

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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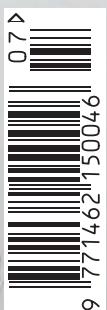
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Ordnance Barracks, Government Road,
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU.

All enquiries: Tel 01252 787107 / 94222 7107
Fax: 01252 787110 / 94222 7110
Email: news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

EDITORIAL

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

Assistant Editor:
Joe Clapson 01252 787097 (7097)
jclapson@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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

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

DESIGN

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

PHOTOGRAPHY

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

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

MARKETING and ADVERTISING

Business Manager:
Andy Clarkson 01252 787105 (7105)
aclarkson@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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

Subscriptions: subs@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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Forward-facing Force

WHAT a fascinating selection of articles the *Soldier* team have put together for you this month – even if we do say so ourselves.

In this issue we get the inside track on the platform being hailed as the “first true 21st century combat vehicle”.

Want to find out what kind of kit is worthy of this impressive title? Turn to pages 24-25 to find out.

As drawdown continues, anyone doubting the intensity of future Op Herrick tours will not want to miss our feature on the work of an incoming Brigade Reconnaissance Force (pages 27-29).

Described by some as “the best role in theatre”, we would love to hear your views in *Talkback* (page 47) about whether this is the case. Without doubt members of B Squadron, 9th/12th Royal Lancers are relishing the challenge ahead.

Also inside, we meet the former staff sergeant whose Army career was brought to a shocking end when he lost his sight overnight. The Serviceman’s response? Become the world’s only blind stunt rider... obviously. Turn to page 40 for more.

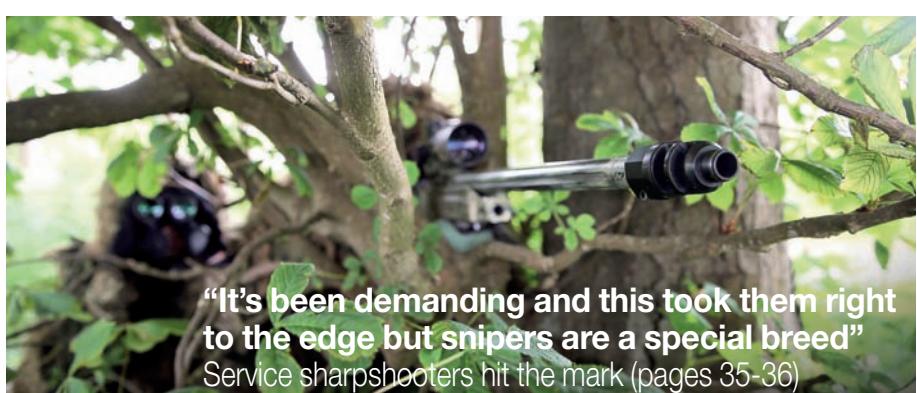
Once again the *Soldier* team have been left in complete awe of the readers we serve.

As 4,480 of you shift your focus to life outside the Army (page 7), some with feelings of trepidation, I hope this magazine helps to inspire you about the future.

When the Twenty20 cricket showdown at Lord’s (page 80) coincided with redundancy day last month it brought an uncomfortable mixture of triumph and sorrow within a few hours. But then what is life in the military if not a combination of those two things? Enjoy the issue. ■



Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor



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Cover: Steve Dock

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“It’s all about flexibility and it’s an exciting role to be involved in”

Recce force ramps up for Herrick tour p27

“I have pushed them to within an inch of their lives”

Sniper contest organiser talks tough p35

“Words can’t describe how lonely and frightening it was – I was in denial”

Ex-soldier tells of day he went blind

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Uphill struggle: Making loyal troops redundant last month was difficult, Brig Rob Nitsch says, but their future job prospects look bright

Redundancy support stepped-up

PERSONNEL who have been made redundant in the latest round of Army manning cuts have a "very mature system" in place to help them transfer to civilian life, a senior officer has said.

Speaking exclusively to *Soldier*, Brig Rob Nitsch explained that reducing troop numbers by another 4,480 last month had not been easy.

But the head of Army manning added: "For 84 per cent of those leaving in this round, it is what they wanted to happen and we wish them well and thank them for their service.

"For the other 16 per cent, there is a very mature system for helping them to move over to civilian life including a greater number of individual education and resettlement officers.

"I appreciate they won't feel comfortable with the process but the employment record for troops who have left before them is very encouraging."

He continued: "These redundancies certainly don't mean the Army doesn't value the service and contribution these soldiers have made."

More than 3,500 personnel have now left the organisation following the first two waves of redundancy.

The exit dates for those in the latest tranche will be December 17 for

volunteers and June 17, 2014 for those going compulsorily.

Although a higher number of applications were received compared with earlier rounds, Brig Nitsch insisted that it was not an indicator of ill-feeling among the ranks.

"Redundancy is very much an individual decision based on your own circumstances and is not necessarily a good reflection of morale," he explained.

"Other indicators such as the Armed Forces continuous attitude survey show that people are committed to serving.

"However, it is important for the chain of command to explain to individuals what their future is in the Army.

"We need those who applied but were not selected to continue."

For those leaving, the Service is stepping up efforts to encourage transfer into the Territorial Army and other areas of the military.

"We are trying even harder in this tranche, and are working on improving the TA package" the officer revealed.

"The Reserve offers camaraderie and other benefits including adventurous training and being in a close-knit team.

"We hope more soldiers in this round will consider transferring."

A fourth and final reduction programme is anticipated next year.

"I hope the Service will then start to move out of this culture of redundancy and begin to understand where we are headed," Brig Nitsch said. "That will happen as new units firm up and we move closer to Army 2020."

● For more information about transfer opportunities visit the official Army vacancies list on the defence intranet.

REDUNDANCY IN NUMBERS

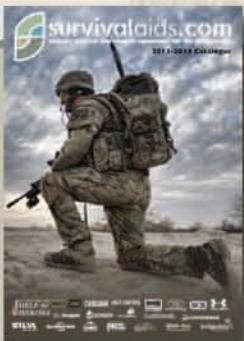
4,480

TOTAL NUMBER OF SOLDIERS WHO WILL EXIT THE SERVICE AS A RESULT OF TRANCHE THREE CUTS

84

PERCENTAGE OF THOSE BRITISH PERSONNEL WHO HAD APPLIED TO LEAVE THE ARMY'S RANKS

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Picture: Sgt Barry Pope, RLC

Heading home: The process of returning kit and equipment to the UK is well under way

Drawdown gathers pace

THE headquarters of UK troops in Afghanistan will transfer to Camp Bastion as the British footprint in the country reduces and local forces take control of security operations.

Task Force Helmand has been based in Lashkar Gah since 2006 but will relocate as part of the drawdown process, which is due to be complete by December next year.

With homegrown soldiers and police officers now taking the lead role, the move will allow British commanders to work closely with their allies as Camp Bastion is adjacent to the Afghan National Army's Camp Shorabak.

In another development, Nato-led units have formally handed over the last of the country's 95 districts to the Afghan National Security Forces – meaning the domestic military will now be responsible for Afghanistan's 27 million citizens.

As part of the transition the number of UK bases has reduced from 137 to 13 and according to current plans there will be just four forward operating bases, as well as Camp Bastion, under British control by the end of the year.

The redeployment of kit and equipment from Afghanistan began

last October and is scheduled to be completed when the last combat troops exit Helmand province.

Speaking during a press briefing on the process, Brig Duncan Capps, commanding officer of 104 Logistic Support Brigade, said: “This is a really significant challenge, probably on a scale that we have not seen before.

“We must redeploy everything to our bases in the UK and in the best possible order we can.

“By the time we come back we want all the accounts to be closed so that we can draw a line under Afghanistan.”

The programme aims to send items home that will be immediately ready for use, rather than in need of refurbishment or repair.

Up until last month, 168 protected mobility platforms had already been transported via air and sea and it is estimated that repairing equipment in theatre, rather than in the UK, will save £98.4 million.

“99 per cent of our vehicles will be returned and in almost all cases the kit will be flown out of the country for security reasons,” added Brig Capps.

“The only assets that will be left in theatre are either old or obsolete.”



Ready to run

WITH charity challenges taking an increasingly prominent role in the lives of British personnel, the pressure is on when it comes to thinking of novel ways to raise vital funds for Service charities.

But a group of soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment have found the perfect answer in the form of the infamous Running of the Bulls in Spain.

The 11-strong party will take to the streets of Pamplona for the pulsating event on Sunday, July 7 as a show of support for the Army Benevolent Fund while paying tribute to colleague Sgt Gareth Thursby, who was killed in Helmand province last year.

“He was a great friend of mine,” challenge organiser Cpl Mathew Pritchard told *Soldier*.

“His nickname was ‘The Bull’ so I thought this would be a fitting tribute to him while also raising money for the ABF.

“The atmosphere in Pamplona is supposed to be amazing and from the footage we’ve seen it looks mental; so we thought ‘why not?’

“It is an 829-metre course down small, winding streets and there are six bulls involved. The idea is to wait until you can see them coming before you start running.

“But the first people back get pelted with tomatoes for being cowards so you have to time it just right. Our aim is to get there fully intact.”

Donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/3YorksBullRun



AFGHAN troops have been training as snipers under the expert instruction of marksmen from 4th Battalion, The Rifles.

A total of 12 members of the Afghan National Army's 3/215 Brigade passed the course, which covered live firing, concealment, stalking and counter-sniping.

Cpl Steve Martin (4 Rifles) said

the trainee sharpshooters had been keen to learn.

“I was impressed by how quickly they picked it up and these skills stack the odds even further against the insurgents,” he added.

Soldiers from 4 Rifles are helping to develop the ANA's capabilities as the country's forces take the lead on security in the region.

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Kept in the dark:

Troops who don't learn about their options for legal support could be disadvantaged



Warning over legal aid

TROOPS facing prosecution in Service courts are missing out on crucial support because of misunderstandings over how the system works, experts have told *Soldier*.

Solicitors and the Armed Forces Criminal Legal Aid Authority (AFCLAA) say that myths are preventing personnel from seeking the professional help they are entitled to.

“We rely on qualified electricians to wire our homes and trained mechanics to fix our cars, so why question the need for a qualified representative for something which could have a massive impact upon your career and family?” said Caroline Sollis, head of the AFCLAA.

Issy Hogg, of Coomber Rich Solicitors in Basingstoke, added: “So many troops don't realise they have the right

to representation during their initial interview with the military police and that they can ask for someone who is used to working with the Services.”

The civilian lawyer regularly acts for British Army personnel during legal proceedings.

“It's critical because that first discussion can affect the rest of a criminal case,” she said.

Mrs Sollis explained that Servicemen and women who are concerned about large bills should ignore the “rumour mill”.

“People tell us they didn't apply for legal aid because they

were told it would cost them thousands of pounds,” the civil servant said.

“But the assessment looks at your outgoings such as any debts, loans or credit cards.

“Only those who can afford to contribute will be required to do so.

“It is so much fairer than the old system we had.”

Under the current scheme introduced in 2011, applicants are means tested to establish whether they can make contributions ahead of a trial.

Previously, costs would be awarded against personnel following a conviction and without full measurement of their circumstances.

Approximately 50 per cent of all applicants qualify for free legal aid.

And with no obligation to proceed after applying, Servicemen and women are being urged to

investigate their options before making their final decision.

“Until they apply, people won't know what it could cost them and I would urge them to do so for their own peace of mind,” Mrs Sollis said.

“At a trial it can be the difference between an acquittal and a conviction, or indeed between a custodial and a non-custodial sentence.”

For further information about legal aid contact unit human resources staff or read joint Service publication 838.

“At a trial it can be the difference between acquittal and a conviction”

INFANTRY IN ESTONIA

■ TROOPS from 1 Mechanized Brigade have taken part in an international serial in Estonia while the rest of their formation serves on Op Herrick.

Members of 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers did not deploy to Afghanistan because of the UK's drawdown in the country.

Known jointly as Kohima Company, the formation instead travelled to north east Europe to train alongside nearly 5,000 soldiers from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, France, Belgium and the US.

The two-week package saw personnel test the host nation's conscript force on the last phase of their basic training.

AWED BY AWARD

■ MEMBERS of the Army were among 183 defence personnel named in the Queen's annual Birthday Honours list.

A total of 70 soldiers received awards, including CSgt Rustim Murphy (2 Para, pictured), who was given an MBE for work with his unit's mortar platoon.

The 36-year-old's citation stated that his efforts to raise standards in his field had “inspired a generation of young soldiers”.

A veteran of 11 operational tours, CSgt Murphy admitted he was stunned and “a bit embarrassed” to have been singled out.

“Every day I come to work with the most professional people you could imagine and together I feel like we can do anything,” added the paratrooper.

BAD BIKES GONE GOOD

■ THE Metropolitan Police has donated 40 bicycles to 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment as part of a disposals programme for lost and stolen equipment.

The items will be used for physical training and competitive cycling.



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Picture: Grahame Main

Soldier to sir: The experience and talent of Service leavers is needed in UK classrooms

Teacher training for troops

A SCHEME has been launched to make it easier for members of the Armed Forces to begin new careers in the classroom.

Troops to Teachers, which was modelled on a similar initiative in America, will provide salaried training programmes and bursaries to graduate and non-graduate Service leavers.

From September this year, personnel with degrees will be able to enrol on year-long specialist courses supported by grants of £2,000.

Those without university qualifications but who have built up relevant experience in instruction or coaching during their military careers will be able to apply to join two-year training schemes as of January 2014.

Following a rigorous assessment, successful applicants on the non-

graduate route will receive a salary throughout the course and a degree and qualified teacher status at the end, making them the only people in the country who can start teacher training without first having gone to university.

Education Minister David Laws said the scheme would help former members of the military who have the potential to become great teachers make the transition to the classroom.

"We want to capture the ethos and talents of those leaving the Armed Forces, and bring this experience into teaching," added the politician.

"We know that our highly-skilled Servicemen and women can inspire young people and help to raise educational attainment."

For details visit www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/troops-to-teachers

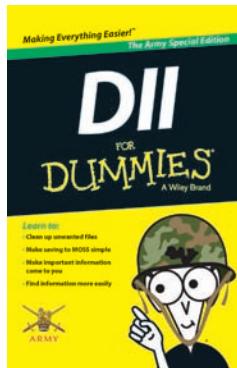
Defence system decoded

SERVICE personnel struggling to get to grips with the MoD's computer system will have access to a new source of help from this month.

DII for Dummies has been developed by Army Headquarters staff to enable troops to work more effectively.

Following the format of the popular self-help titles, the text includes guidance on how to reduce profile sizes by deleting unwanted files, save documents to the MOSS system, send hyperlinks and navigate sites.

Maj Nicola Roberts (RLC) of the Information Superiority Directorate explained: "Computers are an integral part of the Army and critical to it operating successfully.



"Although online training and reference guides are available, some still find it difficult to master their machines.

"This book explains in jargon-free English the main functions that staff need to know about in order to help them get on with their jobs."

Due to be published at the end of this month, the title will be distributed in hard copy and online via the Army intranet page and Defence Gateway e-book store.

● To be in with a chance of winning £100-worth of *For Dummies* books and merchandise from Army HQ, send your contact details by July 31 to dummies@armymail.mod.uk

APP AIDS ARMY POST

■ TROOPS using the British Forces Post Office (BFPO) system can now monitor the progress of letters and parcels on their smartphones.

The Track and Trace app shows customers the route their item is taking, its current location and expected delivery time.

The function allows users to enter or scan a product's barcode and is designed to work alongside the organisation's recently-released information app, which includes a postage calculator, advice on permitted items and a label-creating facility.

Visit www.gov.uk/british-forces-post-office-services for more information.

CAREER CONVERSATIONS

■ SOLDIERS who want to extend their Army careers can convert to versatile engagement (full and long) from 2014.

Troops who enlisted after 2008 and have served more than 36 months of their current engagement will be eligible to apply if they meet the qualifying criteria for their cap badge, details of which will be published later this year.

Those wishing to transfer are urged to log on to the JPA system to update their career aspirations ahead of the process.

Read ABN 42/13 for further details.

SOLDIERS MEET STARS

■ HOLLYWOOD royalty met troops from the Household Cavalry and the Grenadier Guards for an after-party at one of the Army's iconic London headquarters.



Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie were in town for the premiere of the *Fight Club* actor's *World War Z* film and attended a glitzy soiree at the Household Cavalry Museum.

The star-studded launch concluded with a concert by Muse, the band behind the movie's music score, to a capacity crowd at Horse Guards Parade.

Shot in Surrey, Hampshire and Glasgow, *World War Z* tells the story of a future apocalypse.

● Movies – pages 66-67



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The screenshot shows the Forces Leasing website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for HOME, OFFERS, FINANCE OPTIONS, INSURANCE, ABOUT US, FAQ'S, NEWS & REVIEWS, TESTIMONIALS, and CONTACT US. Below the navigation is a search bar with dropdowns for 'Select Make', 'Select Model', 'Monthly Budget', 'Body Type', 'Fuel Type', and 'Gearbox', with a 'GO >' button. To the right of this is a promotional image for a 'Mercedes E Class Coupe E220 CDi B/E SE Auto' with a '24 Month Contract', showing a black car and a price of 'from £221.99 p/m'. Below the search bar is a 'REQUEST AN ONLINE QUOTE' button. Further down, there's a 'SEARCH BY CATEGORY' section with icons for Small, Medium, Large/Estate, Sports, Prestige, MPVs, Crossovers, 4x4, and Commercial vehicles. On the left, there's a 'BY MANUFACTURER' section with logos for Alfa Romeo, Aston Martin, Audi, Bentley, and BMW. The right side of the page features a 'FORCES LEASING - BUSINESS & PERSONAL CAR LEASING' section with text about their services for Forces personnel and a list of featured vehicles including Volkswagen Up 3 door, Ford Fiesta, SEAT Ibiza Hatchback, and Nissan Juke Crossover.



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Deutschland drills: Around 2,000 troops and 750 vehicles from 20th Armoured Brigade took part in the exercise in southern Germany

Picture: Cpl Wes Calder, RLC

Future ops under spotlight on new serial

CHALLENGER battle tanks, Apache helicopters and artillery assets were called into action during a new training serial in Germany.

Exercise Bavarian Charger saw 2,000 troops and 750 platforms from 20th Armoured Brigade descend on to rain-soaked countryside to prepare for missions beyond Operation Herrick.

The package was split into three phases including live-firing, assaults and battlegroup-level tasks.

Speaking from the formation's

headquarters, Capt George Strachan-Hayes said: “We don't know what contingency will look like; future conflict may be very different so we must consider a broad spectrum of capabilities.

“This exercise focused on the worst-case scenario; how we might attack or defend against a force of similar size to ours, transitioning from offensive operations into security missions.”

The serial in Bavaria saw its participants move en masse from the proving ground of Grafenwoer to

Hohenfels, which is situated some 100 kilometres further south.

The journey across open terrain was designed to simulate the kind of difficulties faced by Servicemen and women when they travel through a hostile environment.

Challenger crew member Lt Fred Algate, of C Squadron, The Queen's Royal Hussars, commented: “This is the first exercise of this sort that I have done.

“It provided a lot of new tests for troops and we have learnt far more than we expected.”

Milestone for Merlin in Afghanistan

THE Merlin helicopter fleet has carried out its final operation in Afghanistan, after nearly four years of providing continuous support to British personnel on the front line.

During its time in theatre the platform has flown more than 18,000 hours in the dust and heat of Helmand province – transporting 7,900 tonnes of kit and stores and in excess of 130,000 troops.

With the UK military handing responsibility for security operations to Afghan forces, the number of bases has reduced from 137 in 2010 to just 13 this year – meaning fewer airframes are needed to sustain them.

In 2010, helicopter support hours totalled 2,300 a month, a figure that has now fallen to approximately 1,350.

As a result, the Merlin fleet and its crews are being returned to the UK to



High flyer: The Merlin in action in Helmand

prepare for potential future roles.

Gp Capt Frazer Nicholson, commander of the Joint Aviation Group, said: “These helicopters have proven to be a capable air asset that have tirelessly moved personnel and equipment in a demanding environment.

“Camp Bastion is nearly 3,000 feet

above sea level, dusty and more than 40 degrees Celsius in the summer.

“Those conditions are incredibly tough on all airframes but the Merlins have fared well.”

Engineers in Helmand province are now preparing the platforms for their journey back to the UK.

Each one will have its rotor blades and tail removed and will undergo a full “bio-wash” to remove dust and insects, before being loaded onto a C-17 Globemaster for the trip home.

Sqn Ldr Kevin Harris, officer commanding 1419 Flight, Merlin Detachment, said: “The aircrew and engineers have worked tirelessly to operate the Merlins in support of UK Forces in Afghanistan and it has been an immense privilege to have commanded such a fine group of men and women.”



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Sharing stories: Soldiers from the Royal Logistic Corps were among those to take part

Troops tackle social isolation

A TERRITORIAL Army medic has been praised for overseeing a scheme that has helped to combat social isolation among elderly people.

Capt Graham Bandy (pictured below), of Abingdon's 202 Field Hospital, worked with Age UK Oxfordshire to give troops and veterans the chance to meet and swap war stories.

A community psychiatric nurse in his civilian role, the officer organised six "reminiscence therapy" sessions involving members of all three Services.

"The idea was for people who had served during national service or other times to interact with today's troops," said the former Regular.

"I'm also a military historian so I brought some old memorabilia such as kit and uniform along and we used those as discussion points.

"Even though they might look old, on the inside these individuals still feel young and wanted to engage with the



'green machine'.

"We had a gentleman who was completely silent at first but over time he came out of his shell and by the end he was chatting away to everyone."

Karen Thomas, community development worker for the charity in south Oxfordshire, described the backing from the Forces as "absolutely incredible".

"Loneliness will literally kill people and I've seen the sorrow of some of our elderly first-hand," she explained.

"My job is to find activities for them. I turned to the military and every single unit we approached stepped up to the plate – I've never had that level of support before."

"It showed the Army appreciates what these people did and still values them."

"All of the troops that came wanted to return; they said it was inspiring."

A funding application has now been made to the Civilian Military Partnership Forum to take the scheme to new areas.

New life on the ocean waves

A FORMER member of 6th Battalion, The Rifles who was seriously injured in an IED blast in 2004 has completed a leg of a 50,000-mile sea odyssey aboard the *Lord Nelson*.

