast of America.

But his record-breaking feat went down to the wire.

Now safely back on UK soil, he gave *Soldier* the lowdown on broken bones, celebrity shout-outs and digging deep on the home straight...

BY FAR the lowest point of the whole crossing was actually the last 36 hours. The current off Florida is vicious – about three or four knots running south to north, plus there was a 20-knot wind.

It was firing me northwards and I wasn't making any progress west. I missed my first landing point by ten nautical miles and was lucky to make the second.

That's when I got really down. I was thinking about all my friends and

family who were there waiting. If I had to take a tow-in it would have become an assisted crossing – all my work and 18 months of planning would have been for nothing.

I had two options – keep going and maybe make it, or stop and definitely not make it. All I could do was battle through. Eventually I rowed through the current and started making headway to my inlet.

Relief, fulfilment and joy were the main feelings when I made land. It was epic. My mum and dad, and all my friends, family and cousins were there – it was amazing.

And it was nice to be able to have a few beers after being teetotal for 111 days.

I set out to complete the challenge in good physical shape and I mostly achieved that.

Apart from some pain in my lower back and bum and my hands being quite dry I've got no major ailments.

I did break my finger, but that's just something that happens at sea. I was pulling in my parachute anchor and all of the sudden the rope went tight and slammed my finger into the deck cleat.

It was pretty gopping – I remember looking at it and it was all distorted. The pain was bad, so I took the day off, although I didn't get much rest stuck in my warm, stuffy cabin getting chucked about by the waves.

The bandage I put on came off in



about two hours, so I just carried on without one. At that point

I probably had about 1,000 miles to go, so it wasn't ideal.

I never doubted I would make it, though. The thought of all the naysayers spurred me on. People didn't think I could do it, or that I'd be able to get all the funding together in the first place because I didn't have official backing. I used that as my motivation. I would say in my head, »



” ‘there is no way I’m going to give them the satisfaction of being right’.

As I got closer to the end I started doubling up on rations, which

improved morale.

In terms of solitude the first ten days were the worst but strangely it got easier to cope with as time went on.

Messages from home helped keep me going. I also got shout-outs from people like David Beckham (below), Steven Redgrave (above), Gary Neville and Jonny Wilkinson (page 23) – it was mad.

The people donating also held me accountable and would make me want to row harder. I’ve been blown away by their generosity and am buzzing that I exceeded my £50,000 target. It hasn’t really sunk in fully yet.

There are seven billion people on the planet and I’m the only person to do what I’ve just done.

I think others will try it now and that’s fine. Everyone remembers Roger Bannister as the first person to run a mile in under four minutes, but no one remembers who did it second.

So if someone beats the record I’m not bothered – it’s easy once you know that it is possible.



In numbers

£64,200

Cpl Jarvis’s current fundraising total for Braintrust

10kg

weight lost during the challenge

4,600

distance, in miles, of the crossing

Gut feelings

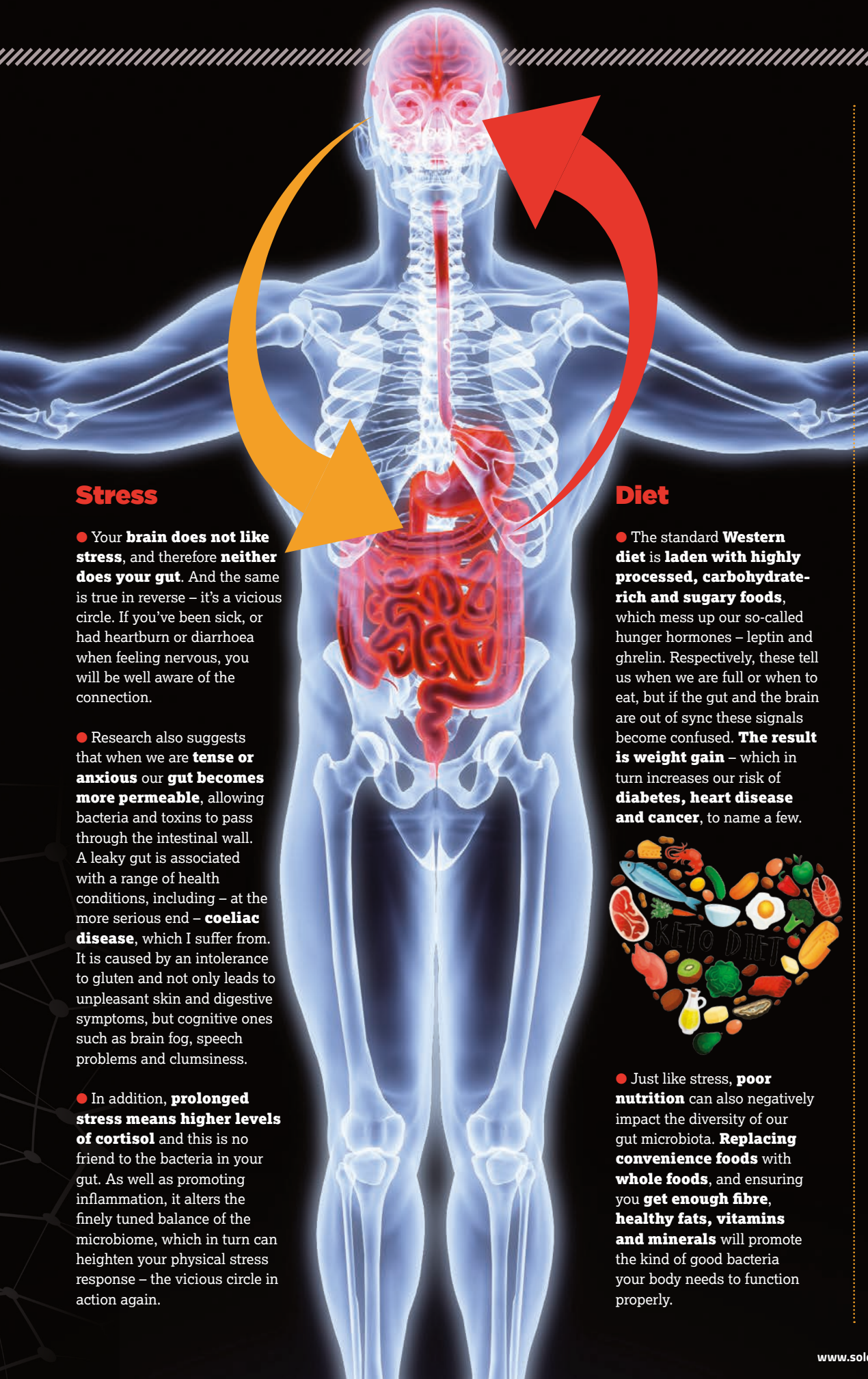


The intriguing connection between the brain and digestive system

► **AS ANYONE** who’s felt butterflies in their tummy or “listened to their gut” can relate to, the mind and the gastrointestinal tract are closely linked.

Known as the enteric nervous system, if any part is off kilter then the rest is likely to suffer too.

But as Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineer-turned-diet coach Kev Mason explains, modern life negatively affects this delicate balance in two major ways...



Stress

● Your **brain does not like stress**, and therefore **neither does your gut**. And the same is true in reverse – it's a vicious circle. If you've been sick, or had heartburn or diarrhoea when feeling nervous, you will be well aware of the connection.

● Research also suggests that when we are **tense or anxious** our **gut becomes more permeable**, allowing bacteria and toxins to pass through the intestinal wall. A leaky gut is associated with a range of health conditions, including – at the more serious end – **coeliac disease**, which I suffer from. It is caused by an intolerance to gluten and not only leads to unpleasant skin and digestive symptoms, but cognitive ones such as brain fog, speech problems and clumsiness.

● In addition, **prolonged stress means higher levels of cortisol** and this is no friend to the bacteria in your gut. As well as promoting inflammation, it alters the finely tuned balance of the microbiome, which in turn can heighten your physical stress response – the vicious circle in action again.

Diet

● The standard **Western diet** is **laden with highly processed, carbohydrate-rich and sugary foods**, which mess up our so-called hunger hormones – leptin and ghrelin. Respectively, these tell us when we are full or when to eat, but if the gut and the brain are out of sync these signals become confused. **The result is weight gain** – which in turn increases our risk of **diabetes, heart disease and cancer**, to name a few.



● Just like stress, **poor nutrition** can also negatively impact the diversity of our gut microbiota. **Replacing convenience foods** with **whole foods**, and ensuring you **get enough fibre, healthy fats, vitamins and minerals** will promote the kind of good bacteria your body needs to function properly.



Profile

Name: Kev Mason

Age: 39

Military career:

13 years as a recovery mechanic in the REME, deploying on Operation Telic and serving across Germany

Civvy street:

After losing 40kg by ditching sugar and carbohydrates, he set up his ketogenic diet and influencing business, **ketokev.com**

In numbers

500m

Neurons – or **nerve cells** – attached to the digestive tract

30+

Neurotransmitters – or **chemical messengers** – operating within the enteric nervous system

Did you know?

Our ability to “listen to our gut” starts early – when we are babies. We feel hungry, so we cry and are fed. That way we learn to make a connection between a “gut feeling” and an outcome

Trade test

REME troops showcase their skill
in new training assignment

► PERSONNEL from 17 Field Company, 4 Armoured Close Support Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers recently returned from Exercise Kambra Sun in The Gambia.

It was the first company-level deployment to the West African country by British troops in 40 years and saw them share trade skills with their counterparts from the Gambian Armed Forces in a series of short-term training teams (STTTs).

The trip also allowed the three platoons to complete training and validation exercises and pilot the core combat skills section of the new individual training requirement (ITR), which replaced military annual training tests (Matts) last month.

Here the company's OC, Maj Matt Keogh (REME), reflects on the challenges of the deployment and the skills his personnel needed in the field...



How did this benefit UK personnel?

STTTs are usually the remit of officers and senior NCOs, but we were throwing junior NCOs front and centre and they were exposed to something they have never done before. As part of the ITR they took their sections away and taught their own troops. Everyone would go through the old Matts with one instructor and qualify – now the junior NCOs lead and that empowers them to own their section. They worked hard but got a decent amount of downtime, in which they travelled around The Gambia.

What were the main aims for the STTTs?

This was the first time the Gambians had received bespoke equipment to support training. They want to conduct United Nations operations in future, and we were there to enable them to achieve that. Over three phases we identified areas to develop – including vehicle electrics, first parade checks, diagnostics and preventative maintenance – before focusing on improving the availability of Gambian equipment. By the end, 115 vehicles were triaged, with 32 repaired. We also built an armoury to UK specification and upgraded workshop infrastructure as well as delivering training packages. A significant enhancement to their capability was the gifting of a vehicle diagnostics computer, which our mechanics taught the Gambians to operate.



In numbers:

1982

year of **the last company-level deployment** of UK troops to **The Gambia**

95

British soldiers on the exercise, two thirds of which came from **17 Field Company** and the remainder from across **101 Logistic Brigade**

FOUR

length of **Ex Kambra Sun**, in weeks

SKILLS & DRILLS

How receptive were the host soldiers to the training?

We have an entrenched history with the Gambian Armed Forces – their doctrine is British. While there was a massive gap in terms of safety culture, it was easy to trade ideas and knowledge. Their guys all spoke English, were keen to learn and constantly took notes and asked questions. They are a really forward leaning and receptive army.



How did your troops adapt to conditions in country?

Our tradesmen did not realise how lucky they are in the British Army. If something goes wrong, you find out what it is and throw in a replacement part. In The Gambia there's a real shortage of spares, so while we were teaching their vehicle mechanics our personnel were thrown headfirst into the concept of "repair by repair", as opposed to "repair by replace", which is real back-to-basics stuff. We also helped to enhance the infrastructure in workshops and tackle some of the issues around fuel, which is low in quality. We had to think hard about developing an in-country solution that was economically viable – as Covid masks were everywhere, the troops showed them how they could be used to filter the fuel when filling up.