Dave Hart (pictured) sailed on the Jubilee Sailing Trust's accessible tall ship from India to Singapore.

Despite having limited use of his left arm, the former soldier managed to take an active role on the impressive vessel.



"I 'died' a couple of times before they got me out of Afghanistan so I was relieved to be alive; I just wanted to get back home and get fit," he said.

"I realised I wouldn't be returning to the front line but the one thing I didn't think I'd be able to do was climb rigging."

"The first time I did it I wasn't expecting to get past the initial platform."

For more on the Jubilee Sailing Trust visit www.jst.org.uk



ECHO EXPERIENCE

■ ROYAL Engineers have been given a taste of life at sea on-board one of the Royal Navy's multi-role hydrographic survey ships.

Exercise Floating Owl saw ten sappers from Ewell-based 135 Independent Geographic Squadron join their Senior Service and Royal Air Force counterparts on HMS *Echo* for a trip from Plymouth to Falmouth.

Organised by the Worshipful Company of Chartered Surveyors, the visit included briefings on the ship's capabilities and practical demonstrations of fire fighting, man-overboard drills and damage repair.

REVIVOR RECOGNITION

■ A ROYAL Artillery Serviceman has received a Joint Commander's Commendation for his work as a surveillance system operator during Op Herrick 16.

SSgt Kevin Langshaw from Bristol-based 266 (Gloucestershire Volunteer Artillery) Battery, 100 Regiment, RA (V) was attached to D Company, 5th Battalion, The Rifles at Checkpoint Sorab in Babaji for the six-month tour.

The senior NCO's citation described how his expertise on the Revivor asset and his detailed understanding of the local insurgent group kept troops safe in the early days of their tour and ultimately enabled them to defeat the enemy threat in the area.

A financial adviser in his civilian role, SSgt Langshaw was presented with his award by the Lord Lieutenant of Bristol.

GP WARNING TO TROOPS

■ RESERVISTS are being advised to check they are still registered with their GPs – especially if they have seen a Service health care provider during training or mobilisation.

A change in the defence medical IT system means that NHS computers have wrongly recognised some patients as being in permanent service and delisted them.

When his country needed him, Martin was there.

The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a charity that provides brilliant care to disabled members of the nation's military family with high care needs.

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As a charity, we do not receive any direct government funding and rely on the generosity of our supporters to fund the high level of specialist care that we provide.

You can show your appreciation for Martin and others like him, by making a donation to The Royal Star & Garter Homes today.

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IN MEMORIAM



FUS LEE RIGBY (25)
2ND BATTALION,
THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS
DIED MAY 22

HEARTFELT tributes have been paid to Fus Lee Rigby, the soldier killed in Woolwich.

The 25-year-old, of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, was attached to his regimental recruiting team and had been serving in London when he died.

He joined the Army in 2006 and on completing infantry training was selected to be a member of the Corps of Drums and posted to 2 RRF.

After serving as a machine gunner in Cyprus, he returned to the UK to perform public duties in the capital – the highlight of which was being part of the Household Division's Beating Retreat.

In April 2009 Fus Rigby deployed to Helmand province and later completed a second tour of duty before moving to Germany.

"An experienced and talented side drummer and machine gunner, he was a true warrior and served with distinction in Afghanistan, Cyprus and Germany," commented Lt Col Jim Taylor, commanding officer of 2 RRF.

WO1 Ned Miller added: "Riggers was what every battalion needs. He was one of the great characters, always smiling and always ready to brighten the mood with his fellow fusiliers."

"He was easily identified while on parade by the huge smile on his face."

Fus Rigby was a lifelong Manchester United fan and father to two-year-old Jack.

A family statement said: "All he wanted to do from when he was a little boy, was be in the Army.

"He wanted to live life and enjoy himself."

Rule change on rolled sleeves

ARMY policy has been amended to enable troops to roll up the sleeves of their combat uniforms during warm weather.

It means commanding officers now have the discretion to authorise shirt sleeve order as they see fit.

The change comes ahead of the introduction of a redesigned jacket in September, which will make it easier for soldiers to fold garments in this way.

However, the current style – which features more protection for the forearms – can also be worn short until the item is replaced.

There is no shift in the rules on wearing shirts untucked from the trousers or the way in which badges and name tapes are to be displayed.

Brig Matthew Lowe, Director of Personnel Operations at HQ Army, explained that the current jacket would remain suitable for use both in barracks and on training packages, with little visible difference.

"It is estimated that if the new



Picture: Steve Dolk

A warm reception: COs are now able to authorise shirt sleeves being rolled up

garments are issued under 'waste-out' arrangements, it will take three to four years for all personnel to be issued replacements," added the officer.

For more information read ABN 48/13.

Wolf pack protection

NEW safety features are being added to the Army's Land Rover fleet.

The £39 million programme by Defence Equipment and Support will eventually see around 7,000 British Wolf vehicles modified, including the last remaining assets to be returned from Afghanistan next year.

Enhancements include a front roll-over protection system to safeguard occupants if the four-wheel drive flips or is shunted.

Self-retracting rear seat belts have been fitted along with

acoustic matting designed to absorb sound and vibrations.

Anti-corrosion paint has also been used to protect the chassis.

Maj Simon Powell, the officer overseeing the three-year project, said: "This has been the most extensive safety upgrade to the Wolf fleet since it entered service back in 1997.

"It will play a significant part in maintaining the platforms to the extended out-of-service date of 2030."



CAVING CONQUEST

■ A SOLDIER has described the moment he helped a cave diving team reach new depths in Mexico as "amazing".

Cfn Connor Roe (REME, pictured below) spent his 21st birthday on the civilian-run trip to Huautla near San Agustin.

The area was last explored almost two decades ago but after taking up caving in recent years, the Serviceman decided to join the 47-strong contingent.

"We had a lot of people from all over the world on the expedition," he said.

"It's a renowned network among the caving community and has a reputation for being dangerous."

Cfn Roe's mission saw him swim and wade through caves, feeding rope to his colleagues which allowed them to reach a new depth of 1,545 metres.

The soldier spent up to four days at a time below the surface, in cramped and dark conditions.

"I think my military background meant I was very focused on what we were doing," he explained.

"It is definitely one of the more challenging sides of caving I have experienced; there were up to 20mph winds inside.

"There was a vibe of pure excitement on the trip; it was amazing," Cfn Roe added.



Picture: Chris Jewell



“**PEOPLE WERE HORRIFIED WHEN WE SAID THAT WE WERE ATTEMPTING IT**”

—BLINDED SOLDIER TO STUNT MAN, PAGES 40-42

SWITCH FOR SQUADRON

■ PERSONNEL from 47 Air Despatch Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps have started a new role within the Service's high-readiness contingency force, 16 Air Assault Brigade.

The unit has been re-subordinated from 29 Regiment to 13 Air Assault Support Regiment as part of plans set out in Army 2020.

The squadron will continue to meet its responsibilities at RAF Brize Norton while supporting the Air Assault Task Force.

Picture: POA (Phot) Dave Husband



MEDIC MILESTONE

■ AN innovative programme run in conjunction with the University of Cumbria is set to provide combat medical technicians with enhanced skills and a new qualification.

The higher education certificate is available to all class one medics on the recommendation of their commanding officer.

The course aims to bring the professional recognition of Servicemen and women in line with their civilian counterparts and focuses on areas that soldiers may be less familiar with including childbirth, chronic conditions and dealing with families.

A pilot scheme involving 60 Armed Forces personnel began last year and members who completed it received their certificates at a ceremony in Camberley.

Soldiers will increasingly be able to gain civilian qualifications from other military courses as well.

The Army has received accreditation from external awarding organisations for some training, including leadership and trade-specific programmes.

Read ABN 51/13 for more details.

BULLYING SHOWN CARD

■ A POCKET-sized guide to assist those who believe they are being bullied, harassed or discriminated against is being issued to soldiers.

The “speak out” card details avenues of support including a confidential helpline that troops can call if they require advice.

It will be distributed gradually to all units over the coming months.



Picture: Graeme Main

Fit to face the future: Another ten years have been added to the battle tank's shelf life

Up for the Challenger

DETAILS of a life extension project planned for the Challenger 2 battle tank have been revealed in a move that is likely to see the asset remain in the ranks until 2035.

As part of the reorganisation under Army 2020, the platform will be consolidated into three larger armoured regiments, each consisting of 56 tanks.

The vehicle was due out of service in 2025 but the new programme aims to add a further decade to its shelf life as it continues to provide support to Infantry personnel in close combat.

Challenger 2 had a number of technical enhancements through the urgent operational requirement process in Iraq, but previous initiatives to upgrade its firepower and mobility were

56

NUMBER OF BATTLE TANKS THAT EACH ARMoured REGIMENT WILL POSSESS UNDER ARMY 2020

not successful.

The focus of the latest project will be on managing obsolescence; that is, replacing any components that will soon be unavailable.

The scheme also includes the Challenger armoured repair and recovery vehicle as well as the driver training tank.

...Mobile accessories



FILM buffs would have guessed the answer to last month's spine lines competition.

Based on our military movies special, actors (Keith) David, (Forest) Whitaker, (Mark) Moses and (Kevin) Dillon all had a role in the 1986 blockbuster *Platoon*.

This month we have teamed up with innovative mobile accessory company Proporta (www.proporta.co.uk) to offer three lucky winners a bundle of smartphone-sustaining contraptions worth almost £100 per set.

Each pack contains a BeachBuoy bike mount, durable waterproof case and – most excitingly for the iPhone users among us – a USB emergency charger.

To be in with a chance of winning one of the handy packages, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue. Send your answers on a postcard to the usual address or via email comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by July 31.



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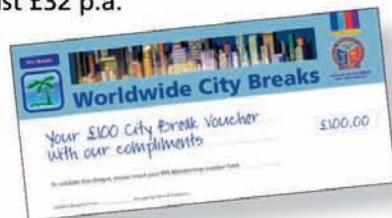
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THE BIGGER PICTURE

MORE than 1,000 soldiers and horses from the Household Division and The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery marched in front of Her Majesty The Queen during the Trooping the Colour parade in London. This year the honour of leading the sovereign's official birthday celebrations fell to 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards. Picture: Cpl Paul Shaw, RLC





Top marks: An integrated lane-marking system allows the Terrier to highlight safe routes to vehicles behind it.

All seeing: Terrier uses on-board thermal imaging and vision kit. A remote control capability allows its crew to safely disrupt devices.

Clearance king: To remove roadside bombs and other dangerous materials the 32-tonne platform uses a surface clearance device and can also tow and fire the Python explosive route clearance system.



KING OF THE COMBAT VEHICLES

ARMoured DIGGER ENTERS SERVICE IN STYLE

TERRIER'S VITAL STATS

● General features

- Medium-weight armoured combat engineer vehicle
- Air transportable in both A400M and C17
- Wading up to 1.5 metres

● Electrical systems

- Terrier has two power sources (engine and six batteries), which provide a 330 amp-hour capacity
- Hydraulic and electrical outlet for power tools

● Crew

- Two – commander and driver with side-by-side configuration

● Vision

- 24-hour, day-night visibility
- Reversing camera, 360-degree thermal and visual surveillance system
- Commander's special-to-role low-light camera

● Multi-capability

- Front-loading system: multi-purpose clamshell bucket with a 2.8 cubic-metre capacity, lifting up to five tonnes

- Excavator arm system: bucket capacity 0.4 cubic metres, lift capacity of three tonnes at maximum reach
- Load platform for transport of up to five tonnes
- Automatic route marking system
- Tow an 18-tonne capacity trailer
- Remote control capability at up to 1,000m

● Protection

- Integral spall liner for the crew compartment
- Regenerative NBC protection with environmental control system
- Advanced crew seating
- Mine blast protection
- Removable modular armour system
- 7.62mm machine gun

● Engine and transmission

- Caterpillar C18 700hp-rated engine
- Modified Allison X300 automatic transmission
- Two-speed final drives
- Road speed maximum 70km/h
- Cross-country speed maximum 40km/h



Greater grip: The multi-purpose bucket and excavator arm can fill craters, dig and construct earthworks, mechanically place obstacles and doze over and level surfaces, giving it the ability to bridge natural or man-made voids. Terrier can also grip and lift objects, breach earthworks and remove obstructions such as barricades. With its rock hammer it can destroy and disrupt concrete obstacles.

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

A NEW platform described by its makers as "the first true 21st century combat vehicle" has entered service with the British Army after more than ten years of development.

The 32-tonne Terrier can dig, carry and grab while being driven remotely and will be delivered to Royal Engineer units across the country over the coming months.

Produced by BAE Systems, the armoured platform has been billed as a "military workhorse" and is set to revolutionise the way combat engineers do business by undertaking numerous tasks from obstacle and mine clearance to repairing vital transport routes.

"The Army has very high expectations of this vehicle," said the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall.

"Pretty much anywhere we're going to go, it will be there."

"Had we had it in service in recent years, it would have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Reflecting on the 700hp tractor, the Service's top soldier – himself a former Royal Engineer – said it would provide a boost to personnel across the entire military.

"The private soldier in the Engineers will be very pleased to have a new piece of kit that enables him to give better support to other parts of the Army," the officer explained.

"The soldier on the armoured infantry side will find his assistance turns up faster, is more reliable and can dig and provide protection more effectively."

"Terrier has been described as the Swiss army knife of vehicles because of all of its various utilities."

With the ability to shift 300 tonnes of earth in an hour and operate in temperatures ranging from -31 to 55 degrees Celsius, 20 of the versatile diggers are now part of the Army's vehicle fleet.

A further 40 are due to be delivered by June 2014.

As part of the package, "high fidelity" full-motion simulators will be used to prepare crews to use the Terrier, enabling troops to complete missions in a mock version of the platform.

WO2 Steve Cahill (RE), who will be overseeing proving packages for the vehicle, said: "Terrier represents a whole new training ethos by the Army in general.

"It's a learning rather than instructional regime, which will be based on trial and error by students and peer reviews.

"This sort of process is the first of its type for armoured vehicles and these are the first full-motion platform simulators the Service has had."

Those who use the battlefield earth-mover will drive it in the knowledge that the Royal Engineers Training and Development Unit (RETDU) has been working alongside the kit's manufacturers since 2002 to ensure it meets all specifications.

"We have been involved with the vehicle from the first blueprint through to the prototype and the final product to point out where changes needed to be made," explained Cpl Michael Pitt, a member of the RETDU.

"It will give the wider Force a medium-weight capability rather than relying on large vehicles."

"It is also a good combat engineer tractor for use in indirect fire zones."

Colleague Cpl Robert McClurkin (RE) added: "In an environment like southern Afghanistan, this platform enables fast movement across short gaps and provides mobile support to patrols."

"It also gives you the option to take different routes on the ground rather than being channelled down the roads that a 60-tonne tank can use, which makes it easier to avoid IEDs."

With a front-loaded digger that can lift up to five tonnes, a side version capable of excavating trenches and knocking buildings down and the ability to move through

1.5 metres of water, the Terrier is unlike anything else in the Service's existing arsenal of trucks.

Adrian Betteridge, BAE Systems' programme manager for the platform, said: "This is the first true 21st century combat vehicle, designed to meet the bespoke requirements of the Army."

"It needed to be able to be transported inside an A400 with a high level of capability and all the protection needed by soldiers."

One of the key features of the vehicle is its ability to be driven remotely from distances of up to one kilometre.

"This means it can be sent into dangerous areas from a safe location, providing extra protection for our troops," the expert added.

Although the multi-talented bulldozer will not see action in Helmand, its capabilities ensure that whatever task the Army next finds itself on, the Terrier will be a highly sought-after asset.

On all terrain and in any weather condition – whether on the front line or at the rear echelons – this armoured platform is set to make a big impact on future missions. ■



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FLEXIBLE FORCE

LANCERS COVER ALL THE BASES IN HELMAND PREPARATIONS

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

WITH British troops actively engaged in the drawdown in Afghanistan, remaining Herrick tours will undoubtedly look a lot different to those that have gone before them.

Afghan forces are now playing a prominent role in security operations and with more and more patrol bases and checkpoints closing, life on the front line has changed dramatically.

But the progress being made in Helmand province does not mean UK personnel no longer have an important part to play and preparations for the next deployments are already well under way.

One formation planning for all eventualities is B Squadron, 9th/12th Royal Lancers, who will form the basis of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) on future missions.

A total of 16 different cap badges – including the Coldstream Guards, Royal Artillery and Royal Signals – provide the backbone of the highly versatile outfit and these troops have been preparing for the challenge ahead during a bespoke package of serials in the UK and Germany.

Staged by the Operational Training Advisory Group's Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing (SRW), the course focuses on the key skills soldiers need to fulfil such a role.

A technical phase teaches them how to use equipment such as ground sensors and cameras, drivers are put through their paces on the sand dunes at Braunton Burrows and Sennybridge serves as an arena for a variety of observation tasks.

"All the attachments come together for a basic week that includes Op Barma drills, patrolling, how to detain insurgents and how to gather evidence," WO2 Barry Taylor (RHG/D), the SRW's training warrant officer, told *Soldier*.

"We then split the squadron in two. One half will go to Braunton Burrows for training on Jackals and Coyotes, while the others go to Sennybridge. >>



All eyes and ears: LCpl Luke Forshaw (Coldm Gds) observes enemy movements with the BRF at Sennybridge

>> "For most drivers it is the first time they have done anything this challenging. It shows the capabilities of the vehicles and really tests their skill sets.

"The commanders and gunners are pushed and the course sees them working together as a crew.

"We also focus on ground sign awareness and in Sennybridge we look at close target reconnaissance.

"It is mission-specific training and we are trying to cover everything they may be asked to do out in Helmand province."

Capt James Howlin (Coldm Gds) was quick to highlight the benefits of the package as his unit prepares for a new role in Afghanistan.

"It has been very good, particularly in terms of vehicle mobility," the Serviceman explained.

"The Coldstream Guards come from a dismounted reconnaissance

background so it has been very useful for us.

"I was in an Infantry rifle company on my last Herrick tour. To be part of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force is the pinnacle and it will be a nice change from working in patrol bases.

"We have gone from supporting the Afghan National Security Forces to focusing on the drawdown but I think missions in the BRF will be just as busy.

"It is the first time I have worked with the cavalry but they are a good bunch with a lot of experience. They have a slightly different way of doing things but that's not a problem."

For Tpr Chris Doherty (9/12 L) his upcoming tour will be vastly different to his previous role on Op Herrick 14.

The junior soldier was involved in mentoring the Afghan National Police and is now relishing the chance to be part of the BRF.

"There is a lot to take on board during the training but I'm enjoying it," he said.

"Sennybridge is a great area. Normally the weather is pretty bad so we

have been given a bit of a gift with the sunshine.

"The hills and terrain make it challenging. It is about being robust and this is getting us in the right frame of mind for Afghanistan."

WE HAVE GONE FROM SUPPORTING THE AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES TO FOCUSING ON THE DRAWDOWN



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The serials offered by the SRW will ensure the squadron is fully prepared for life on tour and members are eager to get to theatre and put their skills to the test.

LCpl Scott Beverley (AGC (RMP)) has been attached to the formation since the start of the training cycle and believes the early integration will serve him well.

"We are getting along and it is good for us to bring our skills to the fore on tasks such as evidence collecting," he said.

"This is completely new to us really, we have to learn quickly but it is achievable. I have been told this is one of the best jobs in theatre and I am proud to be part of that.

"Ours will be one of the last Afghan tours and this is a great opportunity for us to get out there. It is what I joined the Army to do."

While fulfilling a key function at brigade level, being part of the BRF is also seen as a badge of honour for those included within its ranks.

The personnel *Soldier* spoke to all revealed a sense of immense pride in being asked to perform the role and Lt Tristan Burwell (9/12 L) said the blend of experience in the force will be a great asset.

"The intelligence-led operations we will be doing are second to none," he added.

"The environment is one that other soldiers will probably not

reach and we have the immediate job satisfaction of seeing tangible results from our efforts – whether that is destroying an IED factory or taking a potential suspect off the ground. That gives the guys a lot of motivation.

"It is hard to say what the role of the BRF will be.

"Our OC will go out to see the guys on Op Herrick 18 and that will be the gauge for what we do.

"It's all about flexibility and it is an exciting role to be involved with." ■

Combined ops: Members of the 9/12 Royal Lancers' Brigade Reconnaissance Force during training at Sennybridge, Wales and Braunton Burrows in Devon Picture: Graeme Main



'IT IS MISSION-SPECIFIC TRAINING AND WE ARE TRYING TO COVER EVERYTHING THEY MAY BE ASKED TO DO OUT IN THEATRE'



EYES FRONT

RESERVISTS LOOK AHEAD TO 2020 DURING CYPRUS SERIAL

Report: Becky Clark

Pictures: Steve Dock

WHILE the government prepares to publish a white paper on Territorial Army reform, West Country Reservists have been wasting no time in readying themselves for an increased role in tomorrow's Force.

Members of 6th Battalion, The Rifles deployed to Cyprus for the latest step in their training towards future operations.

Over the course of two weeks, Exercise Lion Star 5 tested their ability to integrate with Regular counterparts from brother unit 1 Rifles and, for the first time, to work as a company group.

Maj Jon Penhale, training major for the Exeter-based battalion, explained why the serial represented a big step for the troops and a shift in focus for the Service.

"As a unit this is the first time we've worked at this level for a number of years," said the former Regular officer.

"Over the last decade the focus for the TA has been supplying individual augmentees in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that has been at the expense of collective competences.

"It will take a while to build it up again but it's on trips like this where you find that after two weeks a company has bonded and could take its place alongside the Regulars for joint serials.

"The guys have been excellent," observed the 40-year-old during the package.

"The conditions are very challenging – it is hot and sunny, and over rugged terrain but they are keen and work hard."

Section drills and live firing were followed by a final training exercise designed to prepare the troops for any eventuality.

A coordinated amphibious assault and helicopter insertion saw the Reservists working in tandem with the 1 Rifles Fire Support Group (FSG) to secure a beachhead.

Afterwards LCpl Jack Daniels (6 Rifles) explained: "We were taking on a paramilitary force so we deployed by landing craft and took the beach and then began an advance to contact, moving up to our first report line before clearing the enemy positions."

The Plymouth University student said that making use of unfamiliar assets would help to increase the troops' versatility.

"As infantry we're usually working on the ground so it's good to do an element of airborne or amphibious assault because it

advances our skill set," he added.

"If we have to do it again in the future we'll have that knowledge to use."

Sgt James Stark (1 Rifles) said that both Regulars and Reservists had found the training "a massive learning curve".

"We benefit from working with a different bunch of lads who bring a certain array of expertise and tactics," said the 29-year-old.

"For the Territorial Army guys, they've never really worked alongside an attachment like the FSG before.

"Normally they'd be on exercise in the UK but coming out to Cyprus, working in the heat and doing something like the amphibious landing or helicopter insertion is building up their experience and that will lead on to them becoming a capable part of the greater Force.

"The TA are more than up to the job; there just has to be that little bit more integration to get them used to working with different assets, so by 2020 there shouldn't be any problems."

LCpl Daniels agreed that the swift evolution of the Reserves would bring its personnel in line with the full-time Force in a matter of years.

"The TA has come on leaps and bounds and that's only going to improve with the funding we're getting and the expansion of it," said the 21-year-old former Royal Marine Reservist.

"It's positive to see we're getting the same equipment as the Regulars as well."

"For this exercise we've been issued the multi-terrain pattern warm weather kit and I believe we're one of the first formations to get the new brown desert boots, which is very good indeed."

Lt Col Nev Holmes, commanding officer of 6 Rifles, said that another key aim of the serial had been to show his soldiers that they are being well resourced.

"It's important to demonstrate intent; that the money is being invested under FR 2020 in terms of new uniforms, good exercises like this one, ammunition for live firing and so on," he explained.

"There's a lot of talk about whether they can step up to the mark and from what I've seen from a similar exercise we ran in Germany last year and the one here in Cyprus, even in two weeks the level of capability a company can generate is remarkable."

"From people who didn't know each other a few days ago they're now looking and sounding every bit like a unit."

"If that can be achieved in a fortnight, what can we do between now and the seven years we've got to reach Army 2020?" ■





BACK TO BASICS

ALTHOUGH soldiers on Lion Star had their eyes firmly fixed on the future, much of the serial was about returning to the fundamentals of conventional conflict.

Permanent staff instructor Sgt Daniel Field (6 Rifles) explained what the so-called "new basics" entail.

"It's never really gone away because even though we've been on operations the essentials still apply – we just had to adapt to the Afghan or Iraq environment," commented the 31-year-old.

"But what we're returning to now is more traditional warfare; coming back to advance to contact, tabbing, setting up harbour areas, the kind of thing you don't do so much in Afghanistan because you're living in compounds.

"It's about brushing off the cobwebs and getting back down to the good, basic rifleman stuff."

LCpl Glen Hamblett, a nursery school manager and veteran of Herrick 14, said the process had been "hugely interesting".

"I was here in Cyprus three years ago and it was very much geared towards Afghan-specific protocols, such as counter-IED drills," he added.

"This is more like the stuff we were taught in infantry training with a few lessons learnt from Helmand and Iraq thrown in.

"It's your conventional platoon and company assault whereas on Operation Herrick it was very much based on sections or 12-man multiples."

Medic Cpl Andrew Netherton was also familiarising himself with the switch in procedure around casualty handling.

"Compared to the Herrick way of doing things, the old-school style of infantry work in terms of dealing with the wounded is very different," he explained.

"In conventional warfare you need to plan for more casualties and the way you evacuate them could differ because you might not have the Medical Emergency Response Team to come and get them.

"In Afghanistan, if you get a casualty the mission can sometimes become secondary to the evacuation but in conventional war the mission is paramount."



IN NUMBERS

450 – members of 6 Rifles who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003

130 – the number of troops on Exercise Lion Star 5



ARMY 2020

"Ambitious but achievable"

Commanding officer of 6 Rifles gives his take on the drive to increase the TA to 30,000...

“THE Army 2020 figures are ambitious but within my battalion I have no concerns.

Manning is healthy at around 90 per cent and there are about 100 recruits in the pipeline.

Twelve months ago I had two potential officers on the books and now I have 23.

The active strength has also gone up by about eight per cent in the same period, that is the guys that

turn up week in, week out for regular training.

The level of commitment and enthusiasm is humbling.

Numbers are strong and growing and soon we'll know the answers to the questions about basing and terms and conditions which will give both Reservists and their employers more certainty.”





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Inside the stalking zone

New contest seeks out Britain's best sniper

Report: Joe Clapson

Pictures: Steve Dock

THE definition of a sniper on the battlefield is the ultimate warrior, so he must excel in everything," explained WO2 Brian Trainner (SASC) as *Soldier* entered the daunting stalking zone at the inaugural Tri-Service Sniper Competition.

It was the first time elite marksmen of the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force had been pitted against each other in a test of their craft.

"I have pushed them to within an inch of their lives on their skills and this has shown us who is the very best in the Armed Forces," added the event's organiser from 3rd (UK) Division's operational shooting training team.

The talk was tough, but then so was the task at hand.

Over three days in the varying weather conditions of Salisbury Plain, Service personnel were paired off to undertake missions including stalking, marksmanship, navigation by day and night and close-quarter combat.

The serial recreated battlefield conditions to test the physical and mental limits of the 17 teams, whose members must remain strictly anonymous for operational security reasons.

For the stalk, the heavily-disguised

troops were required to find a position from which they could lay down accurate fire on the "enemy" without being compromised.

Faced with a combination of dense undergrowth, tall trees and open spaces, obtaining a clear shot was a tough prospect.

From the foliage a whisper of "14 clicks elevation, one left spin drift," came from a number two as his partner prepared to take aim on the instructors' observation point (OP).

The pair from 1st Battalion, The Rifles had taken cover under a tree in a roadside ditch and were setting the coordinates for an accurate shot.

What became immediately clear was that success as a sniper requires far more than excellent shooting ability.

Following the stalk, a team from 3rd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment explained how even the tiniest mistakes can prove costly.

"Obviously being a good shot is important but you also need to be able to get in and out of a location without being seen," the number two commented.

"The smallest movement can give

you away; I shifted my head slightly to improve my position and was spotted."

His teammate added: "We had leopard-crawled about 200 metres through nettles and prickles to get in position without being seen, but one false move revealed us.

"We wouldn't be doing this kind of stalking in Afghanistan but these skills are very important for conventional warfare."

From the perspective of those in the shooter's cross hairs, the task was to identify any potential attack on their OP.

"Our eyes will immediately be drawn to any movement in our arc," said the 1 Rifles instructor.

"Meerkating" to check their position or 'telegraphing' by moving a tree when there's no wind are all things that can give you away.

"We think the same way our opponents do so if they haven't put the right camouflage with their ghillie suits they will be seen." >>

(On the exhale,
as you are
almost out of air,
you squeeze the
trigger)





>> As a team of experts studied the land with powerful binoculars, those on the ground had to utilise every aspect of their training in concealment, observation, stalking, judging distance and shooting in order to successfully complete the mission.

A member of 1 Rifles explained the importance of being able to change strategy while under pressure of being caught out.

"Our map recce suggested we could get a good view on the OP once in position but on arrival we realised we needed to move, so we went on the belt buckle and crawled 300 metres," he said.

"Then we sat in behind a bush and cut an aperture through it with a line of sight on the mark."

After either completing their tasks or being spotted, the pairs conducted a two-mile extraction before lying down side-by-side with their rivals to fire at metal targets positioned at undisclosed distances of up to 1,300 metres.

Taking the gusting wind and pouring rain into consideration, the number ones were given 15 seconds to fire three times at each range.

A resounding "ding" of metal on metal gave instant feedback of success, while silence followed by the bark of "miss" signified failure.

After the gunfire ended a member of the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines talked *Soldier* through the process of neutralising a target.

"You get your breathing steady and on the exhale, as you are almost out of air, you squeeze the trigger," he said.

"As a number two I see the 'fall of splash' if the shot has missed and can help my counterpart adjust for the second engagement."

The marine added: "It definitely helps us being up against the Army and the RAF because it adds a competitive edge and brings Service pride into it."

With only the best in the field sent to represent their unit, the competition required outstanding all-round ability to come out on top.

This year's greatest sniper pair was 1 Rifles' "B" team, while the title of best number one was awarded to a member of the same unit and top number two to a Royal Marine.

"Service personnel were tested across the spectrum, combining operational fitness with tactical marksmanship," concluded WO2 Trainner.

"For young soldiers there's a lot of technical knowledge required.

"It's been demanding and this took them right to the edge but snipers are a special breed."

As the UK's Armed Forces move their focus from Afghanistan to contingency operations, these highly valuable assets will continue to operate under the radar, eliminating targets without causing collateral damage. ■



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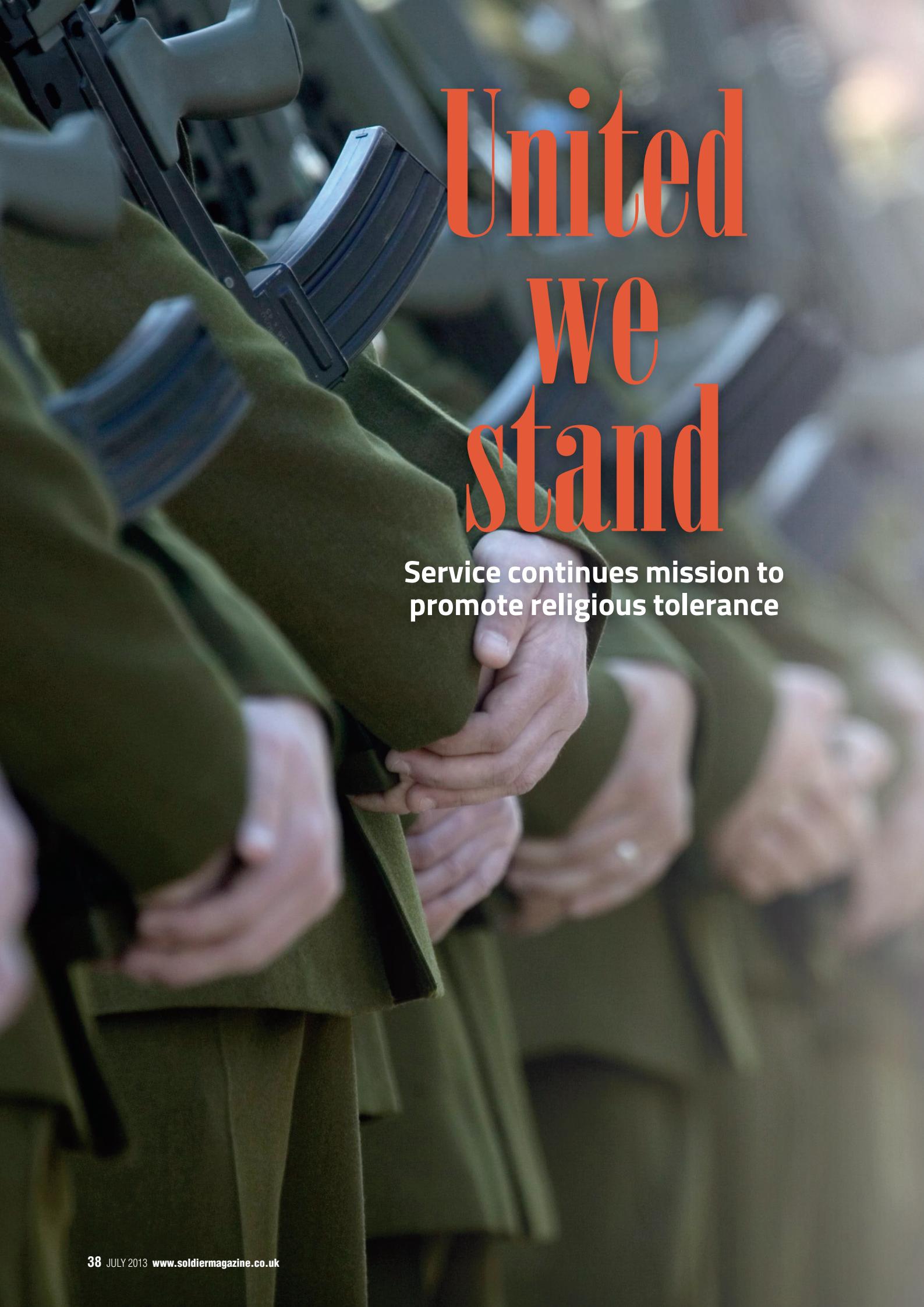
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United we stand

**Service continues mission to
promote religious tolerance**

Report: Joe Clapson

THE killing of Fus Lee Rigby (RRF) as this magazine's June issue went to press prompted an outpouring of tributes to the Serviceman from across the nation (page 19).

It also led some members of the far-right to launch revenge attacks on innocent followers of the Muslim faith.

Despite finding itself at the centre of political discussions in the wake of the 25-year-old's death, the UK's military community has vowed to continue its efforts to promote religious tolerance.

Army careers are open to members of all faiths and a recent overseas visit by one Serviceman served to demonstrate that fact on an international scale.

LCpl Taju-Deen Mohammed (pictured below right) made history by becoming the first soldier from a non-Islamic country to attend the International Koran Recital Contest for Military Forces in Saudi Arabia, a rare honour that allowed the Service to demonstrate how it embraces people from different backgrounds.

The junior NCO journeyed to the prestigious competition along with Wg Cdr Mohammed Ahmed of the Royal Air Force and Imam Ali Omar, the Muslim civilian chaplain to the Armed Forces.

Featuring more than 100 competitors from across the world, the event proved to be a military mission with a difference as the lance corporal read passages of text from memory before being judged on his accuracy by an expert panel.

Speaking to *Soldier* about the experience, the group said they hoped it would help to demonstrate there was a place for Muslims in the UK's Armed Forces.

"Since the terrible attack on Fus Rigby people have spoken very carefully about what has happened but nothing negative has been said towards me as a Muslim," commented LCpl Mohammed.

"On the whole, I have found that troops do understand that there's a difference between most followers of Islam and those with very extreme views," he added.

"We just need to be fully aware that there are a minority of dangerous people with radical beliefs.

"These individuals claim to be Muslim but do not share the same views as the vast majority of those who read the Koran."

The same message has been echoed repeatedly by other members of the Islamic faith and by Prime Minister David Cameron.

"The people who did this were trying to divide us," he said in a speech shortly after the killing.

"They should know: something like this will only bring us together and make us stronger."

To that end, it appears that one of the greatest acts of defiance British Army personnel can undertake is behaving impeccably and displaying solidarity with those from different walks of life.

"Lee would not want people to use his name as an excuse to carry out attacks against others," his family said in a statement released after the soldier's death.

"We would not wish any other families to go through this harrowing experience and appeal to everyone to keep calm and show their respect in a peaceful manner."

As Fus Rigby's colleagues begin to come to terms with his passing, the Service community continues to show that the multicultural message will not be derailed.

"Troops who follow faith in the Army can practise their religion freely," Wg Cdr Ahmed explained to *Soldier*.

"We must continue to look after the Muslims that are already serving and then civilians on the outside will see that; people will realise that being a British soldier doesn't conflict with their religion."

As well as showing that the Army takes the beliefs of its troops seriously, it is hoped that events such as the international competition will help to improve understanding of religious practices among others.

In an organisation where Islam is often discussed in the context of al-Qaeda and the mission in Afghanistan, all three arms of the military are keen to ensure that their personnel see the stark difference between an extremist and a committed, balanced Muslim.

LCpl Mohammed believes progress is

being made in this area.

"Even in my seven years in the Service I have seen a lot of improvements for Muslims," he explained.

"What I would like to see is senior commanders attending courses about different faiths so that they can understand religious requirements better."

According to this soldier and his colleagues, following the word of Allah has no detrimental impact on a military career.

"I find that having faith actually helps me to be a good soldier because the rules and values of the Army are so similar to those of Islam," said the veteran of two Herrick tours.

"Things like discipline and selfless commitment are very important to me both as a Muslim and a Serviceman."

"The principles are easy to abide by because they are already embedded within your character."

However, Imam Omar said the task of improving tolerance towards minority religions in the Services was far from over.

"There is a lot the military needs to do to catch up with other sectors I've worked in," he admitted.

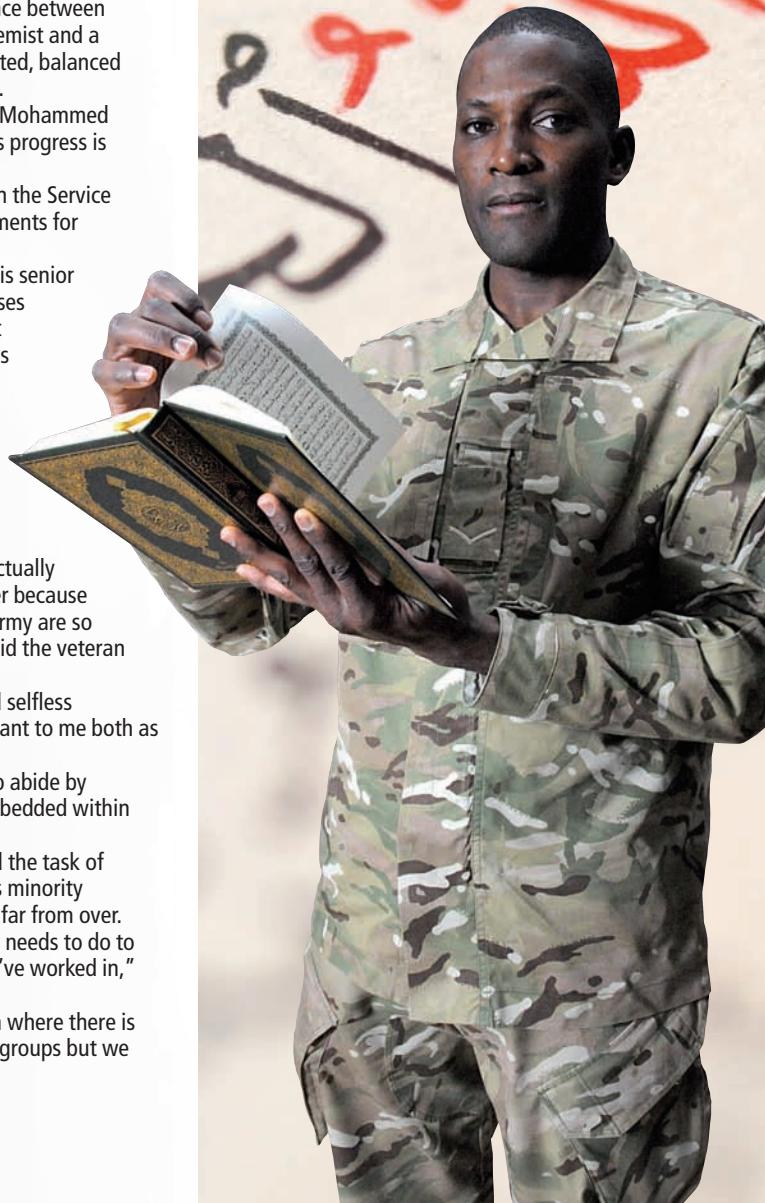
"We are now in a position where there is a lot of support for religious groups but we must keep going." ■



Above, Bringing us together: LCpl Taju-Deen Mohammed and Imam Ali Omar, the Muslim civilian chaplain to the Armed Forces, visit Saudi Arabia for the prestigious competition **Below, Reading respect:** Wg Cdr Mohammed Ahmed greets military counterparts during the Koran recital contest



I find that having faith actually helps me to be a good soldier



Report: Becky Clark

Operational ordeal

IT is hard to envisage a scenario more horrifying than waking up to find that you can't see, but that was the nightmare reality facing Billy Baxter one morning in 1997.

For weeks the Royal Horse Artillery staff sergeant had been ignoring deteriorating vision in his right eye but suddenly overnight the sight in his left eye had gone too, leaving him completely blind.

"I remember it was September 1 and I was in my married quarter in Tidworth," recalled Baxter.

"I woke up and I couldn't see my wife in bed next to me.

"I closed my eyes and opened them again – nothing. It was terrifying."

The cause of the problem was an infection, which the then 33-year-old battery quartermaster sergeant had picked up on a deployment to the Balkans.

"I was on a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and had been present during the exhumation of mass graves," he explained.

"Bacteria got on my fingers and I rubbed my eyes. That was it; wrong place, wrong time."

"My right eye started going

first but I never told a soul.

"I was due to be promoted to sergeant major so I certainly didn't want an early bath and to leave my lads in Bosnia and go home.

"I was in denial.

"Words can't describe how lonely and frightening it was."

Initially the disease – bilateral neuroretinitis – responded to treatment with steroids but after three frustrating years of successive improvements and relapses, Baxter's sight disappeared for good.

"By this time I was ready to kill myself," the former soldier admitted.

"I was going to lose the job I loved, couldn't support my family and felt like I was totally out of control.

"The world becomes a scary place when you're blind because you can't clock someone looking at you or see any dangers around you."

In 2000 the father-of-three was referred to Blind Veterans UK, then known as St Dunstan's.