It all helps

How **6** small changes to your driving could save you cash

IN NUMBERS

25

percentage increase in fuel usage when driving at 80mph instead of 70mph

39

additional drag, in per cent, from a roofbox

► WITH petrol, diesel and electricity prices at record highs, making your fuel go further is more important than ever.

We asked WO2 Daz King (RLC), master driver at 11th Security Force Assistance Brigade, to share his top tips for squeezing more miles out of a gallon...



1 Don't skip the service

Regular maintenance makes your car run more efficiently and therefore improves fuel consumption. It's particularly important to make sure your tyres are inflated to the correct pressure shown in your owner's manual as under- and overinflated tyres adversely affect fuel economy

2 Be gentle with your right foot

Excessive speed is the biggest fuel-guzzling factor so having a light touch on the accelerator and ensuring you speed up gently is key to fuel-efficient driving. Figures from the Department for Transport show that driving on the motorway at 80mph uses around 25 per cent more fuel than at 70mph

3 Anticipate, so as not to lose momentum

Keeping the car moving at the right speed is essential to making fuel go further. Drive as smoothly as possible, being gentle on the steering, accelerator and brakes

4 Take off roof bars and boxes when out of use

These create wind resistance and cause your car to use more fuel through the drag

effect. This is increased the faster you drive. According to the Energy Saving Trust an empty roof rack adds 16 per cent drag when driving at 75mph. At the same speed, a roof box adds 39 per cent, making your vehicle much less fuel efficient

5 Think twice before using climate control

Don't switch on your air conditioning unless you really have to as it uses engine power and therefore fuel. This goes for heating as well as cooling, so try to dress for the weather, even inside your car

6 Lighten the load

While this isn't going to make the biggest difference to your mpg figures, it stands to reason that the heavier a vehicle is the more fuel it will use. For that reason, don't keep unnecessary items in your boot as they all add weight to your vehicle, which isn't going to help with fuel economy



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7 CONTINENTS**

RACE THE WORLD 2022



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EUROPE



NORTH AMERICA



SOUTH AMERICA



ANTARCTICA

The Seven Continents **Virtual** Challenge

14th September - 22nd October 2022



WHAT IS IT?

A virtual race across the seven continents of the world in support of ABF The Soldiers' Charity - the Army's National Charity.



WHO CAN TAKE PART?

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Choose any number of continents (or all seven continents if you want a real challenge) and race the distance on foot, by bike, in the pool - however you want to do it! Distances will be recorded via Strava.



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OLIVE TREES, SORE



KNEES AND TTPS

Soldiers rethink
war fighting in
the Med



CYPRUS – the land of windsurfing and early finishes. Or at least that's what troops from 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment might have hoped when they arrived on the island for their two-year stint as the Regional Standby Battalion last summer.

Then again, these are the same troops who made their entrance via a punishing relay across Europe which saw them run, swim, cycle and row to reach the country. Amazing what some people will do to avoid a Royal Air Force trooping flight.

But The Vikings are not interested in taking things easy. And as it turns out, the manner in which they arrived in Cyprus was an entirely realistic foretaste of what was to come.

On the island's Western Sovereign Base Area, just a stone's throw from Episkopi, the soldiers have found themselves thrashing across hills and rocky fields in unseasonable sub-zero temperatures that are as much a shock to the indigenous olive trees as they are the body.

But there is little time to dwell on this – nor on their bruised knees from the rock-strewn vegetation surrounding them – as even the newest members of the battalion are discovering.

"It was just nonstop grief from the enemy," a fatigued looking Pte Patrick Chesters (pictured right) tells *Soldier* after the defensive phase of Exercise Ares Storm.

"We had one hour off, two on, for 48 hours; it has definitely been demanding."

His first ever battlegroup exercise, this package has presented the married 21-year-old with a welcome opportunity to get to know his Dhekelia-based colleagues better, as someone who lives outside the block.

But a brief pause in the inevitable "new bloke jobs" to chat to this magazine is as close to downtime as this Serviceman is likely to get for the moment.

"It's good to see how things work at this stage because obviously all my training to this point has been platoon level," he continues. "But there's a lot more that you need be across at battlegroup level. You have to stay disciplined for longer. I'm enjoying the challenge."

The exercise has seen 450 soldiers and 86 vehicles, along with supporting elements from a military working dogs troop and the Royal Air Force's 84 Squadron, test their core war-fighting skills in three rotations designed to fuse the companies with their supporting elements.

And with Royal Anglian personnel even playing the enemy force, it has also been a welcome opportunity for the battalion to design its own collective training. With a final attack looming in conditions a good ten degrees below what might be expected at this time of year, things are not easing up for The Vikings.

"It's going to be a hard, cold, long night," Pte Chesters concedes.

And he isn't wrong. Having already undertaken an urban raid, a punishing hillside advance-to-contact and the defence of an electronic warfare asset from sniper attack, the troops are braced to launch a dawn assault on an abandoned Turkish village near Paramali, where every soldier's movement will be scrutinised in detail thanks to their tactical engagement simulation (or Tes) kit.

It is a training opportunity that, according to battalion 2iC Maj Nick McGinley, is not lost on participants amid today's fragile global situation.

"You don't have to motivate people much right now to know that what they are doing here is important," the officer says.



"This is about trying to get everyone back into a war-fighting mindset. And if you want to train everyone properly you need to run out the whole battalion.

"Not only are we running this exercise ourselves, we are still maintaining our security duties on the island.

"We have had to literally pull everyone out the door to make that happen."

As the largest exercise on Cyprus for almost a decade, Ares Storm has even caught the eye of Commander British Forces Cyprus, Maj Gen Rob Thomson (see panel), and members of the Cypriot National Guard, who observed some of the serials.

Commanding officer Lt Col Graham Goodey says continuous improvement is vital for his soldiers.

"Everything we do rests on our core combat skills," he says.

"And as with Viking Storm last year, everyone will come away from this that bit better at what they do.

"The speed with which troops can relearn and re-find their top gear is impressive. You notice a big difference when you train little and often.

"Getting to exercise support weapons, light aid detachment, battlegroup HQ – the glue that holds the battlegroup together – has been important.

"You might have good elements but if they don't hang together well then they aren't effective."

Collective training is not the only area where the package has broken new ground. It is also the first time the Royal Anglians have worked together tactically with the island's other resident unit – 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment.

Now at the forefront of Army experimentation as the Service's Enhanced Light Force Battalion, a company of its soldiers are attached to the package to trial the nano-UAS, dismounted situational awareness kit (DSA) and robotic platoon vehicles they are currently examining.

More importantly, though, they are here to develop new »



A PLACE TO UP YOUR GAME (if the wallet can cope)

COMMANDER British Forces Cyprus is clear about what the Mediterranean island has to offer to British Service personnel.

"Cyprus is a place of extraordinary personal and professional opportunity," Maj Gen Rob Thomson tells *Soldier*.

"We talk about IQ and emotional intelligence, but I also talk about CQ – cultural intelligence.

"And a stint here certainly allows soldiers to gain that.

"We work with the Cypriot National Guard, and defence engagement happens here on an almost-daily basis.

"I think personnel love that. And in today's world we need our troops to be comfortable being expeditionary.

"We are also supporting operations, day in, day out – whether that's through RAF Akrotiri, the Regional Standby Battalion or on Op Shader.

"Our people are trained to be ready, and I was delighted that we could send soldiers forward during the Kabul evacuation.

"Cyprus is great for training too, and with Exercise Ares Storm we wanted to prove that you can run a battalion-level exercise to keep that readiness going.

"You get sore knees here; the terrain is hard. And we have lots of things to bring more panache to exercises – from military working dogs to bomb disposal, Watchkeeper and much more."

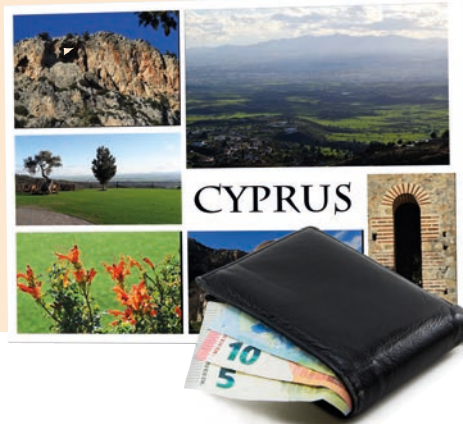
However, a major shake-up of local overseas allowance rates last year has left some Cyprus-based troops out of pocket.

Personnel told this magazine the removal of the payment's vehicle and respite provision – which leaves soldiers having to claim these costs separately and means a reduction in the overall daily rate – was causing problems for some. And that is before spiralling living costs and the reduction in paid-for flights home are considered.

Cpl Niki Grantham (Yorks) said: "For most people now the cost of living out here is past the point of expensive.

"That has an impact on welfare. The blocks at Episkopi are good, but life on this island requires cash and I am genuinely worried about guys here losing money."

Maj Gen Thomson said the issue was being looked at and his team were staying in close communication with troops over the changes.





» tactics, techniques and procedures that will be required to incorporate these ground-breaking devices into Service life.

And it is fair to say Ares Storm has helped them establish how such technologies might work, or not, on combat operations – with some tantalising results.

“I’ve had more situational awareness here than on any exercise ever before,” Lt Pete Burke (Yorks, pictured below), one of those testing the DSA, tells us.

The device allows commanders to see the location of their soldiers on a screen as well as maps, photos and messages – all in real-time. Until now, such information could only be relayed by radio or via a headquarters location.

“The main game-changer is the ability to see where every single soldier is,” Lt Burke explains. “Now all the lads have better awareness of what’s going on.

“And it saves so much time. It helps soldiers see exactly what is going to happen, rather than having to build model pits or write notes and take everyone through things.

“Similarly with the drone, you can send it out to check high features rather than sending patrols.

“Now it’s all about working out new tactics to fit these things.”

He continues: “I love it – I’m not a technical geek but I really enjoy thinking outside the box about how we can change our operating models to accommodate this stuff.

“Having the freedom to try new things is so interesting.”

When Lt Burke and his colleagues return to the UK at the end of this Mediterranean stint, their expertise will be absorbed into the newly formed Experimentation and Trials Group to drive even more battlefield innovation.

It is a responsibility that isn’t lost on their battalion, even in this relatively remote location.



“This is an exciting time for us; this experimentation work puts 2 Yorks on the right side of history and is a huge privilege,” says CO Lt Col James Ashworth.

“But there is also huge responsibility.

“When it was first announced our soldiers were excited about the equipment and having their voices heard, but worried about whether they would still deploy.

“But there’s no firewall between experimentation and operations. In fact, some of the best innovation happens on operations – so experimentation has to carry through there to fully understand the threat we need to counter.”

With training like this under their belts, and a deployment on Op Newcombe looming, 2 Yorks soldiers will be better placed than ever to influence how the Army fights in future.

And according to the CO, it is the work of younger personnel such as Lt Burke that will be critical to success.

“The modern generation get this stuff really quickly,” he says. “We talk about cognitive burden, but there’s an interesting generational divide on that.

“The younger troops are able to process a huge amount of information.”

As Exercise Ares Storm concludes, the Cyprus weather almost immediately snaps back to something resembling warm – yet another reminder of the cruel unpredictability that can greet soldiers on operations.

But equipped with the latest kit, some world-class training locations, and a new permission to think outside the box, these fighters will provide winning answers to whatever uncertainties confront them in future. ■



CYPRUS FACTFILE

In 1960 a treaty of establishment allowed Cyprus to become an independent republic free from British control

The UK has two resident infantry battalions (currently 1 R Anglian and 2 Yorks) and supporting arms on the island



“Cyprus is a place of extraordinary opportunity”





“
**I'm not
comfortable
with an Army of
just 73,000,
it's too small**
”

Gen Sir Mark Carleton-Smith has achieved much during his time as chief of the general staff, but not everything has gone to plan...