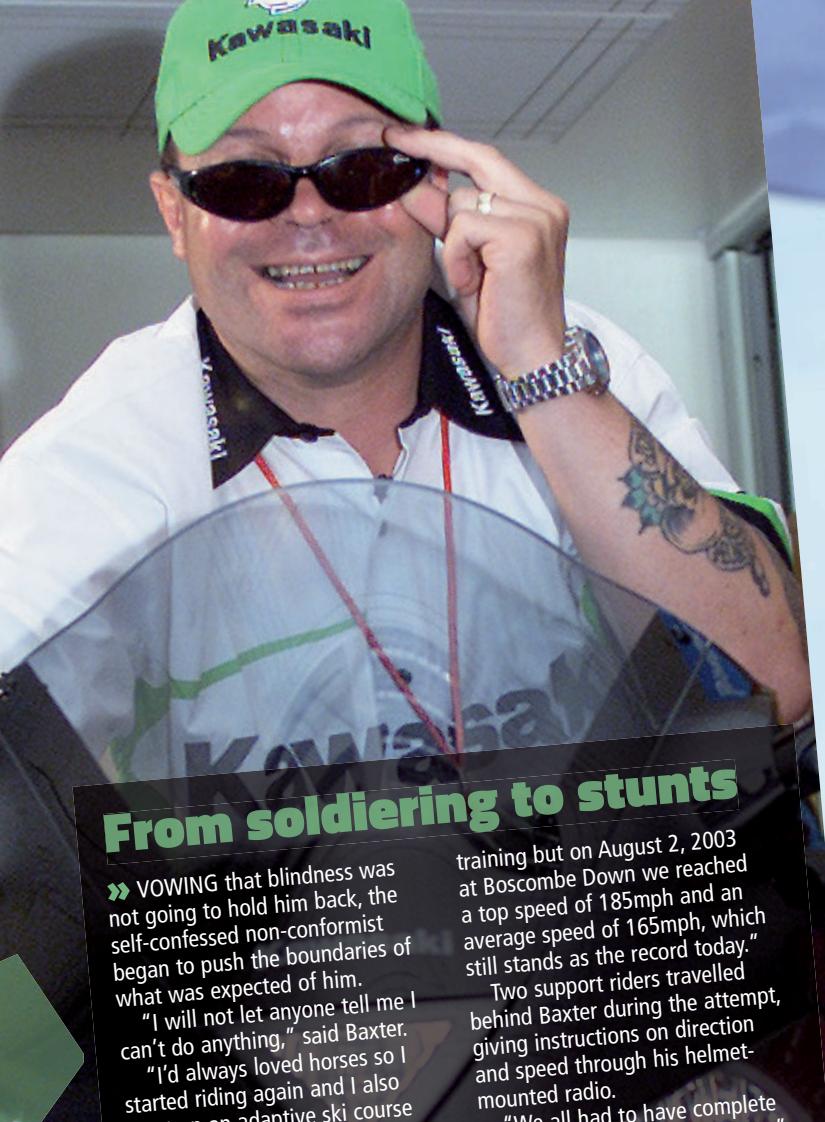
With the organisation's help and the support of his family, he began the gradual process of coming to terms with a new life outside of the British Army. »

Blind AMBITION

How sight loss took this man from staff sergeant to stunt rider...



Above and main picture, Speed king: Billy Baxter under instruction with the Royal Artillery motorbike display team, The Flying Gunners, and at Brands Hatch, where he was presented with a bike by Kawasaki UK
Pictures: Graeme Main



From soldiering to stunts

» VOWING that blindness was not going to hold him back, the self-confessed non-conformist began to push the boundaries of what was expected of him.

"I will not let anyone tell me I can't do anything," said Baxter.

"I'd always loved horses so I started riding again and I also went on an adaptive ski course through the Battle Back initiative.

"I discovered I still had my balance so I decided to try riding motorbikes again too."

Not content with half measures,

Baxter soon became the world's only blind stunt rider and achieved his lifelong dream of performing alongside the Royal Artillery motorcycle display team.

"I tried every trick in the book to get into The Flying Gunners when I was serving but my regiment wouldn't let me go because of the job I was doing – it took going blind for me to get onto the squad," the veteran quipped.

Following three years touring with the team, executing tricks such as backwards riding and the "tulip", in which six men balance on a single vehicle, the former soldier took on a venture that was even more daring.

"We found out that the solo land speed world record for a blind motorcycle rider stood at 78mph," he explained.

"My team had done 100mph, even without communications, so we developed a special helmet for me to wear to challenge this – a bit like the ones police riders have. It took 18 months of

training but on August 2, 2003 at Boscombe Down we reached a top speed of 185mph and an average speed of 165mph, which still stands as the record today."

Two support riders travelled behind Baxter during the attempt, giving instructions on direction and speed through his helmet-mounted radio.

"We all had to have complete trust in each other and the gear," he recalled.

"The guys talked to me continually because the scariest thing is hearing nothing – you wonder whether you're heading for a wall or a tree, even though you know there's nothing there.

"It was psychologically very surreal.

"I just had to sit as still as possible and keep myself focused – all you can feel is the vibration of the engine.

"The physics of the bike keep it upright when I'm accelerating but slowing down is more dangerous because I can't tell how fast I'm going and you can veer off course.

"Also, if we lost comms, as had happened in training, I'd be both deaf and blind so we had a safety plan in place whereby the guys behind me would come up alongside, box me in and keep me on-track while we slowed down.

"People were horrified when we said we were attempting it but I was training with the very best military riders and also had a lot of support from a number of professional superbike racers – it was humbling."



Mentoring mission

» LIVING proof that a life

without sight is not the end, Baxter now works as a rehabilitation and training support officer at the Blind Veterans UK centre in

he said.

"Initially people are terrified but here they're always met with kind and compassionate staff."

Although the centre is not run in a military fashion, the discipline found in Service

life can be useful when

adjusting to blindness.

"Anyone who has been in the Army will know that when you're on exercise, if you use a bit of kit you put it back in the same place and that you must keep your locker neat and tidy," the mentor added.

"Using a cane is also a bit like using a pace stick during drill."

"All of those skills come into play when we work with members."

"Some of them joke that I'm the blind provost sergeant around here."

Thirteen years after being referred to the organisation himself, Baxter draws on his experiences in his role as a mentor to blind former military personnel and their loved ones.

"I can tell them that things are going to get better and they're more likely to listen to me because I've been there,"



Getting it right: Billy Baxter with actor Alec Newman during his visit to the Blind Veterans UK Centre in Llandudno

Acting insight

» BAXTER'S skills were recently called upon to help actor Alec Newman prepare for a part in new film *Greyhawk*.

Due for release next year, the title features the 38-year-old *Waterloo Road* star as a blind veteran.

Describing the task he faced, Newman told *Soldier*: "It's important to prepare for any role but when there are people out there who have that condition and live in those circumstances, you really have to get it right."

"I had to be thorough before I could attempt to play the character."

To get ready for the movie, Newman visited Baxter and his team to discover how to negotiate the streets as a blind person.

"We did some work on the road and how you use the kerb, a railing, grass – anything you can – to navigate," the star said.

They say about 80 per cent of the information that goes to your brain is from sight

"They also took me to a pub and left me at the door while they went in and sat down and I had to find them."

"They say about 80 per cent of the information that goes to your brain is from sight."

"I felt mine trying to tell me different things – it was very disorientating."

Newman shadowed Baxter to learn how to imitate his movement.

"There's a big difference between a blind man who hasn't served and a blind ex-Serviceman and it was important for him to see it first-hand," explained the former drill sergeant.

"Once a soldier, always a soldier. I carry myself in an upright manner, whereas a lot of people, especially civilians, will stoop if they are blinded."

"We only had a short time to teach Alec but he picked it all up very quickly."

During the course of his visit, Newman spoke to the centre's veterans about their lives, something he described as "moving and inspiring".

"The way they adapt to things and their spirit is incredible," he said.

The experience led him to become an ambassador for the Blind Veterans UK "No One Alone" campaign, a drive to raise awareness of what the organisation can do for partially sighted or blind members of the ex-Service community.

Calling on friends and relatives of those affected by sight loss to use the charity, Baxter added: "It is not a sign of weakness to accept help."

"Going blind can be very isolating but those affected will learn they're not on their own any more, they're part of the Service family again." ■

● If you or someone you know is struggling with sight problems visit www.noonealone.org.uk or telephone 0800 389 7979



Sight loss in numbers

100 million – amount, in pounds, needed over five years for Blind Veterans UK to continue providing lifelong support to its members

68,000 – number of individuals who may be unaware they are entitled to the charity's support

5,861 – number of blind or partially sighted ex-Service personnel currently under the care of the organisation

10 – percentage of Armed Forces leavers estimated to have problems with their sight



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5 tips for operating in deep cover

Author and former pathfinder David Blakeley shares his advice for operating in deep cover

1 RIFLE READINESS

ALWAYS have your weapon within arm's reach so you can bring it to bear in a split second. Take every opportunity to use it as much as possible in training. Elite soldiers have fired thousands of rounds down a range and this is what gets them out of a hostile situation; the ability to put down intense and accurate fire without hesitation.

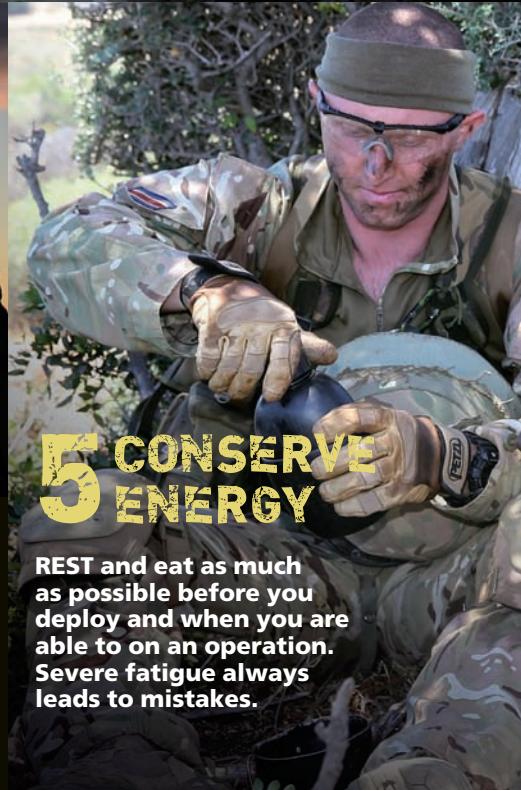
2 KIT CLEVERNESS

KNOW where all of your personal equipment is located within your webbing and Bergen. You should be able to clean your weapon and obtain kit with your eyes closed – and silently to avoid detection.



3 KNOW YOUR TERRAIN

STUDY your map before a mission starts and check it at every stop. Visualise the ground ahead of you, which will help orientate you quickly if things go wrong. Scan your arcs and look ahead to identify key features that can be used for cover in the event of a contact.



4 TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

INVOLVE as many of your team as possible in mission planning. It will help more people think on their toes if it all goes noisy. Devise your "actions on" for every eventuality. Murphy's Law says if things can go wrong, they will. This is especially true of operations behind enemy lines.

5 CONSERVE ENERGY

REST and eat as much as possible before you deploy and when you are able to on an operation. Severe fatigue always leads to mistakes.



6 MIND YOUR MAP

DON'T have your map folded on the area of your mission or put any markings on it – it's a giveaway. Tie it to your pocket buttonhole so that it cannot get lost or blown away in the wind.

Pictures: Steve Dock and Sgt Rupert Fiere, RLC

7 WRITE VERY LITTLE DOWN

DON'T have notebooks full of any information about your commander's plan or members of your troop or platoon. All of this should be memorised and you should have no written information on you other than radio frequency details, which you can encode.

8 DON'T BLOW YOUR COVER

AVOID using torches or white light unless it is the size of a pinprick and you cover it with your body. Identifying your position could compromise you immediately. Steer clear of villages and outbuildings as stray dogs and civilians could give you away.



9 AVOID DETECTION

DO not urinate or defecate without taking it away – it will reveal signs and identify the number of men in your team. Use bottles and bags. Don't shave either. It wastes water and is unhygienic when behind enemy lines for long periods of time as it risks infections.



10 SHARE INFO QUICKLY

DON'T wait to complete a glossy patrol report before passing on enemy grid references. Get accurate information relayed quickly around the battlefield, then share detailed routes and approaches later.



Maverick One by David Blakeley is out now priced £18.99. Read last month's book review for further details



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Paderborn:	07 - 18 Oct 13	Chester:	07 - 18 Oct 13
Northern Ireland:	21 Oct - 01 Nov 13	Didcot:	28 Oct - 08 Nov 13
Bovington:	11 - 22 Nov 13	Colchester:	11 - 22 Nov 13
Honington:	18 - 29 Nov 13	Tidworth:	25 Nov - 06 Dec 13
Catterick:	25 Nov - 06 Dec 13	Aldershot:	20 - 31 Jan 14
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Didcot:	13 - 17 Jan 14	Tidworth:	13 - 17 Jan 14
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TALKBACK

YOUR letters provide an insight into the issues at the top of soldiers' agendas... but please be brief. Emails (mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk) 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.

MESS DRESS MISS

■ I WAS recently promoted to sergeant and told that I was required to purchase mess dress, which wasn't a surprise to me.

What was a shock was the price of buying it new.

Many warrant officers' and sergeants' mess members informed me that it is much cheaper to acquire these items second-hand.

What I found disappointing was that I had to pay for it all, regardless of whether it was new or not, because I am a Reservist.

I have been informed that Regulars get an allowance towards their mess dress so why shouldn't I and the rest of the Territorial Army?

And if it is classed as uniform, why do we have to pay for it at all?

Royal Air Force personnel are issued with their garments, albeit not as attractive as ours. – **Sgt Sean Mullin, 75 Engr Regt (V).**

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), replies:
I understand that on promotion to sergeant every soldier looks forward to wearing mess kit.

However, contrary to what you have been told you are not required to have these items as a senior NCO in the TA.

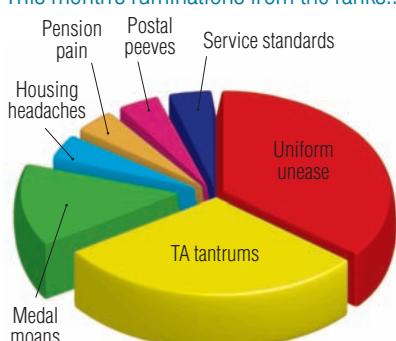
Army dress regulations, part seven, state that this is optional.

Other Services have smaller Reserve elements and each has only one style of mess dress, making it far cheaper to produce and issue.

There is an aspiration for part-time personnel to have similar scales of uniform to their Regular colleagues with the advent of the integrated Force, and work is under way to scope the requirement; the key will be affordability.

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



'Why penalise for poor health?'

In 1999 I, like many others, signed on the dotted line and vowed to serve my Queen and country.

After time in training I started to hear about all the different perks and bonuses that soldiers get throughout their careers.

One of these was the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for 15 years' exemplary duty.

Now I know this decoration doesn't mean much to some individuals but once I learnt of it I aspired to get it by ensuring I kept my nose clean.

However, in May 2010 an incident occurred that would change the course of my career forever: I had the first of three epileptic seizures.

I started to be investigated for the condition and was later diagnosed, leading up to my impending medical discharge.

On June 3 this year I had served 14 years and will complete my medical discharge at the end of this month.

It leaves me about 307 days short of receiving the decoration.

It isn't my decision to be discharged and the medal is something I have always aspired towards.

I understand that rules are there for a reason but it was not my choice to be diagnosed with epilepsy.

Is there any possibility of being considered for this honour early? – **Cpl Dean Bell, R Signals.**



Brig Matthew Lowe, D Pers Ops, responds: The Army medal board has some flexibility on the good character criteria for this honour where offences are of a minor nature.

However, it has no flexibility on the long service aspect, where 15 years is the minimum required.

While I sympathise with your circumstances, the Army cannot consider you for this decoration.

Ruffled by medical rules

I RECENTLY applied to join the Territorial Army but to my disappointment was rejected based on my medical history.

The grounds cited were related to my previous experience of the eating disorder anorexia nervosa.

This episode occurred three years previously and I received outpatient therapy, following which I was discharged with no need for future clinical input.

At the time of my application I held a healthy BMI index.

Following my initial rejection I was encouraged to appeal the decision by recruitment staff at company HQ.

I gained a letter of recommendation from my GP supporting my suitability.

After the appeal was rejected, citing anorexia nervosa as exemptible to service, I feel compelled to gain further reasoning for the decision.

I am a healthy, athletic individual who partakes in regular sports training.

Given the current recruitment drive, the Army's policy on promoting positive

associations with mental health conditions and the specific aspects of my application, I find it difficult to comprehend the logic behind such a decision. – **Name and address supplied.**

Matt Carter, SO2 Army Sec, Army Recruiting and Training Division,

responds: Joint Service medical policy (JSP 950) states that candidates with a confirmed diagnosis of anorexia nervosa should be graded S8 (that is, medically unfit for service).

It is impossible to predict the 20 per cent of sufferers who make a full recovery and the remainder relapse and remit or remain severely ill.

If an Army applicant believes they have fresh evidence from their GP or specialist subsequent to a previous decision, and wish to appeal further, they should submit the evidence with a detailed letter stating their case to: Occupational Medicine Branch, HQ ARTD, Trenchard Lines, Upavon SN9 6BE.

DIGITAL DOSSIER

THIS MONTH'S ELITE TWEETS

#PARADE PRIDE (P 22)

@clarebalding

It's a darned impressive sight on Horse Guards Parade. **#troopingthecolour**

@JamesPFry

Love the **#troopingthecolour** such pride and precision. The Armed Forces are amazing. God bless them

@Ablockblue

Just watched **#troopingthecolour** Another impeccable performance by the **#welshguards** Proud as!

@pinkieappleose

#troopingthecolour Judging by the amount of horse muck on The Mall, it should have been renamed "pooping the colour"!

@CatDow

At my next birthday I'm totally organising a flyby... might be a Cessna... or paper, but it'll happen. **#troopingthecolour**

#REDUNDANCY (P 7)

@jonnylawsl

A very important chapter is about to begin, one way or another. **#redundancy**

@RadioChickBFG

So far so good, friends I've seen are happy with their **#Armyredundancy** result.

#TERRIER (P 24-25)

@VmBasham

British Army **#Terrier** now available for use. Can be operated remotely and can fire weapons as well as dig holes.

@HuffPostUKTech

The British Army's new toy is essentially a tank from *Warhammer 40,000*.

#PENNY PINCHING (P 57)

@startsavingapp

Big financial goals might be divided into smaller goals easier to accomplish. Divide and conquer! **#savingtips**

@MissBee73

Money saving tip: A vigorous snog with a bearded man is free and enjoyable face exfoliation.

@money_force

40% of young adults don't know difference between overdraft and in credit, says PFEF. Don't be one of them! Get Money Fit.

@soldiermagazine

Postal deliveries hit the rocks in Falkland Islands

to learn of your frustrations with the BFPO and the postal support to military persons serving overseas.

Whilst I note your disappointment at friends and family having to pay for parcels to the Falklands, I can assure you that Royal Mail is not making a mistake and is following military-provided policy correctly.

All operational BFPO addresses qualifying under the deployed welfare package, as determined by PJHQ, are entitled to free blueys and e-blueys. This includes those detached to British Forces South Atlantic Islands.

The new e-bluey app is proving very popular and usually facilitates receipt within 24 hours.

Parcels are charged preferential concessionary BFPO (UK inland) rates rather than full international tariffs.

This is a significant discount compared to the international price which, as you correctly identify, is because most of the transport beyond the UK is undertaken by the MoD.

At Christmas time certain additional operational BFPO addresses are permitted to have concessionary parcels of less than two kilograms in weight sent to them free as an additional service; included in this are the Falklands and British Forces South Atlantic Islands.



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'Stop penalising our ex-Regulars'

MANAGE a class two warrant officer serving on the full-time Reserve service (FTRS) home commitment.

I believe that as an ex-Regular with a pension, he is being penalised compared to Territorial Army personnel who have received redundancy payouts from other government organisations.

When selected for FTRS appointments, in accordance with TA regulations and the Army pensions warrant, former Regulars often end up forking out capital payments, commutation, redundancy payments, pensions abatements and more.

Past enquiries about this have usually ended with the favourite default answers of "it's in accordance with JSP 764/Treasury rules/policy".

Please consider that members of the Armed Forces are effectively paid from the same pot as teachers, council employees, NHS staff and civil servants.

So if that is the case, it follows that they should fall under the same Treasury rules.

Why, then, does a Reservist with a substantial package from one of the aforementioned agencies not have to repay

anything when they are selected for an FTRS appointment?

If a deal has been done between the Treasury and the military can it please be clearly explained to prevent any further confusion and headaches?

The ultimate outcome would be for ex-Regulars to be brought in-line with TA applicants, not the other way round. – *Name and address supplied.*

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds: This is a complex area but the key principle that underpins the rules is that the Armed Forces are not considered the same employer as other parts of the public sector.

We have a separate pay review body, separate pay structures and separate conditions of service.

For example, we can receive pension benefits earlier than others.

All public servants are subject to abatement of pension benefits if they rejoin their previous employer.

For us, that means if we rejoin the Armed Forces on a full-time engagement

(Regular or FTRS).

However, an ex-soldier can join the police force or civil service with no abatement of their military pension.

Equally, an ex-police officer can join the Armed Forces with no abatement but cannot return to their former employer without the police pension being affected.

The rules apply equally to all.

If ex-Regulars (or civil servants for that matter) are made redundant and subsequently enrol in the TA, they are not required to repay any of their redundancy package or pension benefits if qualified.

In the future, benefits earned under Armed Forces pension scheme 15 will not be subject to abatement.

Those which have been accrued under both AFPS 75 and AFPS 05 will continue to be.

An MoD pamphlet (MMP 116), available both on the internet and intranet, explains the effect of re-employment on benefits.

A separate leaflet (MMP 138) specifically covers the Armed Forces redundancy schemes, including impact of compensation on re-employment.

Resettlement plans encounter brick wall

I SERVE overseas and have hit a brick wall in my last 15 months of service.

After recently buying my own house back in the UK, I arranged for my son to start his first year at a local school.

We tried to move our belongings back to Britain but then encountered the problem that is joint Service publications (JSPs).

According to these documents, there are no provisions for a mid-assignment move other than when a marriage breaks down.

But surely after 20 odd years when I am trying to make the transition into civilian life as smooth as possible for my family, there should be more flexibility in the system?

I'm not asking for anything over and above my entitlement, just to take advantage of it a few months before my end-of-tour date and finish my job as married unaccompanied.

I cannot go onto the over-37 package as again, you can only claim this in the first or last six months of an assignment. Neither can I take advantage

of the final tour of duty provision as I will be assigned to a post in the UK for my last six months in order to undertake resettlement activities.

So what help is there?

I have applied via the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency's pay and allowances complaints and casework cell (PACCC) for the entitlement but this process can take a long time and I'll be lucky to get any answers in my final 11 months.

The alternatives are to enrol my son where I am based and then move him back to a UK school after three months, with no guarantee of it being our local one, or fork out the estimated £4,000 for removals.

Surely there should be some flexibility and assistance for Service personnel and their loved ones to get settled in the

UK. – *Name and address supplied.*

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), replies: As you have identified, there are a number of allowance provisions to assist military personnel in preparing for the transition to civilian life at the end of service.