“

What achievements are you most proud of after four years in the job?

Our response to the national emergency of Covid for a start. It was a superb demonstration of what we could do for the country well beyond the specifics of our core role. Then, at very short notice in August last year, we were able to pull off an extraordinary evacuation operation in Kabul in dramatic circumstances that hadn't been anticipated. More broadly, I feel I'm leaving an Army that is self-confident and much clearer in its understanding of its purpose than when I took over. Back in 2018 it didn't have a vision for dealing with the changing nature of warfare. We had been very focused for the best part of 20 years on a specific set of issues to do with counterterrorism resurgence, but a new set of geostrategic challenges was emerging. There was a return of great power rivalry and peer-on-peer state competition along with the consequences of the technological revolution. The information age was upon us and I felt I had to help redefine the Army's relevance, credibility and utility to deal with that.

What about from a personal perspective?

The creation of The Ranger Regiment is something I'm proud of. I was playing with the idea of such a unit as soon as I arrived in post in 2018 and pitched the idea to the defence secretary in early summer of 2020. The Future Soldier initiative was the opportunity to bring it to life. It will professionalise our relationship with foreign forces because it is a culturally attuned unit working with long-term goals. The Rangers will also be good for our soldiers to aspire to join – and that applies to anyone in our organisation because it is an all-arms capability. It will take them to fascinating places and allow them to work with interesting people. It will also be good for retention and recruitment because most Service people want variety and challenge, and the Rangers provide that.

Have events in Ukraine altered your opinion at all about what was set out in Future Soldier?

In many respects it has reinforced some of the conclusions we came to. We were clear that Russia was an acute problem, but we expected it to manifest itself in a more hybrid, unconventional fashion – bots as well as boots, subversion and disinformation. They'd done similar in Georgia and Crimea and so the surprise was that Putin went all in at very significant scale and in a very crude, conventional, old-style manner. It's difficult to align that strategy with his political objective of regime change in Ukraine so he has clearly miscalculated. He certainly didn't count on the Ukrainian armed forces' resilience or the international consensus that his actions galvanised.

Has that conflict put a spotlight on our Army? Having 148 Challengers, for example, raised a few eyebrows...

It's certainly highlighted the fact that mass and size are important. I'm not comfortable with an Army of just 73,000. It's too small. That was never part of our proposition going into the review. In fact, I was working to direction that we regrow



the Army to 82,000 – and we have done that successfully over the past four years. So being limited to 73,000 people was quite a surprise – and it's a bit of an arbitrary figure

because it's just a price point. What's important is that it's an amalgamation of what we think we can afford and what we can translate into a coherent, balanced capability. There's no point having an Army that you can't equip properly.

Does our smaller Army along with events in Ukraine mean our personnel can expect more training around Nato integration rather than expeditionary activity?

In terms of our expeditionary intent, we need to have a dynamic presence in Europe, but not exclusively so. We still have interests and problems to deal with in sub-Saharan Africa, for example. But Nato integration sits at the heart of our defence policy and that organisation has had an electric shock because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It's now busy reinventing its concepts for deterrence and defence of the Euro-Atlantic region. It's supercharged the alliance in terms of their interoperability agendas so they can work better and more closely together. Consequently, our personnel can expect to be actively engaged



“
I’m so glad
I joined the
Army as a
teenager
”

in training with more partner nations abroad more often. It’s one of the reasons we have scaled back Batus. Amazing training ground that it is, it doesn’t allow us to train alongside the European allies we are going to be operating even more closely with in the future.

Does that mean even more investment in Germany?

I see more of it across Europe. Germany is a good springboard, but I see more investment in the high north with our Scandinavian partners and our Baltic friends plus a more regular pulse of training activity with allies in Southern Europe, such as Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey.

If the Regular Army is going to be more often engaged abroad, does that leave too much to do on the home front for a Reserve that’s not going to increase in size?

Admittedly, their numbers will remain broadly static, in the mid-twenty thousand or so, but that’s still quite a lot of people. We need to get more out of them because we can’t hook the Regular force held at high readiness into a whole host of domestic tasks. The government looks to have an appetite to use the Army more than they used to, so we should expect a higher level of

commitment in support of national resilience. It’s an important role the Reserve can play. They represent the communities in which they live so it is common sense for them to be our nominated first responders at home.

Is there a flip side to that? Many Reservists join up to spend their time soldiering, not dealing with floods.

It’s important that we provide variety. The Reserve will continue training for and playing a vital role in supporting the Regulars when they are at war, as they so ably demonstrated in both Iraq and Afghanistan. But we also need them to be available to support the UK at home.

How do you keep in touch with the opinions of ordinary soldiers in the Reserve or other parts of the Army?

The command sergeant majors and the Army sergeant major are playing an increasingly important role. The information and insight flows both ways. It keeps people like me not only in touch but grounded. I talk to the Army sergeant major maybe once a month and he’s out visiting personnel all the time. The CGS Briefing Team is also vital and they give the Army Board a pretty good feel for the mood of the junior soldier. ”

“
Junior NCOs
really are
the glue of
the Army
”



» We recently visited Cyprus and the mood wasn't that great among some personnel there. They loved the work but reported the same old gripes around housing, food and overseas allowances. How do you feel about that?

In terms of the lived experience there is still a lot of friction in our systems. When you are asking as much of our people as we do, we can't lose sight of the fact that they are essentially volunteers and if we don't get their domestic and home fronts right then we'll lose good and able people. I think it is still the case that some personnel feel their lives get out of balance when we ask more of them than they can comfortably give at a particular stage in their lives. Cyprus is a fascinating island to live on and full of opportunities with exciting training programmes, but if a soldier's opinion is still that the package isn't good enough then there's a real issue there.

Do you have any regrets around what else you might have achieved during your term as CGS?

I wish I had been bolder earlier around our personnel policies and career employment opportunities. We are creating much more flexible careers now, but it has taken a long time to work that through the system – in fact it's taken at least four years. If

there had been more career choice and flexibility previously we might have retained lots of good people who we've now lost. Also, I wish I had got a grip of the issue of bad behaviour sooner and the sense of just how much bullying, discrimination and harassment so many of our people feel. There is almost no part of the Army where it doesn't exist. It's a cultural problem and there's only so much you can do from the top down. We had to open the conversation up and hear from the shop floor about people's experiences. That led to Teamwork, our overarching strategy for diversity, inclusion and equality issues. There's no point in ramming topics like that down people's throats, but no one argues about wanting to be part of a better team. Our feedback shows Teamwork is working because the way it's been implemented makes it feel real and relevant to individual units.

Will the junior NCO academy that's being set up be a positive step for improving culture too?

Yes, it's going to be a key feature. It's not my idea but I will take credit for approving it! We knew we were sitting on a centre of international excellence in Sandhurst so why were we not doing that for our junior NCOs? They really are the glue of the Army and I think these particular soldiers are hugely influential and



also challenged so much more than when I first joined up.

Why is that?

Because of social media. These junior leaders are operating in a world where they can be criticised anonymously. The challenge for a relative youngster to corral a team of soldiers of similar age who are all living very different lives in their spare time, alone and online in their SLA, is immense. I was a commanding officer when Skype was a typo, the cloud was what rained on you at Brecon and people occasionally bitched a bit behind your back at most. But now that bitching goes viral in an instant.

Did you ever suffer mentally through bullying, PTSD or any other issues?

PTSD is obviously a real thing and we are much more alive to the challenges it poses for our people than ever before. I don't think it has ever seriously affected me, at least not yet, as I'm aware these things can manifest themselves at later stages in life. Visceral experiences can affect anyone. I found it difficult to fit back into the domestic routine after extended periods serving on operations. You look forward to it immensely but instead you become the source of a disruptive atmosphere at

home. I got better at handling it over the years but it's not easy and individuals must find their own ways of dealing with it depending on their experiences.

Have you achieved what you wanted to when it comes to better mental health care for soldiers and veterans?

No, not yet – it's still a growing issue. I assumed soldiers were more resilient than their civilian counterparts but our statistics suggest that it's no longer the case. Mental health is a crucial factor for the Army – personnel need to be fit in both body and mind. So there's more work to do.

What's your opinion on the report last year which said two thirds of women in the Armed Forces have experienced bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination during their careers?

More should have been done about these issues earlier, before my time in post and during my time. But we are on an accelerating journey in improving things. Maybe it's a generational thing – I don't know for sure – but in years past women had to conform to an Army designed for the requirements of men. However, today's generation are not prepared to accept that and are much more vocal about why that's not right and why it doesn't lead to a more capable Service. If they are not able to give their very best then we are not benefiting from the full sum of their talents. The Army is now much less tolerant of bad behaviours toward women and encourages people to call it out – although it still takes a lot of moral courage to engage with the system and have faith that you will be supported. There are still some deeply ingrained bad behaviours we must deal with, but I think over time a range of measures, including things like the junior NCO academy, will really help drive change.

What else do you think needs to be done?

Women need to have role models at the highest level and we need to give them the opportunity to show how good they are and the confidence to achieve their goals.

If women need to be 'given' the opportunity, doesn't that mean the system is still biased against them?

I believe systemic bias does still exist, yes. But it is something we are working hard to erode. The Army is still a male-dominated and male-orientated organisation, but we are trying hard to change attitudes through training and education. Appointing Maj Gen Sharon Nesmith as the British Army's first female deputy chief of the general staff and lieutenant general (page 15) will go a long way in providing a senior role model. She will bring fresh ideas and perspective and is the right person at the right time to be the Army's number two.

You relinquish your post next month, so how would you sum up your time as CGS?

Overall, just proud to have been the custodian of something unique. Looking back, I'm so glad I joined the Army as a teenager and stayed in for a full career. I can honestly say I have enjoyed every single minute of it. ■





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TWO SIDES OF A STORY

Reflections from the Falklands War, 40 years to the month»



TWO SIDES OF A STORY

LIFE DOWN SOUTH

Britain's Royal Navy-led task force began strikes in the Falklands with intense battles following

Steve Duffy



STEVE Duffy's blood still runs cold when he remembers the Royal Navy drills set in motion if a vessel at sea was facing attack from the skies.

The shout "air raid warning red" would spur a hive of activity to effectively lock down the ship. With hatches slammed shut to stop water flooding in if ordnance hit home, the sense of fear among the Falklands-bound soldiers sealed below decks as fast jets closed in was palpable.

"Even now – 40 years on from the conflict – I still feel a sense of dread at those words," the former soldier with 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards admitted as he recalled the tense moments before landing on the islands.

"We had already seen British vessels sunk by the time we were in range of Argentine forces and now we were being shut in below – the logic being that during an attack the sailors must place the safety of the ship above all else."

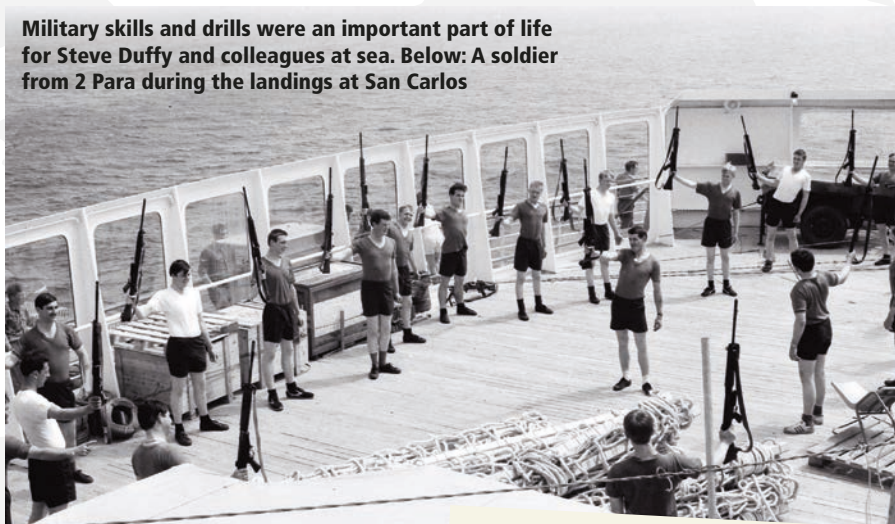
It was the reality of a high-intensity expeditionary campaign for which the modern Army is now well prepared. But 40 years ago – when Argentina occupied the Falklands – this type of deployment was well off the radar.

The attack on the islands had come amid the rolling Op Banner counter-insurgency action in Northern Ireland and tensions with a belligerent Soviet Union in Western Europe. Although the South American nation had long laid claim to the Atlantic territory – and negotiations had been ongoing – an outright invasion was never expected.

As the Argentine action was greeted with outrage in the UK, however, the then British PM Margaret Thatcher was soon announcing the formation of a Royal Navy-led task force, which would attempt to retake the islands.

Royal Marines from 45 Commando were the first to leave on the 8,000-mile journey –

Military skills and drills were an important part of life for Steve Duffy and colleagues at sea. Below: A soldier from 2 Para during the landings at San Carlos



departing Southampton aboard the RFA Stromness on April 7 – while 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment left Portsmouth on liner SS Canberra soon after. Other infantrymen followed on in short order.

The end of April saw the task force retake the occupied Falklands dependency of South Georgia – to the east of the parent islands – without a fight. But seaborne fighting erupted as May arrived when Argentine cruiser General Belgrano was

sunk by submarine HMS Conqueror. More than 300 of her crew were killed in the attack, carried out amid intelligence that the vessel was preparing for a strike on UK ships.

The South American adversary would hit back two days later, with an air-launched Exocet missile killing 20 sailors and dealing a fatal blow to destroyer HMS Sheffield – the first of several British vessels to be lost.

Meanwhile, Royal Air Force Vulcan bombers had attacked the runway at Port Stanley while Sea Harriers – now in range of the islands from carriers HMS Hermes and Invincible – were engaging the airfield as well as other targets.

Duffy, who had heard about the invasion while on a pipes and drums course in Scotland, was soon recalled to a battalion that had been on public duties in London. Having first exercised at Sennybridge, the 21-year-old found himself sailing southwards on May 12. His unit, along with several others including 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards and 4 Regiment, Royal Artillery, would deploy with 5th Infantry Brigade.

“We sailed on the QE2 – a luxury liner requisitioned for the campaign – which was surreal,” he added. “There were crowds at the dock to see us off – which was strange in itself as not many people paid much attention to the Army back then.

“In 1982, the Second World War had finished less than 40 years previously and was still a fresh memory – it felt as if we were all living out scenes of films we had seen.”

The soldiers on the cruise ship found it had lost nothing of its class despite its new passengers. The civvy crew, who had courageously volunteered to stay aboard, provided outstanding catering while two cans of beer a day were permitted.

However, military standards were strictly maintained through a daily programme of PT – which involved soldiers tabbing around the liner’s decks. “We were also able to use our rifles for the first time in a while,” said Duffy. “The troops fired off the helicopter deck near the swimming pool.”

But thoughts of combat remained distant despite the ongoing military escalation. “We did not think that we would be called upon to do any fighting and that diplomacy would prevail by the time we arrived,” he added.

Some way ahead of the QE2, Gus Hales – from 9 Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers – had been approaching the Falklands on board the Canberra. The then 24-year-old NCO remembered the luxury liner-turned-

Captured Argentine personnel at Goose Green



troop ship taking on a very different dynamic as it sailed within range of the enemy and concerns mounted that an Argentine submarine might be shadowing.

“As we closed on the Falklands there was an altogether more sinister feel,” he added. “The portholes were blacked out and movement around the vessel was limited – it was all designed to make our profile as invisible as possible.

“If you looked outside you could see the Royal Navy presence and task force ships all around protecting us – it was actually an awesome sight.”

Hales recalled the soldiers being in sound shape as a result of solid phys while an improvised range saw them use rubbish bags as targets.

“The crossing was also an opportunity for us to catch up on classroom stuff,” he added. “There were lectures and other talks on different aspects of soldiering that were given to us by subject matter experts.”

After the tension at sea, the Serviceman finally came ashore unopposed at San Carlos on May 21 – digging in and establishing defensive positions before embarking on tasks that included patrols around the area.

The landings that followed soon after were not so fortunate, with the Argentine air force mounting a series of low-level raids against the incoming ships. Several would be sunk and damaged in an area that would infamously become known to the British personnel as “Bomb Alley”.

Duffy and his colleagues would soon arrive to face the air threat and a series of intense clashes against Argentine troops. Meanwhile Hales, now battling the approaching Falklands winter, was grimly aware that the fighting was imminent – colleagues in 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment would soon strike adversaries at Goose Green.

As he heard the drone of an Argentine Pucara ground attack aircraft somewhere in the skies, the reality dawned that he might not be coming home. ■

FALKLANDS WAR: MAY 1982

MAY 1

Operation Black Buck. A Vulcan from the RAF attacks Stanley airfield; Harriers from the task force begin strikes against targets on the Falklands



MAY 2

Argentine cruiser ARA General Belgrano is sunk after being attacked by Royal Navy submarine HMS Conqueror

MAY 4

Royal Navy destroyer HMS Sheffield is hit by an Exocet anti-ship missile. The vessel later sinks. Second Vulcan attack on Stanley airfield

MAY 6



UK accepts United Nations mediation offer



TWO SIDES OF A STORY

DIGGING IN DEEP

Argentina had faced a stiff battle to take the islands it long claimed – now its forces were committed to their defence



DIEGO Garcia Quiroga's memories of the Falklands War are a grim mixture of a world alternately darkened by blood loss and morphine-induced hallucination.

As part of the Argentine Navy's elite tactical divers' group, he had been part of a planned op to snatch British governor Rex Hunt in the hope that the move would secure the territory without resistance. But as he approached Government House in Port Stanley in the early hours of April 2, 1982, he was cut down by fire from the defending Royal Marines.

In the nightmare scenario that followed, the 28-year-old found himself paralysed and caught in a garden as the two sides traded fire over his head. Amid agonising pain, the lieutenant heard the zipping rounds before the din gave way to the deep blue sky of a clear spring morning.

There was a constant drone of military activity with the arrival of the main invasion force and he was dimly aware that Lt Cdr Pedro Giachino – the senior officer wounded with him – was now dead.

"I don't remember much, but apparently I was bleeding rapidly at one point," Quiroga, who retired in 1999 as a commander after a 27-year naval career, told *Soldier*. "Then a quick-thinking doctor opened up an old, unrelated injury on my arm and put in a line to

keep the blood flowing.

"It was his actions that kept me alive as I was evacuated – then I remember waking up at a hospital in Argentina with a face looking at me," he continued. "This person asked if I knew a Julio, which was my father's name. My parents and then-wife were with me.

"I soon lost consciousness again and woke up 20 hours later after three surgeries."

Quiroga had actually been hit three times – by a pistol-calibre round that rammed a Swiss Army knife he had been carrying into his groin and bullets from two different assault rifles that struck his torso and severed an artery in an arm.

Left unable to play any further part in his country's campaign, and facing months of rehabilitation, he was left to watch events from afar. And the newspapers made for concerning reading as May arrived.

A Royal Navy task force dispatched by the British government was well into a gruelling 8,000-mile journey through the South Atlantic.

The end of April had seen Argentine troops on the island of South Georgia – a British territory they had occupied 750-miles east of the Falklands – surrender without a fight as the ships arrived and personnel landed.

Despite the setback, the South American military rulers showed no sign of giving up the land they knew as the Malvinas.

Their invasion was condemned in the United Nations but attempts to resolve the dispute through diplomacy came to nothing.

Then the realities of war began to hit home. Argentina was left in shock when the Belgrano was torpedoed and sunk by submarine HMS Conqueror.

Eduardo Gerding – who was then a naval medical officer based in Buenos Aires – recalled that the invasion of the Falklands had initially been greeted by euphoria. But the loss of the ship altered the mood overnight and brought home that conflict – and its human cost – was now likely.



“It was his actions that kept me alive”

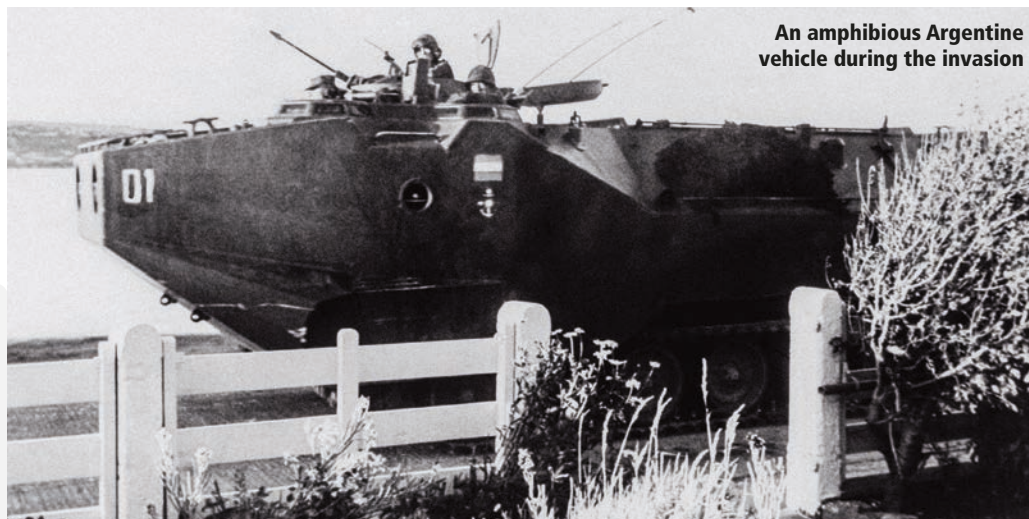


Above: Now and then, Cdr (Retd) Diego Garcia Quiroga

An Argentine Panhard vehicle following the attack at Port Stanley



Picture: Graham Bound



An amphibious Argentine vehicle during the invasion

"We heard about the controversial sinking of the Belgrano on May 2, and it was a turning point," the retired lieutenant commander pointed out. "I remembered I had a friend and colleague aboard that cruiser."

In the absence of social media and other digital communications, the officer's distant family members were concerned he might also be among the casualties.

"I had cousins in Europe who were worried and had tried to find me through the Red Cross," he added.

The attack marked the beginning of one of the most ferocious seaborne encounters since the Second World War.

Just two days later the British destroyer HMS Sheffield was fatally damaged after being struck by an Exocet anti-ship missile. She was the first of several Royal Navy vessels lost during the month as Argentine fast-jet pilots from the mainland prosecuted low-level attacks – taking heavy losses in the process.

Amid the mounting attrition, Graham Bound was keeping a keen watch on the situation – and news of the approaching task force. A lifelong Falkland islander, he had seen the battle in which Quiroga had been injured and was now living – with 2,000 other residents – under an unwelcome flag.

The 24-year-old, who had founded the territory's only newspaper, loved his homeland, which had a rich outdoor life unlike any back in the UK. But with South American reinforcements arriving by the day, the population faced a terrifying reality.

"The military governor – Brig Gen Mario Benjamin Menendez – tried to maintain life as normal during the first month," Bound – a retired journalist and author who now lives in

the UK – recalled.

"Although there were edicts and decrees issued, as well as endless propaganda over the airwaves, I was out taking photos without real problems.

"However, life started to change after the recapture of South Georgia and the Argentine leaders realised that all was not going well.

"There were house searches, BBC radio transmissions were blocked and people were detained – remember we were dealing with a regime that had killed thousands of its own people in a so-called Dirty War."