Clearly your circumstances are not accounted for by any of the aforementioned packages.

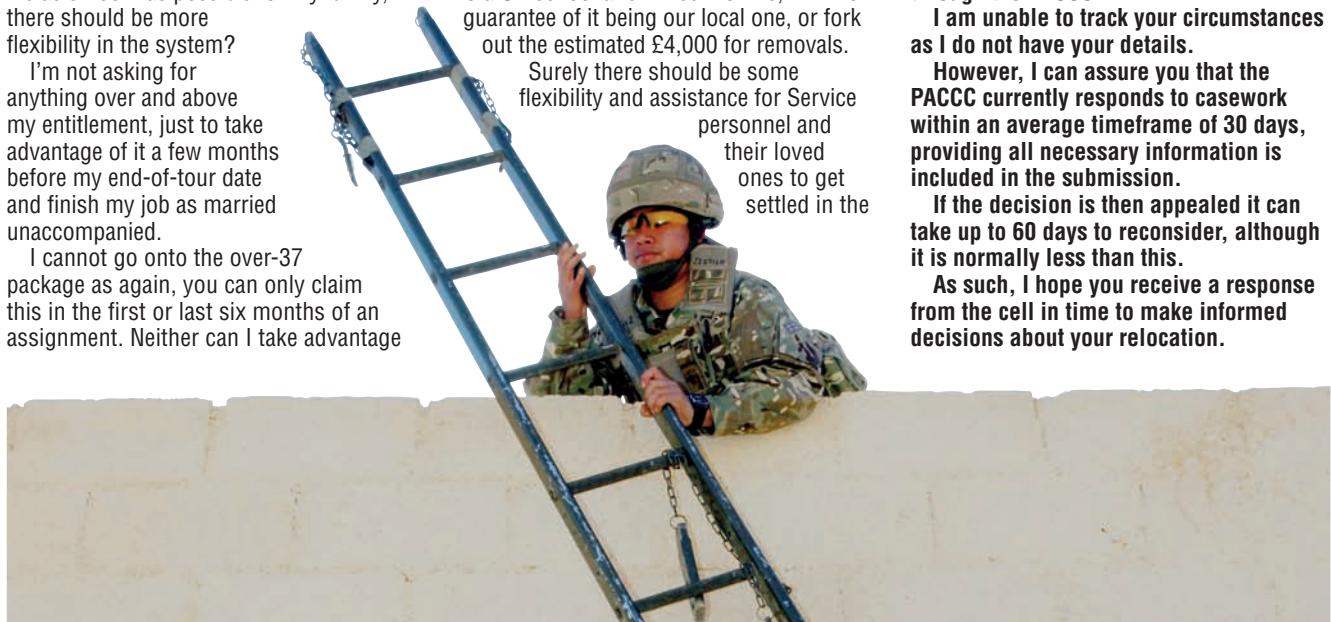
On occasions it is necessary to adjust or consider waiving regulations to meet individual cases and this can be requested through the PACCC.

I am unable to track your circumstances as I do not have your details.

However, I can assure you that the PACCC currently responds to casework within an average timeframe of 30 days, providing all necessary information is included in the submission.

If the decision is then appealed it can take up to 60 days to reconsider, although it is normally less than this.

As such, I hope you receive a response from the cell in time to make informed decisions about your relocation.



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'Time to learn from the chip shop'

I AM writing this letter on behalf of numerous officers, now and in the future, who may find themselves in the same situation as me.

With my commission due to come to an end shortly, I have applied to convert to an intermediate regular commission. As in previous years, I have so far been unsuccessful in this area.

The results of the board will be released soon but with little time to go before the commission ends, there is only a small window in which to prepare for civilian life if my bid fails.

Many good officers with years of experience under their belts and much to offer cannot take the gamble: they have spouses to support, children to feed and mortgages to pay.

Despite requesting a modest extension to our short service commissions (SSCs) so that if unsuccessful we can get the all-important "soft landing" into civilian life, my colleagues and I have all been turned down.

Although we feel for those who have been made redundant against their will, at least they will be leaving with a considerable lump sum and sufficient notice to make the all-important transition easier.

We will receive none of this.

We feel as if we are the forgotten few and an easy and obvious way for the Army to

reduce its size as cheaply as possible.

To add insult to injury, our commissions will end less than one month before our nine-year point; the small lump sum which is afforded then could at least tide us over until we find new employment.

Whilst the Service has done nothing wrong legally, this treatment is utterly immoral. For officers who have put their lives on the line, this is not good enough.

Without the support and leadership of many of those in my chain of command, I would have checked myself into the local mental asylum this year.

Like the Army, my local chip shop is having to reduce its manning by a sizable figure. It is, however, doing so with consideration towards its employees.

I suggest that some of those at the top who turned down our applications to extend but who

themselves will leave with nice fat pensions, take some advice from the chip shop

and start to look after their people. — Name and address supplied.



Maj Stuart Wiles, SO2 Offr Terms of Service, DM(A), replies: The process of converting to an intermediate regular commission is controlled by the arms selection boards run by each cap badge.

Progression is merit-based, tempered by the number of vacancies within a

particular formation.

If individuals receive the right recommendations they may apply to convert their commission. However, there is no guarantee of success.

The boards are run using standardised practice and precedent guidelines to ensure that everyone is considered fairly.

Army Personnel Centre career managers give the chain of command (or in some cases individuals) sufficient information on score and placing to provide troops with a full debrief on how they fared.

It is impossible to predict performance on future boards as the field and quota change in accordance with the Service's manning requirements.

Officers serving on an SSC will know their retirement or end of engagement date. Therefore, it is up to the individual to plan for this notwithstanding the results from the arms selection board.

Individuals who are retiring having completed their agreed commission are not being directed to leave prematurely. They go on a pre-determined date under the agreed terms set out when they began.

These circumstances are different to those who have been made redundant and include any redundancy benefits.

Depending on the commission held, when personnel reach the end of their service there are differing entitlements.

For those on an SSC, a preserved pension and terminal grant is payable at age 60 or 65, depending on the scheme.

The processes outlined are routine and well established.

Pension forecast falters for Serviceman

I FEEL angry that I've been penalised financially by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) with regards to my pension and resettlement grant.

Like many others, I re-enlisted in the Army so that I could complete a tour of Afghanistan and continue military life.

After 11 years' reckonable service, I realised that I hadn't fulfilled what I joined the Service for in the first place.

I was eager to rejoin, go on tour and continue a career that I really enjoyed.

I completed all the relevant paperwork and have been serving ever since.

Not at any time since rejoining has anyone in my chain of command ever mentioned to me the huge financial impact that a re-enlisted soldier suffers due to the subsequent changes in policy on pensions and resettlement grants.

From the information I received from SPVA, after much confusion from incompetent staff and what seems like an untrained department, I learnt that they now talk about "relevant" and "reckonable"

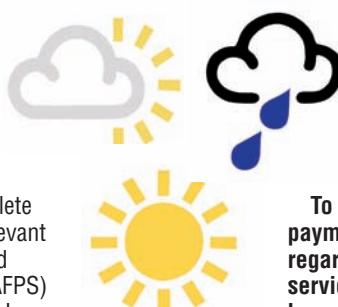
service and that the pension forecast I had requested is pretty much not worth the paper it's written on.

With a break in service of one year, it is now my understanding that I would have to complete an additional 18 years' relevant service on the 2005 Armed Forces pension scheme (AFPS) in addition to the 11 years I had already served in order to go onto an immediate pension.

This would obviously be very difficult to achieve as most personnel only serve for up to 22 years.

At what point would the Ministry of Defence think it advisable to inform re-enlisted troops about such life-changing and important information? — Sgt Andrew Casey, Allenby Barracks, Bovington.

Brig John Donnelly, DPS(A), responds:



The issue of aggregating periods of service under AFPS 75 and 05 for pensionable purposes was raised in a letter to *Soldier* which was answered on page 57 of the March edition.

To reiterate, early departure payment (EDP) scheme rules regarding whether previous service can count as "relevant" have not changed.

Only that under AFPS 05 (service after April 6, 2005, or qualifying service transferred under the 2006 offer to transfer) can count as relevant towards an EDP lump sum and income.

An individual is entitled to aggregate their preserved AFPS 75 with current AFPS 05 pensionable service but this will count towards your pension only, not EDP.

You will receive the correct pension benefits to which you are entitled in accordance with existing AFPS 05 rules.



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Maintenance provider plague

Picture: Mark Owens



'LET'S REMAIN VISIBLE'

I HOPE this short letter conveys what many of my colleagues feel.

In reaction to Fus Rigby's death in Woolwich, I was disappointed to note the immediate direction was that we were all (115,000 of us, Regulars and Reservists) to keep a low profile and not draw attention to the fact we are soldiers.

I believe that this would have been a sad and retrograde step.

I remember the first half of my career in the Army being very different to the second: in the 1990s, because of the (actually small) IRA threat, we were all obliged to wear civilian clothes and hide our true profession whenever we emerged from barracks.

I for one felt out of touch and perhaps somehow ashamed of being a soldier; there was no parade after our successful insertion into Afghanistan and no victory march after the invasion of Iraq.

Then in the mid-noughties Gen Sir Richard Dannatt made us feel proud again by encouraging us to wear our uniforms in public and to parade after operations.

What a difference that has made to our connections with, and reputation among, the general public!

Let's not overreact and undo all that we have gained: let's stay in uniform on the streets of our own country and remain proud to be soldiers in the public space. —

Lt Col Marcus Evans, ACSC.

Brig Nick Cavanagh, ACOS, Land Forces, replies: In the immediate aftermath of the tragic incident in Woolwich, direction was issued that uniform should not be worn in public in London. This was a wholly appropriate and prudent response whilst a complex situation remained under assessment.

As soon as it became clear that this force protection measure was not required, it was relaxed.

On May 30, the chief of the general staff wrote to the chain of command emphasising the importance of personnel remaining visible.

I AM writing to highlight the real story on Modern Housing Solutions (MHS), our supposed property maintenance provider, from the perspective of Service families accommodation (SFA) occupants.

I'm sure that I would not be alone were I to regale *Soldier's* readers with numerous tales of incompetence, missed appointments, poor and unsafe workmanship, dishonesty, lame excuses and a general lack of efficiency experienced at the hands of this organisation.

I can sincerely state that I have never spoken to anyone occupying SFA that has a good word to say about MHS.

More worrying is the attitude of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), who are effectively our landlords.

Following a recent complaint (one of many) and visit from my local DIO officer I was informed that the occupants of SFA are 95 per cent content with the service provided by MHS.

I find this impossible to believe.

The representative was so intent on defending MHS she became completely disinterested in the complaints raised, service received or the fact her employer was paying for something that was not being provided – effectively wasting a great deal of taxpayers' money.

My opinion is that occupants have simply tired of complaining, and have now come to expect and put up with poor service.

Perhaps they are not complaining through the right channels – that is, to the DIO. This body will invariably not pass objections on, and why would they?

As one housewife put it, "I just get my husband to do the jobs as it is easier, more convenient and reliable work gets done, none of which you get from MHS".

I call on readers to share their stories of dealings with this company.

If nothing else I am sure it will make hilarious reading – if you didn't laugh at them you would have to cry – and highlight the issues we have.

In addition I encourage the passage of all complaints, resolved or not, to local DIO offices. Otherwise it will remain ignorant of the situation.

Soldiers, or families in our absence, should not put up with the appalling service supplied by MHS any longer.

Let's see if we can raise more awareness of this issue. — **SSgt I Rockett, RE.**

Air Cdre Alan Opie, Head of Operations Accommodation, DIO, responds: I meet regularly with MHS to hold them to

account for their performance.

Each year, this provider's help desk receives around 400,000 requests for repairs to SFA in England and Wales (an average of nine repairs per property).

Those requirements are assigned a priority based on the nature of the fault: emergency, urgent or routine.

Whilst MHS performance levels are high, I recognise that the sheer volume of repairs means that anything short of 100 per cent represents a significant number of families with cause for concern.

Each day MHS contact five per cent of customers about the jobs they have completed in the last 24 hours in order to assess satisfaction.

The conduct of this survey has been subject to external validation.

In April, 78 per cent of customers assessed performance as nine or ten out

of ten, and a further 16 per cent rated it seven or eight out of ten.

The six per cent who evaluated the organisation as below seven out of ten are analysed to identify where the service needs to improve.

If things go wrong, I encourage families to report their problem to the MHS help desk.

In addition, at a number of garrisons there are now customer assistance point coordinators who provide face-to-face support and signpost troops and their loved ones to someone who can solve their issues.

At a local level, joint DIO and MHS meetings are held to which families are routinely invited.

There is an escalation process in place for difficulties which cannot be solved locally. This goes through regional brigades to Support Command, whom I also meet with on a regular basis.

If occupants feel their problems have not been addressed properly, there is a three-stage complaints process.

These arrangements are explained on our website (www.gov.uk/dio) and were put in place to ensure that families receive the best possible level of service and get any issues resolved at the earliest possible opportunity.

Finally, a new MoD SFA customer satisfaction survey started this year.

Each month an independent company will contact 200 families on behalf of the department to ask for their views on housing delivery.

If approached, I encourage readers to take part and be honest.

Feedback will help us to improve further the support that is provided.





British Forces Resettlement Services

provides help, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces, past and present, and their families. Fostering links with local communities, BFRS offers work placement trials and employment opportunities for those leaving the Services. For details of job vacancies, training courses and events held around the country visit www.bfrss.org.uk

Telereal Trillium offer work placements to help British Army troops improve their post-Service career prospects. With a £6 billion property investment portfolio Telereal Trillium affords military personnel an insight into the role of facilities management in the private sector. For further information go to www.telerealtrillium.com

Launched in Leeds, **The Enterprise Foundation** is a charity to help ex-Service personnel start their own businesses. Located at Headingley Office Park, the organisation offers tenancy at reduced rates. For further information visit www.enterprisefoundation.net



Spine line winners: Capt S Gibbons, HQ JSSO, Ashby-de-la-Launde; G Wright, Bovington, Dorset; M Hards, Fallowfield, Manchester; SSgt D Williams, MoD Abbey Wood, Bristol; K Chapman, Knightswood, Glasgow.

MacWet gloves: D Courtney, Army Personnel Centre, Glasgow; Jayne Hawkes, HQ Hereford Garrison; P Wheeler, Maindy Bks, Cardiff; Ian Webb, Grantham.

Marine 3: Anna McKernon, Scotton, Catterick Garrison; Capt M Claxton, RHQ 10 Sig Regt, MoD Corsham; LCpl S Wood, Gundolph Bks, BFPO 31; John Card, Beacon Bks, Stafford; Lt A Lappin RN, RMB Chivenor.

The New Twilight Zone: SSgt D Muff, 106 Flt Sqn, Bradford.

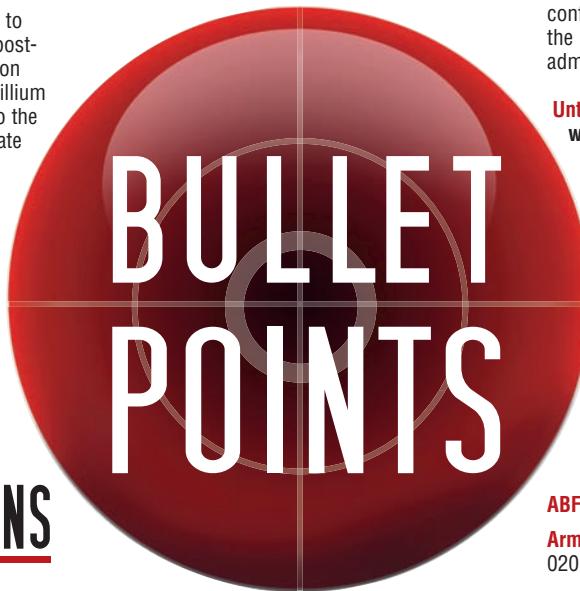


July 3: Concerts in the Park, Kneller Hall, Twickenham TW2 7DU. Also on July 13, 20 and 24. Free entry for soldiers with MOD 90. Tickets £15 and £10. www.army.mod.uk/khconcerts

July 6: The Royal British Legion Surrey will hold a fund-raising walk at Dunsfold Race Park, Cranleigh from 1300 to 1700. Civilians and military personnel are invited to enter teams to walk, dance or cycle round the one-mile circuit as many times as they can. The minimum sponsorship is £50 per team and fancy dress is welcome. Some

500 motorcyclists from the RBL Riders Branch will also complete 11 honour laps. For further information visit www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/surrey/news-events

July 11: Parade and muster of Korean veterans and a service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey. Those wishing to attend are asked to apply by email to PersTrg-DSsec-CECTMailbox@mod.uk or in writing to: Ceremonial, Events and Commemorations Team, Level 6, Zone C, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB. For more information contact Tom Gallagher on 020 7218 0341 or by email at tom.callagher880@mod.uk



July 15-20: The 79th Armed Forces Art Society exhibition takes place at the mall galleries, London. The event showcases a diverse and exciting range of works by members who share a past or present Armed Forces background. 1000 to 1700 (closes 1600 on final day). Admission free. www.mallgalleries.org.uk

July 27: The Thankful Villages Run. Medwyn Parry and Dougie Bancroft will be riding their motorbikes to every one of the 51 Thankful Villages in England and Wales. These are the communities with no traditional war memorials because all who left to fight in the Great War were lucky enough to return home. The journey will start at Llanfihangel y Creuddyn, near Aberystwyth, at 0900 on Saturday, July 27 and will finish at the same point at around 1900 on Sunday, August 4. The ride will raise funds for The Royal British Legion – the target figure is £51,000. For more details visit www.thankfulvillagesrun.com

July 27: Wimbish Open Day. Held at Carver Barracks, Wimbish, Essex CB10 2YA, 1200 to 1600. For further details contact Capt Greg Stockbridge on 01223 203655/94659 3655.

From July 29 onwards: IWM London's new major family exhibition based on the popular children's book series *Horrible Histories* by Terry Deary. Visitors will be immersed into the realm of Second World War spycraft, including codes and ciphers, disguises, camouflage, forgeries and gadgets. Tickets: adults £5.50, concessions: £3.95, children £2.95.

Opens July 29: Architecture of War Exhibition. Exploring how modern conflict has influenced and impacted on the spaces people inhabit by

bringing together a selection of art from IWM's collection from the First World War to the present day. Highlights include works by William Orpen, Ronald Searle, William Scott and Langlands and Bell. Free admission.

Opens July 29: IWM Contemporary Omer Fast: Five Thousand Feet is the Best. The London premier of Omer Fast's celebrated film in which the artist interviews personnel about their experiences flying predatory drones over Afghanistan and Pakistan. As the feature progresses the narrative becomes increasingly disorientating, time and place become confused and questions are raised about the nature of contemporary warfare. Free admission.

Until further notice: Chelsea Pensioners' wartime stories are being captured in a new online collaboration between the National Army Museum and the Royal Hospital Chelsea. **The Old and the Bold** is an audiovisual history project and videos are available to view at www.nam.ac.uk



DIRECTORY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

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

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

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

Armed Forces Muslim Association: Chaplain 0207 414 3252; www.afma.org.uk

Armed Forces Humanist Association: www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk

Army Libraries: 01252 349381

Army Ornithological Society: www.armybirding.org.uk

Army Welfare Service: 01980 615975; www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/welfare-support.aspx

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

Blind Veterans UK: (formerly St Dunstan's) www.blindveterans.org.uk; 0207 7235021

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association: 0208 590 1124; www.blesma.org

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk

Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society: 01372 841600; www.combatstress.com

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

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: 0207 820 9988

Heroes Welcome: www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

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

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group):
www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

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

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

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

Remount: 01451 850 341;
www.remount.net

Royal British Legion:
www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

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

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency:
0800 169 2277 (from the UK);
0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

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

Stoll: (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation) 0207 385 2110; info@stoll.org.uk; www.stoll.org.uk

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

uk4u Thanks: 01798 812081;
www.uk4u.org



INTELLIGENCE

The following Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs and Defence Information Notices can be found online by visiting www.armynet.mod.uk

ABN 53/13: Future of SLI

ABN 52/13: Changes to uniform grants

ABN 51/13: Accreditation

ABN 50/13: Access doctrine

ABN 49/13: Welfare grants

ABN 48/13: Combat uniform

ABN 47/13: Use of supplements

ABN 46/13: Changes to the casualty information flow

ABN 45/13: Resettlement tranche 3 redundancy

ABN 44/13: Armed Forces pension calculator upgrade

ABN 43/13: Bullying and harassment advice card

ABN 42/13: Versatile engagement conversion in 2014

ABN 41/13: Regular to TA process

ABN 40/13: PADR

ABN 39/13: Physical development inspections

ABN 38/13: TA commitment bonus

ABN 37/13: Mess duty subscriptions

ABN 36/13: Herrick rotation allowance

DIN 2013DIN01-117: The Army Dependants' Trust – annual trustees report and accounts

DIN 2013DIN01-115: Support available to Service personnel assigned to EJSU supported posts in Europe

DIN 2013DIN01-114: Healthcare provision in British Indian Ocean Territory directory of local health services and medical screening advice

DIN 2013DIN01-113: Extension of MoD contract for Service life insurance

DIN 2013DIN01-107: The Award of Combined Service (CS) sports colours and clothing colours for CS teams

DIN 2013DIN01-106: Winter sports travel

DIN 2013DIN01-105: Opportunities for Defence Medical Service personnel to serve with United Kingdom Special Forces Medical Group

DIN 2013DIN01-102: Late entry commission in the Royal Artillery and Royal Army Physical Training Corps

DIN 2013DIN01-101: Territorial Army Group A late entry commissioning process

DIN 2013DIN01-100: Engagement with suppliers, contractors and potential bidders during the Materiel Strategy procurement process

DIN 2013DIN01-098: Undertaking to repay expenses incurred during external training or adult further education courses

DIN 2013DIN01-097: Staff specifically recruited for overseas service – annual uplift to monthly accommodation charges

DIN 2013DIN01-096: Medical employment recommendations by secondary health care consultants

Continued on page 56

NO. 860

JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?



TEN details have been changed on this picture from the *Soldier* archive of Pte Ingrid Fahr (WRAC) dropping the chequered flag at a race between two Scorpions at the Nurburgring Grand Prix circuit in 1973. Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 860**,

Soldier, Ordnance Barracks, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by July 31.