Bound added that the tension increased further as British ships began to close in and Sea Harrier jets mounted their own much-feared attacks. Before long, British troops secured a beachhead at San Carlos Water.

"My mother, father and I later moved into the Upland Goose, a hotel in Port Stanley, which had much thicker walls than our home," he continued. "It would not be long before artillery rounds were landing nearby."

The war was certainly inching closer. In the hills around Stanley, Argentine troops watched and waited, enduring the cold of the coming Antarctic winter.

The British had suffered setbacks with the loss of replacement helicopters on the ship Atlantic Conveyor – sunk in another Exocet attack. A close-run final battle, with sacrifice on both sides, was about to unfold. ■

WHAT NEXT?

Read more about the next stages of the Falklands battle in our June issue...

MAY 7

British government extends the total exclusion zone around the Falklands to within 12 miles of Argentina's coastline

MAY 12

The QE2 – a famous Cunard liner – leaves Southampton with 5th Infantry Brigade on board

MAY 21

Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade carry out largely unopposed landings at San Carlos; five-day battle ensues with heavy Argentine air strikes. Frigate HMS Ardent set ablaze and abandoned

MAY 24

Frigate HMS Antelope sinks after unexploded bomb detonates



MAY 25

Destroyer HMS Coventry sinks after air strike; container ship SS Atlantic Conveyor – carrying replacement helicopters and other kit – is sunk after an Exocet strike

MAY 28-29

Soldiers from 2 Para attack Goose Green. The fighting claims the life of CO Lt Col H Jones, but Argentine garrison surrenders

MAY 30

Maj Gen Jeremy Moore begins command of British land forces on the Falklands



Female Volunteers Needed

for a Human Performance Study

What are we investigating?

The effect of energy and calcium intake during load carriage on bone health.

Who can take part in the study?

- Women
- Both civilian and military
- Aged 18-36 years
- Women not currently using the implant, injection, or taking the 'mini pill'

Where?

Army Health & Physical Performance Laboratory,
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley

Contact:

Dr Tom O'Leary (Thomas.OLeary100@mod.gov.uk) or
Dr Charlotte Coombs (Charlotte.Coombs102@mod.gov.uk)
01264 886795

What do I need to do?

- 3 laboratory visits which include a pre-screen, and two load carriage exercise sessions
- Take a calcium supplement before one of the load carriage exercise sessions
- Blood samples will be taken during laboratory visits
- You will be compensated for your time



'Opt-out option needed in mess'

IN DIFFICULT times like these, when prices are on the rise across the board, many of us are finding it increasingly difficult to stay afloat.

This is not helped by expensive warrant officers' and sergeants' mess bills which seem overpriced for what we receive.

It is tough to explain to my partner why I'm paying these when, as a family, we are struggling to pay our everyday expenses and putting holidays on hold.

I pay, on average, £60 per month into my mess, with one recently hitting £80 due to the number of dine-outs. This is without food or drinks on bar tabs as I don't use it for those.

So I'd like to know why we cannot opt out of certain services to reduce our bills.

For example, in my mess tea and toast – which I never have – carries a mandatory charge and there's an entertainments levy, as well as Christmas and summer ball charges – none of which I attend. I should be able to choose what I pay for and direction from upon high needs be given to messes to that effect.

We feel harassed and bullied into attending events – and that is not a good look for the Army. Writing a letter to the RSM to be excused from an event is archaic, not to mention intimidating to the soldier. A simple opt-in service should suffice. – **Name and address supplied**

Col Leigh Drummond, Assistant Head Personal Services, responds: I recognise the financial pressures you describe, but it is worth noting the mess system for officers, warrant officers and sergeants is part of the fabric of Army life and an important element in enabling unit cohesion

and esprit de corps.

Queen's Regulations for the Army state that members of a mess must pay a subscription, at a rate determined by the commanding officer, to offset the ordinary running expenses of the facility. Other charges may be levied to support restricted funds.

These must be voted in by the mess, but are not mandatory and you should be able to opt out of them in return for not receiving the benefits of their use.

As a member you are required to follow the direction set out in the rules but senior NCOs and officers are expected to challenge practices and behaviours perceived as unfair and the process for doing this through the CO or RSM is not considered unduly onerous.

The requirement to attend an event should be linked to its primary purpose. Where it is for the benefit of the mess members alone then the ability to opt out should be available. However, where the purpose of the occasion is to celebrate (a dine-out, for example) or host a nominated individual, mess members have a responsibility to the team to which they belong.

If the frequency and cost of these events are considered to be unsustainable or unreasonable the issue should be raised with the mess committee and the CO as required. Being bullied or harassed is never acceptable and personnel who are subject to such behaviour should ensure it is reported.

“We feel harassed and bullied”

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

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

‘MAKE DRIVING AN EV EASIER’

● I THANK the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) for their response to my letter on charging electric vehicles (EV) in the April issue.

However, I think it misses the point I tried to make.

The Army has its own policies, such as allowances for over-37 married unaccompanied personnel and the MoD has specific policies for families, such as the continuity of education allowance, among others.

DIO states it is up to budget managers to look at solutions for their organisations so why is the Army not challenging the DIO's position on EVs to improve our lived experience?

Their policy currently dictates that if a charge-back system isn't in place the head of establishment is not permitted to allow individuals to use existing facilities, nor can units invest public or non-public funds to provide further solutions that would benefit personnel who have EVs.

That's mental.

We do not need expensive rapid charging solutions, just some investment in basic infrastructure for those who live in. There are official grants available to government departments for installing 7kW EV chargers, but we cannot access this money because of the current policy.

Yet other departments and organisations allow free charging for both customers and employees – and they don't have people living on site who have no other option.

Personal EVs only become practical if you can charge at domestic rates and at your home. For many, this is single living accommodation (SLA).

To give an idea of the actual costs, at 20p per kWh a vehicle with a 70kW capacity can be charged up from empty for just £14. This could easily be accounted for through an SLA charge amendment.

Come on Army, let's do something for our most important asset, our people, and give a “green” perk to those who live in.

All we are doing at the moment is penalising early adopters of EVs and adding to our carbon footprint as an employer. – **Name and address supplied**

Do current allowances undermine healthy eating?



‘Rates leave food for thought’

AS THE cost of living continues to increase, does the pay review body plan to look at our salary and allowances again?

Subsistence has become a real problem. Where in the UK is it now possible to get three nutritious meals and drinks for £25 per day while travelling?

Not only does the current rate leave troops out of pocket, it also undermines the Army's healthy eating mantra.

And the get-you-home provision has also become a source of angst.

While I accept it is a “contribution”, surely the massive rise in fuel prices should prompt a rethink on the rate people can claim.

It's not hard to make a link between an ability to get home from isolated garrisons and the retention rate of personnel, or their mental wellbeing.

Finally, will the body hold off on the normal increase in rates for Service family accommodation, single living accommodation, pay-as-you-dine and so on? This would go a long way to help military personnel weather the cost of living crisis. – **Name and address supplied**

Col Louise Green, Assistant Head of Army Remuneration, replies: The Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) makes recommendations to the prime minister on pay, charges, and some allowances. In deciding its recommendations, the body considers inflation.

While we had a single year's pay pause in 2021 due to the pandemic, the pay increases in 2019 and

2020 were 2.9 and 2 per cent respectively. We expect the AFPRB's recommendation on this year's award to be published in July, and it will be backdated to April 1.

Soldiers will get an annual pay award and incremental pay, so the increase will be more than five per cent for our most junior personnel.

On some of the specifics, daily subsistence reimburses breakfast and/or lunch and/or dinner costs; where night subsistence is claimed, breakfast costs are often included.

The rate is reviewed periodically although there are no current plans to raise the £25 per day limit.

On travel allowances, we are one of very few organisations that support commuting.

Recent changes to home to duty (HDT) policy will allow all personnel to claim for eligible journeys greater than 50 miles, if approved by their chain of command.

For get-you-home travel, the rates were revised just under two years ago. However, fuel duty is to be reduced by 5p per litre, which provides some relief on costs.

The Army has also raised HDT cycle rates, removing the personal contribution and increasing it from 15p to 20p per mile.

We recognise that cost of living increases are affecting most people and continue to look at pay and allowances. A wide-ranging review into our terms and conditions of service has also started and is due to report in 2023.

“We're adding to our carbon footprint”



THERE THEN, HERE NOW

In 1982, SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity helped support all those who were part of the Falklands Taskforce. Those incredible members of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and their families affected by the conflict received practical, emotional or financial support they deserved. And we still provide it today.

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40
FALKLANDS
1982 - 2022

BULLET POINTS

Bite-sized data to keep you in the know



CAREERS

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service is recruiting veterans to join its ranks through its Advance into Justice fast-track scheme. The initiative is open to those who have left in the last five years and are not in full-time employment. Full training is provided, with travel and relocation contributions available. Visit advance-into-justice.service.justice.gov.uk for more.

The Officers' Association and **RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity** have combined to create a single charity providing career support to all Service leavers and their families throughout the UK. The new organisation is called Forces Employment Charity. For more details visit rfea.org.uk

Forces Families Jobs is a platform designed to help partners into meaningful employment. Visit forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk



COMPETITIONS

March 2022 issue:

HOAY winner: Roger Clift, West Midlands

Spinelines winner: Mike Booth, Lincolnshire



DIARY

Until May 6: Brothers in Arms. A National Army Museum exhibition charting the story of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry – an elite British tank regiment whose men fought their way across north-west Europe during the Second World War. For more details visit nam.ac.uk

May 18: Centre for Army Leadership (CAL) High-Performance Conference. Hosted on Zoom from 1000-1700, the CAL's spring conference will bring together leaders from the military, sport, academia and corporate sectors to discuss leading high-performing teams from their respective fields. Visit the CAL Sharepoint or Defence Connect pages for more information.

June 8-9: CTX Counter Terror Expo. The UK's definitive showcase

of the capabilities, technology and expert knowledge to protect nations, businesses and people from terrorism and serious security threats. The event is aimed at those sourcing and delivering a robust defence against terrorism. With multiple theatres and demo zones, visitors can learn from the best minds in counter terrorism. For details go to ctexpo.co.uk/visit

Until August 2024: Foe to Friend. National Army Museum exhibition following the lives of soldiers in Germany over the past 75 years. It looks at the changing relationship between Britain and Germany and charts the gradual transition from foe to friend. Free entry. For more details visit nam.ac.uk

Until further notice: World War 2: War Stories. An exhibition at The Tank Museum, Bovington telling the story of the Royal Armoured Corps. Visit tankmuseum.org for more information and opening times.