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

First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win £100; the second and third will

receive £25 gift vouchers. The results will be announced in the September issue. Usual rules apply. **May's winner:** First correct entry drawn at random was M Hobbs, 42 Engr Regt (Geo), Thatcham, Berkshire.

Runners up: J Boyle, Burnley, Lancashire and J Malone, Tayforth UOTC, Dundee.



DIN 2013DIN01-095: Joining the Territorial Army: A revised process guide for individuals with previous Army service (including details of incentives available)

DIN 2013DIN01-094: Exemption of Armed Forces Compensation Scheme guaranteed income payments in the means test for social care provided by local authorities

DIN 2013DIN01-093: 138th Defence Industrial Whitley Council meeting, November 28, 2012

DIN 2013DIN03-013: The provision of temporary landing zone safety officer training

DIN 2013DIN04-083: Declaration of obsolescence – firing circuit tester cased

DIN 2013DIN04-082: Fluke/Bio-tek biomedical equipment calibration procedure

DIN 2013DIN04-081: Request for medical support to exercises

DIN 2013DIN04-080: Accounting for PE7 block and slab

DIN 2013DIN04-079: Prepared demolition charges

DIN 2013DIN04-078: Publication of version 2 of Joint Service Publication 912: *Human factors integration for Defence systems*

DIN 2013DIN04-077: Replacement rocket hand fired

DIN 2013DIN04-076: Changes to current triologiView hosting arrangements

DIN 2013DIN04-074: Procedures for the return of demolition kit L2A1

DIN 2013DIN04-073: Support to military training and exercises

DIN 2013DIN04-072: Operational Medical Module content changes (2012)

DIN 2013DIN04-071: Operational Medical Module content changes (January-April 2013)

DIN 2013DIN04-070: Declaration of obsolete – DMC W14

DIN 2013DIN04-069: Declaration of obsolete – AS90 spare parts

DIN 2013DIN04-068: Declaration of obsolete – Bowman management laptop

DIN 2013DIN04-067: Biosecurity Policy – Edition 2

DIN 2013DIN04-066: Sea survival equipment log – working at height personal protective equipment – introduction of self-retractable lifeline blocks

DIN 2013DIN04-065: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2013DIN04-064: Defence Equipment and Support contractor support arrangements for satellite television receive only, sound reproduction equipment and recreational television system

DIN 2013DIN04-063: TLB responsibilities for managing driver behaviour

DIN 2013DIN04-062: New contract notice for the disposal of fire extinguishers

DIN 2013DIN05-022: Defence Medical Systems Team move to DMS Whittington

DIN 2013DIN06-020: Unlicensed tattooing within units

DIN 2013DIN06-019: Safety in swimming pools operated by the Armed Forces

DIN 2013DIN07-081: Biathlon rifle trainer courses 2013

DIN 2013DIN07-080: Defence media training 2013-14

DIN 2013DIN07-079: Higher Defence studies programme – academic year 2014-15

DIN 2013DIN07-078: Tri-Service language examinations (professional expert and functional) 2013-14

DIN 2013DIN07-077: Conversion training to senior non-commissioned officer weapons controllers

DIN 2013DIN07-076: Nuclear department course dates – March 2014-March 2015

DIN 2013DIN08-005: Activities that are not covered by the MoD's self-insurance arrangements – non-core MoD business activities

DIN 2013DIN10-025: 2013 Army motorcycle championships

DIB 35/13: Publication of the *Better Defence Acquisition* white paper

DIB 34/13: Upgraded online pension calculator now available

DIB 33/13: Letter from the Chief of the Defence Staff

DIB 32/13: Troop rotation arrangements for final period of Op Herrick

Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Regimental Associations annual fusilier gathering will be held at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry on Saturday, October 19 from 1900 to 0100. Past and present members of the regiment are welcome. Full details from Warwickshire Headquarters, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, St John's House, Warwick CV34 4NF. Telephone 01926 491653 or email rrfhq@btconnect.com

Royal Hampshire Regiment annual reunion luncheon for all Territorial battalions and successors in 1 and 2 Wessex on Saturday, September 28 at Newburgh House, Winchester, 1200 for 1300. Contact Maj Ian Taylor at 4 Cedar Wood Close, Fair Oak, Eastleigh by telephone 023 8069 4771 or email ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com



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

July: 16, Carlisle; 17, Preston; 18, Warrington



PhD researcher Lee Yarwood-Ross is collecting data from men who have experienced lower-limb amputations as a result of injury in Iraq and Afghanistan to further understand the challenges they have faced. Visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/LowerLimbAmp to leave stories or contact Lee on 07545 885686 or lee.yarwood-ross@stu.mmu.ac.uk to offer a face-to-face interview.

Harj Hutchings from Canada is looking for Leli Cypriani from Malta, who served with the British Army in Rochdale in 1970. Anyone with any information is asked to email harj@mymts.net



If you cannot read the printed word due to visual impairment or disability, **Soldier** can still be enjoyed in audio format.

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01435 866102 or info@tnauk.org.uk

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The cash-flow quandary

How to avoid pouring your money down the drain

THE continuing gloomy economic forecast means that money and debt remain huge concerns at the forefront of many minds.

Learning to live more frugally has been a challenging experience for both civilians and soldiers, and one that looks set to linger.

Whilst the Army Families Federation (AFF) will continue to stress the need for Service salaries to reflect troops' roles, commitment and skills, we recognise that everyone plays a part in learning to manage pay packets better and with a thought to the future.

We therefore welcome the Money Force (www.moneyforce.org.uk) initiative, which gives advice and training on how to sort out debt and use your

finances to best effect.

The AFF still believe that affordable housing, realistic allowances, access to a second income and a decent soldier's wage are all key to allowing families to enjoy a reasonable standard of living.

However, there is also some personal responsibility in spending wisely and learning how to budget.

Three years ago I gave up drinking after recognising that Army life easily lends itself to overindulgence.

Not only do I have more pennies in my pocket to spend on worthwhile stuff but my health and professional ability have significantly improved.

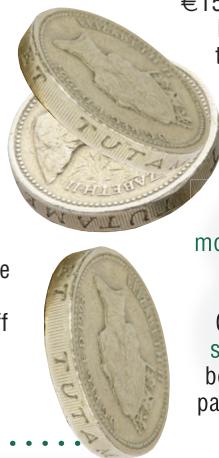
Furthermore, I can honestly say

life is more enjoyable without my regular Saturday morning hangover.

Whilst most won't want to go that far, I was reminded of just how much a good night out can cost as I chatted with a soldier currently posted in Germany who told me that he spends around €150-200 in one evening.

If repeated over the month, this adds up to a staggering amount of money.

If you do find yourself in debt, it is well worth contacting Money Force, the Money Advice Service (www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk) or the StepChange Debt Charity (www.stepchange.org) before resorting to a payday loan. ■



Looking after the pennies

Some tried-and-tested tips...

FINANCE manager Anna Charlotte takes care of the Army Families Federation's budget in addition to running her own household on a Service salary. Here, she offers some top tips on looking after your money.

● **RETHINK the way you do your grocery shopping.** Buying a store's own range or purchasing online can save you hundreds of pounds each year. Choosing a supermarket-branded product needn't mean compromising on taste and using the internet reduces impulse buys and could result in a more practical shopping trolley.

● **AVOID payday spending sprees as you may be suffering the consequences a few weeks later.** Make a list of all your "I would like but don't need" items at the start of the month and if you've still got the funds at the end, go and treat yourself.

● **MANAGE any debts or loans carefully.** Clear all of your minimum monthly payment requests first then start to reduce what you owe based on the highest APR. There may be little point holding onto savings whilst you are financing debt. Your investments could be used to reduce unnecessary interest payments.

● USE software such as Bank Tree or Ace Money to help control your finances.

Alternatively, you can build your own budgeting spreadsheet on Open Office (which is similar to Microsoft Office but free). Most online banking facilities also offer budgeting tools and you can get them at no cost on sites such as www.moneysavingexpert.com or www.which.co.uk/money

● **ALWAYS shop around when renewing your insurance, phone contract, utilities or mortgage.** Price comparison sites such as U Switch, Go Compare or Money Supermarket can often provide the cheapest quotes but this may come with a lower quality service so be careful.

● **RESEARCH any discounts available before buying.** The Rewards for Forces and Forces Discount websites offer savings for military personnel. Other useful portals include Groupon, My Voucher Codes and Discount Vouchers. Price comparison web pages are also useful when making purchases. They often come with the added benefit of customer reviews and feedback.

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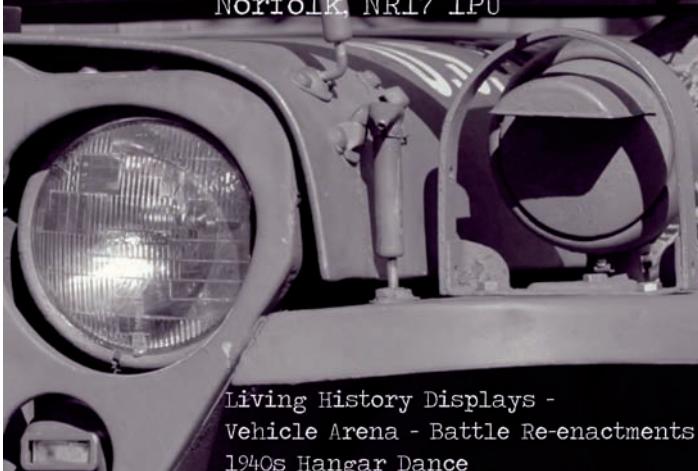
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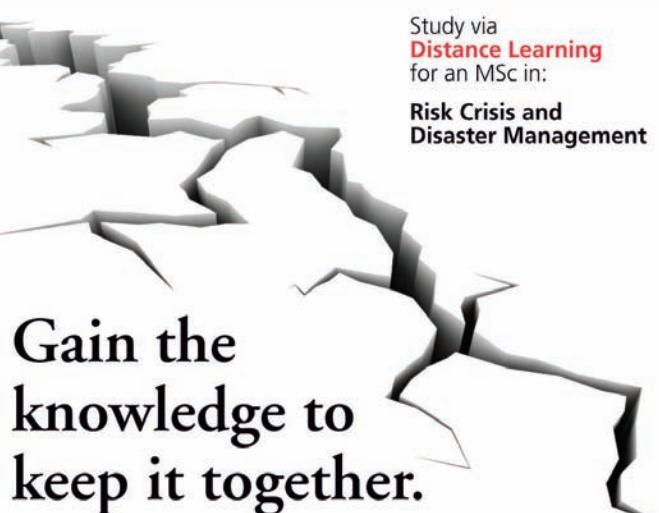
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APOCALYPTIC ACTION

JULY'S JUDGEMENTS

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PICK OF THE MONTH: WORLD WAR Z

ZOMBIE PITT

THE UNDEAD HIT CENTRE
STAGE ON A BIG BUDGET

Review: Joe Clapson

FROM humble beginnings as a low-cost niche for aficionados, the zombie genre has made it to the big time thanks to the considerable wallet of Brad Pitt.

Not only does the Hollywood icon play *World War Z*'s hero (Gerry Lane) but his film company, Plan B, produced the release after acquiring the screen rights to Max Brooks's book following a bidding war with Leonardo DiCaprio.

The grand-scale feature is based on the bestselling novel and follows a former United Nations troubleshooter as he is recalled to duty to find the cure to an inexplicable pandemic which is turning people across the globe into savage citizens of the undead.

As survivors of the zombie takeover-bid sweat about their future aboard a US warship, it's down to the chiselled protagonist to jet across the planet to find a solution.

The international format gives director Marc Forster the chance to work with different scenery and spend some of his \$200 million budget.

"Gerry has been to hot zones around the world – Rwanda, Bosnia, places of tremendous danger, turbulence and crisis," said the man behind *Quantum of Solace*.

"When the zombie outbreak occurs, his former employer contacts him believing he is the only man for the job.

"I wanted to create a movie that feels real, so audiences feel like this could happen, this minute, to any one of us. No one is spared, everyone is susceptible."

The apocalyptic imagery is disturbingly horrifying and the feature is packed with top-spec action and special effects.

Scenes where thousands of diseased, dribbling bodies swarm across the land en masse are particularly impressive.

However, presumably to keep the film accessible to youngsters, there are no signs of gory amputations or bloody slaughtering.

On muscling in on the walking-dead arena, Pitt said: "Max's book treats the zombie genre as a global pandemic, spreading much like we've witnessed viruses such as SARS travel.

"What happens when everything we concern our days with is rendered useless? How will mankind survive?"

The *Fight Club* and *Snatch* star added: "Those zombies are scary as hell and the movie, I believe, works on numerous levels."

This is an offering that will entertain the masses but the lack of gore may leave hardcore fans feeling short-changed. The question of whether Pitt's expensive foray into the category has been worthwhile is up for debate. ■

VIVACIOUS VIEWING



MOVIE 43 out now

THIS collection of short stories from producers **Peter Farrelly** and **Charles Wessler** includes a star-studded cast that certainly makes the movie appear to be one not to miss. However, I suspect the release will leave many with their mouths hanging open in shock. We see **Kate Winslet** going on a blind date with **Hugh Jackman**, who happens to have testicles on his chin. Then there's **Halle Berry** mixing guacamole with her breasts and it gets more disturbing from there. This certainly has "squaddie humour" written all over it.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



HALO 4 out now

THIS movie confirmed my phobia of sci-fi. A futuristic military academy full of teenage heroes must produce the next generation of warriors to fight "the insurrectionists". The use of slow motion is an attempt to complement the cliched dialogue but the fact that there is no action until well over halfway is bemusing. There is only so much teen angst one can take. That, poorly blended with the moody central character's moralising over the unending conflict, makes this hard work. Cheesier than a field full of laughing cows, I would advise against watching this.

Maj Neil Johnson, AAC



STATIC... out July 15

THIS is a horror film that I recommend you watch with company, especially if it's dark and you're of a nervous disposition. A young writer and his wife are at their secluded house when a hysterical woman shows up and they get drawn into a nightmare scenario where an unknown force stalks them. With a chilling finale, this had me jumping at every sound I heard, from the kettle boiling to creaking floorboards. The critically-acclaimed movie, written and directed by **Todd Levin**, is worth a few hours of your time even if it does leave you shocked.

Rick Wilson, civvy



THE LAST STAND out now

ARNOLD Schwarzenegger plays a former LAPD hotshot who had been hoping for an easier life after being the sole survivor of a bloody drug raid. But even as the sheriff of a small border town he returns to his old ways and will stop at nothing to prevent an escaped narcotic kingpin from blasting his way into Mexico. **Eduardo Noriega** plays an infamous crime lord who's escaped from an FBI convoy with a hostage. This is the action star's first lead role in ten years and it's by no means his greatest movie, but even so it scores nine out of ten for me.

Cpl Adam Jackson, 3 Para



TOP 25 RIVALRIES out now

THERE have been many rivalries in sporting arenas down the years and for wrestling fans this will be a journey through the best of them. We learn of the feud that enveloped Triple H and Mick Foley and of the bad blood simmering between Abdullah the Butcher and nemesis Bruiser Brodie. Luminaries from WWE give the low-down on how grudge matches came about with action footage and verbal slap downs from the antagonists. This offers good entertainment but it's not one for the connoisseur.

Steve King, MoD civvy



WIN... UNTOLD HISTORY OF THE US

DIRECTED, co-written and narrated by the legendary **Oliver Stone** (*Platoon*, *Wall Street*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *JFK*), this box-set looks back at the events that went under-reported but crucially shaped America's complex history over the 20th century. *Soldier* has teamed up with FremantleMedia to offer a copy of the DVD and its book companion to five lucky readers. To have a chance of winning, tell us who directed the series. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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games

JULY'S
SUMMER
SELECTION

PICK OF THE MONTH:

LIONS FIND THEIR TEETH

ICONIC PLAYERS MAKE CONSOLE CONVERSION

Review: Richard Long

SPORTING spin-offs have become a mainstay of the console world with the high-octane action on the pitch frequently making a successful transition to the small screen.

Franchises such as *Fifa* and *Tiger Woods* have emphatically led the charge and it seems as though most mainstream pursuits can now be sampled via a joypad and the comfort of the sofa.

However, one discipline that has lagged behind its rivals is rugby union.

The limited releases that have attempted to fill this void have generally failed to capture the brute force of the game's marauding forwards or the speed and guile of the fleet-footed backs.

But with the British and Irish Lions currently embroiled in a challenging test series in Australia, developers Sidhe are attempting to bridge the gap with their latest energy-charged release.

Rugby Challenge 2: The Lions Edition features a vast array of licences from countries and leagues across the world – meaning fans can scrum down with a legion of their favourite players.

The options include more than 110 teams and 50 stadiums along with competitions such as the Aviva Premiership, RaboDirect Pro 12 and the Top 14.

But the main attraction is the opportunity to take charge of the iconic Lions and the full touring squad for 2013 has been added in all its glory.

One of the greatest problems any rugby title faces is the need to capture the many facets of the professional game.

While some of these intricacies can be confusing for casual fans, *Rugby Challenge 2* succeeds in making life simple with an outstanding tutorial section.

With most titles the urge to skip straight to the action and learn as you go is irresistible but here it really is worth investing 15 minutes on learning the basics.

Lessons cover everything from simple passing and penalty kicks to lineout calls and piling players into rucks and mauls.

These are soon mastered on the training ground but in a match environment there is a lot to remember and it was rather humbling to see the mighty Lions tamed by Chile in their first competitive run-out.

However, it doesn't take long to adapt and after those initial frustrations are overcome this proves to be an entertaining offering.

A revamped sound engine captures the match-day atmosphere superbly and commentary from Grant Nesbitt and former All Black scrum half Justin Marshall adds to the authenticity.

The only downfall of this release is the fact the graphics could be better.

The likeness to the real-life players is vague at best and at times the on-screen action appears a little blurred.

But these are only minor irritations and on the whole *Rugby Challenge 2* delivers an accurate portrayal of the sport.

The Lions have scored an early victory – let's hope it can be repeated down under. ■

VIRTUAL PLAYGROUND

PAINKILLER: HELL & DAMNATION

for Xbox 360/PS3/PC

FOR those longing for a simple first-person shooter *Painkiller: Hell & Damnation* is the title for you. This remake of a PC classic brings a full repertoire of heavy metal music to 14 chaotic levels and four thrilling boss missions. You take the role of Daniel Garner – a man crossed by the devil – as he wades through the warped pits of hell to be reunited with his wife. The release features a devastating arsenal from blade cutters to bolt guns and the action is captured in vibrant graphics. This is not a bad attempt but it can become boring rather quickly.



Sgt Craig Backhouse, Coldm Gds

GRID 2

for Xbox 360/PS3/PC

THIS is a different style of racing title; a blend between simulation and arcade classic. *Grid 2* boasts some excellent graphics with a good storyline and offers a lengthy and exciting career mode where you're constantly introduced to new disciplines and events. One aspect that sets this apart is the lack of driving assists, meaning you can't just jump in a car and win. You need to learn the tracks and time corners precisely to get first place, so it's one for the perfectionist. If you are an avid racing gamer, add this to your collection – you won't be disappointed.



SSgt Lee Gibbs, REME

ARCANIA: THE COMPLETE TALE

for Xbox 360/PS3

THIS game revels in as many clichés as possible. The plot revolves around a mad king on a rampage and a farmer who finds his village raided by the evil ruler. Though it won't win any marks for originality the story is presented pleasantly enough. The hindrance comes in the form of its pacing, something the writers evidently had little regard for. The early narrative soon gives way to a heavier combat focus and it is one that is seldom welcome as the fights are reasonably simple. *Arcania* offers a great deal of content but it is a case of quantity over quality.



LCpl John Murphy, QARANC

METRO LAST LIGHT

for Xbox 360/PS3/Wii

SET in post-apocalyptic Russia, this first-person shooter and sequel to *Metro 2033* sees main character Artyom fighting his way through the subways and streets of Moscow. Above

ground, poisonous air and mutant creatures are the enemy, while beneath the surface the main threat comes from hostile factions among the humans. After a slow start, both sets of opponents prove challenging enough to keep your interest and the tension in the storyline builds nicely. Anyone used to *Call of Duty* will find the gameplay relatively easy and, all in all, this is a decent offering.



Sgt Mike Owens, 26 Engr Regt

REMEMBER ME

for Xbox 360/PS3

THE year is 2084 and you play as Nilin, a memory hunter in neo-Paris who has been memory wiped. The opening to this title had me hooked and it initially plays like an interactive movie. The gameplay reminds me of *Tomb Raider* with some *Batman: Arkham Asylum*-style combat thrown in. It might not suit everyone but there are some unique features such as building your own fighting combos and remixing people's memories to change their outlook on life. In summary, if you are stuck in the block this weekend it might be one to try out. It's well worth a look.



Cpl Mike O'Neill, RLC

FAST AND FURIOUS: SHOWDOWN

for Xbox 360/PS3/Wii

THE *Fast and Furious* movie franchise is not really noted for its subtleties, plot twists or highbrow approach so you know what to expect from this console tie-in. Although this is not based on the latest film, the characters are familiar and this is possibly the only bright spot in what is a terrible game. Poor graphics dog this release from the outset and for a supposed racing title the handling and control on the cars is shocking. An array of glitches and bugs adds further cause for concern, making this one for the scrapyard rather than the front of the grid.



Richard Long, Soldier

THIS

JULY'S
SIZZLING
SOUNDS

PICK OF THE MONTH:

NOTHING TO DO

TAKE THAT STAR GOES SOLO ON YEAR OFF

Review: Richard Long

WITH Gary Barlow and Robbie Williams forging successful careers outside the pop juggernaut that is Take That it is easy to forget that Mark Owen is a solo artist in his own right.

Having already recorded three studio albums the singer has ventured away from the group dynamic once more to release a fourth offering – *The Art of Doing Nothing*.

The collaborative effort was produced after the band's record-breaking *Progress* world tour came to an end in 2011 – when they agreed to take a well-deserved year off.

But Owen confesses he is not very good at doing nothing so when long-term songwriting partners Ben Mark and Jamie Norton made a surprise visit to his home, the creative juices soon started to flow.

"I've been making songs for 20 years now and I don't really know what else to do," the star explained. "It's my hobby and my day job all in one."

Instead of sticking to the pop mainstream, the album boasts surprising variety while also providing a showcase for aspiring singer Ren Harvieu and upcoming rapper Jake Emlyn.

Owen said: "The important thing about all of this process is that it was open.

"For a while it wasn't going to be songs, but animation.

"Then for a while, I wasn't even going to sing on the record.

"It feels better somewhere in my psyche to call it a project rather than a solo album because so many people have contributed.

"Before this I didn't know that could happen – I felt you had to do everything yourself otherwise it wouldn't be real."

This is Owen's first individual effort since Take That reformed in 2006 so it was difficult to know what to expect.

What becomes immediately clear is a desire to be unique and individual, rather than conforming to the stereotypes that many would predict.

Lead single *Stars* has a fresh anthemic feel while the piano-driven *The One* and the distorted loops on *Heaven's Falling* serve to keep things interesting.

In terms of effort and ideas Owen should be highly commended and while this album has its highs and is decent enough, it never ventures into truly ground-breaking territory.

It is obvious that the singer is enjoying a pleasant diversion but he will be better served by getting the band back together and doing what he does best. ■

TUNES FOR THE TROOPS

London With The Lights On by Stooshe

ALREADY firmly established as one of music's hottest new artists and the biggest rising girl band around, **Stooshe's** debut album is packed full of provocative, punchy wordplay with cutting-edge choruses and three incredible vocals. That's the official press release definition of the group's breakthrough record and to be honest, it is pretty much spot on. From start to finish this offering is quirky and upbeat and has a definite 60s' soul sound. The trio's tunes already speak for themselves and the single *Black Heart* was one of the biggest airplay hits of 2012. This is certainly worth a listen.



Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

PS by Daniela Brooker

DESPITE being just 19 years old **Daniela Brooker** is not new to making music. She wrote her first song at the age of 12 and has already supported **The Saturdays** on tour. Her debut offering is ideal listening for when you want to relax and unwind. However, a lot of the tracks sound the same and if you took out the pauses between songs they could easily roll into one. It is hard to escape the impression that she is playing it safe and she fails to push her very rich and soulful voice to its limits. This is not an album that excited me but I believe she will be one to look out for in years to come.



Julie Jessup, civvy

The Ascent by Wiley

BRITISH RnB star **Wiley** returns with a new album that is bursting with collaborations with artists such as **Kano**, **Lethal Bizzle**, **Tulisa** and **Tinchy Stryder**. This record is guaranteed to be a sure-fire hit and the tracks all fare well, even though there seems to be an over-reliance on rapping throughout. *Reload* is the standout offering and this catchy tune had me singing and bopping away from the moment I first heard it. From start to end, the vocals are very good and the beats are perfect. The supporting cast make this easy to listen to and the main man is sure to be one of the stars of the summer.



Kim Cresswell, Army wife

Magnetic by Goo Goo Dolls

THE Goo Goo Dolls have returned after four years with a cracking album. This is the kind of record, along with recent offerings from **Matchbox 20** and **Luke Armitage**, that you, your mum and other half can all enjoy and not be ridiculed. Opener *Rebel Beat* made me want to spark up the barbecue and chill out with mates. Tracks such as *Bringing The Night* and *More Of You* have an electric feel, while *Keep the Car Running* finishes proceedings with a real rock fist pumper. None of this mix of ballads and anthems takes away from a thoroughly enjoyable offering. It's not *Iris* but it's still a cracker.



LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

Didn't It Rain by Hugh Laurie

ALTHOUGH being accustomed to seeing **Hugh Laurie** providing an able foil to **Rowan Atkinson** in *Blackadder*, I was intrigued to hear if the critical acclaim to his musical prowess was justified. This material dates back to the early exponents of the blues. For those not conversant with the genre it will take more than one listen. Laurie has surrounded himself with some talented players and tracks such as *Weed Smoker's Dream*, with its trumpet interludes, double bass and deep vocals, offer some foot-tapping anthems. Blues lover or not, you have to admire the talent on show.



Steve King, MoD civvy

I AIN'T EVEN LYIN' by New Killer Shoes

AT the aggressive end of indie with a toe dipped in pop sit **New Killer Shoes** and their debut album, *I Ain't Even Lyin'*. This is Brit-rock at its best with **Arctic Monkeys**-style chords, clumsy lyrics and **Gallagher**-esque disdain. It ticks the boxes with gritty takes on teenage boy issues like dancing (*Throwin' Shapes* and *Let's Go Disco*) and pulling birds (*Smooth*). *Crooks* has a hooky riff that induces natural foot tapping and *Happy Families* colloquially tackles the turbulence of home life with emotive angst. Musically there is some talented guitar picking in the background that if harnessed would inject more excitement into an uninspiring genre.



Capt Matt Walpole, PWRR

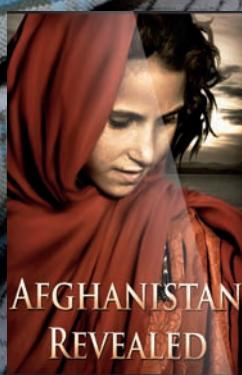
today's

JULY'S
HIGHS

PICK OF THE MONTH:

AFGHAN INSIGHT

CHARITY BOOK EXPLORES
COUNTRY'S COMPLEX HERITAGE



On a mission: *Afghanistan Revealed: Beyond the Headlines* is out now

Interview: Becky Clark

In the 11 years that the UK has been involved in Operation Herrick, Afghanistan has been prominent in newspapers and on TV screens.

But while reports of British casualties became all too frequent, the humanitarian situation and the country's traditional heritage remained largely outside the public consciousness.

Now, a charity book is aiming to increase understanding of the region's history and culture while raising money to help Afghan children.

Afghanistan Revealed: Beyond the Headlines is a collection of essays by world-renowned authors on all aspects of national life, including women, politics, war, religion and food.

Produced by The Afghan Appeal Fund (AAF), the project was conceived by one of the organisation's founders, Caroline Richards, who began fund-raising in 2006 when her husband, Gen Sir David Richards, commanded Isaf troops in Afghanistan.

The aim of the title was to offer the families of personnel serving in the region a deeper insight than the media's portrayal.

"When my husband deployed I had that sense of being left behind and not knowing what was going on and I met people who said 'I want to know more about the place my son, husband or boyfriend' is fighting in," she explained.

"That was one part of it but another reason was that we have a long history with Afghanistan and it's important to understand that if you want solutions.

"We need to be aware of the cultural identity of the country where our troops are deployed, but as a nation I think we have become disinterested.

"I don't think the mission was properly explained and there is this forgotten human side to the conflict.

"We rarely hear the Afghans' stories. I think we lack sympathy and don't realise they are our allies or grasp what they've endured during 30 years of war."

Having developed a keen personal interest in the country, Lady Richards attended talks by leading scholars and academics, some of whom contributed material to the book for free.

With literacy rates in Afghanistan among the lowest in the world, the proceeds from the title will go towards the AAF's main effort; increasing education opportunities for Afghan children.

To date the charity has funded the construction or refurbishment of 11 schools across six provinces.

"Like anyone, the Afghans want a better life for their children," continued Lady Richards.

"We recently completed a wall at a school in Nad-e Ali and work on the classrooms has begun.

"Once it's finished around 1,000 boys and girls from the local area will be taught there."

"Afghans are also working to right the problem and the government recently announced that a percentage of the proceeds from mining will go towards education, which is very good news."

As British operations in Afghanistan begin to draw down, Lady Richards is clear that such initiatives play a vital role in securing the region for the years ahead.

"It's important that we help Afghans find peace," she said. "But we need people's help."

"A civil war in that part of the world would be a very sad day indeed, especially for all those families who have lost loved ones."

"The British policy is to help the country into the future and getting that message out is vital."

Accompanied by a collection of striking images, *Afghanistan Revealed* is available as an e-book, priced £6.99, or in paperback at £9.99.

For details visit www.afghanappealfund.org.uk

RECONNOITRING READING

Ruta's Closet

by Keith Morgan

BRUTAL and highly emotive, this is the tale of a very young Jewish girl living through the German occupation of Lithuania. At the age of five Ruta learnt never to stray far from the "spinta", or closet, in the house where she was being hidden or she would be killed. The book tells of the murder of thousands of Jews but also of the bravery of parts of the non-Jewish community, who risked betrayal and death to save some of their friends. This is a difficult story to read but it is worth the time and effort to do so.



Andy Kay, ex RS

One Heartbeat A Minute

by Craig Emms

NOT for the squeamish, this tale about a Special Forces squaddie is at times graphic enough to make you cringe. Some of the scenes actually cause you to question whether people could survive such treatment. Merging fact and fiction wonderfully, the story leaves you pondering what is true or imagined and what really goes on behind the scenes. How many clandestine missions are carried out and then denied by governments or shadowy organisations? Read it if you like hard-hitting action, not if you prefer your books pink and fluffy.

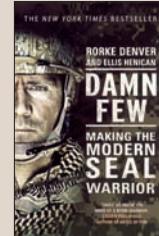


Rick Wilson, civvy

Damn Few

by Denver & Henican

THIS account of the secretive world of the US Navy SEALs is not as bombastic and fiercely patriotic as I thought it would be. However, having finished the book in near record time I felt short-changed. The author spent longer trying to justify the unit's existence instead of giving us the gripping specifics of covert operations in Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Colombia and Liberia. The three chapters on Iraq were exciting but lacked nitty-gritty detail. If you can get past the gung-ho "we're the greatest" attitude then it makes for a pretty decent read.



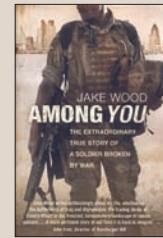
LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles

Among You

by Jake Wood

A BUSINESS analyst in the City of London, **Jake Wood** also volunteered at the Honourable Artillery Company, deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan.

This title provides an honest insight into the author's civilian and military life. After being diagnosed with acute stress reaction, he spent time on a psychiatric ward, ended up on benefits, self-harmed and contemplated suicide. At a time when the TA is being asked to share a larger burden of the Army's workload and the public is becoming increasingly aware of PTSD, this is a very topical book indeed.

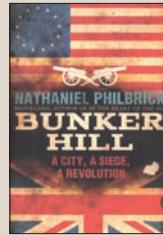


Cpl Adam Jackson, 3 Para

Bunker Hill

by Nathaniel Philbrick

THE battle of June 17, 1775 on a hill overlooking Boston harbour propelled Britain and her soon-to-be former colonies into an eight-year war. As "a people numerous and armed" the Americans were well equipped for this conflict with an undermanned British Army. **Nathaniel Philbrick's** account offers a traditional narrative from the American viewpoint, which should provide plenty of fodder for the planned Hollywood screen adaptation. Those wishing to know more of the fight and its results may read the book, or simply wait for the film.



Dr Rodney Atwood, military historian

WIN... The Manner of Men

by Stuart Tootal

IN June 1944 an elite unit of British paratroopers was sent on a risky, behind-the-lines operation to destroy a German gun battery ahead of the Allies' main invasion on D-Day. *The Manner of Men* tells the story of 9 Para's bloody six-day mission, during which they battled not only the enemy but blunders by high command. *Soldier* has five signed copies to give away. To be in with a chance of winning one tell us how many years ago D-Day took place. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: July 31

IMPECCABLE INSULATORS

ALPHA OPTIONS OUT THIS AUTUMN...

MOUNTAIN COMPANION

MAMMUT'S *Eigerjoch Light* jacket for women and the *Biwak Light* jacket for men are great alternatives to a softshell or mid-layer. The breathable and fast-drying fabric is perfect for stop-go activities in the mountains and includes high-reach sleeves with thumb loops and hidden side pockets.

PRICE: £220

BUY FROM: www.mammut.ch



TREKKING BOX-TICKER

DESIGNED for climbing, walking and high trekking, this men's *Alpha Guide* jacket from Montane leaves the arms free from any restriction. It combines the properties of Alpha with Mt Thermo X Stretch fabric on the arms, shoulders and hood to create an impressive piece of kit.

PRICE: £130

BUY FROM: www.montane.co.uk

WATER-REPELLENT WRAPPER

NAMED after one of Iceland's smaller ice caps, the *Eyjafjallajokull* jacket, suitable for men and women, is designed for challenging outdoor activities. Marketed by winter clothing company 66° North, this handy insulator includes Alpha insulation plus a water repellent and down-proof outer layer.

PRICE: £169

BUY FROM: www.66north.com



EXTREME ASSISTANCE

A COLLECTION of garments in Rab's *Strata* range include jacket, vest and hoodie. Available for both men and women, these products have been tested in a variety of hostile outdoor environments. Use the jacket as a mid or outer layer. A zipped chest pocket on the front of it doubles as a handy integrated stuff sack.

PRICE: £100-150

BUY FROM: www.rab.uk.com

ISOTHERM INSULATION

CONSTRUCTED with Polartec's Alpha insulation throughout the entire garment, this *Isotherm* jacket from Marmot can be worn by both men and women. Its 20 denier Pertex Quantum face fabric and softshell reinforcements on the shoulders make it great for backcountry ski touring and mountaineering.

PRICE: £160

BUY FROM: www.marmot.eu



WIN... A MARMOT JACKET

SOLDIER has teamed up with the Polartec, the makers of Alpha insulation material, to offer two lucky readers a blue Marmot *Alpha Pro* jacket following their arrival onto UK shelves this November.

To be in with a chance of winning this £190 garment, name an activity that our reviewer undertook while wearing the item. Answers to the usual address or via comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by July 31.



Review: Kieran Manning

THIS autumn will see the release of yet another high-performance fabric onto the outdoor clothing market.

Polartec – a US firm famed for its early development of the fleece – is adding a synthetic insulator called Alpha to its already-vast portfolio.

The idea behind this newly-developed technology is that its breathability and fast drying time will bring huge benefits to those on the move in challenging environments.

But does this material have the potential to become as popular as the company's most famous wardrobe mainstay?

Alpha's warmth, wind resistance and high durability have already led to it being issued to US Special Forces personnel.

But at a time when most people are – to be frank – broke, this kit could struggle to find widespread appeal on the consumer market.

I put it to the test in the form of Marmot's *Alpha Pro* jacket, priced at around £190.

This garment is packed full of features to help keep athletes warm in winter conditions.

Immediately drawn to its bright colour and seeming flexibility, the soft inside of this item did not disappoint – particularly the "angel-wing" movement of the arms.

The jacket did not ride up and its elasticated cords at the base and neck prevented the cold wind from getting anywhere near me. Its hand warmers are also a great addition.

Alpha material feels pleasant against the skin and, as promised, removes sweat and water from the body's surface.

The Marmot offering left me bone dry when walking, rock climbing and even kayaking.

Being able to compact it also makes this a great spare.

I am a paddle sport instructor, which means I often need to warm up quickly, so packing the *Alpha Pro* down into a dry bag was reassuring.

However, there are some cons to this product.

The medium jacket was a perfect fit for me but I fear that it could prove too slim for other average-sized users. Make sure you try before you buy.

Breathable side panels are great for running activities as they prevent overheating but when you become inactive, the wind is quickly felt.

Overall, I am looking forward to seeing Alpha products hit the shelves this November.

They will do the job as long as their users never stop. Just the ticket for soldiers, then. ■

CC

AVAILABLE THIS
AUTUMN.

PICK OF THE MONTH:

ALPHA OUTDOOR WEAR

NEW INSULATION TECHNOLOGY IMPRESSES

PRODUCT CONFORMS TO **CURRENT**
MILITARY POLICY ON SUPPLEMENT USE



INFORMED-
SPORT.com
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BIG ON QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE LOW ON PRICE

Colossal Hybrid All-in-One combines four important supplements and has been designed specifically to support faster recovery, increased muscle growth and may assist the prevention of injury following high impact activities.

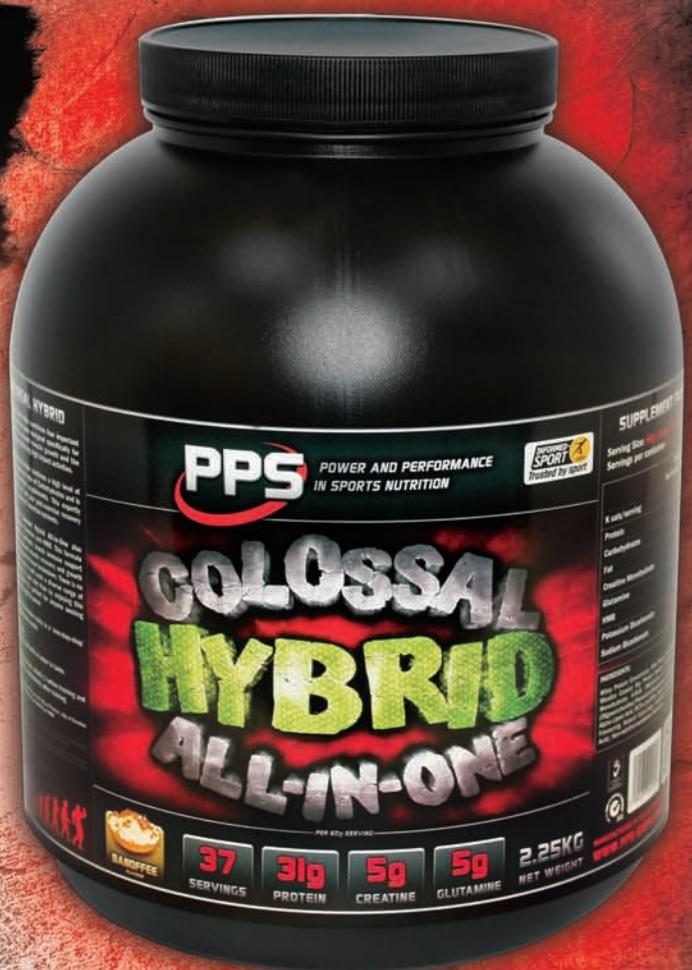
Colossal Hybrid All-in-One combines a high level of Protein, a balanced Carbohydrate ratio and fortified with; Amino Acids, Creatine and H.M.B. This unique blend aids post-exercise recovery and absorption of these essential nutrients.

Must be used in conjunction with a balanced diet

If soldiers are taking or contemplating taking dietary or sports supplements they should only use products tested by the HFL Informed Sport programme and appearing as a registered tested batch on the www.informed-sport.com website.

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SOLDIER SPORT

TRACK STAR PUTS ARMY MOTORSPORT ON THE MAP IN BMW SERIES

PICTURE: GRAEME MAIN



MAKING WAVES

Interview: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

SURF kayak star Maj Chris Elesmore (14 Sig Regt) will arrive on Australia's stunning Sunshine Coast this month on a mission to test herself against the very best in her sport.

The officer has been named in the England team to compete at the world championships and with the outfit boasting an impressive recent pedigree she is under no illusions about the task at hand.

Having finished second in the 2011 showdown the ten-man squad will be expecting another strong performance and Elesmore is determined to contribute to the cause on what will be her international debut.

"Australia will be a totally new environment for me and there are a lot of nerves," she told *SoldierSport* on the eve of departure.

"I am anxious and have been plagued by injuries this year so I just want to get out there and see what happens.

"The two current female world champions are English so there will be a lot of countries hoping to knock us off the top spot.

"As a nation we are looking to be as competitive as possible and I just want to go and do my best.

"I have surf reports from the Sunshine Coast on my iPhone and they are really consistent.

"It will be their winter but the temperatures are still 20 degrees. The conditions will be perfect."

Having triumphed in Army and Inter-Services competitions Elesmore, who deployed to southern Afghanistan in 2012, is not short of experience.

She has also excelled at national

level by twice finishing as runner-up at the British championships, the most recent effort coming at the end of her Herrick tour.

Her career on the water can be traced back to the age of 15, when she started canoeing, and she progressed to the ranks of surf kayaking after joining the Armed Forces.

"I competed at my first Army championships in 2001, which I won, and have carried on ever since," the elite-level athlete explained.

"It is very much like surfing in the way we try to go up and down a wave to gain speed and momentum.

"The breaking wave is where all the pace and power is.

"I have a carbon fibre kayak which is light and fast so the speed generated is very similar to that of a surf board.

"I also have a carbon fibre paddle so, unlike a surfer, I can move between the waves and sets a lot more quickly.

"The better guys can perform aerial tricks and spins. In a competition we go out for around 20 minutes and try to get on at least ten waves.

"The top two or three efforts count and we are judged by what we do on the water."

Elesmore's unit is based near St Brides Bay, in Wales, meaning she has the perfect training environment on her doorstep.

"I love being near the coast and the challenge and unpredictability of the waves is fantastic," she said.

"All the things I have been doing since I was 15 are exactly the same, it is about applying them to the sea and not a river.

"The UK is superb for surf kayaking,

we have an enormous amount of coastline and beaches; you just have to find the surf.

"The challenge is infinite. There is nothing like the feeling of shooting across the top of a wave and beating it before it breaks on you.

"The speed and power is immense. On the big surf there is always a sense of danger but it is a massive adrenalin rush. It is a sensation you don't get in many other walks of life."

"I SIMPLY COULD NOT AFFORD TO DO THIS WITHOUT THE ARMY'S SUPPORT"

Surf kayaking is still very much a minority sport, both within the military and at national level.

However, Elesmore has received substantial backing within Service circles and organisations such as the Sports Lottery, Army Canoe Union and Team Army have all helped fund her Australian adventure.

"It is very much a niche discipline," she said.

"Canoeing and kayaking is really successful but surf is probably the smallest event and we tend to struggle when it comes to getting soldiers interested in the sport.

"However, the Army has really helped me in the build up and preparations for this event.

"It is an expensive venture and the backing I have received has totally amazed me.

"To have such a fantastic level of investment as an individual athlete is quite humbling.

"I simply could not afford to do this without the Army's support."