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

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

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

Armed Forces Muslim Association:
afma.org.uk

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

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

Army LGBT Forum:
armylgbt.org.uk

Army Libraries:
01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
armybirding.org.uk

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

Big White Wall, now Togetherall:
togetherall.com

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

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

Care After Combat:
careaftercombat.org

Career Transition Partnership:
020 7469 6661

Centre for Veterans Health, King Edward VII Hospital:
020 7467 4370;
cdunne@kingedwardvii.co.uk

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

Combat Stress:
0800 323 4444;
combatstress.org.uk

Defence Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination 24/7 Helpline:
0800 783 0334

Erskine:
0141 814 4569;
erskinet.org.uk

Family Escort Service:
020 7463 9249

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

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

Forces Pension Society:
020 7820 9988
forcespensionsociety.org

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

Heroes Welcome:
heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:
highground-uk.org.uk
07951 495 272

Humanist, Atheist and Non-religious in Defence Network:
defencehumanists.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01252 787574

Medal Office:
94561 3600 or
0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (multiple sclerosis group):
mutual-support.org.uk

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

PoppyScotland:
0131 557 2782;
poppyscotland.org.uk

Forces Employment Charity:
0121 236 0058;
rfea.org.uk

Remount:
01451 850 341;
remount.net

Royal British Legion:
0808 802 8080;
britishlegion.org.uk

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

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre:
01622 795900;
rbli.co.uk

Scottish Veterans' Residences:
0131 556 0091;
svronline.org

Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services:
01748 833797;
spaces.org.uk

Speak Out – the Army's confidential bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline:
0306 7704656

SSAFA:
0845 1300 975;
ssafa.org.uk

Stoll: 020 7385 2110; stoll.org.uk

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

The Poppy Factory:
020 8940 3305;
poppyfactory.org

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

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

Troop Aid:
0300 1020215 or 07306 087443;
troopaid.info

uk4u Thanks!:
01798 812081;
uk4u.org

Veterans Welfare Service:
0808 1914 218 (from the UK);
gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service

WVRS: 02920 232 668



REUNIONS

The Royal Green Jackets Regimental Association annual veterans day is at Sir John Moore Barracks, Winchester on July 9. Partners are also welcome to attend. Contact Maj (Retd) Roy Stanger on 01962 869482 or roy.stanger60th@hotmail.co.uk

23/144 Parachute Field Ambulance Old Comrades

Association lunch and reunion dinner, Coventry on July 22-24. Contact Roy Hatch on 07730 977989



ROADSHOWS

The Forces Pension Society – an independent, not-for-profit, membership-funded organisation that acts as a pension watchdog – is staging a number of roadshows. Log on to forcespensionsociety.org/news-events/events for more information.

JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU? No. 961



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WIN

TEN details have been changed in this picture of Reservists from The Queen's Own Yeomanry marking their freedom of the city of York with a parade through the streets. Circle all the differences on the left image and send the panel to HOAY 961, *Soldier*, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU with your full contact details, including email address, by no later than May 31.

A photocopy is acceptable but only one entry per person may be submitted. Alternatively, email a photograph of the image highlighting the differences to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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RAC 22-5	11 Sep - 22 Sep 22	Application deadline: 11 Aug 22
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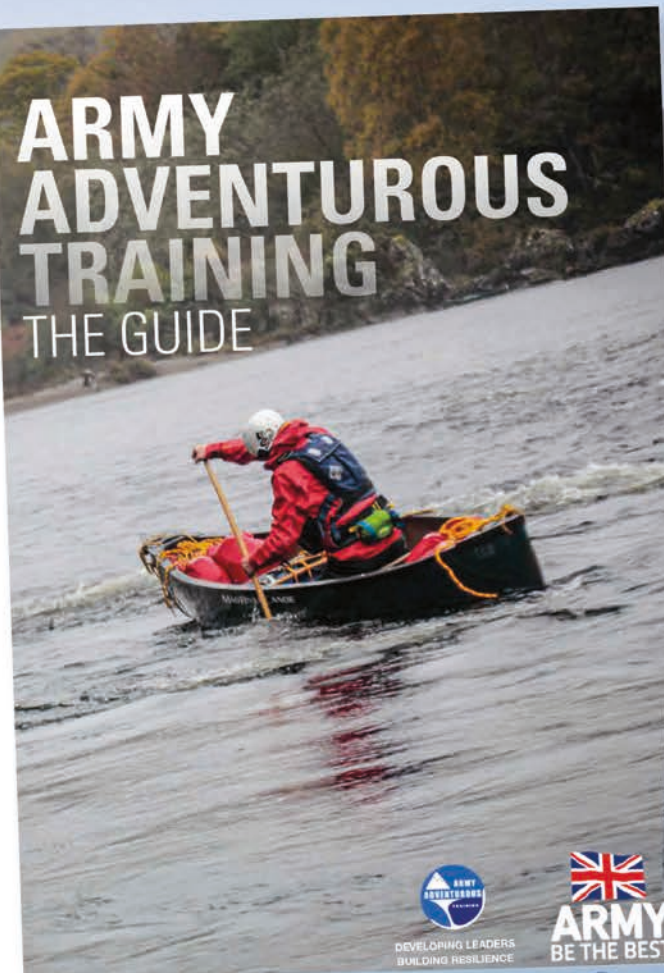
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REVIEWS

PICK OF THE MONTH:

Benediction

Sassoon biopic makes for heavy going

➤ JUST as the poetry of Siegfried Sassoon helped shape society's perception of the First World War, so he himself was forever changed by his harrowing experiences on the Western Front.

The horror of the trenches – so vividly conjured up in his verses – was both his making and his undoing, bringing him acclaim, but leaving an indelible mark that overshadowed the rest of his life.

A darling among the literati in the post-war years, he embarked on a series of gay relationships with glamorous members of the social elite, before taking a more conventional path in life that saw him marry, father a child and latterly become a Roman Catholic.

Now, 55 years after Sassoon's death in 1967, this complex arc has been brought to the big screen courtesy of veteran British director Terence Davies.

Benediction, which finally arrives in cinemas this month after Covid halted its original production schedule, begins with Sassoon at Craiglockhart military hospital, where he was sent to recover from "shell shock" after openly criticising the war.

During his stay he strikes up a friendship with Wilfred Owen, who inspires him to work harder on his own poetry.

From there the story unfolds in a non-linear fashion, with a fresh-faced Jack Lowden (*Dunkirk*, *War and Peace*) leading a formidable cast as the younger Sassoon, later morphing into an embittered Peter Capaldi (*Doctor*



Picture: Laurence Cendrowicz

P58

GAMES

P60

BOOKS

MOVIES

Picture: Laurence Cendrowicz



Who, *The Thick of It*) as time passes.

Delivering a notable, if not exactly likeable, performance is **Jeremy Irvine** (*War Horse*, *The Railway Man*) as feted composer, actor and Sassoon's one-time flame, Ivor Novello.

Calam Lynch (*Bridgerton*) stars as another equally unpleasant partner, the flamboyant socialite Stephen Tennant.

The pair come across as so shallow and narcissistic that the viewer is left wondering if Sassoon's relationships with them were a form of self-flagellation.

Clearly a difficult character himself, the poet is portrayed with aplomb by Lowden and Capaldi as a man struggling for self-acceptance in the face of internalised homophobia and probable PTSD.

His ongoing trauma is alluded to throughout the film by dream-like flashbacks, interspersed with poems, which unfortunately don't always quite land due to clunky CGI.

The main issue, however, is the unnecessarily long running time. Granted, there is a lot to cram in, but half an hour could easily have been shaved off without losing much of the narrative.

It is certainly beautifully shot – especially the scenes set in the roaring twenties – but all too frequently the camera lingers interminably as the minutes tick by and after more than two hours, the end feels overdue.

This is a shame as the film otherwise has much to recommend it – the elegant dialogue for one, as well as its admirable attempts to get to the heart of a complex and impenetrable figure.

That it doesn't quite succeed probably has more to do with Sassoon than the team responsible for this biopic.

While audiences may fidget in their seats, they will also be left with a heavy sense of pathos at the poet's ultimately fruitless search for inner peace – never more so than in the memorable

closing shot, which pans out (slowly) from Lowden's pained face accompanied by the words of Wilfred Owen's *Disabled* and the haunting strains of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Tallis Fantasia*. ■

VERDICT:

Not an easy watch but just about worth the effort

★★★★★

REVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*

DVD/DIGITAL RELEASE



Project Gemini

Out now

SET in the not-too-distant future where the Earth has been ravaged by disease and famine, the crew of an intergalactic terraformer spaceship find themselves on

a distant planet with an unknown being hunting them down. Sound familiar yet? It should as *Project Gemini* is a poor man's *Alien* mixed in with *Prometheus*, only with better special effects than **Ridley Scott's** original. Fortunately, an element it did take was the suspense of the chase and the dilemma facing the ship's chain of command of who to sacrifice for the greater good of the crew. The twist occurs – spoiler alert – when the alien infects a crew member and surprise, surprise their blood holds the key to saving the Earth. But will they be able to get home in time? Worth watching but don't go out of your way.

Sjt Scott Roberts, Rifles

PICK OF THE MONTH:

Sky Gamblers: Air Supremacy 2

Console air combat throttles up

➤ BACK in the mid-1980s – when the original *Top Gun* movie led the bill in cinemas – every other teenage boy was writing “fighter pilot” as their first choice of future job on their school careers form.

Clad in a flight suit, helmet and oxygen mask on duty – and circulation-cutting jeans with figure-hugging t-shirts in the bar – the aviator image sported by Tom Cruise and Val Kilmer was the aspiration of many a student.

As well hurtling around the Californian skies, the Hollywood crews had no trouble attracting the immaculate skirt-suited women of the film's world – grounded by virtue of their gender – with corny chat and serenades of songs by Jerry Lee Lewis and The Righteous Brothers.

A much-ridiculed aviation geek with the skin complexion of porridge, the 15-year-old incarnation of this reviewer was also an aspiring fighter jock. But, alas, it was not to be – never managing to pull off the *Top Gun* image nor drool over any model other than an Airfix kit, the dream was put to bed when exam results arrived. A fast jet ride as a newspaper reporter – in which a Nato-issue sickbag somehow remained unfilled – is as close as the aspiration ever came to reality.

Console air combat, however, remains a way of keeping an unfulfilled aviation career well on track. And with aircraft aplenty and a virtual world without solid ground to hit, *Air Supremacy 2* – the latest outing in Atypical Games' *Sky Gamblers* series – is the perfect platform to satisfy the fighter jock that lurks within.

Shunning any meaningful story – albeit with a passing reference to business conglomerates now hiring private armies – the package is effectively a collection of digital battlespaces based on cities around the world over which players lock horns.

Gameplay with the 18 jets featured is focused on action rather than realism, with the bread-and-butter air combat tools of stick, rudder and throttle taking prominence. Missiles are the principal weapons of choice for the plethora of air-to-air and ground attack missions although players can blast away with a cannon if feeling suitably dextrous.



Sky Gamblers: Air Supremacy 2 is available now on PS4, PS5 and Nintendo Switch

odd and at first led to some frustrating high-speed fireballs. But they can be adjusted to suit players' tastes.

Multiplayer options are also sound, with some solid, basic game formats available should virtual fighter pilots wish to engage and take down their friends over the internet.

All in all, the package adds up to a decent downtime dogfight, with a layer of polish and a satisfying blast for anyone who does not want to venture into the complex territory of realistic flight simulation.

Maybe it is time to dig out the Righteous Brothers CD and see if the stonewashed jeans and denim jacket still fit. ■



VERDICT:

Slick, if simple, air combat action

★★★★★

REVIEW: CLIFF CASWELL, *SOLDIER*

And the fighting is certainly demanding – not least because of the action's terrifying pace and the nausea-inducing manoeuvres required to bring down the enemy. Hitting targets on the deck, meanwhile, is a true test of nerve as distant cityscapes rapidly become a complex labyrinth of tall buildings, power lines and other lethal structures.

Thankfully, players have access to some special moves – available with button presses – which they can use to throw off pursuing enemies or secure attack positions.

The experience adds up to an enjoyable romp – for despite the simplicity of the experience, the overall dynamic of *Air Supremacy 2* provides the feeling of real-life flight.

Graphics are decent, with well-rendered cockpit interiors and a host of convincingly drawn landscapes providing a satisfying backdrop for the aerial encounters.

Manoeuvring the aircraft is slick enough, although the default control settings on the Switch incarnation that *Soldier* sampled felt

Looking for more air combat? Try...

Air Conflicts: Pacific Carriers

SLOVAKIA-BASED studio Games Farm has produced a Switch gem in this title, which allows players to fight for both the US and Japanese in the pivotal Second World War naval campaign. Aircraft including the much-storied Mitsubishi Zero and Grumman Wildcat are replicated, with missions starting at Pearl Harbor and unfolding at other historic settings. It is available as a standalone game via the Nintendo Store although the Switch cartridge of *Pacific Carriers* is packaged with its *Secret Missions* sister title, which is an altogether less compelling affair, in an air combat double pack.



Comanche

IF BEING up close and personal with the enemy is more your bag, this title could well suit. Offering team-based combat with advanced helicopters, the PC outing provides combat opportunities in a variety of locations, including rolling hills, valleys and rivers. In keeping with the kit needed to engage near-peer opponents, gamers can also use assets such as drones to scout out hostile hardware before engaging.





**1945
VICTORY
IN THE
WEST**

PETER CADDICK-ADAMS

● *1945: Victory in the West* by Peter Caddick-Adams is published on May 19 by Hutchinson Heinemann, priced £30

For commentary on the war in Ukraine follow the author on Twitter @militaryhistori

1945: Victory in the West

History comes full circle as Ukraine fights on

➤ SEVENTY-SEVEN years on from the Allied defeat of Nazi Germany, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has seen the blight of war return to Europe.

And despite the gulf in years separating the two very different conflicts, there are striking comparisons to be drawn between them, says military historian and author Peter Caddick-Adams.

When Putin's tanks rolled in, the former Army officer was gearing up for the release of his latest book – *1945: Victory in the West* – detailing the 100 days leading up to VE Day.

But the picture it paints of the collapsing Third Reich – revelations of genocide, a dictator in failing health, a civilian population radicalised by propaganda to name a few – proved to be uncomfortably reminiscent of current events.

"When you're writing history, you're absolutely convinced that this is another era, another world, another century – something that will never happen again," Caddick-Adams told *Soldier*.

"And then all of a sudden, these ghastly parallels are leaping out at you left, right and centre, which even a few weeks ago we wouldn't

be discussing.

"Whole libraries are going to be written about this. Every rule book has been ripped up.

"Everything we understood about international relations and the norms established after the Second World War about peace, fighting and civilised standards has gone out of the window."

Setting aside its unexpected relevance to the here and now, *Victory in the West* is an absorbing read, weaving together the campaigns of the seven Allied armies as they moved into Germany, across the Rhine and eastwards to meet up with the (then) friendly Soviet forces.

The last of a trilogy that also dealt with the Battle of the Bulge and D-Day, it charts a part of the war that is generally overlooked – including the oft-uncredited Canadian and French contributions – and is liberally sprinkled with interesting anecdotes from those on the ground.

The common experience for troops of all nationalities – as reported in the very first editions of this magazine – was the shocking discovery of the Nazis' vast network of concentration camps and use of slave labour.

Back in the present day, Caddick-Adams says he hadn't foreseen Russian troops "taking on the role of the SS" in carrying out similar atrocities, though this is far from the only development that has blindsided Western analysts.

"I'm astonished and rather embarrassed that we

got Putin's Army so wrong," he continues.

"We thought it was this huge, well trained, monolithic force that would shatter us.

"We also thought that we had moved on to information warfare and cyber and that fighting in the future would be non-lethal, non-kinetic and would not require boots on the ground.

"And if the UK defence community is honest, I don't think we expected Ukraine to last very long.

"But after Crimea and Donbass they realised they needed to change their approach, so part of our training philosophy, along with the US and Canadians, has been teaching them about leadership and

modern tactics especially at the NCO and junior officer level.

"And it's produced enormous results. The reward of seeing the guys you've trained felling Russian tanks by the dozen in combat is one of the most rewarding things I think the British Army has done for decades."

With the conflict in Ukraine unfolding day by day, it is impossible to predict how history will eventually come to judge 2022.

But if there is one message for readers to take from this insightful book, it is that the past has an unfortunate habit of repeating itself. ■

REVIEW: BECKY CLARK, *SOLDIER*



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SOLDIER SPORT



EQUINE SCENE >>

ARMY riders made an encouraging start to the season at the UK Armed Forces Equestrian Championships. The soldiers won ten of the 11 show jumping classes but were narrowly defeated in the dressage. Read about their efforts on pages 66-67...



NATIONAL SERVICE LOOMS AFTER TRIALS SUCCESS

T MAY have only been up and running for a matter of months, but the Army men's netball team is already making an impression on the national stage.

Leading light LBdr Dave Sunaki (RA) has been included in the inaugural England squad, which will meet for a training camp in the coming weeks as efforts to grow the sport continue.

The 30-year-old was encouraged to attend a trials event by his Service teammates following some impressive displays with the military set-up and caught the eye of the selectors in a series of seven shortened matches alongside the best players in the country.

"I'm stunned, and it still hasn't sunk in that I have made the team," he told *SoldierSport* as he reflected on the call-up.

"I think it will only become a reality when I take part in my first training session.

"There were around 70 guys at

the trials – 80 per cent of whom play club netball every weekend and train two or three times a week. I only play when the Army plays, which is normally once or twice a month.

"But I do my own training and watch netball videos every single night so I can pick up the skills and drills needed for the game."

Sunaki, who has represented the Royal Artillery in rugby league and union, played different positions in his first four trial matches, before eventually making his mark at centre.

"I was aiming for goal defence or wing attack, but my Army coach kept saying that centre was my best position," he explained. "It is one of the hardest roles to play and is the only one where you run from one end of the court to the other.

"I was absolutely hanging in that final match, but I did not want to show it. I went there thinking I would play the best



**"I'M
STILL
ON
CLOUD
NINE"**

I could, have some fun and see how it goes.

"After the first couple of games everyone was saying I would get selected, but I didn't let the way I was playing go to my head as I was up against the top centres in the country.

"I'm still on cloud nine."

Sunaki's interest in the sport stems from his mother, who used to play back home in Fiji, and when he discovered the Army was launching a men's team, he was keen to get involved.

"One of the first things people ask when they meet a Fijian is 'do you play rugby?' and I want to get away from that stigma," the soldier, who also plays civilian volleyball, said.

"Netball is different. I'm quite good with my short sprints so I have adapted quickly, and I've managed to bring some of my skills from rugby to the court.

"Since I made the squad a lot of my friends have started to

show an interest in netball, which is what I'm aiming for.

"We want to get more male athletes involved and they're already asking when the next Army trials are."

Sunaki was quick to thank his chain of command for allowing him to pursue opportunities in a new sport which has seen him benefit from the expertise of the Army women's set-up, led by head coach Lt Col Laura Ellis (REME). Current star Sgt Ellie Nawele (AGC (SPS), pictured below) has also helped.

"She takes time in the evenings to teach me more skills such as footwork, pivoting and ball work," he continued.

"I want to take this seriously and will not be playing any more rugby – you get too many injuries. Now it's all about joining up with England and seeing where that takes me."

Ellis said she was not surprised by Sunaki's call-up and hopes more male personnel will follow his lead and get involved.

"He is hugely talented," she added. "I have no doubt that there are more players like him in the Army, it is just a case of getting them to come along to trials for the squad."

The men's and mixed teams will be involved in a new national competition over the summer. The latter will also tour the USA and Canada alongside the women's side, ahead of an Inter-Corps competition in October. ■



RUGBY IN NUMBERS

POINTS
POSTED BY
SPR JACK
JOHNSON
AS HE WON
HIS FIRST
ARMY CAP

20

POINTS
SCORED BY
THE ARMY
MASTERS AS
THEY BEAT
THEIR RAF
RIVALS TO
COMPLETE A
HAT-TRICK
OF WINS

26

POINTS
ON THE
BOARD AS
THE ARMY
WOMEN
DEFEATED
RICHMOND
AFTER THEIR
WIN OVER
THE RAF

33

TRIES FOR
THE ROYAL
NAVY MEN
AS THEY
DOWNED
THE RAF
IN THE
CONTEST'S
SECOND
ROUND

3



Picture: Alligin Photography

REDS RETURN AT THE DOUBLE

THE Army were looking to complete a clean sweep of silverware at the Inter-Services Rugby Union Championships as this issue went to press following a successful opening salvo against the Royal Air Force.

A brace from Bath star LCpl Semesa Rokoduguni (Scots DG) formed the headline act of a 35-20 win for a men's team that awarded nine new caps at the clash in Gloucester.

Among them were Spr Jack Johnson (RE, pictured) and Kenyan international Capt Will Reeve (RGR).

The officer said: "It is a special bunch of boys to share this with. Some of them have been in a red jersey longer than I've been in the Army and they have welcomed me into the capped gang."

After tasting defeat to the RAF last time out in 2019, the Army women gained some

long-awaited revenge with a 24-10 victory.

Wing Pte Courtney Pursglove (RLC) crossed for two tries on her debut as the soldiers raced into a 12-0 lead but their rivals fought back in the second half to reduce the arrears to just two points.

However, late scores from Sgt Carrie Smith (Int Corps) and skipper SSgt Jade Mullen (AGC (SPS)) gave them much-needed breathing space ahead of the final whistle.

"We weren't perfect, but we demonstrated composure and the work we've been doing on mindset," said head coach Maj Gemma Stonebridge-Smith (AGC (ETS)).

"We regained our structure after letting the RAF back into the game and that's testament to the quality in the team."

Both sides were facing the Royal Navy at Twickenham at the time of writing. ■



Pictures: Cpl Jack Wilson, RAF





SHOWING THEIR CLASS

SERVICE'S EQUESTRIAN STARS SHINE BRIGHT AS QUEST FOR MILITARY HONOURS RESUMES

ARMY riders returned to the saddle for the first military test of the new campaign at the UK Armed Forces Equestrian Championships.

Staged at Bury Farm Equestrian Club in rural Buckinghamshire, the event saw 112 soldiers from 12 cap badges go head-to-head with their Forces rivals in a host of categories across the dressage and show jumping disciplines.

The contest formed the first of four legs in the Loriner Trophy, which will decide the Inter-Services champions for 2022, and represented the start of what is hoped will be a regular season after the disruptions caused by Covid in recent years.

Maj Fran Sykes (RHA), secretary of the Army Equitation Association, told *SoldierSport* that plans for the new campaign have a more familiar feel, with the three single Service championships reverting to their traditional slots and tentpegging, also known as mounted skills at arms, resuming after a three-year hiatus.

"We had to run a condensed season in 2021," she explained.

"More than half of our fixtures were cancelled and we could not compete until July, so we ended up with a three-to-four-month window that featured as many dates as possible.

"We were one of the first five Army sports to resume after the first lockdown in 2020, but the focus was very much on individual riders, as opposed to what we are doing here, which is about developing people of all abilities.

"While this is the first event of the season, we can see that

our riders have put a lot of hard work in over the winter months. There have been some great results across the board in dressage and show jumping and no individual or cap badge has dominated.

"There is a friendly rivalry with the other Services, but at the same time it is competitive – everyone is out to show that they are the best."

A total of 280 military riders, plus representatives from the police and ambulance service, were in action over the two days and the Army won ten out of the 11 show jumping classes.

Capt Zoe Andrew (R Signals) was among the standout performers and was victorious in the 1.05m and 1.10m qualifying rounds for the London International Horse Show in December.

With 40 personnel competing for the eight places available at the prestigious competition the officer is now leading the field with two further rounds to come and, if successful, she hopes to improve on her sixth-placed finish in 2021.

"I'm really pleased," Andrew said as she reflected on her opening win.

"I did not necessarily come here with high expectations as I didn't know how my horse, Asterix, would jump with it being the first show of the year.

"We had a successful military season in 2021 and I won the 1.05m qualifier here last year, so there was some pressure from the outside.

"But it was good to be back out there. It was a chance to see who my main rivals are going to be and with only eight places available for London it has been keenly fought.



"OUR RIDERS HAVE PUT A LOT OF HARD WORK IN"

"So, it is great to get a decent number of points on the board early on."

The dressage formed the opening round of the Loriner Trophy, and it was the Royal Navy who topped the standings ahead of the Army and Royal Air Force.

The soldiers will look to close the gap in the show jumping, eventing and combined competitions that feature in the single Service championships later in the year.

LBdr Liz Griggs (RA) said the result went to form given their rival's dominance in recent seasons, but it could have easily gone in her team's favour.