The World Surf Kayak Championships get underway on Sunday, July 7. ■





ARMY SURF KAYAK STAR IN NUMBERS

16

THE HERRICK TOUR COMPLETED
BY MAJ CHRIS ELESMORE
BEFORE COMPETING AT THE
2012 BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

15

THE AGE AT WHICH THE OFFICER
STARTED CANOEING – SHE
PROGRESSED TO SURF KAYAKING
AFTER JOINING THE FORCES

10

THE NUMBER OF ATHLETES IN
THE ENGLAND SQUAD FOR JULY'S
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ON
AUSTRALIA'S SUNSHINE COAST



Leading light: Pte Brannon Varley (DMSTG) starred with bat and ball at the Inter-Services T20



T20 SCOREBOARD

Inter-Services Twenty20
Lord's Cricket Ground, London

ARMY vs RAF

Army 178-5 (Green 82 not out, Varley 43, Edmed 2-35)
RAF 122 all out (Compton 25, Morris 20, Boynton 4-18, Varley 2-20)
Army win by 56 runs

NAVY vs RAF

RAF 178-7 beat the Navy 106-6 by 72 runs

ARMY vs NAVY

Army 166-5 (Massey 54 not out, Govender 45, Buss 3-24)
Navy 124-6 (Buss 51, Moore 24 not out, Dearden 2-28)
Army win by 42 runs and are crowned 2013 champions



Reds find path to Lord's glory

Report: Richard Long

Pictures: Graeme Main

THE Army ended their Lord's hoodoo by recording back-to-back wins over their Forces rivals to emerge victorious from cricket's Inter-Services Twenty20 showdown.

A 56-run triumph against defending champions the Royal Air Force was followed by a ruthless demolition of the Royal Navy as the soldiers lifted the prestigious trophy for the first time at the historic venue.

Having underperformed in recent years the Reds hit top form in all facets of the game and an unbeaten knock of 82 from Capt Storm Green (HQ 101 Log Bde) laid the foundations for an imposing total in their opening match with the airmen.

The Army were blown away for just 44 in the corresponding fixture last season but some powerful early hitting from Sgt Dan Webb (HQ DIC) ensured a repeat performance was not on the cards.

A flurry of boundaries saw the right-hander race to 21 but his innings ended when he lofted a catch to Flt Lt Matt Compton off the bowling of medium-pacer Cpl Tom Chapman.

But Green and Pte Brannon Varley (DMSTG) continued the assault and a 98-run stand for the second wicket put the

RAF firmly on the back foot.

Varley took a liking to the short boundaries and smashed a rapid-fire 43 before being caught in the deep off Flt Lt Jim Iago.

However, Green maintained the pressure and a superb innings featuring six fours and five booming maximums guided the Army to a healthy 178-5.

In reply, the light blues saw opener SAC Ross Driver bowled by Varley in the second over and his early departure set the tone for a disappointing effort with the bat.

The Army all-rounder also claimed the scalp of SAC Jake Wray and a miserly spell of 1-20 from four overs by skipper LCpl Jacques Prinsloo (39 Engr Regt) ensured their opponents remained well adrift of the required rate.

With spinner LCpl Jonathan Boynton (1 CS Bn REME) returning outstanding figures of 4-18 the RAF crumbled to a miserable 122 all out.

Having slipped to a 78-run defeat against the airmen in the second match, the Senior Service needed a convincing win over the Reds to have any chance of lifting the trophy.

And they made the perfect start as ET Ian Buss claimed the wickets of Webb and Green to reduce the soldiers to 4-2 in the opening over.



Driving force: Capt Ian Massey (LD) steered the Army to a competitive score against the Navy

LCpl Russell Emmanuel (LD) and Varley soon followed and with the score teetering at 35-4 the Army were in danger of collapsing.

However, Capt Ian Massey (LD) and LBdr Sherwin Govender (47 Regt RA, pictured below) stopped the rot and a 92-run partnership for the fifth wicket saw the champions-elect move towards a competitive score.

Govender's dismissal for a well-crafted 45 brought Boynton to the crease and the all-rounder ensured the innings finished with a flourish as he smashed 27 from just 16 deliveries.

Massey remained unbeaten on 54 as the Army posted a total of 166-5.

In reply, the Navy quickly fell behind the asking rate as a combination of disciplined bowling and superb fielding halted their progress.

LCpl Ross Dearden (22 Engr Regt) set the tone by running out Mne Lee Evans in the second over and Varley struck soon after as AB Mike Green was caught behind.

Skipper ET Matt Thompson holed out in the deep off the bowling of Dearden to reduce the score to 23-3 and with Prinsloo and pace ace Pte Marlon Simon both taking 1-17 from their four-over spells, the contest was as good as over.

Buss offered stern resistance with a dogged knock of 51

from 45 deliveries but the Senior Service finished on 124-6 to hand a 42-run win to their opponents.

Speaking at the close of play Prinsloo praised the efforts of his team on what was an energy-sapping day at the home of cricket.

"Season after season we say that if we do the basics well we will win this tournament and we executed them very well today," he told *SoldierSport*.

"We would not have won if our standards were not excellent.

"The RAF team has set the bar very high and this has become a strong competition.

"We got ourselves in a good frame of mind during the build-up. We have had the same players for a few years now and they have really come together to produce a winning formula."

Head coach Lt Col Phil King (RLC) added: "The manner in which we won really pleased me.

"We were very strong in our match with the RAF. We could have folded to a score of 80 against the Navy but we recovered well to post a decent total.

"We went on tour to Pakistan in November and that pulled everyone together. During pre-season we focused on the basics and the winner was always going to be the team that executed those skills the best." ■

ARMY'S MAIN MEN



ALL-ROUNDER LCpl Jonathan Boynton (1 CS Bn REME) was the chief tormentor with the ball as he claimed four RAF wickets – including that of skipper Flt Lt Matt Compton – for the cost of just 18 runs.

He showcased his talent with the bat against the Navy by hitting four fours and a six in a rapid-fire 27 not out that propelled the Army to a match-winning score of 166-5.



OPENING batsman Capt Storm Green (HQ 101 Log Bde) hit an unbeaten 82 to help the Reds set an imposing total against the RAF.

The left-hander smashed six fours and five sixes in his 52-ball innings and shared a 98-run partnership with Pte Brannon Varley (DMSTG) for the second wicket.

Unfortunately, Green fell for just three runs in the game with the Navy.

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How are we helping the Armed Forces?

Since July 2011 Reclaims UK North West Ltd has endeavoured to tailor a personal service to the Armed Forces. Working tirelessly to claim back monies that have been wrongfully and completely mis-sold throughout the tri-services on a massive scale, it has been our pleasure to help so many families claim back life changing sums including £16,383.12 for Mr & Mrs Broadist (22 Fd Hosp) whom this money has helped through a relocation starting their new life in Canada. The money has also helped Mr & Mrs Allen (39 Regt) pay off all their debts, enjoy a wonderful family holiday and buy a lovely new Audi A3 with the £13,445.41 we were able to claim back for them. It is definitely worth noting that both Mr & Mrs Allen and Mr & Mrs Broadist were previously declined by their respective banks when they tried to claim the money back themselves. It was no easy task to reclaim the money but we did not take no for an answer and if you feel you have a claim we will do the same for you.

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Reclaims UK is also committed to helping Forces personnel with free debt advice if you are struggling to meet your monthly payments. New legislation is in place to freeze rising debt so give us a call now to find out more.

Why use Reclaims UK?

Reclaims UK is a small family-run business that can guarantee you will only ever speak to one person throughout your claim. There is no waiting around listening to annoying hold music and being passed from pillar to post. You will also be given a direct mobile number so that you can contact the personal claims handler at any time. As we appreciate the busy lifestyle of Service personnel we offer a 24-hour service for anyone who is currently on tour.

Reclaims UK has visited several UK and Germany based regiments in the last 12 months and our campaign to raise awareness of mis-sold PPI and claim back money for soldiers has been an ever growing success. If you feel that you or someone you may know have paid PPI, please get in touch today. You can call our freephone number, email or fill out an online contact form. It's a hassle-free process that can only benefit you. This is the biggest financial scandal in history and we are here to help.

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Picture: Double Red

Road to success: Rider Murray Hambro has found a new focus by competing in the Triumph Triple Challenge with the True Heroes Racing team

Hambro hits new heights

Report: Richard Long

FORMER soldier Murray Hambro is making a name for himself on the track by competing in the Triumph Triple Challenge.

The double amputee lost both legs in an IED blast in 2010 and rides for the True Heroes Racing team, an initiative comprised of injured and able-bodied ex-Servicemen.

Having made his debut last season, Hambro is riding in his first full campaign which features nine gruelling rounds at some of the biggest venues in the country.

"This year is all about learning the circuits and getting used to everything," he told *SoldierSport*.

"I need to master a riding style on the bike so I can get good corner speeds but I'm getting quicker every time I go out on a lap."

Hambro served as a lance corporal in 2nd Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment and he competes on a specially adapted Triumph Daytona 675R.

All the foot controls, including gear selector and brakes, have been switched to the handlebars and a special locating stud has been added to anchor his right boot to the machine.

He said: "I was told that potentially I would never be able to ride again.

"So the first thing I did was buy a bike

for use out on the road.

"The worst part about being injured is that you are just sitting at home twiddling your thumbs.

"I finished at Headley Court and it was a year before I was discharged, that is



when you start to go a bit loopy.

"For me, racing was something to focus on. Now I'm smiling and that helps a lot.

"We are not in this series to win races. For me it is all about being in the thick of the action and competing.

"Although I'm disabled I do not see myself as such. I want to do everything I did before and a little bit more."

The initiative is the brainchild of WO Phil Spencer, of the Royal Navy, and is run in association with military charity Afghan Heroes.

It is the only motorcycling team of its kind in the country and also includes Cpl Graeme Billington (2 RTR) and ex-soldier Nick Dinsdale, who served in the same unit.

Spencer said: "Motorsport is a pressurised environment, not too dissimilar to the battlefield.

"It is also a world many Service personnel would not have considered open to them even when they were fully able-bodied.

"Murray and the team have proved they can not only cope with the pressure but also compete at the highest level.

"They are sending a message to other former personnel that there are opportunities for them out there."

To follow the team's progress visit www.trueheroesracing.co.uk

Darver's driving ambition

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

THE Army's growing legion of track stars are looking to push for honours this season after returning to action in the Armed Forces Race Challenge.

Among those lining up on the grid is Capt Farard Darver (RLC), who is also competing in the BMW Compact Cup Championship in what promises to be a busy 2013.

The officer is a relative newcomer to life behind the wheel but his long-term passion for high-octane motorsports meant the transition to the pit lane was almost inevitable.

"When I came back from Op Herrick 14 I decided to take the step into it," he told *SoldierSport*.

"I did a bit of research and found the BMW Compact Cup, which is a one-make series with individual cars. It is not about who has the biggest chequebook and most resources.

"I then discovered that motor racing is recognised as a fully-fledged Army sport so I joined the Armed Forces Race Challenge. I now compete regularly in both."

Darver finished tenth in a field of 30 cars in his debut BMW campaign and with this year's series being broadcast on Motors TV he is hoping to raise the profile of the Service set-up.

He added: "It shows you can build your own car in the garage with the help of a few sponsors.

"The racing is very competitive. It started as a small series but is now a

full championship and there are some quite big names from the world of touring cars taking part."

With the Army now in the middle of a second season in the Forces challenge, Darver is hoping more soldiers will follow his path into sports car racing.

Unlike other track events, the winner is decided by consistency of performance as opposed to out-and-out pace with the fastest lap being divided by the average time to get a percentage score.

Whoever gets closest to 100 per cent is the winner.

"If we had a one-make series you would be automatically saying to people you must have a certain car," the racer explained. "This is all about nurturing the growth of the sport.

"It is not as expensive as people think. A lot of guys have cars fully prepped for track days so why not come racing?

"To buy my BMW and get it ready for the grid cost around £4,500."

Funding is available to help offset the cost of race fees, with a sliding scale in place depending on rank – meaning junior soldiers will receive greater support.

Darver said: "We want to pull the younger guys in and it is a fantastic discipline. You buy a car, strip it out

and then add a roll cage, brakes, suspension and cut-off switches.

"It builds discipline; you have to maintain the vehicle and look after it. The ability to crack on with the job is already there in Service personnel.

"A soldier coming back from Afghanistan with a tour bonus can easily get prepped and buy a trailer."

For more information on sports car racing and upcoming events log on to www.armymotorsports.co.uk ■





Going for gold: From left, LCpl Ryan Taylor (RE), Pte Jamie Milburn (RLC) and Pte Scott Sarson (2 Para) will be looking to impress in Colchester

Services welcome world elite

Report: Richard Long

Picture: Graeme Main

THE Combined Services will be hoping to capitalise on home advantage as they look to retain the Armed Forces Rugby League World Cup this month.

With a strong Army contingent involved the squad will face their military rivals from Australia, New Zealand and Serbia in the two-week tournament, which is being staged in Colchester.

The players were put through their paces in a gruelling training camp ahead of the competition and the team is confident of mounting a successful defence of its crown.

Pte Jamie Milburn (RLC) is in line to make his Combined Services debut and with just one Army appearance to his name is one of the group's least

experienced members.

However, with a background in the sport's professional ranks that includes a spell with the Huddersfield Giants he could have a crucial part to play.

"This is a huge attraction for me," he told *SoldierSport*. "To represent the Combined Services is the pinnacle.

"A lot of effort has gone in to publicising the event and Colchester will be a great base and venue.

"Wherever we play we look to reach a high standard but with it being in an Army garrison the focus will be on us to shine."

Hooker Pte Scott Sarson (2 Para) will have the added pressure of performing in front of fellow soldiers from his unit but he is relishing the challenge ahead.

The 23-year-old hails from a rugby union background and only started playing the rival code on joining the Army.

He said: "I am really pleased to be selected. I have gone through the ranks from the academy to the first team and now I'm in the Combined Services squad.

"Everyone brings something different to the party and these are the elite players from all three Services.

"We know the games are going to be tough. New Zealand and Australia are not going to bring poor teams but if we stick to what we have been doing and prepare well then we'll be fine."

The team was playing its opening match against New Zealand as this issue went to press. They face Serbia on Wednesday, July 3 and Australia on Saturday, July 6.

The tournament's semi-finals have been scheduled for Wednesday, July 10 with the final following on Saturday, July 13.

For more information on all games visit www.rlfcwc2013.com ■



Picture: Graeme Main

Sevens enjoy learning curve

THE Army sevens squad tested themselves against international opposition as they hosted a world cup warm-up event in Aldershot last month.

Wales enjoyed a 55-0 win over the soldiers before Kenya were forced to dig deep for a 27-17 victory.

"Losing to Wales is understandable as they are the world champions," team manager Capt John Voss (HQ ARRC) told *SoldierSport*. "But against Kenya we pressured right across the field and attacked the kick-off, scrum and lineout.

"We had a lot more possession and to score 17 points is something we can be proud of.

"This is all about helping our development. We have got 14 new players this year so it is great experience for them."

Wales and Kenya were in action at the Rugby World Cup Sevens in Moscow as this issue went to press.



■ THE Parachute Regiment retained rugby league's Trafalgar Cup with a 22-20 win over the Royal Marines.

Having secured a slender victory in the annual fixture the airborne soldiers now trail their rivals by just one match in the series, which has been running since 1998.

Coach SSgt Andy Hunter said: "The team performed well and every player earned their jersey. There's no love lost between the paras and marines and the encounter was every bit as hard fought as you'd expect.

"We delivered a tough and aggressive contact game for the first 20 minutes and then settled into more free flowing rugby. Our aim was safe, unspectacular play and not to commit any handling errors."



■ FRONT row forward LCpl Ricky Reeves (33 Engr Regt EOD) has joined Premiership outfit London Wasps for the 2013/14 campaign.

The Army star made the step up to English rugby union's top tier after a successful spell with the Bedford Blues in the Championship.

"Ricky is an experienced player who has been a key part of Bedford's excellent season and is very keen to be given a chance in the Premiership," said Wasps' director of rugby Dai Young.

"He will be a very useful addition to our squad and we are looking forward to seeing what he can do."

Reeves has previously played for Cambridge and also appeared for Saracens in last season's LV=Cup.

He was part of the Reds team that defeated the Royal Navy 43-26 at Twickenham in April and will be given a sabbatical period by the Army to pursue his playing ambitions.



Marsden's panel show

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

ARMY official Capt Max Marsden (RAMC) will be taking centre stage on the rugby union field next season after being promoted to the national panel of referees.

The officer made the step up at the end of last year, when he took control of three fixtures in National League Two, and is looking forward to further game time when the new campaign gets under way.

Marsden is a familiar face at Service level and he told *SoldierSport* about the challenges of testing himself in a new environment.

"It is a massive increase in terms of professionalism," he explained.

"The teams have bigger crowds, bigger infrastructures and bigger coaching set-ups.

"As referees we are under a bit more scrutiny. We have to wear microphones and every time we take to the field there is an assessor watching us.

"People's jobs depend on the decisions we make.

"I have thrived on that pressure and have really enjoyed myself – it makes you put in a better performance."

Marsden was quick to praise his background in the Army game and

had the honour of refereeing the Combined Services-Oxbridge under-23s showdown at Twickenham Stadium last season.

Despite his promotion he will continue to officiate military fixtures and already has one eye on a possible showpiece encounter next year.

"I'm hoping I can do the Royal Navy-Royal Air Force game. That is the top Services match I can cover," he said.

"I have refereed in London as a civilian but the Army and Combined Services have given me an opportunity to be exposed to some high intensity battles on the pitch.

"I took charge of the Navy in their clash with Cambridge University and that was a great stage to practise on.

"I also went out to Australia and New Zealand for the defence forces world cup.

"I was selected for the third-place play off between Tonga and Samoa, which was a fantastic experience.

"My other goal is to reach the Championship. The Premiership is a bit of a pipe dream really.

"There are only six professional, full-time referees and to get to that level you have to put in a lot of time but being a doctor in the Army makes that difficult.

"My career comes first and I still have some training to do." ■



Cyclists hit the road as growth continues

THE Army Cycling Union (ACU) has continued to go from strength to strength with the successful launch of the Inter-Corps Road Race Series.

With the Olympic feel-good factor still burning bright more than 130 soldiers took to the saddle for the fifth round of the ever-expanding competition, which was staged in Bramcote.

The event is aimed at increasing participation in the sport while providing a stepping-stone for riders hoping to represent the Service at senior level.

"We are trying to get as many

people involved as possible," said series organiser Capt Darren Clarke (REME).

"The ranks range from a brigadier down to privates and there is a complete mix of cap badges.

"The whole demographic and popularity of cycling is improving. I think that is down to the impact of the Olympics and the success of guys like Bradley Wiggins and Mark Cavendish."

Each stage features A and B League competitions to cater for personnel with different levels of experience and points are awarded to the top 20 riders.

With the series proving to be a popular addition to the fixture list, the ACU's development secretary has been keeping a close eye on proceedings.

"There are so many young guys coming through at the moment," Clarke said. "It is not that expensive and the corps teams have kit for them to use.

"If we want to develop elite-level riders there is no point investing money in 30- or 40-year-olds, we have to identify them at a young age."

For more information on all events visit www.armycyclingunion.co.uk ■

Picture: Graeme Main

HOCKEY FOR HEROES



A SELECT group of hockey players have gone head-to-head with the Service's top talent in a unique nationwide tour.

The Hockey for Heroes challenge saw a squad of 20 athletes travel more than 700 miles and play 23 matches in eight days to raise money for the military charity Help for Heroes.

The team suffered an 8-5 defeat against the Army during a visit to Aldershot before they moved on to Halton for three matches with the Royal Air Force's representative sides.

The schedule also featured a fixture with the Royal Artillery at Larkhill.

"To our knowledge, no other team has toured for as long or indeed covered as great a distance to play as many military teams as Hockey for Heroes," said organiser Carl Woods.

Donations can be made at www.bmycharity.com/HockeyforHeroes2013



Picture: Graeme Main



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Final word



Maj Jon Penhale

I left the Regulars about a year ago but I didn't want to just walk away with all the experience I'd amassed and in the context of the Future Reserves 2020 study, the timing seemed right to transfer. Now is a fantastic time to join the TA in terms of its role, its relevance within the Army and the likely tasks assigned to it going forward. The resources have been committed to training and it's an interesting and exciting place to be.

Rfn Nick Courage

For me, joining the TA was an opportunity to gain insight into what being in the Regulars might involve. I've decided I'm going to remain a Reservist, though, because of the full-time Reserve service opportunities. You can mobilise and go full-time and then return to your civilian life so you're not just reliant on the Army for a career. We've been on exercise in Cyprus and Germany – not many institutions give you those chances and pay you to be there.



Rfn Harrison Vowles

I used to be a cadet and was thinking about joining the Regulars. However, because the TA is now taking on more of a role and getting lots of resources from the government I think it's more beneficial to stay in the Reserves. It gives you the best of both worlds because you get the advantages of civvy street and the military lifestyle as well.

Ocdt Oliver Staunton

The fact that the remit of the TA is increasing is a really good thing for Reservists. It's now starting to become recognised that under Army 2020 we're working towards deploying in companies, rather than just sending individuals out with other units. It's a commitment and you have to be serious about it but if you like the outdoors and getting involved in things that you wouldn't do every day then it's definitely worth joining.



Rfn Terry Pratley

I'd always wanted to join the Regulars but I'm a full-time carer for my mum so I couldn't leave her. However, the TA allowed me to strike a happy medium between a military career and my home life. I've loved every minute and I would definitely encourage others to do it. I get a lot of pride out of the job – especially with the role growing. It's a good time to be in. I'd like to go on tour, build up a really good military CV and get as much experience as I possibly can.



With a white paper on Territorial Army reform set to give more clarity on Reservists' futures, we asked new members of 6th Battalion, The Rifles why now is a good time to join the Reserves



Rfn Joseph Scott Lyne

Things are changing and the more we are becoming one Army, the more prospects and kit are coming our way. I'm self-employed so that works in my favour with getting away. It's much less like the *Dad's Army* image people used to have. There's a lot of new blood coming in. You still have the older generation but they're passing on their experience to the younger guys.

Rfn Ben Harris

My civilian role is a relatively boring desk job. Through the TA I've been mentally and physically challenged; I've progressed a lot as a person, made new friends and gained confidence. I'm looking forward to the Reserves playing a bigger part because I want to further my career, get all the qualifications I can and make sure that wherever the TA goes, I go too.



Rfn Francis Elliott

I'm going to university in September but I plan to carry on with the Territorial Army and fit it in around my studies. You have to put the commitment in but it's probably the best part-time job you can have in terms of earning some money, getting physical exercise and learning lots of other skills.



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