"It is a little bit disappointing," she added. "The scores between all three Services were incredibly close and it was anybody's on the day.

"While it is frustrating, when we looked at our final points we realised we had done okay.

"Army dressage is on the up and, from a Royal Artillery point of view, we've had more people at this competition doing both dressage and show jumping – two years ago it would only have been the latter.

"I had ridden for years and was a hardcore show jumper, but then I had a lesson with the Army dressage manager who said I had potential.

"Within six months I had made it on to the Army team at novice level. If you can ride, you can do dressage and it is a sport that when you feel you are doing well you move to the next level and learn again." ■

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TABLE TENNIS



TABLE TOPPERS TOAST IMPRESSIVE TROPHY HAUL

THE Army enjoyed a trophy-laden return to action at the Inter-Services Table Tennis Championships as they claimed all but two of the major prizes on offer at RAF Halton.

After seeing the men's A squad suffer a narrow defeat to their Royal Air Force rivals in the opening day's team competition, the soldiers then hit top form to claim a host of individual and doubles titles.

The pairing of Spr Dom Weston (RE) and Pte Bethany Brewer (RLC) proved too strong for fellow Army players Cpl Kiran Tamang (RE) and Sgt Hilary Greig (AMS) in the mixed doubles final. However, Greig was able to celebrate success in the women's doubles alongside Rev Nicola Frail (RACHD).

The one setback came in the men's doubles, where RAF duo Flt Lt Anth Barella and SAC Ben Law triumphed over SSgt Pete Owusu (RLC) and Lt Matt Hutson

(REME, main picture).

But further silverware followed in the singles draws, as Brewer (pictured right) and Weston (pictured top left) sealed the women's and men's titles to end the campaign on a high.

The winning run came on the back of a successful Army training week and championships in Aldershot, which ensured the players were in peak condition ahead of their opening matches.

"That was really useful," Hutson, treasurer of the Army Table Tennis Association, told *SoldierSport*. "It has all been a bit stop-start since Covid, some people have moved on and new faces have come in, so it was a chance to get to know them and how they play."

"It was a very competitive tournament and even though the Army A team lost to the RAF, it was a close match."

"After that we had the best top



**"WE
HAD THE
BEST TOP
SEEDS"**

seeds in each category, and that made the difference."

Hutson was among the debutants at the event and said the sport is continuing to gain popularity in Service circles.

More than 80 personnel attended the Army Championships in February and plans are in place for a round-robin tournament in October to build on the momentum.

The organisation is also looking at possible future overseas tours, with Nepal and the USA being discussed as potential destinations.

"Table tennis is growing at a healthy rate," the officer continued. "I'm one of the new ones and we have people who have just finished phase one and two training coming through."

"Our social media channels have been a huge help; they have allowed us to advertise, find new talent and give them time to practise and develop." ■

SPORT SHORTS



Reds' consolation prize

AFTER seeing their title hopes dashed at the first hurdle (pictured), the Army men ended the Inter-Services Football Championships on a high with a 2-1 win over the Royal Navy.

Midfielder LCpl Sam Atkinson (RE) gave the soldiers the lead when his low free kick nestled in the bottom corner. Their opponents fired a quick response through Jamie Vincent before Spr Scott McCarthy (RE) sealed the contest on the stroke of half-time.

Following their opening loss to champions the Royal Air Force, the Army women concluded their campaign with a 2-1 defeat to the Navy.



Enduro series takes off

THE Army Enduro Mountain Bike Series stages its first leg at the Llandegla trail centre in Wales on May 4.

New for 2022, the event features four rounds and, after this month, moves to the Forest of Dean (June 15), Gisburn (July 13) and Bike Park Wales (September 28).

Enduro is similar to downhill racing in that timed stages start at the top of a mountain and finish at the bottom. However, competitors then have to pedal back to the top for the next stage.

The series is aimed at novice and experienced riders and includes individual, major and minor unit competitions. Visit sientries.co.uk

PUSHING ON WITH THE PROS



OLYMPIC bronze medallist Gnr Karriss Artingstall (RA) has called time on her Army career as she embarks on the next stage in her boxing journey.

Last month, the former soldier signed a long-term promotional agreement with Boxxxr in a move that saw her migrate to the sport's professional ranks alongside fellow Team GB athlete and Olympic champion, Lauren Price.

Artingstall, who was crowned Army and UK Armed Forces sportswoman of the year on the back of her performances at the Tokyo Games, later announced that she had left the Service after eight years in uniform.

"The British Army and boxing have worked hand in hand to mould me into the woman I am today," she explained. "Five of those eight years were spent fighting for my country, but in a different way than I initially intended.

"If it wasn't for the Service I would not be where I am now in my career. While I am no longer part of the Army, it will always be a part of me."

The fighter joins a growing stable of female talent at the promotion – which includes fellow Olympians Natasha Jonas and Caroline Dubois – and her future bouts will be broadcast live on Sky Sports.

"I've achieved more than most in the amateurs and I'm more than ready to work my way up to world titles on the biggest and best platform of them all," she added. ■

**"THE
ARMY
WILL
ALWAYS
BE A
PART OF
ME"**



● THE Inter-Services Twenty20 Cricket Championships return to Lord's on Thursday, June 16. The day will assume a new look this season as a women's match will be played on the ground for the first time. Two fixtures in the men's competition will also feature, with the third being staged at an alternative location beforehand. Visit tickets.lords.org

MONTH IN SPORT

May's key fixtures...



WHAT: Army FA Challenge Cup final

WHEN:

May 4

WHERE:

Aldershot

NEED TO

KNOW: 4

Regiment, Royal

Logistic Corps will hope to emulate the 2020 success of their colleagues from 7 Regiment (pictured) as they face 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment



WHAT: Inter-Corps T20 Cricket Championships

WHEN: May 10 to 12

WHERE: Aldershot, Larkhill and Tidworth

NEED TO KNOW: The first major competition of the season sees the corps' finest battle it out over three days. Can the Royal Artillery defend their title?



WHAT:

Inter-Unit Boxing Championships

WHEN: May 12

WHERE: Combat Sports Centre, Aldershot

NEED TO

KNOW: Fighters

from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute

Regiment and 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers step into the ring in a bid to be crowned champions of Service boxing's premier tournament



FINAL FIGHTS LOOM FOR PRIZED PAIR



**"WE'VE
DONE A
LOT OF
WORK"**

THE Army boxing team were looking to add two new names to their proud roll call of national amateur champions as this issue went to press.

With the squad's male contingent falling in the earlier rounds, the Service's hopes rested with Sig Lucy Kisielewska (R Signals) and LCpl Keeley Austerfield (RLC) as the country's finest fighters descended on the Manchester Central Convention Complex for the competition's finals day.

Kisielewska (pictured), a beaten finalist in 2021, was facing a stern opponent in the shape of Braunstone's Dionne Burman but head coach Sgt James Allen (REME) told *SoldierSport* she had the skills needed for victory at 66kg.

"Burman beat the number one seed in the semi-finals and won by a stoppage in the quarters, so she's coming off the back of a couple of good performances," he added.

"Hopefully Lucy can use the experience from her previous final to her advantage. She is capable of winning, and we've done a lot of work on our gameplan – she has the tools

to beat her."

Austerfield was taking on number two seed Elise Glynn in the 57kg showpiece and Allen said the contest could be another close bout.

"Keeley sparred her a few weeks ago – she's from good stock and is quite experienced," he continued.

"She may be giving away some experience, but she has a chance.

"It is essential we have people in and around the national finals – we would love to see both win, but nothing is guaranteed in this sport."

Despite seeing his male fighters fall short, Allen believes the future is bright.

"Five of the ten boxers who fought at the UK Armed Forces Championships were in the development squad before Christmas," he explained.

"Pte Lewis Harvey (RLC) has bags of potential and Pte Jordan Shaw (AGC (SPS)) only finished basic training in November – he has been a revelation this season.

"We have others coming through and there's no reason why they can't be champions in a couple of years." ■

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BASKETBALL



Pictures: Cpl Becky Brown, RLC

TITLES COME AND GO IN WARRIORS' COURT RETURN

IT WAS a week of mixed fortunes for the Army at the Inter-Services Basketball Championships as they claimed one title but saw two others slip from their grasp.

The Warriors' sole success came in the men's under-23 draw, where a convincing win over the Royal Air Force saw them seal the honours after the Royal Navy failed to field a side.

However, back-to-back defeats for a new-look women's outfit saw them relinquish the trophy they claimed last time out and there was further disappointment for the senior men's squad.

They made a strong start in their clash with the Senior Service but were unable to hold onto the lead and when their opponents surged ahead, the soldiers failed to claw back the deficit – losing by 15 points.

However, they managed to end their campaign on a high following a dramatic encounter with the RAF.

Having been second best for

most of the game they found themselves trailing by 15 points in the final quarter only to stage a remarkable comeback to claim victory by a margin of four points in the dying seconds.

With the Navy defeating the same opposition they retained their title from the last Inter-Services in 2019.

Capt Benn Wathey (REME), head coach of Wathey Basketball, described the results as a “mixed bag” but told *SoldierSport* there were plenty of positives to take from the competition.

“In terms of the under-23s, this was a stark contrast to where we were pre-pandemic,” he said. “We’ve had to go through a rebuild and have recruited heavily from across the Army’s corps.

“By doing that we’ve found some real gems; they are young guys who, in a couple of years, will be strong senior players.

“The women’s squad was heavily depleted with people away on career courses, exercises, and operations.



**“WE
HAVE
FOUND
SOME
REAL
GEMS”**

“We’ve lost others to injury and retirement, so the team ran into some trouble against the RAF and Navy.”

Wathey said the Senior Service are the team to beat in the men’s ranks, with several players lining up for civilian clubs in the national league.

In their last encounter they defeated the Army by 40 points, so to cut the margin represented a sign of progress. “I think we’ve clawed some ground back and the void is not as big as it was,” the officer added.

LCpl Ryan Clasper (RLC) was singled out as one of the team’s star performers, while Pte Samuel Toluwase (RAMC) and LCpl Callum Henderson (RLC) were pivotal in the win over the RAF. Cfn Anish Tamang (REME) was named MVP in the under-23 match, with AirTpr Harry Catterall (AAC) also drawing praise.

The Army’s top performers will represent the UK Armed Forces at the Shape international tournament in November. ■



Work life has been very busy out here since we deployed last August. But hopefully things will be a bit easier as we go into the summer this time. Sport out here is pretty good. I'm captain of the football team and there's a league set up. You get time off before the games to train too.

LCpl John Wood, R Anglian



When I first came out here it was tough because we couldn't get out and about as a result of heavy Covid restrictions. However, the opportunities for travel are amazing, with cheap flights to locations such as Jordan and Israel.

Lt Pete Burke, Yorks



It's good, especially in the summer when it gets warm. We can enjoy watersports on the base in Dhekelia, and there's lots of diving too. Activities like that make a difference. Getting your diving qualification out here is a very different experience to getting it in a quarry back in the UK!

2Lt Paul Phillips, R Anglian



The people who do best out here are single blokes. For others it can be hard being away. The blocks are good – we have kitchens and stuff like that – but local overseas allowance changes are leaving people out of pocket. For most it is becoming extortionate, and that impacts welfare. We currently pay 30 euros per month for 20mbps Wi-Fi.

Cpl Niki Grantham, Yorks

It's nice having family out here, so that when you get some leave there's lots to do. We have the whole island to explore.

LCpl Kane Leach, R Anglian



Island intel

We asked troops exercising in Cyprus (page 30) about the highs and lows of a posting to the Mediterranean...

It's really nice weather out here, but it's expensive – especially with children. And everything you do requires money. We came out when my daughter was eight months old and the cost of living is high. The cheapest things to buy in Cyprus are cigarettes and booze. The Forces Store on camp is so expensive.

Cpl Ansias Londt, Yorks





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